

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
WORK SESSION MINUTES – 5:30 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – 7:00 P.M.
JANUARY 12, 2016**

A WORK SESSION OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA, ON JANUARY 12, 2016 AT 5:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor R. Cord Hall; Samuel M. Bishop; Harry Collins; Steve Huppert; Henry D. Showalter; Bradford J. Stipes. ABSENT: None.

WORK SESSION

1. Call to order by Mayor Barber
2. Meeting with Springsted to discuss the search for the next town manager.
3. Adjournment

---Recess until 7:00 P.M.---

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA, ON JANUARY 12, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor R. Cord Hall; Samuel M. Bishop; Harry Collins; Steve Huppert; Henry D. Showalter; Bradford J. Stipes. ABSENT: None.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Barry Helms; Assistant Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Town Attorney Jim Guynn; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell; Police Chief Mark Sisson; Farmers' Market Manager Sarah Belcher; Director of Public Works Ricky Bourne; Director of Human Resources and Public Relations Becky Wilburn

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

REGULAR MEETING

- I. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR BARBER. Mayor Barber stated there was a quorum of Council present
- II. CONSENT AGENDA:
 1. Council Meeting Minutes of December 22, 2015

Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Abstain; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
- III. RECOGNITIONS:
 1. Councilman Hall requested that Council consider recognizing Christiansburg resident, Kayden Camper, who, on January 2, won the 8-9 yr old division of the NFL Punt, Pass, and Kick National

Championship held in Indianapolis, Indiana, at a future meeting. Councilman Hall agreed to work with journalist Marty Gordon to draft a resolution recognizing Ms. Camper's accomplishment.

2. Mayor Barber reported that Doug Kanney, president of the Christiansburg Lions Club, has requested Christiansburg consider naming the week of February 21 – 27, 2016 *Christiansburg Lions Club* Week in recognition of the club's 75th anniversary. Council agreed to move forward in honoring the request and Mayor Barber said he would prepare a proclamation for Council approval.
3. Town Manager Helms presented framed copies of certificates from the State Board of Elections to the newly (re)elected council members.

IV. CITIZEN'S HEARING:

1. Citizen Comments:
 - a. No one to speak.

V. STAFF REPORTS: None.

VI. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. Council action on:
 - a. Conditional Use Permit request by Gilded Restorations, L.L.C., agents for J & M Enterprises, L.L.C., for automobile upholstery with storage of no more than five (5) inoperable vehicles at 930 Roanoke Street (tax parcel 528 – ((A)) – 36) in the I-2 General Industrial District. The Public Hearing was held on December 22, 2015. The Planning Commission vote to recommend issuing the CUP with thirteen conditions was 8 ayes, 0 nays, 3 absent. Councilman Hall made a motion to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to issue the CUP with thirteen conditions, seconded by Councilman Stipes. Councilman Collins noted he was present during the Planning Commission public hearing on this issue and he expressed his support for the recommendation to approve. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye. A copy of the Planning Commission recommendation for approval of the CUP with thirteen conditions is attached herewith.
2. Appointment to the Cemetery Advisory Committee. Councilman Hall made a motion to appoint Wayne Booth to serve on the Cemetery Advisory Committee, seconded by Councilman Huppert. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye. Councilman Huppert briefly reported on the numerous changes and upgrades being made at the cemetery, including the construction of a columbarium. Mr. Booth thanked Council for the appointment and expressed his eagerness to serve in this capacity. Councilman Stipes expressed his appreciation for Mr. Booth's continued service in the community, even in retirement, and noted his influence in the construction of the cellular tower located at the New River Valley Mall.
3. Backcountry.com economic development grant to the Economic Development Administration. Town Manager Helms reported that Backcountry.com has met the goals set forth in its contract, as amended, with the Montgomery County Economic Development Administration, and the business is requesting a 25% tax rebate as agreed upon in the contract. The rebate requested is for the years 2014 and 2015, at a total cost of \$22,496.53. The rebate would be paid to the economic development administration. Town Manager Helms recommend paying the rebate as agreed upon in the contract. Councilman Hall made a motion to pay the Montgomery County Economic Development Administration a tax rebate for the years 2014 and 2015, at a total cost of \$22,496.53, for the benefit of Backcountry.com, as set forth in the amended contract. Councilman Stipes seconded the motion and Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
4. Discussion regarding proration of personal property taxes. The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors recently voted to begin using the proration method of personal property tax billing, and Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie has asked Council to make a decision on whether to prorate

taxes along with the County, or continue using its current process of non-proration. She provided Council with a memo explaining non-proration and proration of personal property taxes, and she reviewed the pros and cons of both systems, noting how each would affect residents. Moving to proration would result in the tax billing becoming a continue process throughout the year, and Mrs. Tweedie said that an additional full-time staff member would be needed to assist with the additional work load, noting that, even without moving to proration, an additional staff member is needed because of new Town programs, including the recent implementation of a storm water fee. After Council discussed the pros and cons of both tax billing methods, Councilman Hall asked Mrs. Tweedie for her recommendation. Mrs. Tweedie stated that if the County had not moved to proration, she would have preferred to continue with the non-proration method because of the simplicity of the billing system and the extra administrative work required with moving to proration. However, since the County did vote for the change, it is difficult for the Town to not do the same. She explained that the proration method is often viewed as a more "fair" tax basis, and the reliability of the tax information received from the County would be improved if the Town and County were using the same tax billing system. Using the same billing method as the county would also cut down on confusion and conflict among the citizens. Councilman Collins said he has heard from numerous citizens asking about the Town's tax billing method, and he reported that those he has spoken with have preferred the non-proration system. He then asked if the due date for tax payment could be changed from early December, due to the hardship it could create being so close to Christmas. Mrs. Tweedie replied that state law determines the date on which personal property taxes are due. Council discussed the increase in annual revenue of \$70,000 if the Town changes to proration, and the cost of new tax billing software and an additional full-time employee. Mrs. Tweedie noted that she was already looking into a software upgrade prior to this issue. Montgomery County Commissioner of Revenue Helen Royal was present to answer any questions of Council. Council will set a Public Hearing on this issue during the Town Manager's Reports.

5. Re-organization for the Year 2016:

- a. Election of Vice-Mayor. Councilman Stipes nominated Councilman Hall to serve a second, consecutive year as vice-mayor. However, Councilman Huppert said he would like to nominate Councilman Showalter who has not yet served as vice-mayor. Councilman Stipes withdrew his motion and Councilman Huppert made a motion to nominate Councilman Showalter to serve as vice-mayor for the year 2016. Councilman Hall seconded the motion and Councilman Showalter said he would be happy to serve if that was Council's choice. Council discussed different ways of determining who would fill the role each year; Mayor Barber said he preferred a rotation to give each member an opportunity to serve. Councilman Bishop recommended a policy be developed to give consistency to the nominating process. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
- b. Set regular meeting dates of Council. Councilman Hall made a motion to continue meeting the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: AYES: Bishop, Collins, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes. NAYS: None.
- c. Authorize Vice-Mayor, Assistant Town Manager, and Finance Office Manager, to sign Town checks. Councilman Stipes made a motion to authorize the Vice-Mayor, Assistant Town Manager, and Finance Office Manager, to sign Town checks, seconded by Councilman Hall. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Collins, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes. NAYS: None.
- d. Appointment to Committees of Council: Mayor Barber appointed the Committees of Council as follows:
 1. Water, Sewer, and Solid Waste Committee – Showalter and Hall
 2. Street Committee – Stipes and Collins
 3. Finance Committee – Showalter and Stipes
 4. Fire and Rescue Committee – Bishop and Huppert
 5. Public Health and Welfare Committee – Ad hoc
 6. Central Business District Committee – Bishop and Showalter
 7. Cemetery Committee – Ad hoc, representative - Huppert
 8. Council on Human Relations Committee*

**Councilman Stipes made a motion to remove the Council on Human Relations Committee due to inactivity, seconded by Councilman Hall. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Collins, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes. NAYS: None.*

6. Closed Meeting: Councilman Hall made a motion to remove the second Closed Meeting matter, seconded by Councilman Stipes. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

a. Councilman Showalter made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting under **(1)** Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body. The Closed Meeting is being held for discussion of personnel, specifically the appointment of officers for the year 2016; ~~**(2)** Request for a Closed Meeting for discussion of information otherwise excluded from public knowledge and exempted from FOIA pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(4) for the protection of the privacy of individuals in personal matters not related to public business.~~ Councilman Hall seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

b. Reconvene in Open Meeting.

c. Certification. Councilman Showalter moved to certify that the Town Council of the Town of Christiansburg, meeting in Closed Meeting, to the best of each member's knowledge, discussed only the matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law and only such matters as are identified in the Resolution to enter into Closed Meeting, seconded by Councilman Huppert. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

d. Council action on the matters. Appointment of Officers as follows:

7. Appointment of Officers:

a. Councilman Hall made a motion to appoint Barry Helms to serve as Town Manager, seconded by Councilman Stipes. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

b. Councilman Hall made a motion to appoint Valerie Tweedie to serve as Finance Director/Treasurer, seconded by Councilman Huppert. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

c. Councilman Hall made a motion to appoint Mark Sisson to serve as Police Chief, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

d. Councilman Hall made a motion to appoint Michele Stipes to serve as Clerk of Council, seconded by Councilman Collins. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Abstain.

e. Councilman Hall made a motion to appoint Guynn & Weddle, P.C. to serve as Town Attorney, seconded by Councilman Huppert. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

VIII. COUNCIL REPORTS

- a. Councilman Collins thanked the citizens of Christiansburg for their support in electing him to serve on Council, and he thanked those who encouraged him and supported him in making his decision to become involved in serving Christiansburg through local government.
- b. Councilman Bishop recommended setting a work session to discuss the Master Follow-up Task List.

- c. Councilman Hall reported on the Recreation Advisory Commission meeting held on January 4, and welcomed Councilman Collins as a representative on the commission. He then requested that the Street Committee study a portion of Independence Boulevard at Tranquility Via, and consider recommending a center line to aid motorists in staying on their side of the road over and around the blind hill and curve. Individuals from the Police Department and the community have voiced this concern to him. He reported that the Water, Sewer and Solid Waste Committee continues to focus on improvements to trash pickup and recycling, and he passed along a citizen compliment regarding the successful organization of a recent swim meet.
- d. Councilman Stipes commented that he was looking forward to discovering what 2016 held for Christiansburg and that he felt optimistic about working with Council to bring positive change to the Town.
- e. Councilman Showalter reported that the Central Business Advisory Commission was scheduled to meet January 26. He, too, is aware of citizen concerns regarding traffic along Independence Boulevard, and mentioned a traffic study provided to Council by the Police Department for the George Edward Via area. He agreed that traffic control measures were needed to deter speeders. He then spoke of the continued efforts to brand Christiansburg, and recommended updated photographs of Council for the Town's website. He congratulated Councilman Collins and Councilman Bishop on their election to Council, and recommended a work session to review and discuss the Town's Vision 2020 after the new Town Manager is hired. Lastly, he requested that Council embrace the Mayor acting as moderator during debates of Council to ensure that each member has an opportunity to speak during discussions.
- f. Councilman Huppert welcomed Harry Collins to Council, then agreed with Councilman Hall that the area of Independence Boulevard at Tranquility Via was in need of traffic control measures. He reported that the VFW would hold a presentation on Memorial Day at Sunset Cemetery, after which the Town would hold a dedication ceremony for the new columbarium.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORTS:

1. PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST: Town Manager Helms presented the following request and recommended setting the Public Hearing as follows:

January 26, 2016

1. Proration of Personal Property Taxes.

February 9, 2016

1. An ordinance to amend Chapter 42 of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to urban agriculture, specifically the keeping of chickens and bees within Town limits.

On motion by Councilman Hall, seconded by Councilman Huppert, Council voted to set the Public Hearings for the dates indicated, as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

2. PROGRESS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Town Manager Helms reported that Blacksburg Transit has lost some of its grant funding due to a change in the way the federal government issues its grants. With the change, the Town is no longer eligible to obtain federal funding, which is now issued through the Metropolitan Planning Organization. As a result, Town Manager Helms recommended Council discuss ways to cut costs, or generate additional funding. He offered that one option for raising funds could be to expand marketing efforts for sale of advertising on transit vehicles. Currently, the graphics on Christiansburg buses are wrapped, with no advertisements. Town Manager Helms asked Council to consider changing the graphics on the vehicles to allow for advertising. With the change, the Town could sell advertisements, resulting in approximately \$2,000 in additional revenue annually. Town Manager Helms reported that Blacksburg Transit has a new director, and Council expressed interest in having the director provide them with an update on the transit operations, preferable during a work session.
- Council scheduled a work session for February 9, 2016 at 6:00 P.M. to discuss the Follow-up Master Task List and to hear an update from Blacksburg Transit.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:53 P.M.

Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor