

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 12, 2016 – 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 APRIL 12, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor Henry Showalter; Samuel M. Bishop; R. Cord Hall; Harry Collins; Steve Huppert; 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; Farmers' Market Manager Sarah Belcher.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Verizon lease for cell service equipment at the Hill's Water Tank site. Town Manager Helms reported that Verizon has submitted a proposal to lease ground and tank space to install antennas and operating equipment at the Hill's water tank site. The lease would be for five years, with an option to extend the lease four additional times. Verizon would lease the space for \$32,400 the first year, with a 3% increase each year. The Town Attorney has reviewed the lease, which is similar to the Town's other cell tower leases. There was no one to speak for or against this request.

**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 March 22, 2016
2. Action on Proclamations: Commit 2 Graduate Week April 10 - 16  
National Travel & Tourism Week May 1 – 8  
National Police Week May 15 – 21, Day May 16  
Public Works Week May 15 – 21  
Water Safety Month May

Councilman Hall made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Councilman Huppert.

Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Abstain (was absent from the 3/22/16 meeting).

*Mayor Barber welcomed Christiansburg High School student, Victor Zimbardi, to the meeting. Victor is a government student, but said that he was attending the meeting out of his own interest in local government and not for a class assignment.*

III. RECOGNITIONS:

1. Valerie Tweedie, Finance Director/Treasurer, Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association. Mayor Barber reported that Valerie Tweedie had been awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for the third consecutive year. The certificate was awarded to Ms. Tweedie and her staff for their FY 2014-2015 reporting practices.

2. Email Broadcast Information Service Top 10 Award. Mayor Barber presented Town Manager Helms with a plaque from the Virginia Institute of Government recognizing Christiansburg's dedication in providing prompt electronic communications through a program it hosts to encourage information exchange between Virginia localities. Town Manager Helms expressed gratitude for the recognition and noted that the electronic information was not only provided by him, but also by department heads and staff members.

#### IV. CITIZEN'S HEARING:

1. Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce to give a presentation about the benefits of fiber broadband. Mr. John Tuttle, a Chamber of Commerce board member, along with Avery Grabenstein, an employee of the chamber, explained to Council the importance of fiber broadband in providing reliable internet speed, capacity, and access, to businesses and residents. Using a personal business experience as an example, Mr. Tuttle said that, without the benefits of fiber broadband, businesses in Montgomery County were experiencing inadequate internet service, which could be debilitating when trying to service the needs of customers. Currently, broadband is supplied to the Christiansburg Industrial Park, but more capacity is needed, and businesses county-wide expect the type of internet speed and capacity provided through fiber broadband. Mr. Grabenstein spoke about the necessity of fiber broadband service in meeting the expectations of Virginia Tech and Radford University, as well as the businesses and individuals associated with the universities. He spoke about the population of Montgomery County and the demands that come with a large population, noting that the need for high speed internet, capacity, and access, would only increase with time. Mr. Tuttle stressed that installation of fiber broadband would be an investment in the Town's infrastructure, and he presented a 2016-2017 annual budget request from the Chamber of Commerce for \$40,000, to be used for assessment and strategic planning. The Chamber is working to form a coalition with Christiansburg, Blacksburg, and Montgomery County, in providing the broadband service. Mr. Tuttle said he has provided this presentation to Montgomery County, but has not addressed Blacksburg at this time because they are currently working on a similar project. Currently, Montgomery County has not committed to participating in expanding broadband service. According to Mr. Tuttle, several areas in Montgomery County already have fiber optics, and the goals are to determine how to tap into the existing service and who would run the service. The New River Valley Regional Commission has been involved in the discussions to expand fiber broadband and recommended an investment of \$40,000 from the Town of Christiansburg. In closing, Mr. Tuttle said the chamber would be meeting with Roanoke Broadband Authority to learn how it provided broadband infrastructure to Roanoke communities. Council thanked Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Grabenstein for their presentation.
2. Bob Leonard to address Council regarding Christiansburg Institute. Mr. Leonard addressed Council regarding the plight of Christiansburg Institute (CI), and the alumni association's vision for revitalization through a partnership with Christiansburg and Virginia Tech. Mr. Leonard provided a brief history of the school, noting that 2016 is the school's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He expressed appreciation for the Town's faithful investment in CI's vision through financial support over the years. Mr. Leonard said that in the past the Town's funds have supported CI's long-term vision for redevelopment, and he understands the Town's concerns with continuing to provide annual funding without evidence of tangible improvements to CI property. According to Mr. Leonard, the Town's annual contributions have supported CI's annual operating expenses. The Town has not included an allocation to CI in its draft 2016-2017 annual budget, and Mr. Leonard requested the Town add a \$10,000 contribution to CI in honor of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and to help fund an anniversary celebration. Mr. Leonard spoke about the alumni association's vision for an institute that is redeveloped into an asset to the Town, County, and the entire New River Valley. However, Mr. Leonard reported, redevelopment was estimated to cost \$2M, and CI has faltered in raising funds on its own. As a result, Mr. Leonard proposed a partnership with Christiansburg and Virginia Tech that would provide for the necessary funds for redevelopment. Mr. Leonard said he has worked with John Dooley of Virginia Tech to secure grant funding for VT's study of the institute, and he plans to continue reaching out to Virginia Tech to increase its involvement in CI's redevelopment. Councilman Huppert expressed his concern with what he believes to be CI's lack of accountability with funds contributed by the Town over the years. Last year the Town requested, and received, financial records from CI, but those records did not fully provide record of how the contributions had been utilized. Councilman Huppert stressed that the Town has a number of individuals requesting funding, and Council must be a responsible steward by carefully selecting where it will make contributions. Councilman Stipes commended Mr. Leonard's commitment to CI, and commented that a partnership between CI, VT, and Christiansburg, could provide the needed momentum to move forward with redeveloping CI property in a

way that would tell its historical story. Councilman Showalter thanked Mr. Leonard for his presentation that went beyond simply asking for funding, and he agreed that it was important for the Town, CI, and representatives of historic Hill School (also referred to as the community center) to work together to develop a plan to preserve the heritage of the two properties. He then recommended encouraging the involvement of Montgomery County in discussions. Mayor Barber recommended Mr. Leonard form a working group of representatives from Virginia Tech, Montgomery County, and Christiansburg as a first step in moving forward with developing a plan for redevelopment of the two historic properties.

3. Sue Farrar, Executive Director of Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center, to address Council. On behalf of the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center, Ms. Farrar brought to Council requests for street closings during two downtown summer events, and a request for alcohol sales during one of the events. The first scheduled event is Cruisin' and Ms. Farrar used an aerial map to indicate the requested street closures along Main Street, and provided details on the date and closure times. The Cruisin' event will be a fundraiser for the museum. The second event is the Crooked Road music festival scheduled for June 18 from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This event was held in Christiansburg for the first time last year. Ms. Farrar provided details on the street closure routes and times. She then requested permission to sell alcohol on private property during the Crooked Road event. Alcohol sales would be by ticket only, with a maximum of four tickets per adult. Permits have been submitted for both events, and museum representatives have met with Charlton McCoy and staff. Ms. Farrar expressed her appreciation for the Town's support over the years, especially with the museum's recent larger events. Councilman Bishop asked if the Crooked Road event would be impacted if the sale of alcohol was not permitted. Ms. Farrar said she believed it would have some impact, but would not ruin the festival. Ms. Farrar said she has met with Captain Ramsey of the police department to develop a plan for the sale of alcohol, and she reported that the police department had no concerns with the proposed sale of alcohol or the street closures. The museum anticipates approximately 1,000 visitors to the Crooked Road event in June. Councilman Hall made a motion to amend the agenda to include Council action on the requests by Ms. Farrar, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council was polled as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye. Councilman Huppert noted that the Crooked Road festival was held last year at the museum with disappointing turn-out. The museum board thought that bringing the festival to Main Street would provide more exposure and increase participation. Town Manager Helms reported that the museum has applied for a grant for the street closures and is waiting for approval from the town on the specific street closures and the sale of alcohol. Councilman Bishop expressed his concern regarding the increase in requests for alcohol sales at events held in the downtown area. He understands that the sales would be on private property, but noted that it would be next to public property during a town-sponsored event. Councilman Showalter commented that, unfortunately, alcohol sales have an impact on the volume of participation at events, and he suggested the museum invite local micro-breweries to participate in future events. Councilman Hall stated his support for the downtown events, but echoed the sentiments of Councilman Bishop regarding the sale of alcohol. He understands that the police department will be involved with enforcement of laws during the event, and he noted that there haven't been problems during events that were related to alcohol sales. Councilman Stipes said that in the past he has not supported the sale of alcohol on public property during downtown events, but that he views this differently because the sales would be on private property. Council asked Ms. Farrar to pass along their thanks to the museum board for its work in organizing the Cruisin' and Crooked Road events.

4. Citizen Comments: None.

V. STAFF REPORTS: None

VI. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. Council action on:
  - a. Verizon lease for cell service equipment at the Hill's Water Tank site. Councilman Hall made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Councilman Stipes. Town Manager Helms noted that the Town had received no negative comments from the community regarding the request. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

*At this time Ms. Jessie Eaves asked if the Town was planning to improve or expand parking at the aquatic center. Council said there were no plans pertaining to parking because parking shortage only occurred during meets, and the Town offers shuttle service from the Christiansburg High School to accommodate overflow parking. Council agreed it may to discuss this matter if the parking shortage worsened or created a public safety hazard along the roads surrounding the aquatic center.*

- b. Request for street closures and alcohol sales by the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center. Councilman Hall made a motion to approve the street closures as requested for the two noted events, and to approve the sale of alcohol on private property during the Crooked Road event. Councilman Collins seconded the motion, and Council was polled as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye. Councilman Hall noted that he has concerns with the volume of alcohol allowed each person, but trusts the Police Department will closely monitor the situation. Councilman Showalter asked Town Manager Helms to place the existing banners for both events on Main Street at the appropriate time.

#### VIII. COUNCIL REPORTS

- a. Councilman Huppert reported that the columbarium at Sunset Cemetery was completed today, with a grand opening celebration scheduled for Memorial Day.
- b. Councilman Showalter reported that the Central Business District Advisory Board met tonight and continues to make progress in reaching its goals.
- c. Councilman Stipes reported on the Bikeway Walkway Committee announcing that the committee is compiling a list of sponsors for various trail amenities and would identify the sponsorships later this year. Bids on the Huckleberry Trail Phase 2d have been submitted. Phase 2d would extend the trail from Cambria Street to behind Food Lion, with the next phase extending to Christiansburg High School.
- d. Councilman Hall expressed his appreciation to Councilman Huppert for his dedication in bringing the columbarium to fruition. He reported that he has had opportunities to talk with citizens about how the Town is utilizing EMS recovery funds. He then reported on the child abuse prevention celebration held in Pulaski last week, and reminded Council of the celebration in Montgomery County scheduled for April 28 at 6:00 p.m. at the courthouse. In closing, he reported on the success of the Christiansburg girls' softball team that he coaches.
- e. Councilman Collins again requested that Building Official Heinline come before Council to discuss the Town's policy on vagrant/derelict buildings. He then requested that Council finalize the Town's alcohol policy.
- f. Mayor Barber reported that a non-mandatory work session is scheduled for April 14 at 6:00 p.m., at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center, to meet with the company working on the new aquatic center logo. Also, he has secured a location to hold the town manager interviews and is working to finalize an interview schedule.

#### IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORTS:

- 1. PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST: Town Manager Helms presented the following request and recommended setting the Public Hearing for May 10, 2016:
  - 1. Request by Hash Investments, LLC to extend its lease on property/building located on Cambria Street.  
On motion by Councilman Hall, seconded by Councilman Bishop, Council voted to set the Public Hearing for May 10, 2016, as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes - Aye.
- 2. Council was provided information in the agenda packet regarding the General Obligation Refunding Bond, Series 2016, through VML/VACo. Town Manager Helms reported that refunding the loan as outlined in the document would result in a savings of approximately \$10,000 per year. Council had reviewed the information and gave consensus to proceed with refunding the loan as outlined.
- 3. A budget work session was scheduled for April 26, 2016, after the regular Council meeting.

4. Monthly water billing is scheduled to begin in May, and second notices will no longer be sent out.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:44 P.M.

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Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

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D. Michael Barber, Mayor