

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 24, 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 MAY 24, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Barry Helms; Assistant Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Town Attorney Theresa Fontana; Treasurer/Finance Director Val Tweedie; Assistant to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti; Director of Engineering and Special Projects Wayne Nelson; Environmental Project Manager John Burke; Sergeant Phillip Townley; Captain Derek Altizer; Police Chief Mark Sisson; Farmers' Market Manager Sarah Belcher; Public Relations Director Melissa Powell.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Proration of personal property taxes. Mayor Barber explained that the change to proration would affect the way personal property taxes are assessed, but would not be a tax increase. Montgomery County currently prorates personal property taxes and Town Charter requires that the Town use the same assessment system as the County. The proration of personal property taxes will be voted on with the Annual Budget for FY 2016-2017. There was no one to speak for or against this matter.
2. Proposed water fee increases for the Fiscal Year 2016 – 2017, effective July 1, 2016, in accordance with *Code of Virginia 15.2-2119 and 15.2-928*, as follows:

Water Rates			
	Minimum Rate per Month (0 – 2,000 gallons)	Rate per 1,000 gallons (2,001 – 50,000 gallons)	Rate per 1,000 gallons (50,001 – 3,000,000 gallons) <sup>(1)</sup>
Within Corporate Limits	\$10.50 <b>\$11.00</b>	\$5.90 <b>\$6.14</b>	\$3.50 <b>\$4.00</b>
Outside Corporate Limits	\$15.75 <b>\$16.50</b>	\$8.85 <b>\$9.21</b>	\$5.25 <b>\$6.00</b>

Christiansburg resident Leslie Atkins addressed Council with his concern regarding the proposed water rate increases, stating that there had already been an increase to that particular fee during the FY 2015 - 2016. His main stated concern was the ability of individuals on a fixed income to continue to afford increases in utility fees. Mr. Atkins questioned how the Town planned to use the increased funds and noted the disrepair of several streets in Christiansburg. He also expressed his belief that ongoing Town construction projects seemed to take longer than necessary to complete, which he said causes him to question the efficiency of Town work crews. Mr. Atkins said he believes the increase would be a waste of money, and he asked Council to reconsider the proposed fee increase.

3. Proposed Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2016 – 2017. Town Manager Helms reported that the current, advertised budget was the version modified by Council after its last budget work session. He offered to answer questions of Council.
4. Ordinance amending Chapter 36 “Utilities” of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to establishing a stormwater utility and system of stormwater utility fees. The second Public Hearing was necessary because the stormwater utility fee schedule had not been advertised publicly in the newspaper. Blacksburg resident Javad Torabinejad began by congratulating the Christiansburg High School wrestling team on its 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive state championship, and commended the team on setting a great example of team work. He then thanked Council for allowing him to again speak on the stormwater utility fee matter. Mr. Torabinejad said he fully supports the creation of such a fee to fund the construction, operation, and maintenance of stormwater programs in the area to protect the environment, and he spoke about the ways the Town can foster support for the program. However, he again stressed that the proposed stormwater utility fee policy is not a policy that is fair to all Christiansburg residents, and he recommended several changes to the policy that would impact owners of smaller properties and owners of properties with a low ratio of impervious areas. He encouraged Town planners to make preventative measures a priority in addressing stormwater management issues. Mr. Torabinejad then offered to further discuss his ideas with Council, if interested.

Phyllis Olinger, 307 Miller Street, said she is new to Christiansburg and loves living in the area; however, she felt compelled to address Council regarding the proposed stormwater fee on behalf of residents on a fixed income. The proposed fee would be \$72/year, or \$6/month, which Ms. Olinger said could force some senior citizens to choose between buying a week's worth of eggs or bread and paying the new fee. She requested that Council consider decreasing the proposed fee to \$3/month for individuals who qualify under the Personal Property Tax Relief Act. Town Manager Helms noted that one change to the proposed policy was to remove the railroad track exemption.

## **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 May 10, 2016.
  2. Monthly Bills
  3. Resolution in recognition of the Christiansburg High School wrestling team for its 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive state championship. A copy of the resolution is attached herewith.

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 – Aye.

- III. RECOGNITIONS:
  1. Christiansburg High School wrestling team state championship. Councilman Hall noted the absence of the wrestling team and voiced his concern that he may have miscommunicated the date and time of the meeting. Councilman Hall then made a motion to table the presentation until the June 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Councilman Huppert seconded the motion and Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
  2. Department of Criminal Justice Services to present the Police Department with recertification as a Certified Crime Prevention Community. Victoria Cochran, Virginia's Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, presented Chief Sisson and Mayor Barber with the Police Department's Certificate of Recertification as a Certified Crime Prevention Community. She commended Chief Sisson and his staff for meeting the elements and criteria set forth in the certification program, with special recognition of Sergeant Townley and Officer Delp under the leadership of Chief Sisson. Ms. Cochran

spoke highly of Chief Sisson's leadership over the past eight years and thanked him for his efforts in partnering with other local law enforcement agencies, organizations and businesses to strengthen the Christiansburg community. Chief Sisson thanked Ms. Cochran for the Certificate of Recertification, and he spoke briefly about what the accreditation means to him in supporting his vision of building a stronger community. Chief Sisson then recognized Sergeant Townley, Officer Delp, and Captain Altizer, who oversee the reaccreditation process and organize the Certified Crime Prevention Community programs. In closing, Chief Sisson introduced Rick Arrington, a retired law enforcement officer from Roanoke, who he said provided integral support to the Police Department as a representative of the Department of Criminal Justice System. Chief Sisson thanked Town Council for providing the resources that made accomplishments like the recertification possible.

IV. CITIZEN'S HEARING:

1. Chris Tuck, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, to update Council on Montgomery County activities. Chris Tuck began his presentation by speaking about the successful partnership between Christiansburg and Montgomery County in addressing concerns regarding the Park and Ride formerly located near Falling Branch Elementary School, and he used that situation as an example of the progress that can be made when the two localities work together. Mr. Tuck then provided Council with information on items in Montgomery County's Annual Budget for FY 2016-2017, including funds being reserved to address problems with school facilities. Mr. Tuck said there was a specific focus on Christiansburg schools, but cautioned that the Town must work with the school board to meet the needs of the local school facilities. Mr. Tuck said his initial plan concerning Christiansburg schools was to eliminate all mobile units, and he briefly shared his ideas on ways to meet that goal. He was pleased to announce that there were no taxes increases proposed in the county's budget for the third consecutive year. Mr. Tuck also shared information on the proposed budgeted upgrades to the Sheriff's office meant to increase public safety. Mr. Tuck then informed Council that the County had recently implemented a citizen alert system with enough capacity to serve all residents of Montgomery County. The alert system is similar to the systems used by Christiansburg and Blacksburg, and Mr. Tuck suggested the Town and County work together to manage the alert system and its public information services. He then spoke about plans for vacant county school properties, and Councilman Collins asked what the County planned to do with funds received from the eventual sale of the old Blacksburg high school property, and if grants could be secured to fund school upgrades. Mr. Tuck responded that the school board has committed to using those funds one of two ways: reducing debt or funding future school capital. Mr. Tuck said he believed that the school board was leaning towards using the funds for future school capital, specifically schools in the Christiansburg strand. Concerning grant funding, Mr. Tuck said it was difficult for Montgomery County to obtain grant funding for educational purposes because it was considered a prosperous locality and could not meet many of the grant eligibility requirements. Mr. Tuck stressed that Montgomery County and the school board were working to find ways to address the needs within the different school districts without raising taxes. In closing, Mr. Tuck asked Council members to become involved with county efforts by attending board meetings and providing him with feedback on Council thoughts and ideas. Councilman Showalter asked if the school board had considered revitalizing existing Christiansburg school properties, since building new was not feasible at this time. Mr. Tuck replied that he was supportive of that idea, and noted the success of the renovations in the Auburn school district. However, from a financial standpoint, even renovations were not feasible at this time. Councilman Hall spoke about the overcrowding at Falling Branch Elementary School, and Councilman Showalter asked if the County intended to place a school resource officer (SRO) in Montgomery County schools to work with the Town's two SRO's. Mr. Tuck said that matter was not addressed in the County's 2016-2017 Annual Budget. Mayor Barber offered advice to seek simplicity in improving the school facilities in Christiansburg. Council expressed its appreciation for Mr. Tuck's leadership and advocacy as a member of the Board of Supervisors, and for communicating with Council on important county activities.
2. Cassandra Sabo and Courtney Baker to address Council regarding Relay for Life. Cassandra Sabo, event leader for Montgomery County Relay for Life, presented Council with a request for a Loud Speaker Permit and noted that a solicitation permit had already been submitted to the Town. The Relay for Life event is scheduled for June 3 – 4 from 6:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. The event will feature live bands and food, and according to Ms. Sabo, the event had seen a record year in fundraising and sponsorships. In closing, Ms. Sabo requested that the Town support the event's awareness effort "Paint the Town Purple" by placing purple ribbons, supplied by event coordinators, throughout Town. Councilman Hall made a

motion to amend the agenda to include Council discussion and action on this matter, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Collins, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes. NAYS: None. Mayor Barber placed the matter as item # 5 under Discussions by Mayor and Council Members.

3. Opal Squires, Pulaski County Department of Social Services, to address council regarding Safe Sleep for Children. This matter was tabled until the June 14<sup>th</sup> regular Council meeting.

4. Citizen Comments:

- a. Nancy Miller, 110 North Street, spoke on behalf of herself and her husband Bill regarding the Conditional Use Permit request for a towing service that would allow wrecked vehicles on the lot adjoining their residential property. Mrs. Miller said she does not want to knock someone out of business, but she asked Council to consider the type of business and the business location before taking action on the request. The property in the request is in the center of Town and adjoins more than one other lot. Mrs. Miller was concerned that the wrecked vehicles would be unsightly and that a privacy screen, as required in the Planning Commission resolution, could not be constructed high enough to prevent visibility. In addition, Mrs. Miller said she was aware there were many factors involved in the amount of time a wrecked vehicle may be parked, and she was skeptical of the CUP condition that would place a limit on the amount of time a vehicle could be parked on the lot. In closing, Mrs. Miller asked Council to consider the neighboring residents and their value as citizen when taking action on the matter.
- b. Coach Steve Wright, 480 Tower Road, addressed Council regarding traffic concerns at Tower Road when entering onto Roanoke Street. The area has experienced significant growth in recent years with the construction of several hotels, restaurants, residential neighborhoods, and a church. Tower Road is also located near I-81 Exit 118. These issues combined have created a high density area with a high traffic volume. According to Mr. Wright, safely pulling out onto Roanoke Street from Tower Road was a challenge, and almost impossible when traffic was diverted from I-81 due to an accident. Mr. Wright said he believed a stoplight was necessary at Tower Road and Roanoke Street, in conjunction with the recently reduced speed limit, to improve traffic safety through the area. Mr. Wright said he understands the issue has come before Council in the past, but the problem has continued to increase with time. Councilman Showalter said he recognized the traffic dangers in that particular area of town, and he asked Town staff to contact local business owners in the area to seek support in finding measures to address the traffic concerns. Mayor Barber turned this matter over to the Street Committee for review and recommendation.

V. STAFF REPORTS:

1. Captain Altizer to provide an overview of the Towing Board and how the board regulates tow companies in Christiansburg. Sergeant Townley and Captain Altizer provided Council with an overview of the Christiansburg Police Department Towing Agreement, and introduced the Tow Board members as Fred Newhouse, Derek Altizer, Phil Townley, Derek Lancaster, Jeff Anderson, and Deborah Stump. The Tow Board was formed in 2014 to address public concerns, ensure compliance of the towing agreement, amend the agreement as necessary, and to consider sanctions when necessary. The Tow Board and Towing Agreement are regulated by State Code Section 46.2-1217. A copy of the Towing Agreement is attached herewith.
2. Adam Carpenetti, Assistant to the Town Manager, to update Council on Sunset Cemetery. Adam Carpenetti began his presentation by introducing the staff involved in overseeing the cemetery grounds as Kevin Poff, Kenny Franklin, and himself, along with the Cemetery Advisory Committee formed in 2013 to advise Council on matters related to the cemetery. Mr. Carpenetti provided Council with a brief history of the Town's involvement with Sunset Cemetery and explained the various operations and services of the cemetery. Mr. Carpenetti announced that the columbarium was recently completed and would be dedicated during a Memorial Day service on May 30th. He then provided an overview of the Sunset Cemetery Master Plan, and explained the plans for the future of the cemetery to include expansion; a new database for mapping, records management, and accounting; and the renovation/construction of an office building and dirt storage shed. Mr. Carpenetti then spoke about Kyle Cemetery located on Pepper

Street. The Town continues to work towards verifying ownership of the cemetery and has provided a fence and gate to protect the property. The Town is currently developing a long-term plan for Kyle Cemetery that would be implemented if it is determined that the Town owns the property. Council thanked Mr. Carpenetti for the update.

**VI. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

1. Council to consider beginning each meeting with a Moment of Reflection. Mayor Barber noted that the Moment of Reflection would be for observance by Council members, not the audience, unless the audience chose to participate. Councilman Collins made a motion to begin each Council meeting with the observance of a Moment of Reflection, beginning immediately, to provide Council members the opportunity for private reflection or prayer prior to each meeting. Councilman Hall seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
2. Resolution for VDOT in reference to the Pavement Rating Project. Councilman Hall made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilman Collins. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
3. Reappointment of Ann Carter to the Cemetery Advisory Committee. Councilman Hall made a motion to reappoint Ann Carter to serve another term on the Cemetery Advisory Committee, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
4. Council to consider waiving the reconnect fee for water service turnoffs in the month of May 2016, due to the transition to a monthly billing cycle. Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the recommendation of Town Manager Helms to waive the reconnection fee for water service cut offs in the month of May 2016, seconded by Councilman Collins. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
5. Request by Cassandra Sabo and Courtney Baker regarding the Relay for Life event. Councilman Hall made a motion to waive the loud speaker fee for the Relay for Life event, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

**VIII. COUNCIL REPORTS:**

- a. Councilman Stipes asked Town Manager Helms to provide Council with data on the impact of providing an exemption from the stormwater utility fee for residents that meet the qualifications of the Personal Property Tax Relief Act.
- b. Mayor Barber reminded Council that a discussion was needed to consider appointing a representative to the New River Valley Regional Commission. He then announced that a retirement dinner for Town Manager Helms had been scheduled for June 29, with details to come at a later date.

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

1. PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST: Town Manager Helms presented the following request and recommended setting the Public Hearing for June 28, 2016:

- a. Conditional Use Permit request for a private school at 100 West Main Street in the B-3 General Business District.

On motion by Councilman Hall, seconded by Councilman Collins, Council voted to set the Public Hearing for June 28, 2016 as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes - Aye.

1. PROGRESS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Town Manager Helms reported that the draft amended sign ordinance would soon go to the Planning Commission for review, then to Town Council for a Public Hearing. Council would be provided a copy of the draft ordinance prior to the Planning Commission review.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 9:16 P.M.

---

Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor

---

-----

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 MAY 24, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.

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

WORK SESSION

I. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR BARBER

II. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL:

- 1. Proposed Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2016-2017.

III. ADJOURNMENT