

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 7, 2019 – 5:30 P.M.**

A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA, ON MAY 7, 2019 AT 5:30 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Assistant to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Public Relations Director Melissa Demmitt; Director of Public Works Jim Lancianese; Director of Engineering Wayne Nelson; Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell; Fire Chief Billy Hanks; Human Relations Director Dave Brahmstadt; Street Superintendent Travis Moles; Police Chief Mark Sisson.

WORK SESSION

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. DISCUSSION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL
 - A. Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020.

Town Manager Wingfield introduced a list of budget items to be discussed and explained revisions to the document as requested by Council at the April 16 work session.

Engineering Director Wayne Nelson presented an overview of each of the twenty-five capital improvement projects included in the budget, and explained the delay to restoration of Buffalo Water Tank due to the discovery of lead paint. Councilman Showalter noted that no funding had been included in the budget for the retaining wall program. Mr. Wingfield explained that the \$180,000 included in the original draft budget had been removed during budget cuts, but could be reintroduced in the Fall 2019 budget amendment. Councilman Showalter requested a comprehensive wall repair/replacement plan that included a list of all retaining walls in town and respective structural status as a Master Task List item. Mr. Wingfield clarified that repair to retaining walls was still a priority and that the Town was in the process of the wall condition inventory, and that the \$180,000 was projected for the town's design of the walls and contracted construction but pointed out that some of the walls would be the private owners responsibility (and that the Town will still pursue those).

Council discussed needs at the aquatic center that included resurfacing of the leisure and therapy pools, brick and tiling, and the problems with the HVAC system, along with ways to approach prioritizing and funding those needs. Included in the discussion was the probable need for a new HVAC system and a budget request of \$60,000 for consulting fees related to replacement of the system. Public Works Director Jim Lancianese explained the need for an

unbiased assessment and recommendation with regards to the HVAC system, and noted that the current system was not appropriate for the aquatic center environment and has cost the Town several hundred thousand dollars in maintenance and repairs over the years. According to Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell, the lifespan of a typical HVAC system in a pool facility is seven to ten years. Currently there are \$1M in reserves for replacement of the HVAC system. Councilman Showalter stressed the importance of funding the aquatic center reserve fund for use in meeting the needs of the facility as they arise, and Councilwoman Sachs requested Council be provided with information on the economic impact of the facility with regards to meals and lodging tax.

Councilwoman Sachs expressed appreciation for the budget reductions since the prior work session, and requested that individual department reductions be itemized for specifics and provided to Council for informational purposes. Councilman Bishop commented that the current discussions indicated to him that much of the departmental budget reductions were only temporary and would eventually end up back in a future budget or budget amendment. Mr. Wingfield agreed with his observation, particularly with capital facility items. Finance Director Val Tweedie noted that the majority of the overall budget reduction came from removing COLA and insurance costs, along with reduced departmental travel and school expenditures.

Council discussed requests for vehicles by Public Works and the Police Department. Public Works Director Jim Lancianese explained the need for a dump truck that would replace an existing dump truck with frame issues that may not pass inspection. Councilwoman Sachs suggested looking into renting versus buying equipment that is not often used, noting that Public Works has also expressed a need for land for expansion. Police Chief Sisson talked about the Police Department need for additional patrol vehicles, as well as related costs to outfit each vehicle, and explained that a lapse in purchasing new vehicles six years ago led to the department currently needing to replace at least three or four cars per year to keep an efficient fleet. Councilwoman Sachs pointed out that each year the Police Department overall budget increase included costs for additional vehicles, noting that vehicle requests each year should not be reflected as an increase, but rather fill the vehicle line item from the previous year, with a slight increase due to vehicle/equipment cost increases. Police Chief Sisson noted that five vehicles had been requested for FY 2019-2020: three patrol vehicles, one crime prevention vehicle, and one detective vehicle. Council and Chief Sisson discussed ways the Police Department could cut budget costs, including the possibility of eliminating the crime prevention vehicle, but noted that all Police Department vehicles were purchased through state contract, which was much less difficult due to procurement regulations and more reliable than purchasing used vehicles. Chief Sisson pointed out that last year's Police Department salary increase and overtime pay had affected the department's overall budget costs, and further noted that 70% of paid overtime costs were refunded to the department from outside organizations and localities. Councilwoman Sachs recommended adding the refunded overtime costs to the Police Department budget for accuracy in reporting within that specific budget.

Councilman Huppert talked about the vehicle needs expressed by several departments and stressed the importance of finding ways to make vehicle purchases, and use, more cost effective. Council and staff discussed the status of current vehicles available for staff use, with Assistant to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti noting that the new IT position and additional vehicle were the highest priorities for the IT department in FY 2019-2020. However, Council expressed concern for the high cost budgeted for an additional IT employee vehicle and discussed a more affordable approach to meeting the need. It was the concession of Council to

budget \$19,500 to both the IT Department and the Building Department for the purchase of an additional department vehicle, and to allow in the budget the request for one additional employee for both departments as requested by the respective department heads as well as the revenue neutral radio position. Councilman Showalter requested an itemized list of the projects that would be assigned to the new IT Department employee upon hire. With regard to the additional Building Department employee, Councilman Showalter said he wanted the position restricted based on the success of the program as presented by Building Official Jerry Heinline at the April 16 work session.

Councilman Collins expressed regret that COLA had been removed from the original budget draft and, noting the significant budget reduction, suggested the employee benefit be added back in for FY 2019-2020. In addition, Mayor Barber recommended \$10,000 be earmarked for Christiansburg Institute.

Town Manager Wingfield reviewed the \$1M rollover for the Town park design and potential funding sources for the park budget totaling \$12-\$14M. In addition, Mr. Wingfield reviewed the Fund Balance Policy and provided a breakdown of town-generated tax revenue.

Councilman Bishop expressed interest in discussing a possible reduction of the Town's cigarette tax, as requested several times in the past by a Christiansburg small business owner. Councilman Bishop noted that cutting the tax by $\frac{1}{2}$ may result in the loss of a quarter million in revenue and suggested considering a cut less than $\frac{1}{2}$. Councilman Showalter noted that legislation effective July 1, 2019 would increase the smoking age to 21, which would further decrease town revenue associated with the cigarette tax, and Councilman Stipes commented that decreasing the tax wouldn't have much of an effect on sales, but the Town would need to find ways to make up for the lost tax revenue. Council agreed to assess the affect the new legislation would have on cigarette sales before further discussing the matter.

Councilman Huppert suggested Council consider increasing meals tax by $\frac{1}{2}$ cent to benefit the town park reserves, and he explained his thoughts on ways to fund development of the park. Council was not supportive of the suggestion, and Councilman Huppert thanked them for hearing him out and considering his suggestion.

Town Manager Wingfield provided Council with the upcoming budget schedule, and Council thanked Town department heads for attending the work session and for their input.

XII. ADJOURN

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the work session at 7:30 P.M.

Michele Stipes, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor