

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 22, 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 JULY 22, 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; Planning Director Will Drake; Director of Parks and Recreation Brad Epperley.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. CLOSED MEETING**

- A. Councilman Huppert made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting in accordance with 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 for Planning Commission appointee interviews. Councilman Showalter seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes - Aye.
- B. Reconvene in Open Meeting.
- C. Certification. Councilman Huppert 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. The motion was seconded by Councilman Collins and voted upon as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes - Aye.
- D. Council action on the matter. No action was taken on the matter.

**III. DISCUSSION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

- A. Mobile Stage Rental Contract.  
Parks and Recreation Director Brad Epperley provided Council with a draft copy of the Mobile Stage Rental Policies and Procedures developed by himself, Town Manager Randy Wingfield, and Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Charlton McCoy, and provided an overview of the

proposed policy that he described as a good opportunity to partner with localities in the New River Valley, while raising revenue to help offset the cost of the mobile stage and to provide funds to expand the special events program. Staff is only aware of one business in the New River Valley (Christiansburg-based Midway Production Services, LLC), who have certified Stageline SL100 technicians. Under the policy, a local business with certified technicians could rent the stage on behalf of an interested community, business, or private organization, and would assume responsibility for set-up and tear-down of the stage, as well as provide supervision during the event. Staff believes that they have a good relationship with Midway Productions and think the equipment would be handled appropriately, but the rental would be open to any Town business who may have a certified technician and keeps the stage in the New River Valley. Currently there are two Town employees who are certified to set-up and teardown the Stageline SL100 mobile stage and we hope to have another after retesting. Councilman Collins commented how impressed he was with the stage during the recent July 4<sup>th</sup> downtown event, and expressed appreciation for Mr. Epperley's progressive thinking in his interest in leasing the stage for community use.

Noting that the mobile stage was a considerable investment for the Town, Councilman Showalter said he was unable to support allowing the stage to leave the responsibility of the Town when rented, and recommended ample Town staff obtain Stageline SL100 certification so that the Town retained full responsibility for the stage during set-up, tear-down, and while providing oversight during events. Mr. Showalter further expressed that he thought the stage should remain in Christiansburg. Mr. Epperley said he understood Councilman Showalter's concerns and explained that Midway reached out to the Town with an offer to assist in renting the stage based on their good working relationship, and he noted the idea that the stage could be a good promotional item for Christiansburg if it were to be used within the New River Valley. Councilman Bishop asked how often Mr. Epperley expected the stage to be rented if it were to remain in Christiansburg. Mr. Epperley replied that usage would increase as events grew, but that exact usage was unknown at this time.

Councilman Huppert called attention to the \$250 deposit fee, refundable if no damages to the stage occur, and questioned if that amount should be increased considering the cost of the stage, and Council discussed the Statement of Indemnity that would protect the Town in the event of an accident. Councilman Stipes stated his support for leasing the stage to localities within the New River Valley, which he believed would encourage more events and would create advertising for Christiansburg. Mr. Stipes reminded Council that the policy was a pilot program and could be amended or rescinded at any time. Mr. Stipes said he understood Councilman Showalter's concerns, but believed that the stage would remain largely unused if only used during Town hosted events. Town Manager Wingfield suggested Council consider leasing only to New River Valley government localities and not to the public. Councilman Huppert recommended Council allow Mr. Epperley, as Director of Parks and Recreation, to move forward with his vision for leasing the stage with the assistance of Midway Production Services. Mr. Huppert further stated that Mr. Epperley understood the concerns of Council and should be trusted to make good decisions on behalf of the Town in this matter. Mr. Epperley said he desired the full support of Council in this matter, and talked about his goal to eventually have enough certified staff that a third-party involvement would not be necessary. Mr. Epperley noted that it was his intention that revenue raised through stage rental would initially fund further certification training, and then would go into a special events fund.

Councilwoman Sachs expressed support for leasing the stage to government localities within the New River Valley, but did not support the stage leaving the responsibility of the Town

through a third-party contract. Ms. Sachs talked about the potential for discrimination in considering rental applications, and also the unknowns with respect to potential liability to the Town during use under a rental contract. Ms. Sachs said she believed the Town was not ready to move forward with this matter, and that Council should have been consulted regarding stage rental before the policy was drafted and staff involved. Ms. Sachs expressed willingness to reconsider the matter in one year. Councilman Showalter expressed support for renting to Christiansburg businesses only, with no third-party involvement, adding stage rental to the special events application and grant application, and to revisit the matter in the future.

Councilman Collins talked about how well attended the downtown events were, and recommended the Town focus on organizing more events that would draw people downtown and provide opportunities for using the mobile stage. Mr. Collins said after Council's discussion he was opposed to renting the stage and instead would like the Town to expand its special events programs and provide additional opportunities to use the stage.

Considering the discussion of Council, Mayor Barber turned the matter over to the Recreation Advisory Commission for a 90-day review and recommendation to Council. Mr. Epperley agreed to take the concerns of Council to the Recreation Commission and to Midway Production Services.

## XII. ADJOURN

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:10 P.M.

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Michele Stipes, Clerk of Council

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D. Michael Barber, Mayor