

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 9, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**

Declarations of Emergency have been made at all levels of government including the Town of Christiansburg. During a declared disaster, the Code of Virginia requires and allows governing bodies of localities and other public entities to conduct their meetings in manners which are consistent with providing continuity of government and in a safe and healthy manner, and for the public safety, health and welfare for the governing body and all attendees/interested parties consistent with open government. The COVID-19 virus makes it impractical and unsafe for Christiansburg Town Council to physically assemble in one location. The virus also makes it impractical and unsafe, as well as potentially life threatening, for the public, and the Town staff, to gather in the same location. As a result, the meeting will be conducted virtually. The Council members and any necessary staff will join the meeting via electronic communications without a quorum of Town Council physically assembled at one location pursuant to, and authorized by, Code of Virginia § 2.2-3708.2(A)(3) and the Continuity of Government Ordinance passed by Christiansburg Town Council on March 24, 2020. The meeting will be streamed live on the Town of Christiansburg's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cburgvagov and will be uploaded to the Town's YouTube page once the meeting concludes. Members of the public can also call into the meeting using one of these phone numbers: +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799. Webinar ID: 843 4259 3761. Members of the public who join the meeting will be in listen-mode only. If you would like to submit public comment, please email info@christiansburg.org with your full name, address and comments prior to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9, 2020.

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM ON JUNE 9, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Police Chief Mark Sisson; Fire Chief Billy Hanks.

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Moment of Reflection.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

- A. Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to correct the wording of Items A and B under Discussions by Mayor and Council Members to read “Resolution to adopt an ordinance setting the...”. Councilman Stipes seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of May 26, 2020
- B. Approval of Change Order #2 totaling \$293,320.58 for FY 2020 Primary Extension and Annual Paving.
- C. Resolution of Support for Projects and Use of Bond Financing by the New River Valley Regional Water Authority.
- D. Schedule a Public Hearing on July 28, 2020 for a rezoning request by Caldwell Construction (applicant) for property owned by Sandra Hawks and Janice Blevins et al, located between the eastern and western terminus of Vinnie Avenue, N.W. (100 Vinnie Avenue N.W., tax map no. 435-A-45). The request is to rezone the approximately 4.52 acre parcel from R-1A Rural Residential to R-1 Single-Family Residential. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- E. Schedule a Public Hearing on July 28, 2020 for a Conditional Use Permit request – contingent on the preceding request – by Caldwell Construction (applicant) for property owned by Sandra Hawks and Janice Blevins et al, for a planned housing development to consist of single-family homes at a density of development not to exceed 4.3 units per acre located between the eastern and western terminus of Vinnie Avenue, N.W. (100 Vinnie Avenue N.W., tax map no. 435-A-45) in the R-1, Single-Family Residential District. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Councilman Stipes made motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

- A. One citizen comment was received via an email to Councilwoman Sachs:
 - From Michele Riner, no address provided, *“I would like your assistance at the town council meeting. I would like to thank the public works department for fixing the water pressure issue out in New River Village. I can’t tell you how amazing it is now to have water pressure.”*

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Councilman Stipes reported that the Virginia Tech Montgomery Executive Airport was currently in the process of hiring a new executive director to replace long-time director Michael St. Jean, who will retire in July. In addition, Mr. Al Bowman, long-time at-large board member, has decided to step down, and the airport board will present a replacement candidate for Council consideration in July.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Resolution to adopt an ordinance setting the personal property tax rate at \$0.45 per \$100 for FY 2020 - 2021.

Councilman Stipes made a motion to adopt the resolution as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks - Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- B. Resolution to adopt an ordinance setting the real estate tax rate at \$0.16 per \$100 for FY 2020 – 2021.

Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to adopt the resolution as presented, seconded by Councilman Huppert. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- C. Resolution to adopt the Annual Budget FY 2020-2021.

Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the resolution to adopt the annual budget, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- D. Resolution to appropriate budgeted funds for FY 2020 – 2021.

Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to approve the resolution to appropriate budgeted funds, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- E. Appointment of Dr. Sharon Scott as at-large representative to the Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority for a four-year term beginning July 1, 2020. Al Bowman has asked to not be reappointed as the at-large representative after 25 years of service on the Board. Mayor Barber reported that the recommendation to appoint Dr. Scott came from the Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority Board, and the appointment would be for a four-year term. Councilman Showalter made a motion to appoint Dr. Sharon Scott to serve a four-year term as at-large representative to the Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority, seconded by Councilman Stipes. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- F. Discussion of potential immediate Town actions to alleviate stormwater issues in the College Street area.

As requested by Council on May 28, Town Manager Wingfield provided Council with a list of immediate actions the Town could take in regard to the College Street stormwater issues. Mr. Wingfield provided an overview of each action that would alleviate flooding in the College Street area until permanent measures could be taken. Council discussed the actions proposed and expressed caution with the option to work with FEMA to reassess Floodplain boundaries due to the potential negative consequences to homeowners in the area. Council expressed general support for the proposed immediate actions and agreed to hold a future work session to evaluate capital improvement projects to consider expediting urgent projects. This may also include a review of the Downtown Watershed Study findings.

- G. Discussion of potential closed meeting in accordance with Code of Virginia § 2.2-3711 (A)(1) in regards to Town Council members and the Code of Ethics.

Town Attorney Reid Broughton reviewed Closed Meeting exemptions and noted that Council would be legally permitted to meet in closed session to discuss performance/discipline of public officers under Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1), as well as Section 2.2-3711 (A)(4) that permitted discussions of personal matters unrelated to public business. Mr. Broughton stated that Council could compel member attendance, fine for disorderly behavior, or remove members for malfeasance. Councilwoman Hicks commented that per Councilwoman Sachs' email advising she had sought legal representation in the matter to be discussed, the matter was now a civil one and no longer a council matter. Ms. Hicks said there was no longer a need for a closed meeting and that the matter, if discussed by Council, should be done in open session. Ms. Hicks then made accusations of harassment through email against a sitting councilmember, and accused Council of using its public powers to harass her, her business, and her friends and their businesses, and questioned why she was being punished for the actions of others. Mayor Barber said he supported an open session discussion of the matter, and Council agreed the discussion would be held in open session at the June 23 regular meeting.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager:

- Reviewed the set committee meeting schedules
- Noted, in response to comments by Councilwoman Hicks, that Governor Northam's current Executive Order 65 prohibit the opening of bowling alleys at this time in Phase 2.

B. Town Attorney:

- Attorney Broughton offered to meet with members of Council regarding issues of concern related to Town Council and the Code of Ethics.

C. Other Staff:

- Finance Director Val Tweedie updated Council on the meals and lodging tax revenue for the month of May, which reflected a better outcome than anticipated due to COVID-19. Ms. Tweedie also reported on delinquent water bills and noted that the Town had contacted

those customers encouraging them to reach out to the Town for a payment plan before water cut off begins June 24.

- Police Chief Mark Sisson and Rescue Chief Joe Coyle reported on ongoing activities and efforts of the New River Valley Public Health Task Force to address public health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

- A. Councilman Stipes passed along the commendations of two citizens who appreciated the efforts of Town staff and emergency services personnel in their service to the Town during the COVID-19 crisis. He then recommended the council meeting for June 23 be moved to 6:00 P.M. due to the anticipated length of the meeting.
- B. Councilman Showalter recommended the Town reinstate the defunct Human Relations Committee, due to the current social climate, and to consider a more accurately descriptive name for the ad hoc committee.
- C. Councilman Huppert noted the efforts of Montgomery County Supervisor Sherri Blevins and the Parks and Recreation Department for efforts to recognize Christiansburg's graduating seniors, and encouraged everyone to seek ways through prayer and meditation to improve the current social climate, and strongly disagreed with any comments that Town staff and council were not supportive of the community.
- D. Councilman Bishop expressed appreciation for Town staff's efforts to support and serve the community on a daily basis, especially during this time of crisis.
- E. Councilwoman Sachs reported on the upcoming meeting schedules for the Christiansburg Public Art Advisory Board and the Central Business District Committee. She then expressed support for the "Christiansburg Strong" motto established on social media and proposed the Town provide decals for citizens, and encouraged the Town to seek ways to support the small businesses that have suffered during the COVID-19 crisis. Ms. Sachs then asked Town Manager Wingfield to contact Virginia Municipal League or ask the Town Attorney for advice regarding attorney/client privilege for elected officials.
- F. Councilwoman Hicks thanked Christiansburg Institute for the community outreach event held June 6, and she agreed with Councilman Huppert's comments that the Town should come together to pray for the community and country. She then thanked the Public Works Department for its work within the community, and thanked Parks and Recreation Director Brad Epperley for the care packages sent to Jill's Buddy Camp campers, since the camp has been cancelled due to COVID-19.
- G. Mayor Barber, no report.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURN

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

Michele Stipes, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor