

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 13, 2021 – 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 13, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Executive Assistant/Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Director of Engineering Wayne Nelson; Assistant Director of Engineering Justin St. Clair; Chief of Police Mark Sisson.

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Lease of property at 415 Cambria Street, N.W. (Tax Parcel 466 – ((A)) – 1; Parcel ID 012952) to Montgomery County Public Schools and the YMCA Thrift Store.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned the verbiage of the rent amount within the provided lease agreement and stated it conflicted with the numerical rent amount. Town Manager Wingfield explained the \$2,750 per month stated on the agenda was the correct amount and the verbiage was an error that would be corrected before being signed.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of March 23, 2021.
- B. Approval of audit engagement with RFC (Robinson Farmer Cox, LLC).
- C. Schedule Public Hearing on May 11, 2021 for water rate increase.

- D. Schedule Public Hearing on May 25, 2021 for Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget.
- E. Schedule Public Hearing on May 25, 2021 for a Conditional Use Permit request by Aztec Rental (applicant) on behalf of Curtis Properties, LLC for a contractor storage yard in the General Business (B-3) zoning district at 415 Roanoke Street (Tax Parcel 527 – ((A)) – 204). The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- F. Schedule Public Hearing on May 25, 2021 for a Conditional Use Permit request by John D. Elmore for a contractor storage yard in the General Business (B-3) zoning district at 710 Peppers Ferry Road, N.W. (Tax Parcel 435-((A)) – 23). The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- G. Contract with Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. d/b/a WSSI for Stormwater Engineering On-Call Services in the amount of \$100,000 or more, renewable for up to a 5-year term.
- H. Contract with Rummel, Klepper, & Kahl, LLP d/b/a RK&K for Signal Structure Evaluations and Traffic Engineering On-Call Services in the amount of \$100,000 or more, renewable for up to a 5-year term.

Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilwoman Sachs seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

Councilwoman Hicks referenced the Public Hearing item for the May 11, 2021 water rate increase and proceeded to read a letter from citizen Laura Earp. *This citizen comment will be included in the final draft of the minute book.* Mrs. Earp had written that at the previous work session a Council member had mentioned that the Town of Christiansburg's water fees were lower or comparable to many surrounding jurisdictions. Mrs. Earp explained in the letter that after investigating she thought that statement was incorrect. Mrs. Hicks expressed she would like Council to have the correct information, so everyone including citizens are prepared for when Council does have the Public Hearing. Mayor Barber explained to Mrs. Hicks that there would be time to go back and check figures before the May 11 Public Hearing and at that time Council would respond to Mrs. Earp's letter.

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Executive Director Amanda Forrester of the Small Business Development Center to present on Christiansburg and New River Valley programs and operations.

Ms. Forrester provided Council with information on the Small Business Development Center stating that they serve the New River Valley and the greater Roanoke area that includes Alleghany Highlands. She explained the center provides low-cost training and free tools to help make small businesses successful. She expressed that 80% of their time is based on advising the business on any issues they may have as well as any training workshops available and products offered to them. Ms. Forrester explained the center's partnership agreement with the Small Business Administration, stating they do provide a grant that is

allocated for the center's operational budget. She expressed the center locally matches grants for funding and about 28 partners currently help coordinate the process. Ms. Forrester stated that the annual goal for the region last year was to serve 400 small business owners and their center served 1,722 businesses. Ms. Forrester concluded her presentation by including the upcoming programs for 2021 and stated that a CARES Act grant would be a provided resource to help small businesses recover from Covid-19.

Councilman Huppert questioned if Ms. Forrester believed employment was rising here in the New River Valley. Ms. Forrester responded that numbers were rising some, but small businesses were currently struggling to find applicants, particularly in food and retail due to the new roles for those staff because of the pandemic.

B. Assistant Director of Engineering, Justin St. Clair, to present on the proposed capital projects included in the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget.

Mr. St. Clair presented the details of several of the capital projects in the 2021-2022 budget. He spoke about transportation related projects and the newer projects that had not been in previous budgets. He included information on water related items such as the Roanoke Street waterline and sewer projects such as the Arrowhead Rehab and Replacement project. Mr. St. Clair explained there were stormwater projects as well as the annual paving of streets like N. Franklin Street, Independence Boulevard, in front of the high school and other numerous streets off Independence Boulevard. Mr. St. Clair informed Council of the Roanoke Street, Tower Road/Hampton Boulevard intersection signal and the Arbor Drive/Peppers Ferry Road. N. Franklin Bridge Deck rehab. He explained that the budget for the traffic signal studies would be a rollover into next fiscal year and that there were sufficient aging signals in the Town that needed to be replaced in upcoming years.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned if the new traffic signals were included in the budget for the project off Depot Street and Franklin Street. Mr. St. Clair explained that a lane configuration change will be looked at in that intersection along with new traffic signals and there may be funding supplied from the Commonwealth Transportation Board for that project in the near future. Town Manager Wingfield explained the Town would know if funding for the Smart Scale project would be provided by June 2021. He also explained the Smart scale project would be scheduled in the six-year plan due to being almost completely funded by VDOT. Mr. St. Clair proceeded to talk about the inclusion of the Roanoke Street sidewalk projects, adding pedestrian signals on the corner of N. Franklin Street and Wades Lane and the corner of S. Franklin Street and First Street in the upcoming budget. He spoke about new trail lighting at Depot Park, Downtown Park, as well as the Renna Knowles Bridge and explained the Town had met with AEP to discuss options for lighting for those areas. Mr. St. Clair touched on replacement of water lines on Roanoke Street, the Buffalo Tank rehab/replacement, and the Cambria Trail. He also spoke about the Arrowhead Basin Rehab and explained there was a delay of funding for the construction. He informed Council of the stormwater pond evaluations and explained the stormwater evaluation analysis would be needed to move forward to serve the multiple facilities around Town. Mr. St. Clair concluded that Hickok Street stormwater improvements would move forward this fall along with the College Street designs.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Stipes and Bishop – Street Committee Report/Recommendation.
 - 1. Plat Showing Subdivision of Lots 60-65 & Boundary Line Adjustment on Lots 57-59, Reagan's Pointe situated along Giles Drive, S.E. Six new lots will be created.

Councilman Stipes explained this plat was the last action on Council's approval of a request from August 2020 from the developer that had obtained property from VDOT. He explained a stormwater management facility was created and would serve the needs of the community and Council had already approved six new lots last year.

Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the plat. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

Councilwoman Sachs reported on the Arts Advisory Board and stated that the board's documentation would be completed by May 11, 2021. Ms. Sachs also spoke about the rental space at the Cambria Street building and stated the NRV Food and Security Taskforce at the YMCA of Blacksburg needed a place to store appliances. She explained how the taskforce helped school age children throughout the summer months with food and would like the Town to help with storage of the appliances.

Councilwoman Hicks reported that she wanted to encourage the Aquatic Advisory Board to discuss the changing of fees at the Aquatic Center for non-residents from \$5 to \$10. Councilman Huppert explained that the board had discussed that subject several years ago and they felt \$5 would be an affordable fee and wanted to encourage people to use the facility and swim. He explained that it had worked for the last four to five years and felt it was a good deal for non-residents. Councilwoman Hicks disagreed and stated that the \$10 fee was not a huge increase for out-of-town individuals, and it should not be left up to the citizens to pay a high fee. Councilman Showalter expressed the study that had been completed several years ago showed the profit from the fees was not enough to warrant an increase and explained the goal was to increase participation at the Aquatic Center, not discourage people from using the facility. Mr. Showalter explained that if Councilwoman Hicks wanted this subject investigated then she needed to propose it to the board at their next meeting. Councilman Huppert expressed to Mrs. Hicks that there were families with four to five children and the Town needed to make sure that those families were not discouraged to use the Aquatic Center due to high fees.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Appointment of Logan Kessinger, Director of Sales for the Hampton Inn, as Hotel Representative for the Town of Christiansburg on the Montgomery Tourism Development Council. The term is for two years from appointment.

Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to approve the appointment of Logan Kessinger to the Montgomery Tourism Development Council. Councilman Showalter seconded the motion

and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

Ms. Kessinger expressed she enjoyed being able to help host the swim families at the Hampton Inn coming in for the swim meets.

B. An Ordinance amending Sec. 18-204 of Article VII. Transient Lodging Tax of Chapter 18 Finance and Taxation of the Christiansburg Town Code regarding the lodging tax penalty. The public hearing was held March 23, 2021.

Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the ordinance amending the lodging tax penalty. Councilwoman Sachs seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

C. Lease of property at 415 Cambria Street, N.W.

Town Manager Wingfield explained the lease was for Montgomery County Public Schools to use a portion of the facility. He also explained the lease was for a year and would switch to monthly following the year, but the schools were looking for for two years. Mr. Wingfield stated he would like the Town to let the YMCA also use a portion of the building for six to nine months for storage for their appliances.

Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the lease of property at 415 Cambria Street, N.W. Councilman Showalter seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye*; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

*Note: Sachs vote amended to abstention later in meeting.

D. Potential reward for reporting vandals that results in arrest and conviction.

Mayor Barber explained that in the last month there had been reported instances of graffiti and property damage at the Huckleberry Trail. He explained there was also a report of damage to the restroom at the Skate Park as well as several damages to the split rail fence between the Skate Park and Depot Park. Mayor Barber proposed a cash reward on these instances, or any other Town related instances, that would lead to an arrest and conviction of the person/persons responsible to prevent future vandalism. Mr. Barber also proposed shutting down the areas earlier in the evenings could prevent vandalism. Councilwoman Sachs questioned Chief Sisson if in the past the rewards system worked for the Police Department. Chief Sisson stated he had not been involved in a rewards system in the past but would support any help from the community to proceed. He expressed there had been increased bike patrol and foot patrol at Depot Park and the Skate Park. Mr. Sisson also expressed that shutting down the facilities may work. He mentioned there were cameras at these locations, but there is not full coverage and the incidents had happened at night and employees were not present. Councilman Stipes expressed that he thought \$1,000 would be sufficient to offer as a reward to anyone that had information that would lead to the arrest and conviction of the individuals. Councilman Showalter expressed that shutting down or reducing the hours, as well as installing signs would be a good start. Chief Sisson stated that he felt 7pm or 8pm would be a good time to close the park down and at 5pm the bathrooms could be closed as well. Council agreed to set the reward for \$1,000 and to place appropriate signage at the parks and trails. Council asked Chief Sisson and Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell to meet and agree on a policy moving forward.

E. Discussion regarding a cap on utility debt relief.

Finance Director Valerie Tweedie explained the utility debt relief offered \$4,500 for residential citizens and \$7,500 for Town businesses and only covers water and sewer bills. She explained that with the first round of utility debt relief monies, the program paid a little over \$20,000. She stated there would possibly be another round of funding and wanted to reach out to Council to question if they wanted to place a cap on how the funds were distributed. She explained the Town must abide by the rules set forth for the debt relief, but the Town could also set their own limits on how funds are distributed. Council agreed the numbers were high and very generous.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the cap on utility debt relief as presented. Councilman Stipes seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Town Manager Wingfield offered an additional budget work session to Council if needed. Council agreed that another work session would not be needed, and it was agreed by Council to move forward and advertise the budget as proposed. Councilwoman Hicks expressed she would like to see financial help from the County for different budget items and would encourage Council's support. Mayor Barber expressed that the County would approve their budget April 19 and felt at this point it was too late as far as the County's budget timeline and believed the Town was ready to proceed as far as the public hearing for the Town's budget. Councilman Stipes expressed concern and felt it would not be beneficial to the Town to go into discussion with the County at this point. Councilman Huppert read a section of a letter Councilwoman Hicks had presented to Council before the meeting expressing lack of additional help for infrastructure, public safety, and quality of life. Councilman Huppert expressed that asking the County for funds would not be advisable. *A copy of Councilwoman Hicks' letter will be placed with the final minutes in the Town minute book.*

B. Town Attorney

None.

C. Other Staff

None.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Stipes disagreed with the \$10 Aquatic Center fee proposed earlier in the meeting for out-of-town individuals and stated it would be a great deal of money for some families, especially larger families.

Councilman Showalter

None.

Councilman Huppert reported that the Republican Primary would be held on April 24 at the County Government Building. Mr. Huppert expressed that he felt it was important that everyone consider who is running and who would work for the community. Mr. Huppert was not sure of the Democratic Primary date but would report back to Council when he found out.

Bishop
None.

Councilwoman Sachs
None.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed the Aquatic Center was costing the Town over three million dollars this upcoming year. She agreed the extra \$5 would not make a huge difference in revenue but felt Council should consider it. Councilman Showalter encouraged Councilwoman Hicks to go to the Aquatics Advisory Board on this subject.

Councilwoman Hicks referenced the letter she presented to Council concerning County funding and expressed she did attend the County meeting as a citizen and how she would like more cooperation in working together. Mrs. Hicks stated she had looked over the County's budget and expressed that they currently spend a little over \$1 million for their parks and recreation. She stated that if the Town was paying for County taxes as well, she believed the County could work together with the Town and assist in paying for parks. Mrs. Hicks continued to read the letter she had given to Council and expressed she would like further discussion on the subject at some point. Councilwoman Hicks expressed the letter she had presented Council was a not a finalized letter she wanted to present to the County and stated she was not able to directly speak with County members but felt the feedback was positive. Councilman Showalter expressed there would be several Town Council members stepping down at the end of this year and felt this was not the time for this to be discussed. Mr. Showalter encouraged a liaison meeting at the beginning of the year with the new Council members and the County. Councilwoman Sachs expressed that she would like citizens to remember that Christiansburg's taxes would not be as low as they are if the County was not funding the schools.

Councilman Bishop
None.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Closed Meeting:

1. Councilman Bishop made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia § 2.2-3711(A)(7), for consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. For the purposes of this subdivision, "probable litigation" means litigation that has been specifically threatened or on which the public body or its legal counsel has a reasonable basis to believe will be commenced by or against a known party. The Closed Meeting is to discuss a claim by Alleghany Construction regarding the N. Franklin Street – Cambria Street Intersection and N. Franklin Street Corridor Project. Councilwoman Sachs seconded the motion and Council

voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

2. Reconvene in Open Meeting.
3. Certification. Councilman Bishop 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 Councilwoman Sachs and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
4. Council action on the matters.

Mayor Barber stated there would be no action needed on this closed meeting item at this time.

Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to change her vote of "Aye" to an Abstention vote concerning the lease of the 415 Cambria Street, N.W. item C. under Discussion and Action due to potential conflict of interest. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 9:36 pm.

Tracy Heinline, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor