

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 24, 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 AUGUST 24, 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.

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; Fire Chief Billy Hanks.

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Councilman Showalter made a motion to add the Suicide Prevention Week resolution to the consent agenda as item D. Councilwoman Hicks seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Conditional Use Permit for a commercial auto garage at 1250 Roanoke Street for Tax Parcels 498-((7))-16A, 498-((7))-17A, and 498-((A))-113C by Glenwood Martin on behalf of Twin Oaks Properties LLC. The property is designated Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Glenwood Martin of 1730 White Oak Lane and owner of 1230 and 1250 Roanoke Street explained the request would permit the allowance for a commercial auto garage at 1250 Roanoke Street. Mr. Martin stated that the owners of the business “The Mechanic” had an approved conditional use permit for the 1230 Roanoke Street location and would not be relocating but instead expanding to the adjoining property. Councilwoman Hicks inquired why the owner was charged the \$750 for a conditional use permit and questioned the type of business. Town Manager Wingfield stated that the Town’s zoning ordinance separates a car detailing business from a mechanical garage business. Mr. Wingfield stated that a detailing

shop would be viewed more as a service business not a mechanical garage business. Mayor Barber explained that the \$750 permit fee was a standard fee for a conditional use permit.

Donna Martin, 1730 White Oak Lane, questioned Council if they would be required to go through the same permitting process if a different tenant moved into the building in the future. Mayor Barber explained that if it was a mechanical garage again then it had to be vacant for two years to lose the permit status.

B. Community Development Block Grant 2021 Annual Action Plan.

Andrew Warren explained this grant was a typical process the Town goes through each plan year for the Community Development Block Grant. He stated that the Town continues to look at other opportunities to use this grant and it could go towards areas in Town for future projects. Mr. Warren explained that the Town was expected to be allocated \$105,947 to use this year and that the review period began on August 14, 2021 and will end on September 14, 2021.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes of August 10, 2021.

B. Monthly Bill List.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned a bill item in the amount of \$660,597.70 to Faulconer Construction Company, Inc. for the new park and inquired how the Town was keeping track of the park bills. Mrs. Hicks asked Finance Director Valerie Tweedie if she could provide an update to her.

C. Approval of merchant services agreement.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned if the five-year agreement could be a two-year commitment instead. Finance Director Valerie Tweedie explained that the agreement is for a five-year term, but it could be terminated at any time.

D. Approval of Suicide Prevention resolution for September 5-11, 2021.

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

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

No introductions or presentations.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

No citizen comments.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Huppert reported that the Boy Scouts of the New River Valley would be present and displaying their current projects at the Farmers Market on Thursday, August 26th. Mr. Huppert reminded the public of the eight mile walk on September 18th at 8 a.m. He stated that sign up for this event would be held at the Recreation Center and it includes free t-shirt handouts for the participating walkers.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Lease from September 28, 2021 through December 31, 2021 to New River Valley Unwired Ventures, LLC of space on four municipal water tanks to site communication equipment for the provision of internet service. Such equipment is currently sited on these locations, and the current lease expires September 27, 2021.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the lease with New River Valley Unwired Ventures, LLC as presented. Councilwoman Hicks seconded the motion.

Mayor Barber questioned if New River Valley Unwired was intending to renew again in December. Mr. Wingfield stated that New River Valley Unwired had asked for a longer-term agreement but explained the Town was currently working towards standardizing its telecommunication agreements.

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

- B. Town of Christiansburg Community Development Block Grant Substantial Amendment to the 2019 Annual Action Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to approve the Community Development Block Grant Substantial Amendment to the 2019 Annual Action Plan as presented. Councilwoman Hicks seconded the motion. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- C. Non-Discrimination Policy as required for the Appalachian Regional Commission (for construction grant to fund the Farmers Market and Community Gathering Space on Hickok Street).

Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to approve the Non-Discrimination Policy as presented. Councilman Showalter seconded the motion. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- D. Discussion of Sunset Cemetery fee increases.

Town Manager Wingfield explained that item D was in relation to the Sunset Cemetery opening and closing fees. Mr. Wingfield stated that the Town was currently comparing costs

with other area cemeteries and concluded that Sunset Cemetery was in the lower end of the price range for standard plots and charges the least for graveside service fees. Councilwoman Hicks stated that currently there were two full-time employees that worked at Sunset Cemetery and those employees rotated weekend shifts. Councilwoman Hicks stated that she felt the \$250 increase for the opening and closing fee would not make a huge difference and questioned if Council would consider raising the increase another \$100 instead. Mrs. Hicks questioned if a \$50 increase per plat would be sufficient as well. Councilman Stipes questioned if Westview Cemetery in Blacksburg still sold cemetery plots. Mr. Stipes explained that Westview Cemetery was a municipal cemetery and would like to know how the Town of Christiansburg compares to them before there was a vote by Council. Mr. Stipes stated he had no problem adjusting fees at Sunset Cemetery but felt that the cemetery was special to the people that live in Christiansburg, as well as affordable and accessible. Councilwoman Hicks stated that the cemetery was nice, in comparison to others, and felt the Town was providing a valuable service to the community, as well as providing payment plans for customers that could not pay upfront. Mrs. Hicks stated she would like to increase the fees at the cemetery but would also like to vote at the next meeting opposed to making a decision now. Mayor Barber explained that the opening and closing fees of graves were paid upfront at Sunset Cemetery and that the increase was only to help offset cost to the Town's general fund.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the increase of open and close fees at Sunset Cemetery. Councilwoman Sachs seconded the motion.

Councilman Huppert stated he thought the increase in fees were adequate and would support that change but wanted to keep those fees reasonable for customers.

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

E. Discussion concerning community support (Bishop and Hicks).

Councilman Bishop expressed to Council that for a couple of years Council has discussed putting a cap on the community support amount for businesses and urged Council to start a discussion concerning said cap. Councilman Bishop offered a monetary cap of \$10,000 for each organization for community support. Councilman Showalter stated the cap could be an issue if it was not explained in writing and expressed that if someone wanted a higher cap then Council could support an increase and the cap amount would be mute. Mr. Showalter explained that if one Council member wanted more money for a certain non-profit then it could become political. He expressed that he already had an issue on the time spent on grant discussion rather than on the rest of the budget. Councilwoman Hicks expressed the need for the cap on community support and stated that more non-profits seem to be coming forward and at some point, there needs to be a cut-off amount. Councilwoman Sachs stated that there always seemed to be a concern with the amount offered to non-profits and she would support a cap. Mrs. Sachs asked Mrs. Tweedie if she could possibly work on percentages with the budget so Council would know what that number could look like. Councilman Stipes stated that he understood the intent of a cap, but it really depended on who applied and what their needs were. He explained that sometimes it is a one-time acute need versus a recurring need so therefore putting a cap on the amount may not be sufficient for some

organizations. Mrs. Tweedie explained that there were different types of organizations that provided certain purposes, and those organizations could be broken down into different classifications. Mrs. Tweedie offered to research the subject and bring results back to Council to see how they would like to proceed. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that there were different kinds of needs in the community. She stated that last year, with the pandemic, it was a perfect example of what can happen in the community. She further expressed that if there was a cap then hopefully it would keep other non-profits from reaching out that are not from the area. Councilman Showalter stated he would like Mrs. Tweedie to classify the non-profits for Council and recommended that a work session take place in the future to continue the discussion. Councilman Huppert expressed that last spring he expected more appreciation from the organizations that missed the deadline for community support. He explained that Council had granted several organizations permission to go through the process, even though they had missed the deadline.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield asked Council for permission to hire a full time Aquatic Center Lifeguard and for the current part-time wages to be transferred to the full-time position with benefits. He explained that doing so would give Aquatics forty hours a week for lifeguard operations. Councilwoman Hicks stated that Aquatics was currently competing with other companies that do not require some of the training that the Aquatic Center requires and mentioned the lifeguard wages were far less than other companies. Mr. Wingfield stated the Town could possibly raise the wages for lifeguards to \$15 an hour and expressed that the lack of lifeguards at the Aquatic Center was currently making operations difficult. Mayor Barber requested that Mr. Wingfield have a discussion with Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell and report back to Council. Councilman Stipes stated he was fully aware of the need at the Aquatic Center and felt the staffing problem was keeping the Town from operating its investment in the pool, as well as limiting citizens access to the pools. Councilwoman Sachs stated she was supportive of a full-time lifeguard and expressed this new employee could potentially help with recruiting part-time lifeguards. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that several lifeguard positions have been lost in the last year due to the lack of available training during the pandemic and feels like Council needed to do something now for fear of losing current lifeguards.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the full-time position of Aquatics Lifeguard and to transfer the part-time funds to the new position. Councilwoman Sachs seconded the motion.

Council asked Mr. Wingfield to bring back a revised pay scale for temporary help at the Aquatic Center. Councilman Showalter stated that he would like to see the revised pay scale for temporary help before he voted on the new position or the transfer of funds. Councilman Huppert agreed with Mr. Showalter and urged Mr. Wingfield to speak with Terry Caldwell at the Aquatic Center.

Councilwoman Hicks withdrew her motion and stated that she would also like to wait for the results from Mr. Wingfield's research. Councilwoman Sachs withdrew her second as well.

B. Town Attorney
None.

C. Other Staff
None.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Stipes reported that there was a YouTube presentation featuring Christiansburg Institute and Spectrum Media Solutions that he urged Council and the public to watch. He stated the presentation was very powerful and very moving.

Councilman Showalter inquired about older notes for the past work session at the community center at Christiansburg Institute. He explained he wanted to make sure the Town and CI were on track and could help the upcoming new Council members. Mr. Wingfield stated he could make the notes available for Council and Christiansburg Institute.

Councilman Huppert mentioned that Councilman Stipes had been a huge supporter of Christiansburg Institute and wanted to commend him on his support. Mr. Huppert also reported there were only 63 percent of people in Montgomery County that had received the Covid vaccine. He communicated that 97 percent of people that have had to go to the hospital have not had the vaccine and 98 percent that have died did not have the Covid vaccination. Mr. Huppert encouraged the public to get the vaccine.

Councilman Bishop
None.

Councilwoman Sachs
None.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed that it was a sad time for our country and touched on September 11th coming up and inquired if the Town lowered the flag on this day. Mayor Barber stated that the Town flag could be lowered to show recognition and that the Rockin' Main Street Concert Series held on September 11th would also be a tribute to the first responder heroes. Councilwoman Hicks asked if groups could gather after hours at Sunset Cemetery to honor September 11th. Councilwoman Hicks inquired if the Police department could send weekly reports to Council. She expressed that she would like to have a report of the number of break-ins, traffic accidents, etc. from the Police department. Officer Moye from the Police Department mentioned that the department currently performs quarterly updates and could easily pass that along to Council. Councilman Showalter included the Fire and Rescue departments in that decision as well stating they could send in quarterly reports instead of weekly reports. Mrs. Hicks added that Public Works could also. Mrs. Hicks also recognized the Fire, Police, and Rescue employees and volunteers for a job well done recently and wanted to express her gratitude.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:08pm.

Tracy Heinline, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor