

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 20, 2022 – 5:00 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 APRIL 20, 2022 AT 5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor Henry Showalter; Johana Hicks (Via Zoom); Tanya Hockett; Casey Jenkins; Tim Wilson. COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Samuel M. Bishop

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Executive Assistant/Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Director of Aquatics Terry Caldwell; Director of Human Resources Alicia Dials; Human Resources Generalist Danette Poole; Public Works Director Jim Lancianese; Assistant Director of Public Works Streets Travis Moles; Director of Engineering Mike Kelley; Chief of Police Mark Sisson; Chief of Fire and Rescue Billy Hanks

SPECIAL MEETING

I. Call to Order

In accordance with the adopted Electronic Meetings Policy, the Mayor asked if any Council members physically present objected to Councilwoman Hicks attending via Zoom due to a family illness causing her to participate from her current location in Colombia. Hearing none, Councilwoman Hicks joined the meeting.

II. Budget Resolution for Amendment #9

Town Manager Randy Wingfield explained this resolution for the budget was a transfer of money the Town has available for fiber optic cable. He explained the Town typically allocates money in the budget for fiber projects but would like to appropriately charge the fiber for the park to the park project.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the budget resolution for Amendment #9. Councilman Jenkins seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

III. Budget Appropriation for Amendment #9

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the budget appropriation for Amendment #9. Councilman Jenkins seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

IV. COLA of 5% and targeted increases

Mayor Barber noted the above COLA and targeted increases would come out of funds that have been saved from wages and salaries over the last twelve months. Human Resources Director Alicia Dials explained that her department had calculated the 5% increase for all the Town's employees and noted that the results showed 45 positions that were still below the market average, with 21 of those positions being vacant. She explained that list of below market positions were the targeted increases.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned why these items were tabled from the previous Council meeting and now being discussed at a Special Meeting. Mayor Barber explained that several Council members had approached him and asked for a special meeting for these items due to the timely manner of advertisement for the budget and timely data entry for increases. Mayor Barber expressed that in fairness to Town employees, the increases should be Town-wide and not specified for certain departments. Councilwoman Hicks also questioned the COLA being available for appointed employees of the Town. Mayor Barber explained that appointed employees are treated as any other fulltime employee of the Town and their salaries are set by the Town Manager and recognized for increases. Mr. Wingfield explained that his position would receive a 5% COLA but would not receive a merit increase later in the year. Mayor Barber explained that Council would have to vote on the Town Manager's merit increases. Councilman Showalter inquired why the COLA was being introduced sooner this year than in past years. Mr. Wingfield explained that he had been asked by the Mayor and Councilwoman Hicks to place the targeted increases on the last Town Council agenda, but that through discussions with staff, he thought it would be a large work savings to initiate both at the same time. He noted that in order for staff to implement the increases, calculations of each is required and data entry for each employee is necessary as well as checking the work. Mayor Barber concluded that the 5% COLA would be reflected in the new budget. Mr. Wingfield also noted that new hires, probationary employees, or unsatisfactory evaluated employees would not receive an increase. Councilman Showalter expressed those increases have always been handled in the upcoming fiscal year in the past and has never been a problem before. Mayor Barber noted that the early increase in salaries would not overextend this year's budget and would place the targeted positions at a higher income now. Councilwoman Hicks inquired why the increases could not go to certain departments now and others later. Councilwoman Hockett expressed that she would not support allocating money for some departments and not others. Councilman Wilson agreed with Councilwoman Hockett and explained that he supports the COLA and targeted increases because the Town has the funds and feels the need to help employees. Councilman Jenkins expressed that if you pick and choose who receives a raise you make the problem worse and felt the increases needed to be fixed now to keep competitiveness. Councilman Showalter questioned if the COLA and the targeted increases could be a split item and voted on separately by Council. Mrs. Tweedie explained that the Town had looked at the 5% increase first and that even after the 5% increase the 45 positions were still below the market average. Councilwoman Hockett expressed concern that she did not want to see Council approving a COLA ahead of the budget cycle every year. Councilman Showalter expressed concern that Town employees would be receiving a merit increase in just a few months. Mrs. Dials explained that merit increases were based on their performance with the Town. Mayor Barber noted that 2022 had been a hard year salary wise when looking at inflation and felt the Town needed to help employees.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the COLA of 5% and targeted increases for Town employees. Councilman Jenkins seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Nay; Wilson – Aye.

V. Discussion of proposed Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget

Councilman Showalter questioned employees receiving a 3% merit increase when others receive a 2%. Mr. Wingfield explained that in the merit pool a top performer employee receives a higher increase whereas a poor performer could receive an increase under 2%. He noted that he had emailed a breakdown of his position's salary increases to Council last week. Mayor Barber noted that a public hearing would be set to discuss the budget as well as another work session. Mr. Barber reiterated that all budget questions could be sent to Mrs. Tweedie before the public hearing.

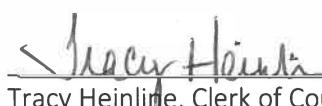
VI. Post current draft of Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget and proposed water increase for Public Hearings to be held May 10, 2022

Mr. Wingfield explained that since this item had been postponed at the last Council meeting, the May 10th public hearing date would have to be pushed to May 24<sup>th</sup> for the proposed water rate increases. He noted that the budget public hearing could be held on May 10<sup>th</sup> as proposed. Councilman Showalter inquired if the Town would still have to advertise the water fee change if they voted against it. Mrs. Tweedie explained that the water increase would not be advertised if Council voted against the increase and that the cost to the Town would be approximately \$130,000. Councilwoman Hicks questioned where the funds were spent that came from the additional water increases in the past. Mayor Barber explained that those funds go directly into the enterprise fund. Councilman Showalter included that the water fee is based in part on the Water Authority planned increases from years ago and the fee increase for citizens was paused during the pandemic. Councilwoman Hockett questioned if there would be a project that would have to be placed on pause if there was no water increase. Mr. Wingfield explained that projects would not have to be paused but in the past some water and sewer projects have had to be subsidized. Mrs. Tweedie noted that if Council voted to not increase the water fees, then a new draft should be advertised to the public so as not to be misleading.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to remove the water increase from the advertised budget and leave the fees unchanged. Councilman Wilson seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business brought before Council the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

  
Tracy Heinline, Clerk of Council

  
D. Michael Barber, Mayor