

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
June 14, 2022 – 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 JUNE 14, 2022, AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Town Attorney Mary Russell; Land Development Coordinator Devon Shields (for Executive Assistant/Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline); Director of Public Works Jim Lancianese; Assistant Director of Public Works, Streets Travis Moles; Engineering Director Michael Kelley; Fire Chief/Rescue Chief Billy Hanks; Parks and Recreation Director Brad Epperley.

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Tim Wilson.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

None.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. An Agreement for a Wing Delivery Zone at Christiansburg Recreation Center at 1600 N. Franklin Street

Mayor Barber noted this item was to be rescheduled and was being rescheduled in the Consent Agenda.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of May 24, 2022 and June 7, 2022
- B. Resolution recognizing June 22, 2022 as GiveLocalNRV Giving Day
- C. Resolution recognizing Gratton Thompson for his retirement from the Fire Department after 61 years of service
- D. Contract with A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc., d/b/a AMT for Professional Engineering Services on the College Street Drainage Improvements Project in the amount of \$300,875.00
- E. Reschedule public hearing for an Agreement for a Wing Delivery Zone at the Christiansburg Recreation Center at 1600 N. Franklin Street from June 14, 2022 to June 28, 2022

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted on the motion as follows: Councilman Bishop – Aye; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Aye; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Resolution presentation to Gratton Thompson for his retirement from the Fire Department

Mayor Barber presented the resolution to Gratton Thompson and thanked him for his 61-year service to the Town. Chief Hanks shared that only two previous members of the Fire Department had reached 60 years of service and added that Mr. Thompson was actively working as Captain until the previous Tuesday night. A large number of members of the Christiansburg Fire Department were present to share their support and thanks.

- B. Parks and Recreation Director Brad Epperley to present on department operations

Brad Epperley began his presentation by sharing a divisional breakdown of department operations, stating the department has nineteen full-time staff, largely housed at the Recreation Center. Mr. Epperley gave a summary of Town facilities managed and maintained by the department and noted that they partner with Virginia Tech for internship opportunities.

Mr. Epperley discussed the Youth and Adult Athletics programs run by the department. He highlighted accomplishments for youth sports and noted it has been especially good to see participation after COVID. He mentioned that youth volleyball is a new program offering and explained that they are trying to put an emphasis on girls' sports with now over one hundred participants. He described some of the Community and Senior Program opportunities provided by the department and highlighted some of the awards the programs have won.

Mr. Epperley gave an overview of the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park, for which construction is underway. He described Jill's Buddy Camp, which is a partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools that pairs teenagers with children in pre-K through second grade who have disabilities. He shared information about the Town's Farmers Market and the new Community Garden, which has six plots, that have all been planted. Mr. Epperley then shared information about Community Events organized and produced by the department, such as the July 4th Celebration, the Great Easter Egg Hunt, and the Rockin' Main Street Concert Series.

Councilman Jenkins inquired about a timeline for potential extension of the Huckleberry Trail to Downtown. Mr. Epperley explained that there were a number of challenges to connecting the trail to Downtown, including the railroad and North Franklin Street. He noted the department works with the Bikeway Walkway Committee on these matters and described one option of placing a sidewalk on the bridge in that corridor and providing some connectivity through bike lanes on North Franklin Street.

Mayor Barber stated that the work the department does serves people of all walks of life, and while not being a money-maker, it provides what people look for when moving to Town. Councilwoman Hicks thanked Mr. Epperley for his work and asked if the department was still understaffed. Mr. Epperley shared that they have gradually been able to hire more staff, and that internships, such as those provided through the ACCE program, help. Councilwoman Hicks asked if the facilities can be used as an emergency shelter and if the department offers cooling systems for the public to use. Mr. Epperley stated that yes, the Recreation Center can be used as an emergency shelter, and they work with Chief Hanks in those situations. They have learned, however, that they cannot run the air conditioning system when the power is out. An updated generator plan is included in the recently approved budget. Regarding cooling stations for the public, Mr. Epperley said the public needed a day pass or membership to use the Recreation Center and Aquatic Center facilities, but they do try to work with people. Councilwoman Hockett expressed her appreciation of the recognition Mr. Epperley gives to staff and the work they do.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Town of Christiansburg 2022-2026 Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Plan and 2022 Annual Action Plan

Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren noted that at the time of the public hearing on this item, the Town had not received an official letter from HUD outlining the amount of money the Town would receive. He explained that the Town would be receiving \$125,664, as opposed to the approximately \$105,000 that had been expected, but that this did not change either the Consolidated Plan or the Annual Action Plan.

Councilwoman Hicks asked if the Town's plan was the same as it was in the past, to use the money to build sidewalks. Mr. Warren explained that yes, that is the plan, provided the Town can leverage other funds for sidewalk projects, as the money received is not enough to build sidewalks alone. Mr. Warren continued, explaining that the money could be used for waterline projects or emergency home repair projects for qualifying low- to moderate-income residents working with a local nonprofit.

B. Discussion of Sustainability Plan

Town Manager Randy Wingfield presented on a potential Town of Christiansburg Sustainability Plan. Mr. Wingfield provided a definition of sustainability, and a list of what sustainability can include. He provided examples of how sustainability can be achieved through regulation and noted some prior sustainability actions by the Town, such as energy audits, stream clean-ups, Zoning Ordinance requirements, and enforcement of environmental regulations. Mr. Wingfield noted that both the Town's Vision 2020 document and Destination 2022 document included goals oriented toward sustainability and added that being sustainable and sensitive to environmental concerns is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. He provided a list of potential next steps, which included proposing sustainability as a Council Retreat topic and considering a Sustainability Committee and the possibility of a Sustainability Coordinator position. Councilwoman Hicks inquired regarding the timeframe for landfill solar panels. Mr. Wingfield replied that he expected to have an RFP within a few months, pending an analysis of feasibility. Mrs. Hicks asked if Mr. Wingfield or Mr. Warren could potentially fulfill the roll of Sustainability Coordinator. Mr. Wingfield replied that it depended on the extent to which Council wished to take sustainability and mentioned the possibility of community sustainability grants and the question of how important a return on investment might be.

Mayor Barber asked Parks and Recreation Director Brad Epperley if he had noticed any savings in energy costs after switching facilities to LED lighting, to which Mr. Epperley replied that he had noticed savings in energy costs. Councilwoman Hicks asked if there were savings in manpower from changing lightbulbs less frequently, and Mr. Epperley said yes, there have been labor savings, as well.

Councilman Showalter inquired whether issuing an RFP for a solar farm would mean that it would be the Town's solar farm and asked if AEP would potentially be willing to participate in the cost. Mr. Wingfield replied that it would be the Town's solar farm and that he would be willing to pursue asking AEP for assistance in funding.

C. Discussion of Town Employee Picnic

Town Manager Wingfield presented various scheduling options for the Employee Picnic.

He proposed holding the picnic on a Wednesday afternoon with a variety of staffing scenarios for Town Hall and other Town facilities. Mr. Wingfield's recommendation was to close Town Hall for the three-hour period needed for the picnic, provided there was Council support for this option. Councilman Showalter expressed his support, as did Councilwoman Hicks. Mrs. Hicks questioned why there had been poor attendance in the past, asking if it was because employees did not want to give up their weekend, to which Mr. Wingfield replied that was probably part of it. Mayor Barber asked if families of employees could still attend, to which the answer was yes. Mayor Barber noted that Mr. Wingfield had noted additional activities, and Mr. Wingfield said he would like to add educational and training opportunities. Mrs. Hicks inquired when the school year would start and asked if it was a good idea to hold the picnic the day before the school year started. Mayor Barber expressed his support for trying this different scheduling approach, noting that any date picked could have its drawbacks. Councilman Showalter asked if department heads had been consulted regarding this plan, and the response was in the affirmative. Councilwoman Hockett confirmed the hours of 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mr. Wingfield noted the proposed date was August 10. Council expressed their support.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield shared that the Juneteenth celebration at Rosa Peters Playground would be that Saturday and stated he could advertise it as a potential quorum of Council, to which Council was supportive.

Mr. Wingfield provided an update on the College Street Drainage Project, noting that 14 of the 25 property owners from which the Town would need an easement have signed agreements. Two property owners have indicated they will not sign, one in the upper basin/pond area, which could potentially be worked around. The other is in the channel area, and they had said they would still consider it. Council inquired if money was requested. Mr. Wingfield stated that the resident is looking for more exact information on the location of the easement and that money was not discussed. Mayor Barber asked if it was still the case that the easements needed to be all or none, and Mr. Wingfield said yes, that is the case, at least for the channel area. Councilman Showalter asked for clarification of what the outcome would be if this property owner were to refuse. Mr. Wingfield replied that unless Council would support condemning the property for the project, it would not be built.

Mr. Wingfield provided an update on Blacksburg Transit hiring efforts. He noted institution of a two-thousand-dollar sign-on bonus and added the Town of Blacksburg was slated to vote on pay increases for bus drivers with a rate of \$17.52/hour for new hires. He added that they are extending hours to return to a more normal operation, and Mayor Barber supplied additional information on hours of operation and routes. Councilwoman Hicks asked if buses would be discussed at the retreat. Mr. Wingfield replied that it could be discussed at the retreat next.

Mr. Wingfield presented a list of potential topics of discussion for the Council Retreat scheduled for Friday, June 17. Councilmen Showalter and Wilson recommended that marijuana legalization be removed from the list due to the potential for the topic to dominate time. Mayor Barber asked that the Town Attorney please look into the potential July 1 to December 31 deadline for a referendum. Councilwoman Hicks questioned whether a discussion of transportation options within the Town, such as buses, could be added to the agenda. Mr. Wingfield offered that if it can be considered a capital project, it could be discussed under capital projects, such as Blacksburg Transit funding, paving, and street projects. Mrs. Hicks suggested discussing reduction of Go Anywhere bus options and increasing the number of regular stops for buses. Mayor Barber stated that he believed Blacksburg Transit would provide input for those decisions. Councilman Showalter noted that Blacksburg Transit would make changes requested by Town Council, provided those changes were funded. Mayor Barber recommended the discussion be continued at the retreat under capital projects. Councilman Showalter clarified that the retreat was intended for staff to get direction from Council and that no hard decisions would be made at the retreat. Mayor Barber stated that he would like to have the conversations finished by the close of the retreat at 4 p.m. and encouraged Council members to review material prior to the retreat. Mr. Showalter asked that Mr. Wingfield please provide a packet of information with background items. Councilman Showalter inquired if there would be an opportunity to discuss other items not on the list. Mr. Wingfield said he was open to adding items and acknowledged receiving a list of items of regional interest provided by Mr. Showalter for discussion. Councilwoman Hicks asked who had added solid waste flow control to the list. Mr. Wingfield stated he had added it for Council's consideration. Mrs. Hicks stated she did not wish to cover the topic. Mayor Barber stated that when the topic comes up, if no one wishes to discuss it, they will move on.

Councilwoman Hockett inquired if there would be an opportunity to discuss other items not on the list, and Mr. Wingfield replied he would add an "Other Discussion" item to the agenda. Mrs. Hockett asked if this would be a good opportunity to discuss ways to provide feedback or evaluation to the Town Manager. Mayor Barber recommended that that type of discussion would need to be held in closed session, as it is a personnel issue. Councilwoman Hicks asked if community support could be discussed at the retreat. Mayor Barber stated that it was already included on the agenda. Councilman Showalter reiterated that the retreat was intended to provide direction to staff and that work sessions could be scheduled to discuss items in more detail. Mayor Barber reminded Council that a retreat of this nature was what created the Vision 2020 and Destination 2022 document. Councilman Jenkins expressed a desire to revisit those documents and discuss a master plan that goes beyond the current year. Mayor Barber inquired whether there would be a final report generated from the retreat. Mr. Wingfield stated that a final document would be created. Councilman Showalter shared a desire to create real goals and real dates for accountability, specifically regarding sustainability. Mrs. Hicks asked if Kevin Byrd could share a sustainability plan from elsewhere in the New River Valley that Council could look at and consider. Mr. Wingfield asked if Council would like to film the retreat. Mayor Barber took a poll of Council. Councilman Wilson expressed a desire to adhere to precedent. Councilwoman Hockett expressed that she was okay with it not being filmed, provided there were minutes of the meeting. Councilmen Bishop and Jenkins expressed they were ok with it not being filmed, Councilman Showalter was okay

either way, and Councilwoman Hicks expressed a desire to film the retreat. Councilman Showalter expressed his concern of discussing items that Council has set policy for in session but reiterated that he is okay either way. Mrs. Hicks inquired whether filming would be a legal requirement. The Town Attorney replied that she did not believe filming would be required, but that minutes would be required. Mayor Barber concluded that the retreat would not be filmed.

- B. Town Attorney – No report
- C. Other Staff – No report

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks inquired regarding the current status of the gas budget. Mr. Wingfield stated the Town was still in a decent position. Mayor Barber noted next year's budget reflected an increase in gas spending, and Mr. Wingfield added it was a twenty-five percent increase.

Councilman Wilson reported that the New River Valley Regional Commission would appoint a new Chair of the Board on July 1st, and that Hil Johnson would likely be appointed Chair.

Mayor Barber noted the Montgomery Museum of Art & History would be holding a soft open and ribbon cutting on June 22nd.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.



Devon Shields, Engineering



D. Michael Barber, Mayor