

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 12, 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 JULY 12, 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; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Executive Assistant/Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline; Planning Director Benjamin Tripp; Chief of Police Mark Sisson; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Engineering Director Mike Kelley

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Hockett.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

No adjustment to the agenda.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

No public hearings.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of June 28, 2022
- B. Certification of Fire Department Officers

- C. Resolution in support of the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization's Virginia Department of Transportation Smart Scale program funding application for the Route 114/Route 460 Bus. Safety Improvement Project in the Town of Christiansburg.
- D. Resolution in support of the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization's Virginia Department of Transportation Smart Scale program funding application for Route 460 widening and operational improvements project in the Town of Christiansburg and Montgomery County
- E. Resolution in support of the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization's Virginia Department of Transportation Smart Scale Application for Interchange Improvements at I-81 Exit 114
- F. Resolution in support of the Smart Scale application for the Peppers Ferry Road – Cambria Street Connector Route
- G. Resolution in support of the Town of Christiansburg's Smart Scale program funding application for the Cambria Street – North Franklin Street Connector Route
- H. Resolution in support of the Town of Christiansburg's Smart Scale program funding application for the North Franklin Street to Elm Street NE
- I. Resolution in support of the Town of Christiansburg's Smart Scale application for the Parkway Drive Extension, Phase I
- J. Resolution in support of the Town of Christiansburg's Smart Scale application for the Parkway Drive Extension, Phase II

Councilwoman Hicks questioned why consent agenda items C. through J. were separated. Mayor Barber explained that they were separate projects, so they needed separate resolutions.

Councilman Bishop 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

No introductions and presentations.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

No citizen comments.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Street Committee (Bishop, Hockett)
-Plat Showing Boundary Line Adjustment between Tax Parcels 500 – ((A)) – 1 and 2 and Tax Parcels 500 – ((4)) – 2A, 2C, 2D, and 3 (2230 and 2260 Roanoke Street)

Councilwoman Hockett referenced a map showing the current boundary lines at the properties on Roanoke Street and where the adjustments would take place. Mrs. Hockett explained these adjustments would not create any new lots. Councilwoman Hicks questioned why this item needed to be approved at this time. Town Manager Wingfield explained that the decision to vote would be at Council's discretion. Councilwoman Hockett explained that all the parcels were owned by the same organization and the adjustments did not affect any other citizen and should not affect the Town.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the Street Committee recommendation to move forward with boundary line adjustments to the above properties on Roanoke Street, seconded by Councilman Bishop. 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.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A. Appointment of Kevin Foust as At-Large Representative to the New River Emergency Communications Regional Authority for the remainder of Alan Fabian's term (until April 28, 2023)

Mayor Barber explained that Kevin Foust was a retired Police Chief and Vice President from Virginia Tech as well as a former FBI Regional Supervisor for Western Virginia. Mr. Wingfield noted that Mr. Foust could not attend the Council meeting but would introduce himself to Council at a later date. Mr. Wingfield explained that the At-Large Representative appointed would need to be approved by all entities in the Authority.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the appointment of Kevin Foust as At-Large Representative to the New River Valley Emergency Communications Regional Authority, seconded by Councilman Showalter. 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.

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

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the agreement for a Wing Delivery Zone at the Christiansburg Recreation Center, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. 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.

C. Montgomery County – Blacksburg – Christiansburg Regional Tourism Office

Councilman Wilson expressed his concern for the Town's agreement with the Tourism Office and how money is allocated. Mr. Wilson explained that \$170,000 of the Town's budget is spent on tourism each year and expressed that he has yet to see anything promoting the Town of Christiansburg. He expressed that Town Council needed to have a discussion concerning the agreement with the Tourism Office. Councilwoman Hicks expressed agreement with Mr. Wilson and commented that tourism could possibly be handled internally with the Town instead, acknowledging Public Relations Director Christina Edney for her hard work with Town event advertisement. Mrs. Hicks noted that the Tourism Office had expressed plans for FY 2025-2026 but felt that was a significant amount of time away and they needed to focus on current upcoming plan. Councilwoman Hicks also expressed concern for the location of the Tourism Office in what she considered a residential area.

Mayor Barber noted that the Tourism Office was advertising the Town of Christiansburg in three different states at rest stops and promoted what was available in the New River Valley. Mr. Barber also stated that 1% of the lodging tax revenue was not the taxpayer's money and instead was the visitors that come to Christiansburg. Mr. Barber explained that the Town averages approximately \$1.7 million a year in transient lodging tax and expressed that he felt \$170,000 a year for Tourism was a fair agreement with the Tourism Office.

Councilman Showalter noted that the local businesses wanted the Town and the Tourism Office to use the \$170,000 to help promote and fill their hotels, restaurants, and stores with visitors so he felt it was a Christiansburg tax base that was being used. He explained it may not directly apply to the citizens, but he felt there was a responsibility to owed to the merchants that collect that revenue. Mr. Showalter noted that in the past the Chamber of Commerce received tourism money from the Town and then it was moved to the Tourism Office with a joint partnership with Montgomery County and Blacksburg. Mr. Showalter questioned the contract with the Tourism Office as well and inquired what the agreement stated concerning the Town separating from the tourism funding. Mr. Wingfield answered that the Town would need to give a one-year notice according to the agreement.

Councilman Jenkins cautioned Council that separating from the Tourism office could be a grave mistake and noted that there was a synergy that gets broken in partnerships when one separates. Mr. Jenkins also expressed that there was new leadership in Tourism in the last year, and noted it takes time for adjustment in a new position. Councilwoman Hicks questioned Mr. Jenkins if the Montgomery County Museum had a contract with the Tourism office to rent the museum's former building. Mr. Jenkins explained that there was a contract with the Tourism Office but felt it did not relate to his position concerning the tourism office. Councilwoman Hockett agreed with Mr. Jenkins and stated that Mr. Rotenizer with the Tourism Office has not had a chance to address Council's recent concerns but stated she would like to see how the Town is currently promoted and asked for more attention to be brought to the events in Christiansburg.

Councilman Bishop stated that he had been on the Tourism Development Board for a number of years and expressed that the Tourism Office had been out of state to set up their booths to promote Montgomery County and the Town of Christiansburg. Mr. Bishop expressed that he was in favor of keeping the partnership with the Tourism Office and noted there was an open position at the Tourism office and expressed that the Tourism Board had discussed this concern at their previous meetings. He commented that David Rotenizer should be invited to present to Council on Tourism's accomplishments. Councilman Wilson also noted his concern with the Tourism's website and stated that he had asked Mr. Rotenizer in February to take down pictures that did not represent the Town but has yet to see the change. Councilman Showalter suggested that if the Town gave the Tourism Office a one-year notice to rectify the issues, Council could withdraw the notice before the year ends.

Councilman Jenkins suggested Council make it very clear the changes they would like to see in order for the Tourism Office to know how to improve on their end. Councilman Showalter stated he would like to see tangible benefits to the Town which would include presenting how the Tourism Office is referencing the Town of Christiansburg. Councilman Showalter suggested taking a Council vote and noted that he did perceive a conflict of interest where Councilman Jenkins was concerned because of the museum. Town Attorney Reid Broughton noted that Mr. Jenkins had to evaluate that conflict of interest himself and expressed that he had previously signed a disclosure concerning the Museum and serving on Town Council.

Councilman Showalter acknowledged David Rotenizer, Executive Director at the meeting and asked if two months would be sufficient time for him to come back and address Council on Tourism updates. Mr. Rotenizer agreed that two months would be adequate. Mr. Showalter noted that Mr. Rotenizer has had incredible ideas concerning signs and identification for the Huckleberry Trail Bridge early on and expressed appreciation. Councilwoman Hicks asked how much money did the Tourism Association hold in unassigned funds and what would happen to that money if the agreement was dissolved. Mr. Rotenizer stated that those funds had been set aside for the future visitor center development and potentially a new vehicle.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to place the Tourism Office on a one-year notice, with a review in two months, and at the end of the one-year notice the Town would have the opportunity to end the partnership, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Town Council voted as follows: Councilman Bishop – Nay; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Nay; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

Mayor Barber advised Mr. Wingfield to add Mr. Rotenizer to present to Council in two months and asked that his be the only presentation that night out of respect for time. Council also agreed to a work session concerning tourism with a date to be determined.

D. Façade Grant/Community Support Policy

Councilman Wilson confided to Council that he would like to see both the Façade Grants and the Community Support have clear policies. Mr. Wilson expressed concern that the Town was taken advantage of when it came to organizations applying for more than one grant in a year. Mr. Wilson also acknowledged that great work had been done thus far by staff on the façade grants.

Mayor Barber noted that Finance Director Valerie Tweedie was currently working on information from the County concerning community support grants and explained that Mr. Wingfield would be addressing the idea of a work session. Mr. Wingfield stated he would get with Council on dates for a work session concerning this topic. Councilman Wilson suggested writing a policy that states an organization could only apply one time every three or five years, a potential cap on how much they could apply for and suggested only applying for certain grants. Councilwoman Hicks agreed with Mr. Wilson and expressed that the façade grants were developed to help business owners and felt that Town Council should be able to set those guidelines.

Mrs. Tweedie expressed that she could get the grant information to Council by early August and stated if she could receive ideas over time concerning how to evaluate requests from non-profits and writing a policy before next year's budget would be desirable.

Councilman Showalter asked how the façade grants were funded. Mr. Wingfield answered that the façade grants were funded through the General Fund and the Central Business Committee makes the final decision concerning who receives the grants. Councilman Showalter inquired if a Town Council vote could take place in order to have façade grants come through Council as a recommendation from the committee. Mr. Broughton stated that Council could establish that as a policy.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion that façade grants come through Town Council for final approval as a recommendation from the Central Business Committee, seconded by Councilman Showalter.

Councilwoman Hicks withdrew her motion. Councilman Showalter referenced the current year's budget, and the community support grants and asked Mr. Wilson if he would include the ACCE program in the organizations that he would not want to contribute to. Mr. Wilson answered that this was correct.

Councilman Showalter made a motion that no façade grants receive funding this year until it comes before Town Council for approval from the Central Business Committee, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Councilman Bishop – Nay; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Aye; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

Councilwoman Hockett inquired when the applications would open for the next grant cycle for community support and if it was possible that Council could have the policy work by being placed on a timeline to have it completed before the next round of applications. Mr. Wingfield noted that applications for grants are due February 1, 2023 and the process opens to the public in December 2022.

Mr. Showalter asked to have all applications for the fiscal year 2023 concerning the grants pulled from the website until a policy was reviewed and approved and expressed concern that several non-profits ask for several grants a year and that Council struggles making decisions every year when going into the budget. He expressed that Council needed to have a policy that holds firm moving forward. Mayor Barber cautioned Council that if they put term limits or caps on these grants then it could cripple organizations that do a lot of good for the Town of Christiansburg.

E. School Resource Officers

Councilman Showalter reminded Council that at the end of the last Council meeting Council was informed that Montgomery County had approved placing resource officers in the schools at Eastern Montgomery, Belview Elementary and potentially one of the Auburn strand schools. Mayor Barber stated that this particular item had been included on the agenda for the upcoming dual meeting with the Town and the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors (between the Mayor, Town Manager, County Administrator, and the Board of Supervisors Chair).

Mr. Showalter expressed concern that at the last Board of Supervisors meeting he noticed that the resource officers were placed in the schools outside of Town limits. Mayor Barber noted that the Town had no obligation whatsoever to provide resource officers for the area schools. Police Chief Mark Sisson provided some history concerning resource officers to Council and explained he was not opposed to County funding but felt very strongly that having Town officers strengthened relationships with the students and the Town of Christiansburg Police Department has always had a good working relationship with the Sheriff's Office and other County departments. He expressed that everyone works together every day to make sure kids are safe in the community. Mr. Sisson noted that he felt very strongly there should be resource officers in the schools in Town. Councilman Wilson stated that while it is everyone's duty to protect our children in schools, and in no way was the Town Council intending on pulling officers from schools, he felt the Town was picking up that responsibility for the County and noted the County had a fiscal responsibility in covering those officer positions. Councilman Showalter expressed that he would like to see the County fund all the schools within the Town as well and asked that the Town Attorney look into the decision the County made concerning excluding resource officers in certain schools and see if there was a breach of duty. Mayor Barber stated that he believed the County had an obligation to protect the students but that he did not believe it was specified how it is done.

F. Sands Anderson billing rates

Mayor Barber explained that Sands Anderson had requested an increase at the beginning of the year and Council asked Mr. Broughton to bring it back to their attention in July. Councilman Showalter requested that requests be made before the budget in the future.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the Sands Anderson bill rates as requested, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Town Council voted as follows: Councilman

Bishop – Aye; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Aye; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield reported that the Aquatic Center would be celebrating their 12th anniversary and that the Aquatic Center would provide free facility usage on July 18th from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

He noted that Town Council had inquired about a work session concerning community support and asked Council when they would like to hold the work session. Councilman Showalter asked that the community support item be the only discussion item. Mayor Barber asked Mr. Wingfield to pick several dates and Council would decide what worked for everyone.

B. Town Attorney

Mr. Broughton thanked Council for the rate increase for Sands Anderson.

C. Other Staff – no report.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Showalter – no report.

Councilman Bishop – no report.

Councilwoman Hicks reported that the Central Business Committee was searching for individuals that would help look over façade grant applications. Mrs. Hicks also inquired why the Planning Commission had not met in several weeks. Planning Director Benjamin Tripp stated that if the Planning Commission has business to conduct, such as applications for rezoning or conditional use permits, then the Planning Commission convenes and makes recommendations to Town Council but stated that things have slowed down and there was no need for meetings at this time. Mr. Tripp did explain that he felt there would be more applications in the near future and that staff had been working on other items that would be given to the Planning Commission.

Councilwoman Hockett reported that the Street Committee had approved new signage on Industrial Drive for vehicles traveling through to Prospect Drive. She explained that several trucks that haul cars travel down that particular street and sometimes get stuck in the cul-de-sac and cannot turn around.

Councilman Wilson reported that the Sustainability Committee would have their first meeting on July 15th and expressed that the public was welcome.

Councilman Jenkins – no report.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

Councilwoman Hockett asked if several Town Council members join in on a Zoom live would it be considered a quorum of Council. Mr. Wingfield stated that a quorum was considered when four or more Council members gather and discuss Town business.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.



Tracy Heinlein, Clerk of Council



D. Michael Barber, Mayor