

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 10, 2023 – 7:00 P.M.

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL WAS HELD AT CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA, ON JANUARY 10, 2023, 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 Reid Broughton; Clerk of Council/Executive Assistant Tracy Heinline; Director of Planning Benjamin Tripp; Director of Finance Valerie Tweedie; Director of Aquatics Terry Caldwell; Chief of Police Mark Sisson

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Moment of Reflection
- B. Pledge of Allegiance
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Wilson.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Barber made an adjustment to the agenda concerning item C. under Discussion and Action by Council and explained that the certification for Fire Officers would take place in July 2023. Mr. Barber added that the appointment of a representative to the Virginia Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport Authority Board under Other Business, item 6., (f.) would not be needed since the appointments are not ending this year.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to adjust the agenda as proposed, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Rezoning request by Town of Christiansburg, property owner, to rezone property located at the intersection of Peppers Ferry Road, N.W. and Booker T. Washington Parkway, N.W. (under construction) (Tax Parcel 435 – ((A)) – 3A, Parcel ID 270079), commonly known as "Christiansburg Huckleberry Park", an approximately 50.539-acre portion from A

Agricultural District to R-1 Single-Family Residential District and an approximately 12.25-acre portion of the same property from A Agricultural District to B-3 General Business District. The property is designated as Business/Commercial and Parks/Open Space on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

The public hearing was opened. With no speakers on the item, the public hearing was closed.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of December 13, 2022
- B. Recognition of Proclamation of January 9, 2023 as Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Town Council voted 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. Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center Director (RRSBDC) Amanda Forrester and New River Valley Advisor Leo Priddy to present on the SBDC programs and operations

Amanda Forrester addressed Council and introduced Leo Priddy, New River Valley Advisor and further explained the role of the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center. Ms. Forrester expressed that the center's goal was to provide small business owners with skills to operate and grow their businesses. Ms. Forrester noted that 65 businesses within Christiansburg had been advised from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022 and out of those 65 businesses 51% were female owned, with 14% minority, and 6% veteran owned. She added that food services, health care, retail, and construction businesses were a few of the many types of businesses they advised. Ms. Forrester explained that the center specialized in business planning, finances, business start-up, marketing, and disaster recovery and expressed that there were statewide trainings that small businesses could attend as well. She explained that most training events were now virtual and easily attended. Ms. Forrester noted the ways to connect with the development center and the many worksheets available online for business owners to grow their businesses. She added that an advisory match on the website was now a new section that business owners could complete and connect with a chosen advisor with knowledge and experience in their line of business. Ms. Forrester thanked Council for investing in their services and helping impact and build the community.

Councilman Bishop inquired if there was an office in the Christiansburg area. Ms. Forrester explained there was an office at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center but that the advisors could meet in person anywhere in the area.

Councilman Wilson asked if the Town would have access to the names of clients to be able to support the business owners in the area. Ms. Forrester explained that their work is confidential, and names are not made public. There can be times when they ask permission and added that often clients themselves share their own experiences on the RRSBDC social media platforms.

Councilwoman Hicks asked about the minority statistics referred to earlier in her presentation. Ms. Forrester explained that the individuals self-identify and that her staff does not do make the determination. She added that many choose not to self-report. She ended saying that the Small Business Administration's focus has always been on women, minorities, and the veteran population so they make efforts to make sure that these services are in their hands to access.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

No citizen comments

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

No committee reports from Council

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Appointment of Alessandro Pugliese of Sandro's Pizzeria as Restaurant Representative to the Montgomery – Blacksburg – Christiansburg Tourism Development Council for a two-year term from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024

Councilman Showalter expressed that he would like Mr. Pugliese to attend an upcoming Council meeting and introduce himself.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the appointment of Alessandro Pugliese to the Montgomery – Blacksburg – Christiansburg Tourism Development Council, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

- B. Reappointment of Heather Browning to the Public Arts Advisory Board for a two-year term from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024

Mayor Barber noted that Ms. Browning had reached out to him and expressed interest in coming before Council but was unable this week.

Councilman Jenkins made a motion to reappoint Heather Browning to the Public Arts Advisory Board, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

- C. Certification of Fire Officers

Item removed per adjustment of the agenda

D. Agreement for Use of the Christiansburg Aquatic Center with Radford City

Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell explained that one of the changes to the agreement with Radford City was a small fee increase. Councilwoman Hicks voiced appreciation for bringing this item to Council and expressed that the citizens of Christiansburg and Radford should be paying an equivalent fee to use the Aquatic Center.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the agreement for Use of the Christiansburg Aquatic Center with Radford City, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

E. Town funding of school resource officers in Montgomery County Public Schools (Showalter and Hockett)

Mayor Barber noted that the Town had asked Montgomery County to reimburse the Town \$265,000 a year for funding for school resource officers and the request had been denied. Mr. Barber explained that several Councilmembers had desired to bring the subject back to the table for discussion.

Councilman Showalter explained the history of the funding of resource officers and noted that early on the Christiansburg Police Department had located grants from the state to fund officers in schools. Mr. Showalter further explained that not all Montgomery County Schools had officers and noted that the County had decided to fund Montgomery County Schools in the unincorporated areas only. Mr. Showalter added that he felt since Christiansburg citizens are paying both County and Town taxes, and the County has decided to fund the positions in the unincorporated areas, then the County should fund both the in-Town and out-of-Town schools.

Councilman Jenkins inquired what will take place if the County continues to refuse assistance with funding. Mayor Barber recommended to Council that he draft a letter to send to the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator, and the School Board Members informing them of Council's action. Mr. Barber explained that the Town should no longer fund the resource officers without the County's help. He added that Christiansburg citizens that live in corporate limits pay County taxes as well and felt that this was not a huge ask as opposed to the taxes the citizens are paying. Councilman Showalter communicated that there would be more discussion within Council if the County denied funding, which would be before officers were permanently removed from the schools.

Mayor Barber added that in his initial letter to Montgomery County he had asked the County to consider including the Town of Blacksburg in their decision as well. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that the Town was not asking for an enormous amount of money for officers in the schools and noted her appreciation to the Christiansburg Police Department for their involvement pertaining to the officers in the past years.

Councilman Showalter reminded Council of the Christiansburg's previous Park and Ride location near Falling Branch Elementary School and the dilemma of transients using the school's facilities. Mr. Showalter noted the County's resistance to the Town being involved with their public schools at that time. Mr. Showalter explained that Council owes it to the citizens to be fiscal-minded and to place a motion on the table and added that he will support it.

Councilman Bishop expressed that all schools should have resource officers and would prefer the County to help fund those officers in the Town but is concerned about pulling the officers out of the schools. Mayor Barber expressed that it takes an ending statement and date if the Town is going to do it, and that is what would be proposed. Mr. Barber added that if the Town of Christiansburg should pull resource officers out of schools that does not violate any legal requirements and that he spoke to both the Town Manager and Town Attorney for confirmation of this. Mayor Barber added that the Christiansburg Police Department would still respond if there was an issue at the schools. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that she has children in the schools in Town and has always considered the children and the officers very important.

Councilwoman Hockett expressed that she was disappointed that the County would not support the schools within the Town. Mrs. Hockett also noted her concern about pulling the resource officers from the schools and expressed that many students feel comfortable and safe with the current officers and there have been important connections made. She asked if there is anything else that could be done to further this conversation. Councilman Jenkins agreed that every school should have resource officers but also expressed that Montgomery County should help in funding those officers.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to suspend funding for school resource officers as of July 1, 2023, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Nay; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Nay; Jenkins – Nay; Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

Due to a divided vote of Council, Mayor Barber voted in favor of the motion to suspend funding for school resource officers beginning July 1, 2023. The motion passed.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Town Manager Randy Wingfield reminded Council that the annual disclosure forms were due by February 1, 2023. Mr. Wingfield asked Council if they would like to schedule a work session in the upcoming weeks for a training on COIA (Conflict of Interest Act) and FOIA (Freedom of Information Act). Town Attorney Reid Broughton explained this training would take up to an hour. Council agreed to a 5:30 p.m. Street Committee Meeting and a 6:00 p.m. training for COIA and FOIA led by the Town Attorney, on January 24th.

B. Town Attorney – No report

C. Other Staff – No report

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks reported that the New River Valley Agency on Aging Board would meet on January 6th.

Councilman Wilson reported that he and Councilwoman Hockett participated in the Santa's Coming to Town and food drive event and expressed how great the event was and noted the gathering of large crowds in the neighborhoods.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Re-organization for the Year 2023:

1. Town Council election of Vice-Mayor

Councilwoman Hicks expressed interest in the position of Vice-Mayor and made a motion to nominate herself. For a lack of a second, the motion failed.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to elect Councilman Bishop as Vice-Mayor, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Abstain; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

2. Town Council to set regular meeting dates and times of Council

Councilwoman Hicks suggested moving the Town Council meeting times to 6:00 p.m. Mayor Barber commented that the times prior to Council meetings are typically used for committee meetings. Councilman Showalter noted that the Council meeting time has been addressed in the past, but the other meetings scheduled prior interfere with an earlier start time.

Councilman Bishop made a motion to keep the regular meeting dates and times of Council moving forward, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – aye; Wilson – Aye.

3. Mayor appointment of Town Council Committees:

a. Water and Waste Committee

Mayor Barber appointed Councilwoman Hicks and Councilman Wilson to the Water and Waste Committee.

b. Street Committee

Mayor Barber appointed Councilwoman Hockett and Councilman Bishop to the Street Committee.

- c. Finance Committee
Mayor Barber appointed Councilman Showalter and Councilman Bishop to the Finance Committee.
- d. Emergency Services Committee
Mayor Barber appointed Councilwoman Hockett and Councilman Wilson to the Emergency Services Committee.
- e. Central Business District Committee
Mayor Barber appointed Councilwoman Hicks and himself to the Central Business District Committee.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed that being appointed to this position was a positive appointment but could also be a disadvantage for a Town Council business owner. Mrs. Hicks noted that she would like to refuse the appointment to the Central Business District Committee.

Councilman Showalter asked Councilman Jenkins why he did not want to be on the committee because he felt that both Mr. Jenkins and Mrs. Hicks would be best to represent the committee because of their backgrounds.

Councilman Jenkins expressed that scheduling was a conflict for him due to the meetings being held in the middle of the day and expressed adverse negative affects with his full-time role at the Montgomery Museum. Mr. Jenkins added that he would prefer to offer his knowledge elsewhere.

Councilwoman Hicks commented that the time of the meetings could be changed. She expressed concern over the 12:00 p.m. meetings and stated that since she works during the day it would be difficult for her to attend.

Mayor Barber stated that the Central Business meetings could be moved to accommodate the members and added that monthly meetings could be moved to quarterly meetings.

After discussion by Council, Councilwoman Hicks and Councilman Jenkins agreed to remain on the Central Business District Committee. Mayor Barber appointed Mr. Jenkins as Chair.

- f. Public Health and Welfare Committee
The Public Health and Welfare Committee is not assigned to a representative and convenes as needed.
- g. Council on Human Relations Committee
The Council on Human Relations Committee is not assigned to a representative and convenes as needed.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the mayor's appointments above, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

4. Mayor appointment of Town Council Representative to Aquatics Advisory Board
Mayor Barber appointed Councilman Bishop to the Aquatics Advisory Board.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the mayor's appointment of Councilman Bishop to the Aquatics Advisory Board, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Abstain; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

5. Mayor appointment of Town Council Representative to Recreation Advisory Commission
Mayor Barber appointed Councilman Showalter to the Recreation Advisory Commission.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the mayor's appointment of Mr. Showalter to the Recreation Advisory Commission, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Abstain; Wilson – Aye.

6. Town Council appointment of Committees, Commissions, and Boards:
 - a. Town Council Representative to Town Bikeway – Walkway Committee
Councilwoman Hockett was nominated to the Town Bikeway – Walkway Committee.
 - b. Town Council Representative to Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
Mayor Barber was nominated to the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.
 - c. Town Council Representative to New River Valley Regional Commission
Councilman Wilson was nominated to the New River Valley Regional Commission.
 - d. Town Council Representative to Public Arts Advisory Board
Councilman Jenkins was nominated to the Public Arts Advisory Board.
 - e. Representative and Alternate to New River Valley Agency on Aging Board
Councilwoman Hicks was nominated to the New River Valley Agency on Aging Board.
 - f. ~~Representative to Virginia Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport Authority Board~~

Item removed per adjustment of the agenda

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the appointments of Town Council to the above committees, boards, and commissions, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

7. Town Council reaffirmation of Town Council Code of Ethics

Councilwoman Hicks expressed that she felt in the past the Code of Ethics had been used against her. Mrs. Hicks expressed that instead of it being ethical she felt it has been subjective. She stated that she would vote in favor of the Code of Ethics in hopes that Council would continue to be civil and kind to each other and remember that they were in the Council seats to serve the community.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the reaffirmation of the Town Council Code of Ethics, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

8. Town Council reaffirmation of Town Attorney Engagement Policy

Mayor Barber noted there were no changes to the Town Attorney Engagement Policy.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the reaffirmation of the Town Attorney Engagement Policy, seconded by Councilman Jenkins. Town Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

B. Closed Meeting:

1. Councilman Showalter made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia § 2.2-3711(A)(1), for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body. The Closed Meeting was held for discussion of personnel, specifically the appointment of officers for the year 2023. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.
2. Reconvene in Open Meeting
3. Certification.

Councilman Showalter made a motion 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 Councilman Bishop and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

4. Council action on the matters

C. Appointment of Officers:

1. Town Manager

Councilman Showalter made a motion to reappoint Randy Wingfield as Town Manager. Councilwoman Hockett seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

2. Clerk of Council

Councilman Showalter made a motion to reappoint Tracy Heinline as Clerk of Council. Councilwoman Hockett seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

3. Finance Director/Treasurer

Councilman Showalter made a motion to reappoint Valerie Tweedie as Finance Director/Treasurer. Councilman Jenkins seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

4. Police Chief

Councilman Showalter made a motion to reappoint Mark Sisson as Police Chief. Councilwoman Wilson seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

5. Town Attorney

Councilman Showalter made a motion to reappoint Sands Anderson, PC as Town Attorney. Councilwoman Hockett seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

Tracy Heinlein
Tracy Heinlein, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber
D. Michael Barber, Mayor