

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 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 MARCH 20, 2023 AT 5:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Executive Assistant/Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline; Director of Finance Valerie Tweedie; Chief of Police Mark Sisson; Assistant Police Chief Chris Ramsey; Fire Marshal Curtis Whitt; Building Official Jerry Heinline; Public Relations Director Christina Edney; Engineering Director Mike Kelley; Assistant Director of Engineering, Utilities and Capital Projects Justin St. Clair; Assistant Superintendent of Public Works, Streets Travis Moles; Director of Public Works Jim Lancianese

WORK SESSION

I. Call to Order

Council agreed to Councilwoman Hicks joining the meeting via Zoom.

Mayor Barber asked Council to hold their questions until after each presentation by staff.

II. Revenue Projections and Budget Assumptions

Finance Director Valerie Tweedie presented to Council a detailed overview of the proposed fiscal year 2023 – 2024 Town budget. Mrs. Tweedie reminded Council that the Town’s policy requires the first budget draft be presented to Council at the second Town Council meeting in March.

Mrs. Tweedie proceeded to explain the following proposed water rate increases deferred from FY 2022 – 2023:

- 2022 scheduled rate changes is \$9.00 to \$10.00 per month for the first 1,000 gallons.
- The proposed change in rate for over 1,000 – currently \$11 per 1,000 gallons to \$12 per 1,000 gallons. Estimated increased revenue is \$350,000.
- The current rate to purchase water from the authority sits at \$4.13 per 1,000 gallons.
- The Water & Waste Committee recommended raising the outside rate from 150% of inside rates to 200% of inside rates. The estimated additional revenue is \$150,000.

III. Capital Items

Mrs. Tweedie talked about several large capital projects coming up this year and explained that the Town has reduced funds for some of the capital projects going into next year due to the upcoming larger capital projects. She added that most of the cost is related to the College Street Drainage project. Town Manager Wingfield explained that the Town was still in easement negotiations with property owners in the neighborhood and was still looking at overrun costs for the project. He explained that the most updated information would be taken back to the Water and Waste Committee for review.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned if the Town could request funding from the Montgomery County Public Schools or Montgomery County to modify its stormwater pond at Christiansburg Middle School. Mr. Wingfield expressed that he did not believe the County would help fund the project and if so, it would have to be approved by the Montgomery County School Board. Councilwoman Hockett expressed that she felt there were other requests of funding to the County she may agree with but would not choose this project.

Blacksburg Transit

Mrs. Tweedie touched on operational increases for Blacksburg Transit. She explained that Blacksburg Transit had provided several funding scenarios and all of those involved an increase to the Town. Mrs. Tweedie explained that the scenario proposed by staff at this time is an 24.5% increase to the budget overall and would also put limitations on availability of the Go Anywhere service in Christiansburg. Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren explained that the Go Anywhere transit would still operate during the morning and evening commutes with 2 buses, but a reduction could be seen in the middle of the day instead when the service was not in high demand. It was mentioned that the fixed route bus service of the Blue and Gold routes would not be proposed to change.

Councilman Showalter suggested looking at Radford Transit to facilitate commuting riders in Christiansburg at current funding levels.

Councilman Wilson asked about negotiating the transit increase. He added that unfortunately the Town either pays for the increase or there would not be bus service in Town. Mr. Wilson noted that he felt the service was important to the community and should be provided. He suggested looking at other options before budget approval. Councilwoman Hockett agreed.

Councilman Showalter added that if the Town decreased transit services, then the community should be notified of the impact ahead of time.

Councilwoman Hicks asked if Council could be sent a breakdown of the number of Explorer and Go Anywhere riders. Council agreed that a work session may need to be held prior to budget approval. Mayor Barber also suggested a rider report be provided to Council periodically.

IV. Staffing and Compensation

Town Manager Wingfield spoke about staffing and compensation and explained that staff had asked for a total of seven new positions but that two were being recommended. Mr. Wingfield explained to Council that Rescue had asked for three new positions, Fire had asked for a fire fighter and an administrative assistant, and the Aquatic Center had asked for a special events coordinator as well as an additional custodian. He explained that he was recommending two positions for Rescue that would be funded through Revenue Recovery.

Mayor Barber expressed that having an administrative assistant at both Fire and Rescue handling paperwork was justified due to the directors needing to focus their time elsewhere. Councilman Showalter asked to see current numbers on revenue recovery to see if the administrative assistant position could be justified.

Fire Marshall Curtis Whitt explained that the goal was to have a four-person engine crew and that currently there was limited daytime help and stressed that it was an unsafe situation during fire calls when they were low on help.

Councilman Showalter reminded Council that previously it was discussed that they would eventually need full-time fire and rescue positions at the Town and added that at some point they needed to start moving in that direction. He added that he felt an administrative assistant in those two departments could help relieve the Finance Department regarding billing for services.

Council agreed to add the administrative assistant positions to the proposed budget for final approval. Councilman Showalter added that he would support the positions if it would increase revenue recovery. Councilwoman Hockett expressed that she felt it was justifiable to add both fire fighter and administrative assistant positions. Councilman Jenkins agreed with an administrative assistant but answered no to a fire fighter position. Councilman Bishop agreed with Mr. Jenkins.

School Resource Officers

Mr. Wingfield touched on the current School Resource Officers and explained to Council that those officers would be reassigned to patrol within the Town Police Department.

Tourism Revenue

Mr. Wingfield inquired if Council would like to see the tourism revenue be reassigned to a specific Town department or leave the revenue in Economic Development.

Councilman Showalter expressed that he would like staff to investigate creating a marketing tourism position within the Town. Councilman Jenkins expressed concern that if the Town funds an in-house tourism director and no longer works with the County, he believes this would not allow the new director to carry out the position's charge. Mr. Jenkins explained that if the locality is no longer a part of a tourism organization or DMO (Destination Management Organization) agreement then Virginia Tourism Corporation could restrict access to marketing and other promotional programming. Councilman Showalter expressed that he was not familiar with the value in partnering with the VTC overall. Councilman Jenkins did express that since the Tourism office is a tenant at the Montgomery Museum property, he would abstain from voting on the matter but felt he wanted to express his opinion.

Staff Compensation

Mr. Wingfield spoke to Council regarding the state including a 7.0% COLA and proposed the Town include a 5.0% COLA and 2.0% merit pool in the budget, similar to Blacksburg. He added that Montgomery County and Radford City were including a 7% COLA increase in their budget as well.

Mayor Barber felt the COLA and merit increases were fair to employees, Councilwoman Hockett agreed. Councilman Showalter inquired if the numbers were fair for the area. Mr. Wingfield explained that the Town of Blacksburg is including a 5.0% COLA and 2.0% step increase in their proposed budget, as well as Montgomery County and Radford City are including a 7.0% COLA each.

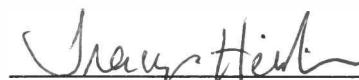
Councilman Bishop inquired if benefits to retirees had been included in the budget proposal as well. Mr. Wingfield noted that retiree benefits had been included in the draft budget.

V. Community Support Applications

Councilman Showalter expressed concern about applicants not applying for community support. Mrs. Tweedie explained that the new policy read that each applicant may be eligible for support funds for 3 of 5 years in a five-year rolling period and felt that some organizations were waiting until next year to apply. She added that there had been no late applicants this year. Mrs. Tweedie asked Council for more guidance as to what they would like to keep in the proposed budget concerning the community support applications. Council agreed to leave the community support in the proposed budget to vote on.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business brought before Council the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.


Tracy Heinlein, Clerk of Council
D. Michael Barber, Mayor