

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 28, 2023 – 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 MARCH 28, 2023, AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Clerk of Council/Executive Assistant Tracy Heinline; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell; Director of Public Works Jim Lancianese; Assistant Director of Public Works, Streets Travis Moles; Director of Engineering Mike Kelley; Director of Planning Benjamin Tripp; Assistant Police Chief Chris Ramsey; Director of Parks and Recreation Brad Epperley; Public Relations Director Christina Edney

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Moment of Reflection

Mayor Barber asked everyone to recognize Ann Carter and Donna Christian, two community members that recently passed, and the community in Nashville, Tennessee that had been affected by the school shooting.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Bishop.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Town Manager Wingfield announced to Council that agenda presenter Dr. John Dooley would not be attending due to illness.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Conditional Use Permit request by Rockstep Christiansburg LLC, property owner, to allow a carnival from April 29, 2023 through May 17, 2023 on the property located at

782 New River Road, NW (Tax Parcel 435 – ((A)) – 41, Parcel ID 007741) in the B-3 General Business District. The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Justin Cole, 5311 Indian Draft Road, Covington, Virginia, spoke on behalf of Cole Shows Amusement Company. Mr. Cole explained that Cole Shows has provided entertainment to the community for the last few years at Uptown Christiansburg and appreciated being welcomed into Christiansburg. Councilman Bishop questioned if the carnival would be larger in size this year. Mr. Cole explained that the carnival would be similar to years past.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of March 14, 2023 and March 20, 2023
- B. Monthly Bill List
- C. Resolution recognizing March 29, 2023 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day
- D. Resolution recognizing April 3-9, 2023 as National Public Health Week
- E. Resolution recognizing April 9-15, 2023 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week
- F. Resolution recognizing the month of April 2023 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month
- G. Request approval of purchase order for Caterpillar Skid Steer Loader and accessories for the Huckleberry Park, total cost \$105,530
- H. Task Order with McDonough Bolyard Paeck, INC., for Construction Engineering and Inspections for the North Franklin Bridge Deck Replacement Project in the amount of \$187,829.61.
- I. Task Order with Rummel, Klepper & Kahl, LLP., for Construction Engineering and Inspections for the Town's 2023 Primary Extension Paving Contract in the amount of \$130,945.47.
- J. Task Order with Whitman, Requardt & Associates, LLP., for Construction Engineering and Inspections for the Town's 2023 Annual Paving Contract in the amount of \$100,000.00.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned item G. of the consent agenda and asked if the skid steer loader had been requested by the department or the contractor. Parks and Recreation Director Brad Epperley explained that the Parks and Recreation Department

had requested the piece of equipment and that request had been part of the previous budget amendment.

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

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Dr. John Dooley to present on the GO Virginia Region 2 initiative (postponed)
- B. Finance Director Valerie Tweedie to present Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget

Finance Director Valerie Tweedie addressed Council and referenced the copies of the amended budget explaining that copies would be available on the Town's website. She noted that Council had held a work session on March 20th to discuss the budget and get direction. Mrs. Tweedie further explained that the Town works with six distinct funds and the narrative of those funds were included in the draft copy of the budget. She explained that the real estate taxes are estimated to increase \$200,000 based on the increase to construction and new building and are estimated to increase approximately \$300,000 based on a rate of \$0.14 per \$100 in assessed value. She also mentioned that a water rate increase, deferred from FY 2022-2023, had been proposed in the budget. Councilwoman Hicks questioned the proposed water rate increases. Mrs. Tweedie explained that it was agreed in the recent work session that the increases would be a part of the proposed budget. Mrs. Hicks asked if the water rate increases could be separated from the budget. Town Manager Wingfield explained that water rate increases would require a separate public hearing and vote from Council.

Mrs. Tweedie talked about the reduction of several capital projects going into next fiscal year due to commitments to very large projects over the next couple years from general fund resources. She noted that there were several ongoing and large capital projects in the water and sewer fund and that the Town had received approval for a low-interest loan through the Virginia Resources Authority for projects to upgrade the plant and reduce future possible Department of Environmental Quality violations. Mrs. Tweedie touched on the Storm Water fund and the proposed projects for Hickock Street improvements, the Industrial Park Storm Water Management, and the expansion of the College Street Drainage project. She spoke about the Blacksburg Transit operational increases and the proposed adjustment to available vehicles for the Go Anywhere service during the day. Mrs. Tweedie noted that three new positions had been added to the proposed budget, two EMS positions for Rescue and an administrative assistant for the Fire and Rescue departments. She included that the state was including a 7.0% COLA in the budget and the Town had proposed a 5% COLA and a 2% merit for Town employees. Mrs. Tweedie spoke about the Community Support grants and the proposed amount for those grants in the budget. Mrs. Tweedie explained that the Town would hold a public hearing for both the water rate increases and the tax increase on May 9th. She added that the budget's public hearing would be held on May 23rd. Mrs. Tweedie explained that Council would consider comments from the public hearings and make

any adjustments to the budget that were appropriate, and the final budget must be approved by June 30, 2023.

Councilman Showalter questioned where the funds from the 2% merit increase would transfer to if the Town employee does not qualify for the increase. Mrs. Tweedie explained that the Town takes 2% of employee wages and creates a pool. That pool is then split amongst the employees based on their targeted wage and anything leftover does go back to the Town's general fund. Councilman Showalter suggested Mrs. Tweedie's presented PowerPoint reflect that some employees receive more than a 2% merit. Mrs. Tweedie explained that it does reflect how much is in the budget for increases.

Councilman Showalter inquired if recovery cost from insurance was included in the proposed budget for the Fire Department and if the Town was still looking at a supplemental insurance for that department's volunteers. Mrs. Tweedie noted that \$50,000 was included in the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year for the Fire Department revenue recovery. Mr. Wingfield explained that the Town is still looking at supplemental insurance for the volunteers and would come back to Council with more information. Councilman Showalter asked about the tourism information in the proposed budget. Mrs. Tweedie explained that the tourism information was left in the proposed budget not necessarily to go to an agency but it's 85% of the 1% of lodging tax that is supposed to be spent on tourism. Councilwoman Hicks mentioned she would like to see funds go towards the Aquatic Center for holiday decorating. Mrs. Tweedie explained this would typically be a line item that the Aquatics Director would need to include in the budget.

Mr. Wingfield added that the College Street Drainage project was in the proposed budget although the current funding would not allow for the piping of the full channel. He explained that included in the budget would be the upper basin pond and some of tie-in pipes for it. He added that it would enclose some of the cross-channel pipes on College Street and an open section near the middle school, in addition to the pond area itself. He explained this would drastically reduce the flow in the area. Mr. Wingfield added that the downside to this would be the channel would stay wet longer than normal because the pond delays the flow. Councilman Wilson explained that Water and Waste Committee had met previously and had agreed to go with this proposal as a phased effort and explained that this would be phase one of the project. Councilwoman Hicks suggested sending pictures to the County of the Middle School stormwater pond flow of water that runs from the pond to College Street so they could help fund the project. Mr. Wingfield noted that the area at the Middle School had been questioned and a collar had been discussed to restrict the flow to College Street, but it had been concluded in the review that the flow from the Middle School was working as designed. Engineering Director Mike Kelley explained that the pond belongs to the County, and it would be their responsibility to maintain it if work were needed. Mr. Wingfield expressed that the County would more than likely not fund part of the project. Councilman Wilson suggested working through County Administrator Craig Meadows and coming back to Council with more information.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Shawn Moore, Evans Street, addressed Council and explained he operated a pressure and soft wash service within the County. Mr. Moore expressed that the management of the wastewater was often overlooked in the area and perceived that it can run-off haphazardly. He noted that stormwater management was important to the community, and it was not in the code as to how it could be discharged into the sanitary system. Mr. Moore urged Council to develop a process so that a fee structure could be set up and the Town could be compliant.

Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren noted that this had been an ongoing project and the Town was looking at the process. Mr. Wingfield explained that there is a list of chemicals and metals that are prohibited from the system and staff would continue to move forward with discussion on the subject.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Street Committee Report/Recommendation (Bishop, Hockett)

1. Plat showing new 20-foot public utility easement and new 7-foot public sidewalk easement on Lot 2, Southwest Hospitality Subdivision at 55 Hampton Boulevard NE.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the Street Committee recommendation to allow two public easements at 55 Hampton Boulevard NE, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

2. Referral to the Planning Commission to study and make recommendation to the Street Committee for potential changes to the plat review process in Town Code, Chapter 40, Subdivision Ordinance, Section 40-3 and other applicable sections.

Councilwoman Hockett explained to Council that the Street Committee had been discussing ways they could improve the ability for Town staff and Council to make decisions related to subdivision ordinances.

Assistant Town Manager Warren explained to Council that the subdivision ordinance governs and reviews the approval process to adjust or vacate lot lines, dedicate access to utility and storm water drainage through easements, dedicating public streets and other rights-of-way, as well as subdividing one parcel into two parcels or more. Mr. Warren talked about the current review process and explained that the current code reads that Town Council will appoint a subdivision agent to review single lot line revisions and lot line vacations, and work with staff to process them in-house. He noted that the agent can consult with the Planning Commission if there were further questions pertaining to a subdivision. The agent prepares the information, according to law, and then goes before Council for approval

Mr. Warren discussed the advantages to the current review process. He talked about Council having the opportunity to see part of the development process in open meetings as well as the public seeing part of the administrative review in open meetings. He added that since Council meets twice a month, they can schedule approvals on a timely basis.

Mr. Warren also spoke about the disadvantages of the current review process and explained that the decisions are different than most Council decisions where most decisions are legislative or discretionary, and subdivision issues are administrative. He added that this adds items to Council's workload and many plats are fairly small. Mr. Warren talked about how other surrounding municipalities handle the review process and that it varies across the board with levels of involvement with staffs, the planning commissions, and the governing bodies. He concluded that the Street Committee had discussed this at three previous meetings and the referral that was recommended to the Planning Commission for further study and to ask if certain reviews and approvals should transfer to staff level, what is the threshold of review at the staff level, and for larger subdivisions, what should the review be. Mr. Warren added that part of this referral would be to make these recommendations to the Street Committee for consideration and the bring before Council. Councilman Showalter noted that if a citizen did not agree with a staff member, then that citizen could ultimately bring it before Town Council if they felt the need.

Councilman Jenkins expressed appreciation for the idea of expediting the process and making it more efficient and did not have an issue. Mr. Jenkins did question if the workload for staff would prove to be too much if the process was changed. Mr. Warren explained that staff vets each plat now and this new process would not add to staff's workload. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that she likes the transparency of the process and would not like to see the change. Mr. Wingfield suggested that with the new process it could come back to Council as a consent agenda item instead for Council action.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the recommendation by the Street Committee for a referral to the Planning Commission to study and make recommendations to the Street Committee for potential changes to the plat review process in Town Code, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A. Discussion of Fiscal 2023-24 Budget

Mayor Barber noted that since discussion concerning the budget had taken place previously in the agenda, unless anyone had any objections, he would proceed with staff reports.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield asked Council for their permission to advertise on the Town's digital signs a Christiansburg High School Hall of Fame event to honor initial inductees into the High School Hall of Fame. Councilman Showalter asked if this could be placed on the Town's website as well. Town Council agreed to the digital advertisement.

Mr. Wingfield also added that he had received a request from the Daughters of the Confederacy to place a wreath at the Town Square several times a year moving forward. Mr. Wingfield expressed that he would limit the approval to just a wreath. Council agreed to the placement of the wreath. Councilman Jenkins suggested preparing a written policy for citizens to follow for future placements. Mr. Wingfield noted that he would prepare a written policy and bring it back to Council for approval.

Mr. Wingfield reported that the Montgomery County Museum had requested to use the Town Square for an arts and craft exhibit display. Council agreed.

Mr. Wingfield noted that a public hearing for a street vacation for a portion of Angle Drive and First Street would be held on April 11th and a public hearing for the budget and water rates. Council agreed to the public hearings and decided that a potential work session may need take place in April for further discussion of the budget.

B. Town Attorney – no report

C. Other Staff – no report

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Bishop reported that Tourism has put out a new bulletin and if there were corrections or questions they should be directed to Mr. Wingfield or himself.

Councilwoman Hicks recognized the 401 Copperhead Robotics team for winning first place at the Glen Allen, Virginia event. Mrs. Hicks asked Mr. Wingfield if there could be a policy or Town Code to help with graffiti and vandalism at businesses in Town. Councilman Showalter noted that even if the Town had an ordinance on graffiti the person that commits the vandalism would still need to be caught and prosecuted before anything could be rectified. Mayor Barber noted that the Town was not allowed to go on private property and fix graffiti but there has been discussion that if the property owner does not fix the graffiti at their property, then the Town could charge a fee for taking care of the graffiti. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that she would like for the Town to help the property owners rather than penalize them for something someone else ruins on their property. Mayor Barber suggested Town staff come together and discuss the graffiti issue in Town.

Councilwoman Hicks also recognized Richard Horne's passing who was an important member of the Town.

Councilman Wilson reported that the Christiansburg Bull and Bones restaurant would be holding a fundraiser on March 30th at 5:00 p.m. and would be serving the Fire Department's award-

winning chili recipe and all proceeds would benefit the Fire Department. Mr. Wilson added that the chili would be a part of the menu at Bull and Bones throughout the spring.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Tracy Heinlein
Tracy Heinlein, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber
D. Michael Barber, Mayor