

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 13, 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 JUNE 13, 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; Public Works Director Jim Lancianese; Superintendent of Public Works, Streets Travis Moles; Chief of Police Mark Sisson; 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 adjustments to the agenda

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Water and sewer rate increase for outside Town limits

Town Manager Randy Wingfield explained to Council that the cost for water and sewer had increased for service outside corporate limits as costs for line maintenance had increased to the Town. He added that the Water Authority had also increased rates. Mayor Barber noted the increase was a recommendation by the Water and Waste Committee.

- B. FY 2023 – 2024 Proposed Budget

Finance Director Valerie Tweedie explained there had been very few changes to the proposed budget since March and noted the community support grant amounts had changed along with carryovers from one year to another.

Chris Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, spoke to Council concerning the Wonder Universe Children's Museum. Mr. Waltz mentioned the financial difficulties the museum had in the year 2020 and explained the Town had helped fund their organization. Mr. Waltz expressed that the Town has given both the Wonder Universe and Montgomery County Museum sufficient financial assistance in the past.

Mr. Waltz referenced an email from a museum board member that had been exchanged with Councilwoman Hicks concerning land purchased by Mrs. Hicks and Mr. Waltz questioned how that subject related to the museum.

He stated that Councilman Jenkins should not participate with the redesigning of the community support forms since he is Executive Director of the Montgomery County Museum.

Mayor Barber mentioned that the Wonder Universe and the Montgomery County Museum figures were not in the current budget and questioned if it should be discussed. Mr. Wingfield stated that if it was related to including or excluding budget items, the Town should listen to the public's comments.

C. Town of Christiansburg's US Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant 2023 Annual Action Plan

Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren explained this grant was funding received annually and the Town had received \$130,000. Mr. Warren added there were two projects listed for this plan. The first being a sidewalk on E. Main Street that currently was in the design process and the second project was an emergency home repair by Habitat for Humanity. He explained the RFP for the home repair is anticipated to be public later in the year.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of May 23, 2023
- B. Award contract to Boxley Materials Company in the amount of \$778,971.15 for construction of the 2023 annual paving work
- C. Contract renewal #1 with AECOM Technical Services, Inc., for annual bridge inspections and engineering services in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 per task order, and with work completed per contract year not to exceed \$500,000
- D. Contract renewal #1 with SCS Engineers, Inc., for professional engineering service, post closure landfill engineering and monitoring in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 per task order, and with work completed per contract year not to exceed \$500,000

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

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

No introductions or presentations

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Paul Leichner, 160 Alexa Lane N.W., questioned Council concerning the order of the citizen comments section on the agenda. He inquired if it could be placed at the end of the agenda instead of where it is currently so speakers could have time to hear the agenda items before speaking. Mayor Barber explained that in the past Council has had the public comment section in different places but expressed that the agenda is posted ahead of time for the public to observe and most individuals like to leave shortly after they make comments. Mr. Leichner also asked about Town Council meeting days and questioned if those could be moved to accommodate his schedule. Mayor Barber explained the meeting dates were discussed and decided at the beginning of the calendar year. Mr. Leichner inquired about the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park and questioned the delay in opening. Mayor Barber explained that the park had just received a backordered electrical panel last week and expressed it had been delayed for nine months.

Casey Abdelnour, 420 Chelsea Loop, addressed Council concerning Wonder Universe. Ms. Abdelnour expressed that the museum was a unique location and fundamental to parents' mental health as well as the children's. She noted that she had formed a petition asking Council to reconsider funding for the museum and to this date had received 309 signatures.

Christine Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, expressed that the Town's budget process was extensive, and staff works hard to complete it. Mrs. Waltz noted there would be several organizations that apply to the Town for the community grant that will be turned away since the new application process is limited to applying 3 out of 5 years. She added that if a nonprofit had financial needs they could come before Council and address them accordingly.

Jessica Jeter, 165 Wisteria Drive, Board Chair of Wonder Universe, explained to Council that she had located to Christiansburg to serve families and expressed that Wonder Universe currently serves 600 Christiansburg families. Ms. Jeter explained that Wonder Universe was a great destination and visitors come from various surrounding areas. She added that the museum exists because of community support and asked Council to reconsider funding.

David Hagan, Shelor Motor Mile, spoke to Council concerning the bid for the naming rights RFP he had submitted with the Town and continued to explain that his bid pertained to what the Town had asked for originally. Mr. Hagan added that he felt this situation made him look unfavorable to the community. Mr. Hagan expressed that the Town should have retracted the RFP and went in a different direction. He talked about the urgency in finding a sponsor for the

new park and added there was not a great deal of time to do so. Mr. Hagan expressed that the Town should take responsibility and thought that he deserved an apology.

Doug Adkins, 1050 Cambria Street, expressed to Council his family has visited Wonder Universe frequently with their child. Mr. Adkins explained that the museum had been a great place to go during the pandemic. He asked Council to reconsider funding for Wonder Universe.

Devin Tobin, 235 Robin Hood Drive, spoke to Council concerning Wonder Universe and expressed that the museum relies on various streams of income and the Town of Christiansburg helps enhance programs at the museum. Ms. Tobin explained that caregivers find mutual support and the children learn many things including important social skills. She added that Wonder Universe works with the area schools and nonprofits in the community and asked Council to reconsider funding.

Dr. Brianne Bailey, 960 S. Jefferson Forest Lane, Blacksburg, Virginia, expressed that a large portion of her patients live in Christiansburg. Dr. Bailey noted that she had been on the Board of Directors for Wonder Universe since 2020 and was their Financial Development Chair as well. She added that Wonder Universe was a positive financial development for the Town of Christiansburg and Montgomery County. Dr. Bailey explained that play for children has a positive impact and Wonder Universe provides them a safe space to play. She added that the All Program provides low-income families financial assistance and explained there is a growing need to support these families. Dr. Bailey urged Council to reconsider funding the museum.

Tessa Wright, 5951 Hogans Retreat Road, Radford, Virginia, addressed Council and explained she currently was employed in Christiansburg and serves as a Finance Chair for Wonder Universe. Ms. Wright added that the museum was a safe place for children to feel free and express themselves. She included that the museum needed funding to help meet increased demands such as insurance, supplies, rent, and utilities. Ms. Wright asked Council to reconsider funding the museum.

Marsha Smith, 2352 Crab Creek Road, thanked Town Council for their support of Wonder Universe in the past and urged Council to continue that support. She noted that play for children is important for development in social skills and life skills. She talked about the various play stations at the museum where children can be creative and explained that the setting was organized to encourage cooperative play and a corner stone for learning which creates respectable citizens for the future.

Beth Umberger, 915 College Street, addressed Council and stated that she had spent the morning at Wonder Universe and noted the numerous play stations at the museum. Ms. Umberger spoke about how play groups were important not only for children but their parents as well. She added that when she visited Wonder Universe she was asked if she needed assistance in paying the entrance fee. She noted that if she had needed the assistance, they would have discounted the fee or even waived it completely.

Paul Leichner, 160 Alexa Lane, expressed his support for Wonder Universe and thought it was a great program.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks reported that she would like to set a meeting date for the next Central Business Committee. Councilman Jenkins noted that Mr. Warren was working on the schedule for after the July 4th holiday.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Rezoning request by RWW36, LLC, property owner, and Christiansburg VA (SEQ US Highway 460 and Roanoke) LLC, applicant, to rezone approximately 1.976 acres located at the southeast corner of US Route 460 Bypass and Roanoke Street (Tax Parcel 529 – ((A)) – 48, Parcel ID 230045) from B-3 General Business to I-1 Limited Industrial. The property is partially designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The Public Hearing was held on May 23, 2023.

Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve the rezoning of approximately 1.976 acres located at the southeast corner of US Route 460 Bypass and Roanoke Street with proffers, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

- B. Conditional Use Permit request by RWW36, LLC, property owner, and Christiansburg VA (SEC US Highway 460 and Roanoke) LLC, applicant, to allow an automobile body shop on approximately 1.976 acres located at the southeast corner of US Route 460 Bypass and Roanoke Street (Tax Parcel 529 – ((A)) – 48; Parcel ID 230045), currently zoned B-3 General Business and proposed for rezoning to I-1 Limited Industrial. The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The Public Hearing was held on May 23, 2023.

Councilman Bishop expressed that he did not want the property to become a cluttered area.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the conditional use permit to allow an automobile body shop at the southeast corner of US Route 460 Bypass and Roanoke Street as recommended by the Planning Commission, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

- C. Rezoning request by Shepherd Contracting LLC, property owner, to rezone approximately 2.00 acres located at 4600 Roanoke Street (Tax Parcel 503-(A)-37, Parcel ID 010304) from B-1 Limited Business to B-3 General Business. The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was held on May 23, 2023.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the rezoning of approximately 2.00 acres located at 4600 Roanoke Street with proffers, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

D. Conditional Use Permit request by Shepherd Contracting LLC, property owner, to allow a contractor's equipment storage yard on approximately 2.00 acres located at 4600 Roanoke Street (Tax Parcel 503 – ((A)) – 37; Parcel ID 010304) currently zoned B-1 Limited Business District B-1 and proposed for rezoning to B-3 General Business. The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was held May 23, 2023.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the conditional use permit located at 4600 Roanoke as recommended by the Planning Commission, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

E. Vacation of unbuilt right-of-way vacation request for an unimproved 0.169-acre portion of the eastern most end of Farmview Road, NE right-of-way. The Public Hearing was held on May 23, 2023.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the vacation of unbuilt right-of-way vacation request for the eastern most end of Farmview Road, NE, seconded by Councilman Jenkins. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

F. Conditional Use Permit request by RWW 36 LLC, property owner, and Denstock LLC, Applicant, to allow a planned housing development of 209 multi-family residential dwelling units on approximately 18.77 acres located at the terminus of Farmview Road., consisting of all of approximately 14.38 acres (Tax Parcel 436 - ((A)) – 41, Parcel ID 017576; an approximately 3.31 acre portion identified as Tax Parcel 436-((A))-38, Parcel ID 021678; an approximately 0.14 acre portion identified as Tax Parcel 436-((A))-36, Parcel ID 021677; all of approximately 0.77 acres of Tax Parcel 436-((A))-37, Parcel ID 032861; all of Tax Parcel 436-((A))-39, Parcel ID 021679; and all of Tax Parcel 436-((A))-40, Parcel ID 021680) zoned B-3 General Business. The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The Public Hearing was held on May 23, 2023.

Councilwoman Hicks inquired if there would be a bus stop at this development. Mr. Wingfield explained that when a large complex was built the Town normally communicates with Blacksburg Transit to add a stop at that location. He added that BT was aware of the new development and that service should not be a problem as it would be close enough to N. Franklin Street for a route deviation if a service stop was not added.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the conditional use permit to allow a planned housing development at the terminus of Farmview Road as recommended by the Planning Commission, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

G. School Resource Officers (Wilson and Hockett)

Mayor Barber provided a quick history of recent events concerning School Resource Officers. He noted that in July 2022 the Town had requested a meeting with Montgomery County to discuss funding for Town Officers in Montgomery County Schools. He added that the Town felt the County should consider funding for Blacksburg area schools as well. Mr. Barber explained that on October 24, 2022 the County denied a meeting with the Town for the reason that they felt the process was operating well. He noted that in early 2023 the Town responded and asked for another meeting with Montgomery County, and they have yet to respond. Mr. Barber explained that at the April 16, 2023 Board of Supervisors meeting there were seven School Resource Officers allocated for the County's budget. He noted that the Town's request was for approximately \$200,000 annually for Town Officers to remain during regular school season.

Councilman Wilson expressed that the Town had asked the Board of Supervisors to meet as two governing bodies to decide on a mutual plan and he felt it was upsetting they had not responded to the request. He reminded the public that the schools belong to Montgomery County and the Town has gladly placed officers in several schools in the past and now is asking for reimbursement. Mr. Wilson expressed the need to have this correct information relayed to the public so the community would be aware.

Councilwoman Hockett expressed that she believed everyone wanted the same outcome, which was to have officers in all the schools. Mrs. Hockett noted that the current Town officers and students have good relationships and would like to see that maintained. She added that they were in a time crunch and the discussion needed to happen before July 1, 2023.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed that all children are important in the schools, and it was the County's responsibility to take care of those children while in school. She added that SROs are necessary and was glad Mayor Barber placed the information out to the public.

Councilman Showalter questioned the timeline for an officer to become an SRO. Mayor Barber explained that it could take 5 years. He added that in order to have a qualified SRO they needed 2 years' experience on the road as well as training for the SRO position. Mr. Barber also added that if the officer was a new hire, they would have to complete the required police academy training which would take 11 months.

Councilman Bishop expressed that he was against pulling the School Resource Officers out of the schools but noted that he would like to see the County reimburse for Town officers. He agreed that the relationships between the officers and students were very important.

Councilman Showalter stated that he felt this was a reasonable ask and expressed concern the County has not wanted to meet with the Town. Mr. Showalter expressed appreciation to Mayor Barber for reflecting the timeline of the communication with Montgomery County.

Councilman Jenkins agreed with Councilman Bishop and explained he had not wanted the officers pulled from the schools. He also expressed the need for a meeting with Montgomery County.

Mayor Barber inquired if Council would like to vote to place Town officers back in the schools.

Councilman Showalter noted that he was not willing to vote until a meeting takes place with the Board of Supervisors. He added that he appreciated Chief Sisson and Sheriff Partin's efforts in a resolution but that it was Town Council's and the Board of Supervisors' decision to make. Mr. Showalter expressed concern that if the Town placed the officers back in the schools the County may not be supportive financially. He added that the Town needed the County's permission to place them in the schools.

Mayor Barber noted that Town Manager Wingfield and County Administrator Meadows had been working on a meeting date.

H. Board of Zoning Appeals application review

Mayor Barber explained that the Town had received an application from Matthew Estes for the Board of Zoning Appeals position.

Matthew Estes addressed Council and explained that he had been a member of the community for five years and was employed with Moog in Blacksburg.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed that she was grateful Mr. Estes had applied and asked what made him want to serve on the Board. Mr. Estes explained he had seen the Town vacancy and had been searching for a civic position in the community.

Mr. Wingfield noted that Mr. Estes' application would be a recommendation to the Circuit Court and Town Attorney Broughton would draft a petition signed by the mayor.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to recommend Matthew Estes to the Board of Zoning Appeals, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield reported that the Town had received 8 applications for the Police Chief position and would like further direction from Council on how to proceed. He added

that both Councilwoman Hockett and Councilman Wilson were part of the committee and would set the first meeting. Mayor Barber noted that Billy Hanks, Debbie Sherman-Lee, and John Tutle would serve on the committee as well as himself (non-voting member). Mr. Wingfield added that these could be closed sessions.

B. Town Attorney

Town Attorney Reid Broughton reported that he had received an email from the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce stating they had partnered with MCEAP (Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program) to aid citizens in the area. He explained there would be a collection box in his office and items could be dropped off at the Chamber office as well until June 28th.

C. Other Staff – no report

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Showalter reported on the Parks and Recreation Commission and noted that senior, adult, and youth memberships were rising at the Recreation Center.

Mr. Showalter spoke about the free annual cancer screenings the Recreation Center provides to the community and encouraged individuals to attend. Mr. Showalter added that it was nice to see Town Staff involved in the community.

Councilman Bishop reported that the Aquatic Center's summer camp was full and a great program for area children.

Councilwoman Hicks reported that the Agency on Aging Board of Directors meeting would take place on June 22nd in Fairlawn. Mrs. Hicks added that volunteers were needed, and the agency helps so many in the community.

Mrs. Hicks noted that she had been questioned concerning her voting privileges regarding the Board and expressed that it is not a conflict for her to serve or vote regarding the Board since she is not compensated for her service.

Mrs. Hicks also touched on non-profits in the community and expressed it was healthy to place a limit on applying for grants through the Town. She noted that the community could also give towards non-profits as well. Mrs. Hicks addressed David Hagan from Shelor Motor Mile and expressed that he had accomplished good things for the community and apologized concerning the bid for sponsorship to the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park.

Councilwoman Hockett thanked everyone for their public comments concerning Wonder Universe and expressed that it was great to see cultural museums in Town as well as all the support.

Mrs. Hockett spoke regarding David Hagan and expressed that she agreed with his comments concerning the bid for sponsorship of the new park. She added that his bid was much appreciated and did not believe there was negative intentions from the Town, stating that at the end of the process the Town desired something different. Mrs. Hockett expressed that Shelor Motor Mile did not deserve anger from the public and apologized to Mr. Hagan.

Councilman Wilson reported there would be a Water and Waste Committee meeting on June 14th.

Mr. Wilson added that he believed most of the comments from Mr. Hagan were concerning him and explained that the paper did not provide the full context of his statement. Mr. Wilson said that he was replying to Councilwoman Hockett's statement regarding keeping the \$500,000 sponsorship with a change to a 5-year title placement sponsorship. Mr. Wilson also apologized to Mr. Hagan for any kind of miscommunication.

Councilman Jenkins apologized to Mr. Hagan for how the sponsorship bid process was handled. Mr. Jenkins stated that he would consult with Councilwoman Hicks and Mr. Warren concerning scheduling the next Central Business meeting. He also added that he was thankful for the public comments concerning Wonder Universe and empathized with them, stating that he had been in favor of funding. Mr. Jenkins expressed that he supported the application process to fund non-profits. He also noted that the most recent news article by Channel 7 news concerning a petition for the Montgomery Museum support for funding should be corrected. He explained that the paper listed organizations the Town rejected for funding, but Mr. Jenkins explained that several of the organizations had not applied. He explained there were only three organizations that had actively applied for funding which were rejected: Live, Work, Eat, Grow; the Montgomery Museum; and the Wonder Universe Children's Museum. Mr. Jenkins noted also that the community grant funding is less than 1% of the Town's operating budget.

Mayor Barber communicated that he had a discussion with Mr. Hagan concerning the new park RFP and understood his point of view. He added that the Town had presented the bid incorrectly. Mr. Barber also added that Mr. Hagan had been generous and commended him. Mayor Barber asked Council if they would like to place Wonder Universe on the present agenda or would they prefer the next meeting. He added that there could be a budget amendment concerning the museum. Council agreed that the Wonder Universe should not be placed on the present agenda.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.


Tracy Heinline Clerk of Council


D. Michael Barber, Mayor