

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 25, 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 JULY 25, 2023, AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor Samuel M. Bishop; Johana Hicks; Tanya Hockett; Casey Jenkins (via phone); 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; Small Business Solutions Manager Amanda Hebert; Public Works Director Jim Lancianese; Superintendent of Public Works, Streets Travis Moles; Human Resources Generalist Danette Poole; Lieutenant Tim Brown; Assistant Police Chief Chris Ramsey; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Director of Engineering Mike Kelley; Police Officer Aaron Durham; Police Officer Jarrett Rhodes; Police Officer Jon Gunter

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barber announced that Councilman Jenkins has asked to join the meeting via telephone.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to allow Councilman Jenkins to join the meeting via telephone, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Abstain; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

A. Moment of Reflection

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Hicks.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

None

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

No public hearings

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of July 11, 2023 and July 19, 2023
- B. Monthly Bill List
- C. Contract with Century Engineering, LLC. for Professional Engineering Services on the Design of the Stafford Drive Signal at Peppers Ferry Road Project in the amount of \$412,216.00.
- D. Contract with Whitman, Requardt, and Associates, LLP. for Professional Engineering Services on the Design of the Cambria Trail, Phase I Project in the amount of \$689,218.55.
- E. Request approval of two purchase orders for a new 2024 Freightliner cab and chassis outfitted with new snowplow and salt application equipment. Both purchase orders together total \$249,054.57.

Councilwoman Hicks 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. Small Business Solutions Manager Amanda Hebert to present on the proposed community-wide business launch program, Launch Christiansburg!

Amanda Hebert addressed Council and explained that most community businesses were started by local entrepreneurs and that businesses launched by local residents were more sustainable. Mrs. Hebert noted that during COVID19, 1.2 million small businesses permanently closed by October 2020. She added that in the Town of Christiansburg there are 338 underutilized commercial properties and with Launch Christiansburg! one of the primary goals is to assist in filling some of those vacant commercial spaces. Mrs. Hebert explained that Launch Christiansburg! is a 10-week business development educational program that culminates with competitive process ultimately awarding up to \$5,000 cash in business investment grants with the requisite that the business locates within Christiansburg. She added that the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce would be donating one-year memberships to the program winners and the program participants would be offered continued support and mentorship.

She noted that in order for this program to be successful it would depend on the success of fundraising efforts, completion of the training program for businesses, success of marketing efforts, community interest, and scheduling. Mrs. Hebert spoke about the funding needs and opportunities for the Launch Christiansburg! program and touched on the sponsorship levels that would be available. She explained that all levels would include a sponsorship listing on the Town's website as well as a participation flyer.

Councilman Bishop questioned how long a sponsorship would be recognized on the Town's website. Mrs. Hebert explained that it would be recognized throughout the length of a program cycle and the hope was that the program would continue annually. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that she would like to see new business fees waived. Councilman Wilson noted that Launch Christiansburg! had great potential for good success. Mrs. Hebert added that a panel of judges would decide on the top grants and reiterated that the Chamber of Commerce had made a verbal commitment to be a sponsor to this program. Mayor Barber expressed that there had been positive feedback from individuals Mrs. Hebert has met with over the last few months. Councilman Jenkins noted Mrs. Hebert's hard work and research and expressed that she has secured a solid foundation for this position.

Mayor Barber recognized and welcomed two Girl Scouts at the Council meeting and the girls explained they were there to earn their communications badge.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Karen Swenson, 205 Phoenix Boulevard, NW, Cambria Crossing addressed Council and explained that a 200-person petition had been signed to request stopping the funding for the connector road that will run behind Cambria Crossing. Ms. Swenson read the petition to Council and expressed that the connector road would devalue properties, upset walkers and bikers, and disrupt wildlife in the area. She added that although the connector road could relieve traffic problems, she felt it would only be a temporary fix.

Kathy Rader, 215 Phoenix Boulevard, NW, expressed that Christiansburg was a peaceful town and the residents were very kind, patient and welcoming. Ms. Rader spoke about the connector road and asked Council to reconsider requesting funding. She expressed that when roads were not well planned or too close to neighborhoods it would likely cause issues as explained by Ms. Swenson. Ms. Rader noted the work that had been done for the connector road but expressed hope that Council would change their minds and stop funding requests for the project. She also expressed concern for the intersection located at Phoenix Boulevard and Cambria Street, NW.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks reported that the Central Business Committee had met recently and spoke about how to assist more businesses in the Town and expand façade grant opportunities to other areas in Christiansburg.

Councilman Jenkins added that the façade grant application was in its final draft form. Mr. Jenkins added that the Public Arts Advisory Board met last week and was currently moving forward in project selection.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A. Conditional Use Permit request by Burch Properties LLC, property owner, and Kevin Lagos, lessee, to allow a public billiard parlor and poolroom on the property located at 1635 N. Franklin Street (Tax Parcel 466 – ((A)) – 20C; Parcel ID 013214) 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. The Public Hearing was held on July 11, 2023.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the conditional use permit request by Burch Properties LLC located at 1635 N. Franklin Street as recommended, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

B. Rezoning request by Summit Community Bank, Inc., property owner, to rezone the property located at 100 Akers Farm Road (Tax Parcel 466 – ((22)) – 1; Parcel ID 100283) from B-1 Limited Business to B-3 General Business. The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The Public Hearing was held on July 11, 2023.

Councilman Jenkins expressed that he would abstain from voting on this rezoning request due to Summit Community Bank sponsoring an upcoming event for the Montgomery Museum of Art and History.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the rezoning request by Summit Community Bank, Inc. to rezone the property located at 100 Akers Farm Road, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Abstain; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

C. Recommendation to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors for Reappointment of Mike Barber to the Montgomery-Blacksburg-Christiansburg Development Corporation for a term of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2026

Councilwoman Hicks questioned how many meetings were held each year. Mayor Barber noted that meetings were held quarterly, and members were not reimbursed for participating.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the recommendation to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors for reappointment of Mike Barber to the Montgomery-Blacksburg-Christiansburg Development Corporation, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

D. Community-wide business launch program, Launch Christiansburg!

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the community-wide business launch program, Launch Christiansburg!, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

E. Discussion of Police Chief position

Mayor Barber explained that Police Chief Mark Sisson would be retiring August 31, 2023. He added that Council had appointed a committee that included citizens as well as two Council members. He added that the Police Chief position was advertised, and eight total applications were received, two of which were internal Town employees. Mayor Barber explained that the committee met and narrowed the applicants down to two. He announced that Council had met on July 24th and interviewed Lieutenant Tim Brown and Major Chris Ramsey and after discussion they had voted unanimously to appoint Major Chris Ramsey as Police Chief effective September 1, 2023. Councilman Jenkins had been absent for the meeting but fully supported Council's decision. Mayor Barber noted that both were great candidates for the position and added that Chris Ramsey was well qualified to assume the position. Mayor Barber congratulated Mr. Ramsey who expressed that not only was it a privilege to serve, but an honor of a lifetime. Mr. Ramsey added that Christiansburg was a great community and thanked the Mayor and Council for their faith in him. Mr. Ramsey also thanked fellow officers Aaron Durham, Jarrett Rhodes, Jon Gunter, and Lieutenant Brown for their support and attendance at the Council meeting.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Town Manager Wingfield reported that the annual VML Conference would be held October 8 – 10, 2023 and asked Council to reach out to the Town Clerk with any interest in attending. Mr. Wingfield noted that Fire Chief Billy Hanks had expressed interest in holding the Fire Prevention parade on October 10th which would coincide with the VML Conference. Council agreed to cancel the Town Council meeting on October 10, 2023.
- B. Town Attorney
- C. Other Staff

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.


Tracy Heirlie, Clerk of Council


D. Michael Barber