

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 12, 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 DECEMBER 12, 2023, AT 7:00 P.M.

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

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; Police Chief Chris Ramsey; Engineering Director Mike Kelley; Public Works Director Jim Larianese; Assistant Public Works Director, Streets Travis Moles; Fire Chief Billy Hanks; Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Moment of Reflection

Councilwoman Hockett acknowledged Councilmember's attire explaining that their shirts represented support for volunteer firefighter Jeremy Compton who is battling cancer. Mrs. Hockett added that the shirts could be ordered through the Fire Department and all proceeds would go directly to the Compton family.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Hicks.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Barber noted that the presentation by New River Valley Regional Commission Executive Director Kevin Byrd had been postponed until further notice.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

No public hearings

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of November 14, 2023 and December 5, 2023
- B. Monthly Bill List
- C. Contract approval for Assured Data Protection's 3-year contract from \$87,840 to \$118,800
- D. Contract approval for Microsoft Enterprise Agreement purchased through SHI International for \$129,582.57
- E. Contract approval for Bond Counsel for VRA bond issue for \$14,500 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant
- F. Change Order #3 for the 2023 Annual Paving Contract in the amount of \$117,516.56
- G. Set Town Council Public Hearing for February 13, 2024 for a Conditional Use Permit request by Shah Development LLC, property owner, and Kevin Conner, applicant, to allow single-family dwellings at a maximum of one single-family dwelling on each of their lots meeting the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District standards on approximately 0.430 acres located at 685 Liberty Street, N.E. (Tax Parcels 528 – ((2)) – 46A; 48A, and 50A; Parcel IDs 160387, 002758, 160388) zoned B-3 General Business. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- H. Set Town Council Public Hearing for February 13, 2024 for a Conditional Use Permit request by Last Resort, Inc., property owner, and Joseph L. Simmons, applicant, to allow multiple-family dwellings (apartments) meeting the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District standards on approximately 4.841 acres located on the south side of Cambria Street, N.W., west of the Town of Christiansburg Recreation Center at 1600 Cambria Street, N.W. (Tax Parcels 466 – ((A)) - 8C and 8C2; Parcel IDs 032702, 210032) zoned B-3 General Business. There is not a proposed number of units for the development. The maximum permitted residential density is 20 dwelling units per acre. The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- I. Set Town Council Public Hearing for February 13, 2024 for a Conditional Use Permit request by RWW 36 LLC, property owner, and Denstock, LLC, applicant, for an amendment to a previously approved planned housing development of 209 multi-family residential dwelling units on approximately 18.77 acres located at the terminus of Farmview Road, N.E. (all of approximately 14.38 acres identified as 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.

- J. Set Town Council Public Hearing for February 13, 2024 for a vacation petition of an unimproved 0.047-acre portion of the eastern most end of Farmview Road, N.E. right-of-way.

Councilman Wilson 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; Wilson – Aye.

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. New River Valley Regional Commission Executive Director Kevin Byrd to provide an update on Commission activities and a presentation with a collaborative New River Valley pandemic response timeline (postponed)
- B. Police Chief Chris Ramsey to introduce Officers Nathan Lucas and Chandler Scott as the Police Department's newest academy graduates.

Police Chief Ramsey introduced Officers Nathan Lucas and Chandler Scott to Council and noted the training and experience each officer would bring to the Police Department.

- C. Town of Christiansburg Annual Audit presented by Scott Wickham of Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates CPAs/Consultants and Finance Director Valerie Tweedie

Finance Director Valerie Tweedie introduced Scott Wickham of Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates CPAs/Consultants. Mr. Wickham referenced the most recent audit report for the Town and expressed that the Town was in solid financial shape. He further clarified that it was an unqualified opinion, which is the cleanest opinion possible, and there were no material weaknesses identified. Mr. Wickham noted that staff had worked diligently throughout the year, especially considering the new implemented software. He explained that the new Munis software allowed their consultants to have a log in to view items remotely which made it considerably more efficient for them.

Mr. Wickham spoke about the Town's unassigned fund balance, which is funds available for the Town moving forward, and explained that \$26.8 million was available for use.

- D. Finance Director Valerie Tweedie to present the Budget amendment #2 for FY 2023-2024

Mrs. Tweedie explained to Council that bids had been received for the Industrial Park Stormwater Improvement Project and that the bids had been much higher and would not be able to accept the bids until funds are properly appropriated. She explained that the budget request was to increase the stormwater improvement project budget by \$309,000.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Jeff Akers, 345 Howery Street, congratulated Councilwoman Hicks and Councilwoman Bowman on recent election results. Mr. Akers expressed concern about campaign signs in the Town and that he had been asked to turn his digital campaign sign off on multiple occasions. He also expressed that he thought he was not breaking a law but an ordinance instead. Mr. Akers noted that the Town could use digital highway construction signs for advertising events but no one else could and he felt disappointment with the situation.

Joanne Price, Christiansburg business owner, expressed concern about the recent budget amendment and the funds voted on to be given to the Montgomery Museum of Art and History. Mrs. Price added that not only did the museum house historical documents of the Town of Christiansburg, but the Montgomery County Clerk's Office did as well and asked why they were in two different places. Mrs. Price felt it was a conflict of interest if Councilman Jenkins were involved in discussion or votes concerning this type of funding. She asked Council to table the vote until these issues could be fixed and there was more transparency provided to the tax paying community.

Chris Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, also expressed concern for the funding of the Montgomery Museum. Mr. Waltz suggested that Council waited until Councilman Showalter was not in attendance so the mayor could break a tie vote concerning the funds for the museum. He expressed concern that there was a conflict of interest if Councilman Jenkins was involved in the museum discussion and added that grant paperwork had been filled out asking for funds for the organization that Mr. Jenkins is a director of. Mr. Waltz read the Town's code of ethics that stated that Councilmembers should work for the common good of the people of Christiansburg, not for private or personal interest. Mayor Barber clarified that Councilman Showalter was aware the item would be on the agenda but still decided not to attend the Council meeting.

Nora Bolte, Executive Director of Wonder Universe, expressed the importance of Wonder Universe interacting with the children in the community. Ms. Bolte explained that the museum boosts tourism and filters in guests outside of the New River Valley. She added that the museum is a trusted education partner with all Montgomery County Schools and explained that last year 1,572 children from the area schools were able to visit the museum during fieldtrips. Ms. Bolte included that the museum offers a Food for All program that supports children and their families that receive food assistance to enjoy free or reduced daily admission. Ms. Bolte thanked Council for their support of the Montgomery Museum as well.

Bob Beard, resident of Christiansburg, spoke about inflation and the concern that the Town's spending was irresponsible. Mr. Beard added that taxes had increased and spoke about utility bills increasing as well and expressed that now was not the time to spend carelessly.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Central Business Committee Report – Jenkins, Hicks

1. Recommendation for 2023 Façade Grant Awards

Councilman Jenkins explained that four Façade Grant applications had been received and three were chosen to be funded at \$5,000 each. He explained that South View Development had been chosen and would be creating a ramp across the full front façade to make it more accessible to the public. Mr. Jenkins added that 250 N. Franklin Street had been granted \$5,000 to turn the property into a vet clinic. Councilman Jenkins explained that 630 Depot Street, N.E. had been included in the grant and the money would be used to paint front facing doors and windows sills. Councilwoman Hicks noted that 630 Depot Street, N.E. had requested help for landscaping at their property as well and explained that she would like to see the full amount awarded to the property, but landscaping maintenance would not be included.

Councilman Jenkins made a motion to approve the recommendation for the 2023 Façade Grant Awards, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Councilwoman Hicks thanked the Façade Grant Selection Committee for their hard work.

B. Street Committee Report – Hockett, Bishop

1. Subdivision Plat showing Harkrader Townhomes on Tax Parcel Number 556 – ((A)) – 84 (creating 49 new lots)

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the recommendation by the Street Committee for a subdivision plat showing Harkrader Townhomes, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

2. Easement Plat on Tax Parcel Numbers 528 – ((A)) – 72 and 528 – ((A)) – 65 prepared for Montgomery County Board of Supervisors

Councilwoman Hockett noted there were three easements, two easements that were existing and would be relocated and dedicated to the Town to continue to access the utilities. She explained the third easement would be for a waterline.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the recommendation by the Street Committee for an easement plat on the above tax parcel numbers, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Consideration of Community Support funding request for Wonder Universe (Hockett and Bishop)

Councilwoman Hockett explained that she had voted previously to support funding for Wonder Universe and expressed that the community had come out in significant numbers to support funding. Mrs. Hockett explained she had researched nonprofits and why they are so important to the community. She had found that nonprofits provide a large economic impact to their communities and expressed that Wonder Universe was driving business to our uptown and downtown areas. She added that Wonder Universe offered education and enrichment to the children of the community as well as fostering health and wellbeing to the area. Mrs. Hockett expressed that the museum fills roles in the community that otherwise would not be served. Councilwoman Hockett asked Council to reconsider funding for Wonder Universe.

Councilwoman Hicks suggested Council wait until Councilwoman Bowman took her seat with Council so she could be part of the discussion for both Wonder Universe and the Montgomery Museum. Councilman Bishop noted that he had voted against supporting Wonder Universe previously and since then has learned a great deal by visiting Wonder Universe and receiving input.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the community support funding request for Wonder Universe in the amount of \$10,000, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Nay; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Nay.

B. Consideration of Community Support funding request for Montgomery Museum of Art and History (Hockett and Bishop)

Councilwoman Hockett reiterated her previous comments for funding Wonder Universe and explained she felt the same for Montgomery Museum and their services they provided to the area.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the community support funding request for the Montgomery Museum of Art and History in the amount of \$10,000, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Nay; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Abstain; Wilson – Nay.

Due to a tie vote of Council, Mayor Barber voted in favor of funding the Montgomery Museum of Art and History in the amount of \$10,000.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield corrected a public comment remark previously made by Jeff Akers and explained that Town ordinances were considered laws and could be charged as violations of Town code. Mr. Wingfield explained that highway construction trailers used to advertise street closures for Town events, not the events themselves. He added that Montgomery County funding questions or comments should be directed to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Wingfield asked for Council's consideration of the agreement the Town has with Radford City for the Aquatic Center. He explained that under the agreement with Radford City the Town collects \$7,200 semi-annually for 200 users per month and noted that if Radford City goes over the 200-user agreement, they would owe \$6 a person in additional fees. Council agreed to renew the agreement with Radford City.

Mr. Wingfield noted several upcoming holiday events including Santa's Coming to Town, Light Up the Homes for the Holidays, and the Aquatic Center's New Years Splash event.

B. Town Attorney – no report

C. Other Staff – no report

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks reported that the Agency on Aging Board had served 3,322 people in the year 2023. Mrs. Hicks expressed thanks to everyone involved. Mrs. Hicks also expressed gratitude to staff and volunteers that had helped with the Town's Christmas parade and Winter Wonderland.

Councilman Jenkins noted that the Christmas parade was a great success and well attended. He thanked staff for their hard work.

Councilman Wilson reported that the Emergency Services Committee had been reviewing the Emergency Operations Plan document and that an updated version would be available soon. Mr. Wilson added that there is training available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and that staff planned training for select staff and elected officials regarding their role in the case of an emergency. Mr. Wilson added that the future in-house training would be hands-on training for elected officials with law enforcement and emergency services.

Mayor Barber expressed appreciation to Councilwoman-elect Kim Bowman for taking her oath with the Clerk's Office recently. Mayor Barber also mentioned that he could provide Councilwoman Hicks and Councilman Bishop's oaths if they were interested, otherwise they could be sworn in at the next meeting of Town Council. Mayor Barber wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Closed Meeting:

1. Councilman Bishop made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia § 2.2-3711(A)(3), for the discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the

bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. The Closed Meeting is being held for discussion of potential purchase of property located in downtown Christiansburg. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed that she felt this closed meeting should be postponed until next year.

2. Reconvene in Open Meeting

3. Certification

Councilman Bishop 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 Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

4. Council action on the matters

Mayor Barber explained that Council had agreed to Town Manager Wingfield negotiating on behalf of Council for potential purchase of property in the Town. Mayor Barber added that he would also be involved in the upcoming meeting.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

Tracy Hein
Tracy Hein, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber
D. Michael Barber, Mayor