

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 4, 2024 – 7:00 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 4, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Fire and Rescue Chief Billy Hanks; Aquatic Director Terry Caldwell, Police Chief Chris Ramsey

WORK SESSION

I. Call To Order

II. Discussion of Fiscal Year 2024 – 25 Budget

Town Manager Randy Wingfield introduced the agenda and gave a brief description of the topics that would be covered. Mr. Wingfield noted the Town's budget policy requirement of a first draft presentation for the second meeting in March (March 26, 2024).

Budget Assumptions and Revenue Projections

Finance Director Valerie Tweedie gave a brief overview of the trends from last year and the impact of inflation to the area. Mrs. Tweedie noted a projected moderate 1% increase in meals tax for FY 2024-25 and explained the lodging tax was projected to remain a flat revenue for 2025. She included that sales tax was projecting a 2% increase for 2025 and personal property tax and real estate taxes would remain relatively flat for next year. Mrs. Tweedie added that Blacksburg Transit operationally has increased approximately 3% and explained the local funding requirement for FY 2024-25.

Capital

Mrs. Tweedie explained the Town would be reducing some of the capital projects going into next year since there was a commitment to several very large projects over the next couple years.

Mr. Wingfield spoke regarding the pickleball courts at the new Christiansburg Huckleberry Park and explained the \$300,000 allotted for the courts would not fund the construction and lighting. He explained that staff would plan on proceeding with the design with the current FY 2023-2024 budget allocation keeping in mind there is potential for donation of construction of the courts.

Mrs. Tweedie spoke about the Water and Sewer Fund and the ongoing large capital projects in that area. She explained that those ongoing projects were reducing the available fund balance to a low level.

Mrs. Tweedie touched on the Storm Water Fund and explained the proposed projects currently exceed available funds in the Storm Water Fund. She expressed there was hope in receiving added funding for projects such as the Hickock Street Project. She further added that if grant funding did not come in then the support would come from the Town's General Fund. Mrs. Tweedie noted that the Hickock Street Project funds need to be spent soon or the Town risks losing the Revenue Sharing grant.

New position requests

Mr. Wingfield explained there were seven new positions requested for FY 2024-25. He further explained that two of four requested paramedic positions had been evaluated for inclusion in the budget, the two firefighter positions were not recommended, and a Behavioral Health Officer for the Police Department was recommended with partial funding the first year and potential for grant funding for future years. Police Chief Chris Ramsey clarified that the Behavioral Health Officer's first year salary would be completely funded by the state. Council suggested adding one firefighter position to the budget.

Cost of Living Adjustment and Merit Allocations

Mrs. Tweedie explained the Town of Christiansburg was proposing a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and a 2% Merit Allocation for FY 2024-25 for full-time employees.

Blacksburg Christiansburg Montgomery Tourism Office

Mr. Wingfield explained the Town of Christiansburg's funding was at \$179,445 in FY 2023-24 budget and that the Tourism office was due to receive \$180,000 in five Virginia Tourism ARPA grants. It was requested by Councilwoman Hicks and Councilman Wilson that Town involvement in Tourism be placed on the March 12, 2024 Town Council agenda.

Main Street Program

Mr. Wingfield noted that the salary estimate in 2023 was \$67,522 which was based on average salary of Virginia Main Street full-time Executive Directors. He explained the Town has a \$40% benefits multiplier which would be approximately \$95,000. Mr. Wingfield further added that staff was projecting \$110,000 funding for FY 2024-25 budget although currently the Main Street Program was not in the current budget. Councilman Wilson, Councilwoman Hockett, and Councilman Jenkins were in favor of the position. Councilwoman Hicks opposed the position.

NRV Main Street Housing Fund

Mr. Wingfield referenced the February 13, 2024 Town Council presentation and noted the \$39,484 that would be required to commit for the next five budget cycles beginning FY 2024-25.

Community Support


Mrs. Tweedie provided Council with a list of community support applicants and what they are requesting. Councilwoman Hicks requested an update from the Virginia Tech Airport and Mr. Wingfield expressed he would contact Director Keith Holt.


Next steps for budget

Mrs. Tweedie noted there would be a presentation of the proposed budget on March 26, 2024 and any requested work sessions by Council would be determined. She added that public hearings concerning utility rate increases and tax increases would be held if desired and the final public hearing would follow on the actual budget. Mrs. Tweedie noted that comments would be considered from the public hearings and adjustments to the budget would be made if deemed appropriate. She concluded that the deadline for final budget approval was June 30, 2024.

III. Adjournment

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m.


Tracy Heinlin, Clerk of Council


D. Michael Barber, Mayor