

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 28, 2024 – 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 MAY 28, 2024, AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Clerk of Council/Executive Assistant Tracy Heinline; Director of Aquatics Terry Caldwell; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Deputy Director of Finance Katie Miano; Police Chief Chris Ramsey; IT Director Jay Waller

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Moment of Reflection

Mayor Barber mentioned the passing of retired Town Police Captain James Epperly and Memorial Day as items of thought.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Wilson.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

No adjustments to the agenda.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget

Christine Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, addressed Council concerning budgets from previous years and expressed that she could foresee property taxes rising by 2028-29. Mrs. Waltz also noted concern for the many events the Town's Parks and Recreation host and expressed she would like to see those funds go towards hiring firefighters and rescue members instead. She also noted funding for the Town employee stipends for cellphones had been challenged previously by a Councilmember and felt that Council should be looking for ways to cut back on spending.

Patrick Melander, 495 Silver Leaf Drive, referenced past budgets for the Town and expressed concern for the increase in revenues each fiscal year. Mr. Melander also noted the increase in Town taxes and fees the last ten years and the burden it puts on taxpayers. He added that the community would more than likely see a tax increase in the upcoming years and asked Council to be conscious of spending.

With no further public comments the public hearing closed.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of May 14, 2024
- B. Monthly Bill List
- C. Approval of Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) Agreement for Grant No. 21-11 for the Industrial Park Stream Restoration Project
- D. Approval of contract for the Community Gathering Space project (farmers market structure) on Hickok Street to Hill Studio, PC in the amount of \$44,100 for design, construction documents preparation, bidding/negotiation assistance, and construction observation/project close out assistance.

Councilwoman Hicks asked if item D. could be separated from the consent agenda prior to voting. Mrs. Hicks also questioned if this would be a permanent structure on Hickok Street and if the cost of the design was part of the grant the Town had received. Town Manager Wingfield noted the structure would be permanent. Assistant Town Manager Warren explained that it was primarily part of the ARC grant awarded, however in November 2023 Council had approved, as part of the 2023-24 budget amendment number one, to allocate additional funds to the allowable amount of grant dollars available for design. Mr. Warren further explained that it had been the direction of Council to staff--and the staff direction to the designer--that the structure be designed so the street would not be closed. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that she would vote against this item due to the fact she felt it should have gone back to the Central Business Committee for more discussion before coming before Council.

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

Motion Approved

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. IT Director Jay Waller to present on IT operations

IT Director Jay Waller gave a brief history on the IT Department and explained the staff's roles in the department. Mr. Waller expressed that the current state of the IT systems at the Town were very good, and staff has managed to keep all systems safe and effective. He spoke about the many various services provided in the IT Department and noted the over 300-line items of electronic software used by the Town. Mr. Waller also added that one of the many jobs of the IT team is to make sure the Town has policies and governance for those policies in order to maintain efficient systems. He explained that currently they were working on updating the procurement policy that would make procurement of information technology devices and systems more regulated.

Mr. Waller spoke about project management for other Town projects such as Wi-Fi devices and safety cameras for the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park. He also added that the IT Department supported Town staff continuously to find more efficient and effective ways to do their jobs. He gave examples of emerging technology such as devices that are connected back to the internet as well as drones being used for deliveries in the community. Mr. Waller also spoke about cybersecurity challenges within the Town and how the IT Department stays ahead of those challenges with different layered systems and technology. He added that a newer area of technology was artificial intelligence (AI) which is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems. Mr. Waller noted that the IT team was currently part of discussions with a group to bring municipalities together to determine what kind of governance could be needed for this new technology.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Chris Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, referenced Town Code Sec. 2-61 and cited that "If the question under discussion contains several distinct propositions the same shall be divided at the request of any member and a vote taken separately." Mr. Waltz noted that the code did not specify when a Councilmember could request an item be separated.

Matt Hicks, 607 ½ S. Franklin Street, expressed concern for the potential closure of Hickok Street and that closure affecting his business. Mr. Hicks noted the earlier approval for \$44,100 for design on Hickok Street and stated that several in the community were against closing the street. He questioned how many downtown streets would be shut down in the future and asked Council to listen to citizens' concerns. Mr. Hicks suggested a permanent structure for the Farmer's Market at the newly purchased parking area behind the Montgomery Museum instead of Hickok Street.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks reported there would potentially be a Central Business Committee meeting held next week.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Aquatics property ground lease agreement with NRVA, Inc. (H₂Okies)

Councilwoman Hicks questioned what would happen with the building after the 30 – year period in the contract. Councilman Bishop explained that if NRVA, Inc. pulled out of the contract early the building would convert over to the Town. He added that after the 30-year period the lease could be renewed with NRVA, Inc. after the initial period.

Councilwoman Bowman questioned if the children from the middle and high schools would be using the building and how the schedules would work during swim meet events. Mr. Sanford explained there was a mutual agreement between the Aquatic Center and the H₂Okies concerning scheduling and operating. Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell explained that the Aquatic Center would continue operations and the contract would remain the same with the H₂Okies program. Councilwoman Hockett expressed her appreciation for all involved and stated it was a special program for the community.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the Aquatics property ground lease agreement with NRVA, Inc., seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield referenced copies of the Comprehensive Plan Project Update Summary at their seats and explained this was a summary of the public input for the Comprehensive Plan to date. He noted that the Town had received 915 surveys by the March 25th cutoff date. Mr. Wingfield added that the next Rockin' Main event would be held June 8th from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.

B. Town Attorney – no report

C. Other Staff – no report

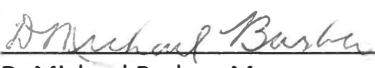
X. COUNCIL REPORTS

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.


Tracy Heinlein, Clerk of Council


D. Michael Barber, Mayor