

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 24, 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 SEPTEMBER 24, 2024, AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline; Public Relations Director Christina Bolt; Planner I Daria Eirich; Neighborhood Services Coordinator Tim Solosky; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Director of Public Works Jim Larianese; Assistant Director of Public Works, Streets Travis Moles; Police Chief Chris Ramsey; Fire Chief Billy Hanks; Deputy Finance Director Katie Miano; 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 Councilman Bishop.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

No adjustments to the agenda

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

No public hearings

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of September 10, 2024 and September 18, 2024
- B. Monthly Bill List

- C. Approval of Task Order #5 to CHA Consulting for Construction Administration and Construction Testing services for the WWTP Biosolids Management Facilities and Headworks Improvements project in the amount of \$480,000
- D. Approval of Task Order #6 to CHA Consulting for Resident Project Representative (RPR) services for the WWTP Biosolids Management Facilities and Headworks Improvements project in the amount of \$487,500

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

Motion Approved

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Planner I Daria Eirich and Neighborhood Services Coordinator Tim Solosky to present on Code enforcement and Neighborhood Enhancement Services

Daria Eirich spoke to Council concerning code enforcement efforts and how it impacts the community. Ms. Eirich explained that Neighborhood Services and Zoning enforce the Christiansburg Town Code including the Zoning Ordinance and the Virginia Property Maintenance Code (VPMC). These codes enforce and support clean neighborhoods, equity in land use, and a general decrease in blighted structures.

Mr. Solosky spoke concerning compliance in code cases and explained that the department's main goal was to build a positive communication between the Town and property owners to work through compliance issues. Mr. Solosky noted that contact with the property owner was important and explained that if contact is not made in person, then notice is provided through door hangers or handouts. He added that an estimated 90% of property owners reach back out to the Town and approximately 8.5% go through abatement, with a few cases closed through the court system. Mr. Solosky added that the final 1.5% are documented "unfounded cases" where the initial inspection did not result in a citation.

Ms. Eirich explained the costs of abatement pertaining to junk/debris and tall grass/weeds and added that those costs were billed to the property with large outstanding fees becoming liens on the property. She explained that the code team meets regularly to discuss current cases, share practices, review law updates, and hold training sessions to benefit staff.

Councilman Bishop asked for the definition of an inoperable vehicle. Ms. Eirich explained that an expired license plate or inspection sticker, or missing engine or wheels on a vehicle were a few signs of an inoperable vehicle and that essentially if the vehicle could not be operated on the public streets that it was considered inoperable.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned how many liens on properties had taken place in the last five years due to abatements. Finance Director Valerie Tweedie noted there were approximately 4 or 5 a year. Ms. Eirich explained there were only a few reasons staff

would abate a property and what goes to court were things the Town could not abate. Mrs. Hicks also asked if the Town enforced towing services. Ms. Eirich explained that the Town will cite the inoperable vehicle, but the Police Department contacts the towing companies. Mayor Barber noted there is a towing list and when the inoperable vehicle is reported, the Police Department goes through the towing list in order so no one company gets all the tows. Police Chief Ramsey explained the tow companies apply to be added to the list and there are certain conditions they must adhere to and if they do not then the department is informed.

B. Treasurer/Finance Director Valerie Tweedie to present on Finance Department operations

Mrs. Tweedie gave a brief history of the Finance Department and noted the vast difference in the department since her arrival in 2009. She explained that then the budget was solely worked by the Assistant Town Manager, there was no purchasing compliance, no purchasing personnel, and minimal grants. Mrs. Tweedie talked about the duties of the Finance Department and what they are responsible for currently. She spoke about the implementation of the new ERP System and noted the last phase of the software implementation would be completed in January 2025. Mrs. Tweedie added that the ERP system has many new features but there was much more that could be expanded upon to streamline the workload of many employees. She referenced Clear Gov, a budget document through the ERP system that would provide a more citizen friendly overview of the budget.

Mrs. Tweedie also spoke to Council concerning the new Director of Finance and Deputy Director of Finance positions. She explained that Council had allowed the Town to hire two additional Deputy Directors to train in order to replace the two retirees.

Mayor Barber thanked Mrs. Tweedie for her hard work throughout the years. Councilwoman Hicks and Councilman Bishop agreed with Mayor Barber and expressed that Mrs. Tweedie had always been a great deal of help to Council. Councilman Wilson questioned if the ERP system had been worth all the hard work. Mrs. Tweedie explained that although some transitions have been difficult there have been big steps forward.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Christo Al Duran, spoke to Council representing Baking is for Lovers. Mr. Duran expressed concern for communication between the business and the Town. He added that he had reached out to the Town for support to increase foot traffic downtown but feels there is a disconnect. Mr. Duran noted that the only email he has received from the Town was concerning meals tax being late. He added that other towns invite small businesses to events and provide discounts to them. Mr. Duran also added they had not received a notification of the Food Truck Rodeo event. He concluded that his business wants the opportunity to have better communication from the Town.

Mayor Barber stated that the Town had addressed the issue of the downtown event in the Events Committee meeting. He noted the Kiwanis Club may not have given prior notice of the

event. Mr. Wingfield added that the plan for moving forward was that the Town would follow up with businesses beforehand, even for sanctioned events.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Bishop reported concern from residents of speeding on Park Street and noted a speed study had been completed between August and September 2024. He explained that the total average was 26.54 MPH and that this average did not meet the threshold of the study program and suggested more speed limit signage instead.

Councilwoman Hicks reported an upcoming Central Business Committee meeting and suggested that Baking is for Lovers participate. Mrs. Hicks noted she understood the business's concerns and wants to make sure they are treated fairly.

Councilman Jenkins reported the Public Arts Advisory Committee met and discussed a mural for the Gravity Real Estate Group building on Roanoke Street.

Councilwoman Bowman requested to form a subcommittee to look at applications for the Façade Grant program.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A. New River Valley Regional Commission office building project financing

Mayor Barber explained there were two options to fund the Regional Commission office building: to finance the project for \$30,485 yearly for 20 years or pay a lump sum of \$400,000. Mr. Wingfield recommended paying the lump sum now and using the extra ARPA money left over from the College Street drainage project that must be utilized by the end of the fiscal year. Councilwoman Hicks asked if there could be a public hearing for this item before spending the funds and if the other localities had agreed to pay into this. Mr. Wingfield explained that some localities were still pending decisions. He added the Regional Commission would need an answer by next week as to what financing option the Town would choose but a public hearing was not required for this amount although a budget amendment would take place before spending the funds.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to move forward with paying a lump sum of \$400,000 to the New River Valley Regional Commission for the office building project, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Nay; Hicks – Nay; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

B. Cooperative Agreement for Radio Technician Service Support Program

Mayor Barber explained this support program was an income producer for the Town of Christiansburg and a renewal of the agreement with Montgomery County and the Town of Blacksburg was required. Mr. Wingfield noted that last year the Town lost income due to

material costs and staff time and because of that the contract was being revised. Mrs. Tweedie noted the loss was relatively small.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the cooperative agreement for the Radio Technician Service Support Program, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

IX. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Town Manager reported a successful blood drive on September 21st at the Rescue building. He noted that 130 individuals had given blood and the drive had raised \$2,575 that was donated to Fire and Rescue.

Mr. Wingfield reported several upcoming events:

- The downtown Homecoming Parade on September 25th at 7:00 p.m.
- The NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet will be held September 28th at 6:00 p.m. at the Inn at Virginia Tech
- The Fire Prevention Parade will be held October 2nd at 7:00 p.m.
- The Water Authority tour scheduled for October 9th at 2:00 p.m.
- A Town Council work session on October 16th at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Wingfield noted that the outstanding items to be discussed included tourism, emergency services request from Montgomery County, the Main Street program, outdoor advertising, and a capital planning session. Councilman Wilson suggested tourism be pushed due to the impending draft of the contract between the Tourism office and the Town. Mr. Wilson also suggested canceling the work session on October 16th due to Council attending the VML Conference October 13 – 15, two days before. Council agreed.

Councilwoman Hicks brought up the subject of tourism and suggested the Town combine the salaries for a Tourism Director and the Small Business Solutions Manager.

Mr. Wingfield reported the Small Business Solutions Manager position had been advertised and interviews would take place beginning next week. Mr. Wingfield inquired concerning the Finance Director position. Council agreed to have a closed meeting on October 8th to meet with the individual that's currently being trained and to discuss personnel items.

- B. Town Attorney
- C. Other Staff

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Barber reported the Town staff did a great job handling the Rockin' Main - Food Truck Rodeo as well as the Wilderness Trail Festival.

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 on the northern side of Roanoke Street for Public Works purposes and for discussion of potential purchase of property in the N. Franklin Street – Peppers Ferry Road area for emergency services purposes. Councilman Wilson seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

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 Councilman Wilson and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

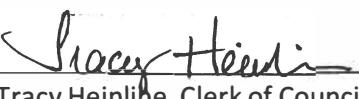
Motion Approved

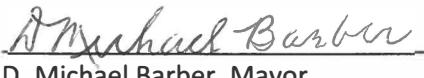
4. Council action on the matters

Mayor Barber noted that Council has authorized the Town Manager to pursue negotiations on the first property discussed but there was no action taking place on the second property.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 9:09 p.m.


Tracy Heinline, Clerk of Council


D. Michael Barber, Mayor