

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 10, 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 DECEMBER 10, 2024, AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline; Public Relations Director Christina Bolt; Director of Finance Valerie Tweedie; Deputy Director of Finance Katie Miano; Director of Human Resources Alicia Dials; Assistant Chief of Police Derek Altizer; Director of Public Works Jim Lanciañese; Assistant Director of Public Works, Streets Travis Moles; EMS Deputy Chief Joshua Settlage; Engineering Director Mike Kelley; Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell; Planning Director Retta Jackson; Planner I Daria Chicosky; Associate Planner Jillian Layton; Deputy Director of Finance Marc Evans; Accounts Payable Manager Amber Haskins; Administrative Clerk Sharon Graves; Accounting Specialist Samantha Conner; Tax Billing & Collection Specialist Jessie Haskins

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barber announced that due to travel Councilwoman Hockett would be joining the Council meeting via telephone, if permitted by Council.

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

Motion Approved

- A. Moment of Reflection
- B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Wilson.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Barber noted Councilwoman Bowman's absence due to illness and added that Mrs. Bowman had requested item K. under Discussion and Action by Council be tabled until the January 14th Town Council meeting.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to table item K. under Discussion and Action by Council, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

Councilwoman Hicks requested to separate item A. from items B. through E. under the Consent Agenda explaining she would like to change her vote to nay concerning the certification of the Closed Meeting that took place on November 12, 2024. Council agreed to separate item A. from the remainder of the consent agenda.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Conditional Use Permit request by Valley Classical School, Inc., property owner and applicant, to allow a private school in the B-2 Central Business District on property located at 100 W. Main Street (Tax Parcels 527 – ((A)) – 66 and 68; Parcel IDs 070462 and 015853) consisting of approximately 1.676 acres. The property is designated as Downtown/Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Nathan McClung, 535 Republic Road, spoke in support of the conditional use permit to allow a private school at 100 W. Main Street. Mr. McClung expressed this would meet the goal of the Town of Christiansburg's Placemaking Plan to decrease vacancy in the downtown area, meet the goals of fostering social interaction, having a sense of comfort in community, and supporting the local economy. Mr. McClung explained the Valley Classical School would bring families to downtown which would promote future base for the existing and future retail, dining, and leisure establishments in that area. He added that the current structures on the property already built out with the development pattern meets the principles and best practices in urban design. Mr. McClung also felt the school would not have an adverse impact on neighboring properties of the public rights-of-way or downtown as a whole.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned what the plans were for the small park located near the property. Dr. Justin Zahraee, Head of School at Valley Classical School, explained there would be a fence placed in the front courtyard for safety purposes.

Hearing no further public comment the public hearing closed.

- B. Town of Christiansburg Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) 2023 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Town Manager Wingfield requested the CAPER item be rescheduled to the January 14th, 2025 Town Council meeting due to the report currently being edited and Council agreed.

Hearing no further public comment the public hearing closed.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes of November 12, 2024

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to change her vote within the minutes of November 12th and then approve. Hearing no second the motion died.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve item A. under the Consent Agenda, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Nay; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

B. Monthly Bill List

- C. Purchase order with Cambridge Computer for Cisco Switch in the amount of \$152,890.62
- D. Purchase order with SHI for Microsoft Licensing Agreement in the amount of \$129,727.70
- E. Award Task Order #3 to Hazen & Sawyer in the amount of \$137,686.00 for Construction Administration and Resident Project Representative (RPR) services for the Walters Wastewater Lift Station Replacement project

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve items B. through E. under the Consent Agenda, seconded by Councilman Jenkins. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Blacksburg – Christiansburg – Montgomery County Regional Tourism Office Interim Executive Director Chris Lawrence to present on the proposed amendment to the agreement

Chris Lawrence, Interim Executive Director, addressed Council and provided a brief history of the Tourism Office and spoke about the achievements of the office in 2024. Mr. Lawrence noted the importance of tourism in Montgomery County as well as the supporting Towns of Christiansburg and Blacksburg. He highlighted several successful grants and the office's ability to bring in extra funds beyond what the transient occupancy tax generates. Mr. Lawrence spoke about marketing for the Tourism Office and partnering with the Chamber of Commerce to provide local TV ads for buying local and product marketing brochures to highlight the region. He touched on several completed ARPA funded projects and explained the office had been working with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority concerning marketing for the future rail system. Mr. Lawrence added that the Tourism office has been working with the Virginia Business magazine to help draw in business individuals from around the state.

Mr. Lawrence explained his job and focus as interim was to ensure the stability and accountability of the Tourism office and has listened and identified the concerns from Town Council. He expressed that online platforms have been updated focusing on Christiansburg sports assets to make sure they are up-to-date and relevant. Mr. Lawrence noted the Huckleberry Park had been added to the website after speaking with the Town's Parks and Recreation staff and defining their needs. He spoke about marketing future summer events in the Town and creating mobile tourism kiosks that would aid in connecting with visitors.

Mr. Lawrence spoke about moving forward into January 2025 with approvals on a joint agreement between the three localities. Mr. Lawrence touched on the details of the proposed agreement and how the contributions of each locality would change. He noted the initial term of the agreement is proposed to be five years with two automatic approvals, provided a locality chooses to proceed with their partnership. He added there was still a notification to "not proceed" stated in the agreement and a promise to appropriate funds for the Tourism office every year in the annual budget. Mr. Lawrence also included that if one locality does not move forward the other two localities can continue as agreed upon without interruption.

Councilman Wilson expressed he was more comfortable with a term of three years rather than five years. Mr. Wilson noted concern that if Council agreed to a five-year term, it could lock future Council into the agreement. Councilwoman Hicks expressed her disappointment in past relations with the Tourism office and noted her wish to see a return on the Town's investment. She added she would like to see more explanation on the Tourism office's marketing plan moving forward. Mrs. Hicks questioned where the additional funds the Town provided were and what the plan was for the money. She also asked where their office would be located in the next few years. Mr. Lawrence explained the funds that come into the Tourism office are spent on salaries for Tourism employees, marketing contracts, and tourism related expenses. Councilman Jenkins expressed his confidence in the Tourism office and leadership and added it was time the Town of Christiansburg joined the partnership again.

Mayor Barber recognized Finance Director Valerie Tweedie and her retirement on December 31, 2024. He thanked Mrs. Tweedie for her service to the Town. Mayor Barber also introduced upcoming Assistant Town Manager Scot Shippee who will begin employment December 16th.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Susan Linkous, 240 Railroad Street, expressed support for the proposed Public Works complex on Simmons Road. Mrs. Linkous noted that she lives near the current Public Works complex on Scattergood Drive and is in no way bothered by the noise. She explained that employees were always respectful of her residence and has not had an issue.

Darrell Linkous, 240 Railroad Street, also expressed support for the proposed complex and agreed he had no issue with the current Public Works facility.

Joyce Radford, 510 Ellett Road, addressed Council concerning Town Manager Wingfield's 6.75% pay raise. Ms. Radford compared the average household income and median household income to the highest salary in the Town of Christiansburg and expressed that salary was 168% higher than the average salary in Christiansburg. Ms. Radford noted the Town of Christiansburg employees had received a 3% cost of living increase as well as a merit increase in 2024. Ms. Radford opposed the increase for the Town Manager and expressed that a select few of Town employees and not the taxpayers benefit greatly from the high salaries.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks reported a Central Business Committee meeting would be held December 11th.

Mayor Barber congratulated Councilman Jenkins on his new job as Executive Director for the Virginia State Museum Association.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Rezoning request by, David L. Dove and Hattie P. Dove, property owners, and the Town of Christiansburg, applicant, to rezone property located at 255 Simmons Road, N.E. (approximately 14.1-acre Tax Parcel 500 – ((A)) – 1A; Parcel ID 019656 and approximately 0.46-acre Tax Parcels 499 – ((14)) – A and B; Parcel ID 019655) from A Agricultural to I-2 General Industrial. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was held November 12, 2024.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the rezoning request for the property located at 255 Simmons Road, N.E., seconded by Councilman Bishop.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed that the rezoning request for 255 Simmons Road was made by the Town of Christiansburg and stated that the value of the property was much lower than what the Town was purchasing it for. Mrs. Hicks clarified the Town had also paid for the property's appraisal and noted the property had been designated as a residential area beforehand. She expressed that she would like to see Public Works in a new location but felt the complex should not be placed on Simmons Road.

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

Motion Approved

- B. Conditional Use Permit request by David L. Dove and Hattie P. Dove, property owners, and the Town of Christiansburg, applicant, to allow a Public Works Facility and operations including a mechanical garage and sanitation vehicle storage in the I-2 General Industrial District on the property located at 255 Simmons Road, N.E. (approximately 14.1-acre Tax Parcel 500 – ((A)) – 1A; Parcel ID 019656 and approximately 0.46-acre Tax Parcels 499 –

((14)) – A and B; Parcel ID 019655). The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was held November 12, 2024.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the conditional use permit request to allow a Public Works facility on the property located at 255 Simmons Road, N.E., seconded by Councilman Bishop.

Councilwoman Hicks reiterated her concern with the Public Works complex being developed on Simmons Road.

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

Motion Approved

C. Resolution for Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Amendment #2A

Town Manager Wingfield noted that staff had looked into issues with the audio system in Council Chambers and felt it should be brought to Council's attention since the budget amendment was currently being discussed. Public Relations Director Christina Bolt explained that the master control system had several issues and clarified there were too many issues to fix at this point and the system should be replaced. Mr. Wingfield explained the Town had received a quote for \$15,000 for the replacement of the audio system but Mr. Wingfield suggested \$20,000 for any additional requirements for installation.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the resolution for FY 2024-25 Budget Amendment #2A with the inclusion of \$20,000 for audio installation in Town Council Chambers, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

D. Resolution for Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Amendment #2B

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the resolution for FY 2024-25 Budget Amendment #2B, seconded by Councilman Bishop.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed concern for the Budget Amendment #2B that included funds for purchasing the property at 255 Simmons Road, N.E., stating it was an excessive amount of money for the Town to be spending.

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

Motion Approved

E. Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Amendment #2A

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the appropriations for FY 2024-25 Budget Amendment #2A, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

F. Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Amendment #2B

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the appropriations for FY 2024-25 Budget Amendment #2B, seconded by Councilman Bishop.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned when work would begin for the Public Works complex on Simmons Road. Town Manager Wingfield explained the grading plan for the perimeter of the property would need to be completed first and it could possibly be a few years out before work would begin. He added that Council had prioritized the upcoming capital projects beginning with the paving at the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park's parking lots and the Emergency Services facility buildings. Councilwoman Hicks asked about the cost associated with building the complex. Mr. Wingfield explained there would be a discussion concerning the cost during capital planning discussions.

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

Motion Approved

G. Amendments to the Town Employee Handbook

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the Town Employee Handbook amendments, seconded by Councilman Jenkins.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed concern for the flex time revision to the handbook stating the last discussion concerning employee time was in a closed meeting and she felt it should be discussed publicly.

Councilwoman Hockett stated her concern for the flex time cap and expressed employees could be in a place where they could not use their flex time they accrued. She questioned if it would take incentive away when there could be other needs.

Human Resources Director Alicia Dials explained this flex time procedure had been in place since she had started with the Town. Mrs. Dials clarified there was no cap on the amount of flex time an employee can accrue and expressed concern that flex time could possibly be used in the place of vacation instead. Town Manager Wingfield explained that past Councilmembers felt exempt employees should expect to work extra overtime because of their jobs. He explained the flex time was adopted as a policy even though it was not added to the handbook. Mr. Wingfield stated that there were situations when certain departments have events after hours and need to work longer shifts but he would like to see that extra time worked be used as flex time the next week, not spread out over a long length of time. Mr. Wingfield clarified the final decision was at Council's discretion.

Councilman Wilson rescinded his previous motion for total approval of the updates to the handbook and made a motion to approve all updates except for flex time which could be discussed at a later date, seconded by Councilman Jenkins.

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

Motion Approved

- H. Purchase of property located at 255 Simmons Road, N.E. (approximately 14.1-acre Tax Parcel 500 – ((A)) – 1A; Parcel ID 019656 and approximately 0.46-acre Tax Parcels 499 – ((14)) – A and B; Parcel ID 019655) for \$1,600,000.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the purchase of property located at 255 Simmons Road, N.E., seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Nay; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

- I. Ordinance for First Amendment to Organizational Cooperative Agreement Between Montgomery County and the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg for the Creation and Implementation of a Joint Tourism Program

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to table this item for another meeting, Councilman Bishop seconded the motion stating he still had questions concerning the terms of the agreement.

Councilman Jenkins read a declaration of personal interest pertaining to funding appropriations for the Blacksburg – Christiansburg - Montgomery County Regional Tourism Office. Mr. Jenkins noted that he could fairly and responsibly participate in the vote concerning this matter as his current employer was part of a group of three or more organizations that receive a promotional benefit from the Tourism office.

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

Motion Failed

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the ordinance changing the five-year term to three years, seconded by Councilman Jenkins. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Nay; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

- J. Order abatement of an unsafe structure located at 995 Montgomery Street, N.E. (Tax Parcel 497 – ((A)) – 185C; Parcel ID 028826) consisting of approximately 0.268 total acres by demolition in accordance with Sec. 10-58. – Enforcement by council. of Article III. Unsafe Buildings, Walls, and Structures of Chapter 10 Buildings and Building Regulations of the Christiansburg Town Code

Daria Chicosky, Planner I explained the unsafe structure had been posted in March of 2024 and the departments' initial goal was to work with the property owner to have it

rehabilitated or demolished. Ms. Chicosky explained this had been brought before Council because the house had since collapsed upon itself. She clarified that the property owner had been given notice but unfortunately, they did not have the resources to rehabilitate the house.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned if the Town should offer other options for the property owner. Ms. Chicosky stated that the Town's hope was that the property owner could possibly do patchwork or upkeep for things such as gutters and windows, but the structural damage would have been more costly to fix. She added that the Town had left notices and reached out to the property owner with no answer and finally in court the property owner explained he had received the notices but did not have an intention to fix the issue. Ms. Chicosky explained the misdemeanor charge had been dismissed due to magistrate filing issues. Town Attorney Broughton explained the summons had a typographical error and the misdemeanor was dismissed.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the order abatement of the unsafe structure located at 995 Montgomery Street, N.E., seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Nay; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

K. Audio quality in Town Council Chambers and Administrative Conference Room (Bowman and Hicks) *(item tabled until the January 14th Town Council meeting)*

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Town Manager Wingfield reported there were two winners for the Shop Small, Stamp, Score event. He added the Town had focused on retail thrift and antiques and would like to expand the program in the future. Mr. Wingfield reported the holiday luncheon for Town staff would be held Wednesday, the 11th and Town Hall would be closed from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. He added that Christmas at the Market would be held Friday the 13th downtown along with the tree lighting and Christmas parade. He also reported the Santa is Coming to Town event would begin the week of December 16th. He included Aquatic Center events; the Winter Waterland event would take place on December 21st and the New Year's Eve Splash on the 30th.

Mr. Wingfield asked Council if they would like to have their regular work session on December 18th. Council agreed to cancel the work session. Mr. Wingfield stated the Town needed to send a letter to the County requesting their budget emergency services funding consideration. He added there was a request from Roger Woody to bring in 1.06 acres in the town with property in the name of RWW4 with Roger Woody as the owner/manager. Mr. Wingfield explained the property is located at the end of Summit Ridge Road and his wish was to develop as residential. Council agreed to consider the request. Mr. Wingfield reminded Council their financial disclosure forms would be due February 3rd.

B. Town Attorney – no report.

C. Other Staff

Finance Director Valerie Tweedie thanked Council for their support throughout her fifteen years of employment with the Town.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Closed Meeting:

1. Councilman Wilson made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia § 2.2-3711(A)(1), for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body. The Closed Meeting is being held for discussion regarding appointment of Town Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Nay; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

2. Reconvene in Open Meeting

3. Councilman Wilson 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. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

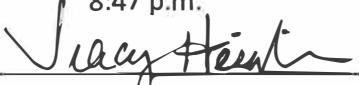
Motion Approved

4. Council action on the matters

Mayor Barber announced that Council appointed Katie Miano to the Finance Director position for a term of one year beginning January 1, 2025.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m.


Tracy Heinlive, Clerk of Council


D. Michael Barber, Mayor