

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 28, 2025 – 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 JANUARY 28, 2025, AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Scot Shippee; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline; Director of Public Relations Christina Bolt; Director of Planning Retta Jackson; Planner II Devon Shields; Director of Engineering Mike Kelley; Police Chief Chris Ramsey; Director of Finance Katie Miano; Fire Chief Billy Hanks

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barber noted that both Councilwoman Hockett and Councilman Jenkins were traveling for business and would like to join the meeting via phone.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to allow Councilwoman Hockett and Councilman Jenkins to join the meeting via phone, seconded by Councilman Bishop.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned how many meeting absences a councilmember may have in one year. Mayor Barber directed staff to research this.

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

Motion Approved

A. Moment of Reflection

Mayor Barber asked everyone to keep the family of William “Bill” Brown, Sr., a Montgomery County citizen and retired Blacksburg Police Chief in their thoughts due to his passing last week.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Bishop.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

None.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of January 14, 2025 and January 15, 2025
- B. Monthly Bill List
- C. Approval of Resolution to Petition the Virginia Department of Transportation for Maintenance Payments for Certain Streets in the Urban Maintenance Inventory System

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; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Director of Community Health Holly Lesko from the New River Valley Recovery Ecosystem program to present on their Opioid Abatement Authority

Mrs. Lesko addressed Council and provided information on the overall program and upcoming programs for year two. Mrs. Lesko explained that the goal of the NRV Recovery Ecosystem program was to look at the broad implications and the underlying factors that can drive addiction in the region. Mrs. Lesko explained that the program focuses on expansion of medical and counseling services, education and prevention in schools, transportation services for on-demand needs, among many other services. She added that the program has very strong regional partners and local governmental leadership who work in the areas of community service and treatment to help build the five-year program. Mrs. Lesko explained that in 2025 the region was awarded \$2.2 million in Opioid Abatement Authority funding. She added that after contributions of local matching to the program the total for FY2025 Programming was at \$4.4 million. Mrs. Lesko spoke about new and expanding programming such as continuing trauma trainings and expanding prevention work in schools. She explained they would be growing the peer center footprint with new facilities in Giles and Floyd this year as well as building a Community Support Fund with the Community Foundation of the NRV to support individual and agency emergency response needs.

Councilwoman Hicks suggested adding the program's information to the Town's website.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Chris Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, addressed Council concerning the Emergency Services Committee meeting held January 27th. Mr. Waltz expressed his concern about building on the lot at the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park. He felt that Council was more concerned about building a vanity project than waiting for a response from Montgomery County to help with funding.

Patrick Melander, 495 Silver Leaf Drive, congratulated the recent Façade Grant winners but expressed he did not feel the grant should be provided yearly. Mr. Melander stated that improvements to a business should fall on the business owners, not taxpayers

Beth Umberger, 915 College Street, commented that College Street has always had drainage issues and appreciates the Town working to address those issues.

Christine Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, expressed her concern for the potential Emergency Services building at the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park lot and stated that initially the lot was to be sold. Mrs. Waltz stated that a current council member had mentioned he would like to honor the wishes of previous councilmembers, but Mrs. Waltz noted that previous councilmembers had specified the property would be used to bring in revenue to cover the cost of the new park.

Mayor Barber clarified that the piece of property at the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park was still for sale and had not been taken off the market. He added that if an offer came in for the property while in negotiation, then the property could be sold for its intent and the funds would be applied as Council had suggested previously.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks agreed with a citizen comment that Façade Grants should not be awarded every year, and the process should be discussed further. Mrs. Hicks expressed that finalizing this year's awards had been a difficult decision for the committee. Councilwoman Bowman agreed with Councilwoman Hicks and added that when she was involved with the Central Business Committee, she tried to make changes to the process but was met with resistance. Mrs. Bowman expressed that the Façade Grants should be revamped or disappear altogether. She added that more than two thirds of the applicants did not qualify this year, and the final decision was very difficult.

Councilman Wilson reported that the Water and Waste Committee meeting had been held prior to the Council meeting. Mr. Wilson explained that it was Councilwoman Bowman's first meeting, and the committee caught her up to date on ongoing/upcoming projects.

Councilwoman Hockett reported that the Emergency Services Committee met on January 27th and had discussion concerning the requests the Town would like to make to Montgomery County. Mrs. Hockett explained that the committee discussed requesting a percentage from the County to contribute to the Town's annual budget that is based on the percentage of calls the Town runs in the County. She added that they were looking at a three-year rotating average.

Mrs. Hockett stated that Chief Hanks was asked to collect the number of three-year rotating averages and then come back to Council in two weeks to formulate a letter for the County. She added that the committee had discussed future development for a second fire station in the Peppers Ferry Corridor and were currently working on a timeline. Mrs. Hockett also added that the committee discussed the transition from a volunteer staff to a paid staff and explained that in order to make that transition successful and continue responding to the residents it would take time and further discussion.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed concern that Council had not received the numbers for the three-year rotating calls from the Fire Department. Mrs. Hicks added that she would like more information on the plans for the building before a letter is submitted to the County asking for funds. She included that she would like to wait and see the County's Comprehensive Plan and plans for building their own fire station in the County before continuing forward. Mrs. Hicks also expressed concern for the cost of funding close to forty full-time firefighters in the future.

Councilwoman Hockett explained that Chief Hanks had brought numbers of the County's incoming calls that are run but in the Emergency Services Committee meeting it was discussed that looking at a three-year average would show some consistency in the requests that the Town would make of the County. She reiterated that those numbers would be available to Council in two weeks.

Councilman Jenkins reported a Central Business Committee meeting would take place in February, and he was looking forward to working with Councilwoman Hockett on the committee.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Town of Christiansburg Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) 2023 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The public hearing was held January 14, 2025.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the CDBG 2023 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

- B. Town Council appointment of Council representative to the Montgomery Tourism Development Council for a term from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2027-2025

Mayor Barber recommended Councilman Wilson.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve appointment of Councilman Wilson to the Montgomery Tourism Development Council for a term from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

C. Town Council recommendation to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors for the reappointment of Billy Hanks and the appointment of Joshua Settlage and Scot Shippee to the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission for a term from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the recommendation to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors to reappoint Billy Hanks and appoint Joshua Settlage and Scot Shippee to the Montgomery Fire and Rescue Commission, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

D. Award of Façade Grants

Councilwoman Hicks announced the Central Business Committee along with the Façade Grant Selection Committee has chosen four potential grant winners for the Façade Grant Program. The awardees are as follows:

- \$5,000 to Crossfit Christiansburg, 1085 N. Franklin Street for painting the façade of the building.
- \$5,000 to Macados Inc., 37 W. Main Street for replacement of the existing street level windows.
- \$5,000 to New River Insulation Co., 1270 Roanoke Street for replacement of garage doors (period specific) and replacement of awning separately from the business name.
- \$5,000 to Subway, 26 N. Franklin Street for installation of handrails and hardscaping that will enclose outdoor seating (flowerboxes).

Councilwoman Hicks expressed thanks to the Grant Selection Committee stating they did an outstanding job helping choose the winners.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the award of Façade Grants, seconded by Councilman Wilson.

Councilman Bishop expressed concern that the Façade Grants were initially supposed to aid in bringing buildings back to their original state. Councilwoman Hicks noted how difficult the decision was this year to choose the businesses and again expressed the importance of further discussion of continuing the program or making revisions.

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

Motion Approved

E. Downtown parking

Town Manager Wingfield addressed Council concerning the purchased property behind the Police Department and noted the old drive thru within the parking lot was scheduled to be demolished next week. Mr. Wingfield wanted to confirm with Council

they still wanted the drive thru demolished. Council agreed to moving forward with tearing the drive thru down. Mr. Wingfield noted that if Council wanted downtown parking signage staff could look into the Virginia Tourism Grant.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Town Manager Wingfield reminded Council of the February 19th work session and asked what topics they would like to have on the agenda. Councilwoman Hicks asked that Emergency Services funding and Façade Grants be topics of discussion at the upcoming work session.

Mr. Wingfield also reminded Council their Statement of Economic Interest forms were due February 3rd.

B. Town Attorney

Town Attorney Reid Broughton answered Councilwoman Hicks question pertaining to Council meeting absences. Mr. Broughton clarified that councilmembers could join meetings remotely only two consecutive meetings or 25% of the meetings, whichever was greater.

C. Other Staff – no report.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilwoman Bowman thanked Planning Director Retta Jackson for her work on the Façade Grant program.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Closed Meeting:

1. Councilman Wilson made a motion to request a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia § 2.2-3711(A)(3), for the discussion or consideration of the acquisition or 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 for Parks and Recreation. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson.

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; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

4. Council action on the matters

Mayor Barber stated that Council had instructed the Town Manager to pursue the discussed subject and come back to Council with findings.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting 8:03 p.m.

Tracy Heinlein
Tracy Heinlein, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber
D. Michael Barber, Mayor