

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25, 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 MARCH 25, 2025, AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Samuel M. Bishop; Kim Bowman; Johana Hicks; Tanya Hockett; Casey Jenkins; 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; Engineering Director Mike Kelley; Public Works Director Jim Lancianese; Assistant Public Works Director, Streets Travis Moles; Planning Director Retta Jackson; Small Business Solutions Manager Miles Campbell; Police Chief Chris Ramsey; Fire and EMS Chief Billy Hanks; Deputy EMS Chief Josh Settlage; Finance Director Katie Miano

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Moment of Reflection

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Wilson.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

No adjustment to the agenda.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

No public hearings.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes of March 11, 2025

- B. Bill List
- C. Amendment to lease agreement with US Cellular for continuing ground lease at the Warren Street tower and increasing the payment the Town receives to \$1,950.00 per month, effective September 22, 2025
- D. Resolution Recognizing the month of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month
- E. Resolution Recognizing April 2, 2025 as Autism Awareness Day
- F. Resolution Recognizing April 7 – 13, 2025 as National Public Health Week
- G. Set Town Council Public Hearing for May 27, 2025 for an Ordinance amending Chapter 42 “Zoning” of the Christiansburg Town Code to align advertising requirements with the Code of Virginia
- H. Set Town Council Public Hearing for May 27, 2025 for a Conditional Use Permit request by Mary Frances Keith, property owner and applicant, to allow a single-family or two-family dwelling on property located near the intersection of Boxwood Drive, NW and Redwood Drive, NW (Tax Parcels 466 – ((1)) – 49, 50, 51, and 52; Parcel ID 013934 consisting of approximately of 0.480 acres) in the B-3 General Business District. The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- I. Set Town Council Public Hearing for May 27, 2025 for a Conditional Use Permit request by Burch Properties, LLC, property owner, and David Beasley, applicant, to allow for a kennel on property located at 1605 N. Franklin Street (Tax Parcel 466 – ((A)) – 20C; Parcel ID 013214 consisting of approximately 10.9 acres) in the B-3 General Business District. The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- J. Set Town Council Public Hearing for May 27, 2025 for a rezoning request by RN Investments Annex, LLC, property owner and applicant, to rezone property located at 115 Farmview Road, NW (Tax Parcels 466 – ((1)) – 60A-67A, Parcel ID 070719 consisting of approximately of 9.050 acres) from B-3 General Business District to I-2 General Industrial District. The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned item G. of the consent agenda and asked if the amendment had gone through the Planning Commission as well. Town Manager Wingfield explained that it would need to go through the Planning Commission, and they would also hold a public hearing. Planning Director Retta Jackson explained that

normally the Commission would wait until the item was approved on the consent agenda and then it would be advertised to the public. Councilwoman Hicks asked for further information on the details of the amendment. Mayor Barber noted that Mr. Wingfield had sent a memo beforehand to all of Council concerning the specifics. He further explained it involved posting notices prior to public hearings and public comments to align with the Code of Virginia. Mr. Wingfield added that the Code of Virginia still requires two notices, but now within a certain time period. Mr. Wingfield stated that a draft ordinance would be available to view. Councilwoman Hicks asked that more information be available to the public concerning ordinance changes. Mr. Wingfield clarified that when an ordinance amends Town Code, a draft ordinance was always available to view within the agenda packet prior to the public hearing.

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

Motion Approved

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Public Relations Director Christina Bolt to provide façade grant updates from the Central Business Committee

Mrs. Bolt addressed Town Council and voiced possible changes to the façade grant program that were gathered by Town staff and the Central Business Committee. Mrs. Bolt spoke about strengthening the areas of communication between façade grant applicants and the Town. Mrs. Bolt noted the Town's Small Business Solutions Manager would continue to work closely with businesses with a clear explanation of the program. She added that feedback shows businesses were still unclear of the program's requirements and the Town's support to applicants would need to be adjusted with elevated support from the Small Business Solutions Manager.

Mrs. Bolt explained there were a few adjustments to the program such as allowing decorative façade paintings to be considered only as approved by the Central Business Committee. She noted that landscaping and hardscaping would not be considered as a standalone project but in conjunction with other approved façade grant work. And a potential for opening the program to nonprofits. Mrs. Bolt also mentioned changes to the application packet that would include a summary of changes from previous years, workshop dates, a rubric for review that would be more in-depth and clearer, budgeting and project scheduling for the applicant. Mrs. Bolt explained suggested changes that included clarifying language to help businesses better understand the requirements of the program.

Mrs. Bolt spoke about post award support and changes noting a post-award workshop to discuss the reimbursement process in detail ending with a signed agreement between the awardee and the Town. She added that the awardee would have a deadline to complete their project and if that deadline was missed, they could potentially be ineligible to apply for any grant assistance from the Town for the

following two years. Mrs. Bolt included that a post-award survey would be provided to the awardee.

Mrs. Bolt stated that the Public Relations department would provide outreach and support along with targeting social media ads, providing workshops in person and recorded workshops, and regular check-ins with business owners. She concluded that if this revision was approved marketing would begin immediately, and the first façade grant workshop would begin the end of April 2025.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned the amount of time Town staff has spent on the Façade Grant program and suggested staff keep track of their time.

Councilwoman Hicks read a non-disclosure statement acknowledging that she owned several businesses within the Town.

Councilwoman Hicks and Councilwoman Bowman expressed they had received information from awardees that there had been no communication received for several weeks. Councilwoman Hicks noted the current façade grant application was one page and felt multiple pages would be too lengthy. She also questioned why nonprofits were being considered for the program.

Councilman Wilson noted that the Community Support Grant was dedicated more for nonprofits and therefore the Façade Grant was brought in for those that were not nonprofits. Mr. Wilson clarified that nonprofits were not included in the Façade Grant program due to being able to use the Community Support program.

Councilwoman Hockett explained she had brought the nonprofit discussion to the table at the Central Business Committee meeting due to the change involving nonprofits being limited to receiving a Community Support Grant every year. Mrs. Hockett clarified that if a nonprofit received a Community Support Grant, they would not be eligible to receive a Façade Grant that same year. She added that if there are nonprofits in older buildings the look of those buildings still impacts the community.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned the age of the buildings and if there was a minimum age requirement. Business Solutions Manager Miles Campbell explained that while there was no minimum age for buildings, the Town would consider older buildings a priority.

Mrs. Bolt questioned Councilwoman Hicks concerning tracking time in her department for this program and whether Council would like her to track her time for other programs. Councilwoman Hicks expressed it would be good to keep track of staff's time due to previously Council questioning whether this was a good program for the community. Mrs. Hicks added that she was also concerned other job duties of Public Relations was not being managed sufficiently and was concerned there were too many tasks for the department. Mrs. Bolt assured Councilwoman Hicks that she manages her time well and felt that her department did not take on more than they could handle.

- B. Treasurer/Finance Director Katie Miano to present Proposed FY 2025 – 26 Budget

Finance Director Katie Miano gave an overview of the Town's proposed fiscal year 2025-26 budget. Mrs. Miano explained the Town has 6 distinct funds and how those funds were utilized within the Town budget. Mrs. Miano stated that meals tax was projected to have a 1% increase for fiscal year 2025-26 and there were no proposed increases to personal property or real estate taxes. She explained there was a proposed \$1.00 fee increase in water fees per 1,000 gallons for the in-Town rate but no increase to sewer, garbage, or stormwater utility fees.

Mrs. Miano spoke about potential revenue from taxes or fees and the potential to increase utility tax increase from a cap of \$2.50 per month to \$3.00. She also explained the estimated needs for the Town to sustain operations and continue capital improvements throughout the Town in the upcoming year. Mrs. Miano updated Council on the proposed budget expenditures and expenses for the upcoming year.

Mrs. Miano noted that the Police Department had asked for 3 new positions for training roles to prepare for upcoming employee retirements. She added that several positions had been requested by departments but had not been included in the budget. She explained that a 2.5% cost of living increase and 2% merit increase for employees had been proposed and compared the increases to surrounding localities.

Mrs. Miano spoke about the capital general fund and projects that were upcoming in the Town. Town Manager Wingfield explained that part of the proposed budget was the New River Valley Communications Regional Authority project as a capital reserve of \$500,000. He stated this would be a complete radio and infrastructure replacement for Montgomery County, Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Virginia Tech. Mr. Wingfield noted the Town's share and allocation to the project with a fall 2025 budget amendment once the final payment is determined. Mr. Wingfield added that there was potential to purchase the radios and not include them in the debt service. Councilwoman Hicks questioned the Town's share of the communications project and asked how it was calculated. Mr. Wingfield explained the radios would come to the Town of Christiansburg for the Police, Fire, EMS, and Public Works. He added that each locality would pay for their own radios and the antennas, towers, and software would be split between the localities. Mr. Wingfield explained that the location of the antennas and towers would be based on what locality was connected to the tower location. He also explained the software would be split evenly among each of the localities. Councilman Wilson clarified the information concerning the towers was given to Council previously. Councilwoman Hicks requested this subject be discussed at the potential joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors and Council. Mayor Barber explained this subject would not be included in that discussion, and the only subject discussed would be emergency services funding.

Mrs. Miano presented the Community Support applications in the proposed budget and added there were surveys included in the proposal for Council to review and complete. She concluded there would be Town Council work sessions as requested, a public hearing on the budget, and then Council would consider public comments and adjust as deemed appropriate. Mrs. Miano explained that the next steps would be the adoption of the budget and the approval for the final budget by June 30, 2025.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned how much the Town was charged for water from the Water Authority. Mrs. Miano explained that currently the charge was \$4.21 per 1,000 gallons and would increase to \$4.40 per 1,000 gallons. Mr. Wingfield added that the Town was currently covering the cost at the current rate in the budget, but the Town was also using a large amount of the capital reserves for projects and would like to replenish those reserves. He explained the Town would be completing a water loss/water listening study to try to find leaks which would generate water projects for the Town. Engineering Director Mike Kelley expressed to Council the water loss study has been completed and presented to the Water and Waste Committee. He added that the Town has received a quote from a professional engineering firm and the information would be brought to Council soon for the water listening. Councilman Wilson explained the next phase would be to go back and monitor where those water leaks were and where the Town needs to repair and replace those leaks.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Damon Brewer, 215 John Lemley Lane, thanked Council for providing a citizen comment section on the agenda. Mr. Brewer expressed that he would like the Town of Christiansburg to send out a new call for artists. He explained that the previous call for artists had gone out in November of 2024 for a mural on E. Main Street. He expressed concern for the artwork that had been selected by the Public Arts Advisory Board but rejected by the property owner. Mr. Brewer explained that the art was not within size parameters and felt it was possibly AI generated. He added that the arts section on the Town's website had not been revised since 2021. Mr. Brewer also asked Council to consider him for one of the open seats on the Public Arts Advisory Board.

Bob Beard, 1200 Flint Drive, expressed concern for a high-water bill at his place of residence. He explained that he has noticed a 63% increase compared to the previous year. Mr. Beard expressed that the increase has caused an impact on his household income and budget. He added that the Town had spent money on the new Huckleberry Park instead of more important issues. Mr. Beard expressed that the fluoride should be removed from the Town's drinking water and asked Council to be more conscious of raising taxes.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

No committee reports.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Change Order #1 for the Arrowhead Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation project in the amount of \$871,354.52

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the Change Order #1 for the Arrowhead Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation project, seconded by Councilman Wilson.

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

Motion Approved

B. Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget

Mayor Barber encouraged Council to study their budget handouts and be prepared for the next Council meeting. Finance Director Katie Miano asked that questions concerning the budget should be sent to her by April 8th.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield reported a previous conversation with County Administrator Angie Hill concerning a joint Town Council and Board of Supervisors meeting to discuss Emergency Services funding. Mr. Wingfield asked Council if April 14th would be appropriate for the joint meeting. Council agreed to April 14th. Mr. Wingfield noted the Council work session on April 16th. He reported on upcoming events in the community:

- The Spring Kickoff Festival April 5th from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- The Egg-Streme Easter Egg Party April 11th beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park
- The Great Easter Egg Hunt at Kiwanis Park April 19th beginning at 9:30 a.m.
- Spring Clean Up April 14th through April 25th

B. Town Attorney – no report.

C. Other Staff – no report.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Wilson reported that Wing drone delivery would be testing their drones at the end of the month during night hours to be able to deliver after dark. He wanted to make sure citizens were aware in case the drones were observed. Mayor Barber asked Public Relations to reach out to the public with the information.

Councilwoman Bowman recognized the Town's Public Works Department and their hard labor, especially their cleanup efforts for the most recent ice storm. Public Works Director Jim Lancianese noted their work pertaining to the ice storm continues and so far, they have had over 1,000 loads of debris.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

Councilwoman Hicks noted that the Agency on Aging had an upcoming golf tournament, and she would send out the information to Council.

Mayor Barber acknowledged the banners downtown recognizing March 29th as Vietnam War Veterans Day.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting 8:18 p.m.

Tracy Heinli
Tracy Heinli, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber
D. Michael Barber, Mayor