

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 8, 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 APRIL 8, 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; Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell; Police Chief Chris Ramsey; Planning Director Retta Jackson; Associate Planner Jillian Layton; 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 Councilwoman Hockett.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

No adjustments to the agenda.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

No public hearings.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of March 25, 2025
- B. Bill List

- C. Contract renewal #4 with Rummel, Klepper, & Kahl, LLP d/b/a RK&K for Signal Structure Evaluations and Traffic Engineering On-Call Services in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 per task order, and with work completed per contract year not to exceed \$500,000
- D. Contract renewal #4 with Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. d/b/a WSSI for Stormwater Engineering On-Call Services in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 per task order, and with work completed per contract year not to exceed \$500,000
- E. Resolution recognizing April 13 – 19th, 2025 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week
- F. Set Public Hearing for May 13, 2025 for purchase of property located on the southern side of Cambria Street, N.W. (approximately 2.314-acre Tax Parcel 466 – ((A)) – 8C2; Parcel ID 210032) for \$370,000

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

Motion Approved

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

No introductions or presentations

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Christine Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, referenced the previous Town Council meeting, and the concern expressed by Councilwoman Hicks that a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request had been requested and had been overdue. Mrs. Waltz explained that she had spoken to the requester of the FOIA, and the gentleman said he could not get in touch with the Town to follow-up. She noted that upon further discussion the requester had the wrong number for the Town. Mrs. Waltz stated there were several errors on the Town's website and has since alerted the Town to those errors. She expressed that Council has different leadership styles and felt the Council issue was being blown out of proportion. She noted the "Council decorum" item on the agenda for discussion and asked Council to be kind to each other.

Chris Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, addressed Council concerning the Façade Grant program and expressed that although there had been modifications, he felt it should be put on hold. Mr. Waltz voiced that after looking at the Town's proposed budget he felt the Town did not have money to waste. He touched on the Town's fund balance reserve policy and noted the funds were at 31% and the policy states it should be 35% – 40%. Mr. Waltz also brought attention to a

member of Council for using profanity during a Council meeting as well as the reasons behind the Town having an attorney engagement policy.

Corey Hamilton, 403 Third Street, voiced that it was Library Week and expressed her love for the Montgomery – Floyd Regional Library. Mrs. Hamilton noted the friendly staff at the local library and encouraged everyone to visit.

Megan Peterson, 995 Church Street, expressed interest in resources for local climate resiliency as well as crime rates for the Town. Ms. Peterson also inquired what Town Council oversees and has control over. She reiterated the previous citizen comment concerning the local library.

Mayor Barber suggested Ms. Peterson reach out to the Public Relations Department and the Police Department at the Town for information on the items she questioned.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Wilson reported that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board met and discussed that the Farmers Market that was fast approaching and explained there were 12 vendors that had committed along with several others waiting for their applications to be approved. Mr. Wilson talked about the Town's community garden spots and noted there were currently 34 spots and 25 people were committed to occupy those areas. Mr. Wilson also acknowledged the Parks and Recreation Department's efforts of working the Town's events.

Councilman Bishop reported that the Aquatics Advisory Board met and discussed the membership increases at the Aquatic Center. He noted the following: the Town resident fee would increase to \$15.00 a month and the non-resident fee would increase to \$20.00 a month. The fees for children ages 3 -17 years of age would increase to \$10.00 for Town residents and \$15.00 for non-residents. Mr. Bishop noted that the Aquatic Center Day Pass would be increasing by \$2.00 next month as well. He also reported that the HVAC system has been placed out for rebids due to no bids coming in. He explained that contractors had expressed concern for the short amount of time initially given to replace the system.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A. Façade grants

Mayor Barber noted the modifications to the Façade Grant program that was discussed at the last meeting of Council.

Councilwoman Hicks read a conflict-of-interest statement due to having businesses within the Town. Mrs. Hicks noted she would abstain from the vote.

Councilwoman Bowman voiced that for the best interest of taxpayers and other businesses in the community she would vote no.

Councilwoman Hockett stated the modifications to the upcoming grant cycle were sufficient and that now businesses would be very clear on how to apply. Mrs. Hockett noted how the scoring system gives priority to the businesses downtown and in the historic areas. She expressed that Council should give it another chance and if no one applies then it could be revisited.

Councilman Jenkins made a motion to approve the Façade Grant process, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Nay; Bowman – Nay; Hicks – Abstain; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

Mayor Barber referenced a citizen comment made previously concerning the Town's 31% fund balance in reserves and clarified that the Town is required to have between 30% - 45% reserves. He referenced page 4 of the proposed budget that explains the requirement.

B. Town Staff, Town Attorney engagement and Council decorum

Councilman Wilson stated that within the Town there is a chain of command that should be followed by Council. He explained that the Town Manager has been hired to manage Town staff and that staff reports to the Town Manager. Mr. Wilson added that when Council reaches out to staff, they are not following that chain of command. He stated that the previous Business Solutions Manager had come to Council with issues concerning Council, when they should have gone through the Town Manager first, noting it is the same for both Council and Town staff.

Mayor Barber addressed the subject of attorney engagement and voiced that any questions for the Town Attorney should be sent to the Town Manager for review first and then can be forwarded on to the attorney. Mr. Barber noted that sending an email to the Town Manager and copying the Town Attorney was not following Town policy.

Town Attorney Reid Broughton stated that questions from Council and Town staff should be channeled through the Town Manager but there were exceptions. He explained the exceptions were information involving those positions by which the elected body maintains appointment authority.

Councilwoman Hockett expressed the importance of acknowledging the attorney engagement policy. Mrs. Hockett voiced concern for the continued engagement by Council outside of the guidelines Council agreed to and felt it was costing taxpayers unnecessary money. She suggested that Council consider each time the Town Attorney was contacted outside of the Town policy, and have that councilmember reimburse the Town.

Councilwoman Hicks stated that if someone states they were going to sue the Town she felt the Town Attorney should be contacted and made aware. Mrs. Hicks noted that she had not seen the first bill from the Town Attorney's office concerning questions asked

about FOIA. She questioned if Mayor Barber's deposition for Allegheny Construction lawsuit information had gone through the appropriate chain of command. Mrs. Hicks also noted that she normally asks questions, especially questions concerning the Town budget and expressed that all councilmembers should ask questions.

Mayor Barber explained to Councilwoman Hicks that the bill for \$27,000 for the deposition concerning the Allegheny Construction lawsuit and had been discussed appropriately during closed meetings of Council where the Town Attorney was present.

Councilwoman Hockett agreed that the Town Attorney engagement policy should apply to all of Council. She expressed that a business owner in Town should not reach out to the Town Attorney because the citizens have not agreed to the policy, only Council. Mrs. Hockett added that the recording Councilwoman Hicks had of a citizen complaining about the Town was not the citizen saying they were suing the Town and should not have been recorded.

Councilwoman Hicks disagreed and stated that the citizen was threatening to sue the Town and felt the conversation should be recorded in case anything came up in the future concerning a lawsuit. Mrs. Hicks also noted it was legal to record someone without their knowledge in the state of Virginia.

Councilwoman Hockett spoke concerning Council decorum and suggested that Council consider their use of cellphones in open and closed meetings and agree to not record closed sessions. She explained that when on cellphones during meetings Council has the potential to access additional information that other councilmembers are not privy to. Mrs. Hockett noted that those two concerns align with # 4 and #9 of the Town Council's Code of Ethics.

Councilwoman Hicks noted her distrust of other Councilmembers.

Councilwoman Hockett also suggested that if Councilmembers were participating on a committee related to Town business, then they should not vote on awards or things of that nature that would ultimately impact the Town. Mrs. Hockett explained that Christiansburg Parks and Recreation had been nominated for an award for the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park but that unfortunately a councilmember had voted against the award.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Town Manager Wingfield shared upcoming events with Council:

- ♦ Extreme Easter Egg event – Friday, April 11th at 7:00 p.m.
- ♦ Children's Easter Egg event – Saturday, April 19th at 9:30 a.m. at Kiwanis Park
- ♦ Spring Cleanup – April 14th – 25th

- ♦ Shred-A-Thon – April 22nd from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Christiansburg Huckleberry Park
- ♦ Volunteer Bed Build with the Police Department – April 11th from 3:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Christiansburg Middle School

Mr. Wingfield asked Council if they had potential dates for the joint meeting with Montgomery County to discuss Emergency Services funding. He clarified that the County would hold their meeting on April 14th to discuss the dates that work for them. Mayor Barber asked Council to send their available dates to him.

- B. Town Attorney – no report.
- C. Other Staff

Mayor Barber reminded Council of the work session on April 16th to discuss the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks and Councilwoman Bowman asked for clarity on who to send emails to concerning votes for the Community Support grants. Attorney Broughton clarified there can be contact on an individual basis to poll councilmembers to see what their position is, but the actual vote on any matter of public business must be at a public meeting. Mayor Barber explained that any questions concerning Community Support could be addressed at the upcoming work session.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting 7:44 p.m.

Tracy Heinline
Tracy Heinline, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber
D. Michael Barber, Mayor