

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 27, 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 MAY 27, 2025, AT 7:00 P.M.

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

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; Planning Director Retta Jackson; Planner II Devon Shields; Deputy EMS Chief Josh Settlege; Fire & EMS Chief Billy Hanks; Engineering Director Mike Kelley; Finance Director Katie Miano; Captain Carson Altizer

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Moment of Reflection

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Bowman.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Councilman Wilson made a motion to separate the minutes of May 13, 2025 and May 21, 2025 from the consent agenda due to both Councilman Jenkins and Councilman Wilson being absent. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

Councilwoman Bowman made a motion to separate two line items within the bill list pertaining to Flock cameras for the Police Department, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Code Amendment request by Town of Christiansburg, applicant, to amend Chapter 42 “Zoning” of the Christiansburg Town Code, Section 42-11 – Amendments to chapter (c) Notice and hearing. The request is to 1) remove the requirement for notices of public hearings to be published once a week for two successive weeks and 2) amend the advertising requirements to the first notice appearing no more than 28 days before and the second notice appearing no less than seven days before the date of the meeting referenced in the notice. The change would bring Town Code into alignment with Code of Virginia § 15.2-2204. (Advertisement of plans, ordinances, etc.; joint public hearings; written notice of certain amendments).

Councilwoman Hicks expressed she did not agree with the change to the code amendment and would like the Town to ensure maximum transparency for all citizens where public hearings are concerned.

Hearing no further public comment the Public Hearing closed.

- B. Conditional Use Permit request by Mary Frances Keith, property owner and applicant, to allow a single-family or two-family dwelling in the B-3 General Business District on property located near the intersection of Boxwood Drive NW and Redwood Drive NW (approximately 0.48-acre Tax Parcels 466 – ((1)) – 49, 50, 51, and 52; Parcel ID 013934). The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Kim Mills came before Council on behalf of her mother, Mary Frances Keith, and explained that her mother no longer lived at the Boxwood Drive property. Ms. Mills noted the property was zoned commercial but was in a residential area and the plan was to sell the property for residential purposes.

Patrick Melander, 495 Silver Leaf Drive, urged Council to approve items B. through D. stating they are property owners and should be allowed to do what they please with their own property.

Hearing no further public comment the Public Hearing closed.

- C. Conditional Use Permit request by Burch Properties, LLC, property owner, and David Beasley, applicant, to allow for a kennel in the B-3 General Business District on property located at 1605 N. Franklin Street (approximately 10.9-acre Tax Parcel 466 – ((A)) – 20C, Parcel ID 013214). The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

David Beasley, owner and operator of Prestige Pet Sitting, addressed Council and explained he specializes in low-density boarding, which means a limited daycare for cats and dogs. Mr. Beasley noted this was a growing need in Christiansburg and asked Council to approve the conditional use permit. He explained the back of the building currently had asphalt, and the plan was to replace that area with turf to keep the area cooler for the animals.

Hearing no further public comment the Public Hearing closed.

- D. Rezoning request by RN Investments Annex, LLC, property owner and applicant, to rezone property located at 115 Farmview Road NW (approximately 9.05-acre Tax Parcels 466 – ((1)) – 60A-67A; Parcel ID 070719) from B-3 General Business District (B-3) 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.

Neal Keesee, owner of 115 Farmview Road, NW, explained to Council he had purchased the property 6 years ago and the Montgomery County Moose Lodge had rented the building until just recently. Mr. Keesee stated that Fortiline Waterworks would be renting the building, which has generated the rezoning request to change to I-2 zoning to allow the store to operate in that area and store materials outside.

Hearing no further public comment the Public Hearing closed.

- E. Town of Christiansburg Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) 2025 Annual Action Plan and Amended 2022-2026 Consolidated Plan

Hearing no public comment the public hearing closed.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of May 13, 2025 and May 21, 2025

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the minutes of May 13th, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the minutes of May 21st, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Abstain.

Motion Approved

Councilwoman Hicks expressed there was missing information in the work session minutes of May 21st regarding Mrs. Hicks asking for personal information pertaining to sewer fees from Councilwoman Hockett.

- B. Bill List

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the bill list apart from 2-line items concerning the Flock cameras, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Councilwoman Bowman expressed concern for the lip balm purchase item under the bill list in the amount of \$513.11. Mayor Barber explained this purchase was made by Human Resources for job fair giveaways.

Mrs. Bowman also questioned the line item under Public Relations regarding a Disney Resort bill. Christina Bolt, Director of Public Relations, clarified that this was not at the amusement park and explained her department attended a work conference that was held at the Disney resort and that her department was conscious of spending for this trip.

Councilwoman Bowman additionally questioned the cost of the resurfacing of the splash pad at the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park. Town Manager Randy Wingfield explained there had been may have been issues with the concrete surface when it was originally placed though it met temperature requirements for placement. He added this could possibly be a recurring expense but if replaced correctly then it would not be as often. Councilwoman Hicks expressed it was her understanding that everything at the new park had a warranty for issues such as this and questioned a replacement at the Aquatic Center recently. Mr. Wingfield explained there are warranties for replacements at the Huckleberry Park, but the Aquatic Center's original slides and other original equipment were not covered under warranties anymore.

Mr. Wingfield spoke concerning the line item for Flock cameras and explained these were license plate readers for the Police Department that scan areas for license plates and records if they are tagged in the system, alerting police of the vehicle. Mr. Wingfield noted there are currently several in Town and a state provided grant had covered a certain amount of the initial cost. Councilman Wilson suggested the Police Chief present more information on the cameras to Council in the near future. He also noted the readers, that are placed at public intersections, only are looking for license plates that are already in the system for criminal activity. Captain Carson Altizer explained there are rules and safeguards pertaining to retention of license plate recordings as well as search history of those recordings. He added these types of cameras are common throughout Virginia. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that although she had initially voted for the cameras, she had changed her mind. Mrs. Hicks noted several citizens complaining that the cameras invade their privacy and feels there were still questions to be asked. She expressed concerns for future potential lawsuits and questioned if FOIA related inquiries pertained to the records.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the Flock camera items under the bill list, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Nay; Hicks – Nay; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

- C. Contract renewal #3 with AECOM Technical Services, Inc., for Annual Bridge Inspections and Engineering Services in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 per task order, and with work completed per contract year not to exceed \$500,000.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the contract renewal #3 with AECOM Technical Services, Inc., seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

- D. Contract renewal #3 with SCS Engineers, Inc., for Professional Engineering Service, Post Closure Landfill Engineering and Monitoring in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 per task order, and with work completed per contract year not to exceed \$500,000.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the contract renewal #3 with SCS Engineers, Inc., seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. New River Community College President Dr. Robert Brannon and Interim Executive Director of Educational Foundation Dr. Deborah Kennedy to present on the Access to Community College Education (ACCE) program

Dr. Robert Brannon expressed that Council's leadership through the ACCE program has made a profound impact on student's lives in Christiansburg. Mr. Brannon noted that approximately 300 students had access to higher education and have given back 25,000 hours of service to the community through the ACCE program. He shared that 2,400 students from Montgomery County had enrolled last year in the program and when researching outcomes, 81% of New River Community College graduates stay in their communities, work, and give back to their community. Mr. Brannon thanked Council for their involvement in the ACCE program.

Dr. Deborah Kennedy addressed Council and spoke about various college degrees earned by Montgomery County students as well as student transfers to other colleges. She stated that of the 2025 graduates from Montgomery County, 60 students have committed to the ACCE program. Ms. Kennedy noted that not only was Council investing in Christiansburg, but also the workplace development, economic development, and its regional collaboration.

Council thanked Dr. Brannon and Dr. Kennedy for the ACCE program update and expressed the importance of the program and the difference it makes in student's lives.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Beth Umberger, 915 College Street, commented that several ACCE students over time had provided community service for her, and it was a great program.

Patrick Melander, 495 Silver Leaf Drive, noted the importance of Council questioning the bill list on the agenda and felt the line items were vague. Mr. Melander expressed that he appreciates the push back from Councilwoman Bowman and Councilwoman Hicks concerning the Flock cameras. He expressed concern for citizens' privacy and felt the recordings could be used against people. Mr. Melander questioned item A. under Discussion and Action and what it was for. He also noted concern for the Town staff COLA and merit increases stating that his work experiences had been different and not as generous as local government. Mr. Melander asked about item G. under Discussion and Action as well and noted the mural request was odd and referenced the mural supporting another country. He suggested Council look at changing the sign ordinances in Town as well.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. 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

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the purchase of property located on the southern side of Cambria Street, N.W. and gave Mr. Wingfield and Mayor Barber authorization to sign the closing documents, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned the mayor signing the deed for the purchase of property. Mr. Wingfield explained that typically the mayor signs deeds. Mrs. Hicks expressed the purchase of this property would provide a larger area for parking for the events provided by the Parks and Recreation Center. Councilwoman Bowman questioned the future location of the Farmers Market noting its current location felt unsafe due to traffic. Mr. Wingfield explained that it would remain at the Recreation Center for now, but the Town would provide structures downtown with grant funding soon.

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

Motion Approved

- B. Resolution for Adoption of the New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan (2025 Update)

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the resolution for adoption of the New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan (2025 update), seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

- C. Memorandum of Understanding Between the Town of Christiansburg and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to Unify and Expedite Virginia Disaster Assistance Fund Program Assistance to Homeowners and Businesses

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the memorandum of understanding between the Town of Christiansburg and the VDHCD, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

Mr. Wingfield noted that this would help expedite private property owner's claims through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

- D. Resolution for Adoption of Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Amendment #5

Councilwoman Hockett expressed confusion for the discussion involving complaints to Council concerning EMS and referencing those individuals as whistleblowers at a previous work session. Mrs. Hockett inquired where the information from the whistleblower was and what was illegal concerning the complaints that were brought forward. She added that any decision to transfer funds over to EMS was an operational decision, not a Council decision, made by the Town Manager and felt it was his place to do so. Councilwoman Bowman stated that she had read her comments at the work session and sent a copy to Town Council. Mrs. Bowman clarified that she felt there was an issue if EMS part-time employees were complaining of lack of hours. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that several EMS employees had their hours cut back recently and she was very upset that Council had not been made aware of the situation sooner. Councilwoman Hockett clarified that information had not been brought to the Emergency Services Committee but that the Committee does support the transfer of funds to cover wages. Councilwoman Bowman explained that Council was told the transfer of \$80,000 was intended for drug box money for EMS, not to support wages. She expressed that the issue may not have been illegal, but it lacked transparency for the public. Deputy EMS Chief Josh Settlage noted that although hours were cut back, EMS was still able to provide all services that were required.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the budget amendment #5 relating to the transfer of \$20,000 to EMS for part time wages, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

- E. Resolution for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Amendment #5

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the resolution for appropriations for Budget Amendment #5 relating to the transfer of \$20,000 to EMS to cover part-time

wages, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

F. Loop.net

Mr. Wingfield explained that a year ago Councilwoman Hicks had suggested the Town use Loop.net to help advertise the 5 acres of land at the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park that was for sale. He added that the agreement was for one year with a cost of \$99. a month and the agreement would expire in June this year. Mr. Wingfield asked if Council would like to continue using Loop.net. Councilwoman Hicks expressed the importance of using a company such as Loop.net especially for commercial properties. She noted that most viewers were most likely investors which was what you wanted for commercial properties.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the continued use of Loop.net, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

G. Request by property owner at 5 Roanoke Street (Tax Parcel 527 – ((A)) – 101; Parcel ID 000816) for Town to lease the mural located on rear building wall in accordance with Christiansburg Town Code Sec. 42-704(a)

Mr. Wingfield explained the property at 5 Roanoke Street included the business Iron Tree Brewery at the front of the building and a small assembly business in the back that sells SnakeClamp products. He noted a complaint/concern had been received regarding a mural on the back wall of the building and whether it needed a sign permit. Mr. Wingfield explained that after speaking with the Town Attorney, it was agreed that the mural would be considered a sign under the Town's ordinance. He had approached the property owner of the building, and they had requested that it be considered an art display instead. Mr. Wingfield stated there is a Town Code section that allows it to be considered an art display, and the Town has done so before with the mural in Cambria. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that the mural should be considered a freedom of speech and not a sign and the Town should not require an agreement with the property owner. Mrs. Hicks also expressed that the Town's sign ordinance should be looked at again and possibly revised. Councilwoman Hockett agreed that Council should adjust how the Town defines signs and what is allowed. She added that revisions had been mentioned in the Central Business Committee before and could possibly be discussed at their next meeting. Mr. Wingfield noted that a Town Code change was made several years ago following a federal court case essentially ruling that advertising and signage regulations had to be content neutral. He added that he would be glad to look at amending the Town Code and working with the Town Attorney to rewrite it. Councilwoman Bowman suggested a work session for this subject and commented that she felt the Town had several Constitutional issues with the current sign ordinance and

would like to be in line with the Constitution. Council agreed that Mr. Wingfield could pause on taking enforcement action until the issue could be looked at closer.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to not take action on this request at this time, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Absent; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield reported that the Aquatic Center's Beach Bash event would take place on May 30th from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. He also reported the Town's Rockin Main Street Concert would be held on June 14th from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Mr. Wingfield asked that the public hearing for the water rate increase be held on June 10th. Mr. Wingfield also noted that he had been asked what the balance of the water and sewer enterprise fund was. He explained that the balance changes day to day due to the Town's expenses with Public Works and capital projects. Mr. Wingfield explained that the proposed budget, page 78, would show what the balance would be at the end of the fiscal year. He stated it would be \$2.16 million, which included the water rate increase.

B. Town Attorney – no report.

C. Other Staff – no report.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks recognized Memorial Day and all those that have served.

Councilwoman Hockett mentioned a previous accusation from Councilwoman Hicks regarding her residential property being on Town sewer and not being billed. Mrs. Hockett noted concern that Mrs. Hicks had been aware of the property being on sewer and not being charged for some time and not bringing it to the Town. She clarified that Public Works had been to her home and provided tests to assure her property was not on Town sewer but instead on a septic tank. Mrs. Hockett felt the reason behind the accusation was manipulative and noted that Mrs. Hicks had never contacted her before concerning this issue and did not appreciate it being brought up in a work session. Mrs. Hockett noted the work session discussion was pertaining to Town water not sewer. She asked that Councilwoman Hicks think more about citizens instead of focusing on her. Councilwoman Hicks questioned the last time her septic tank had been pumped. Councilwoman Hockett expressed that was not her business and suggested she make a FOIA request to look over the Public Works test results. Mrs. Hicks stated it was her understanding the property was

hooked to Town sewer and she would like to confirm that information. Mrs. Hicks also added that she had informed Councilwoman Hockett several years ago.

Councilwoman Bowman reported that the Agency on Aging has had a 40% increase on food cost and will need to make changes to their programs. She added they would be hosting their annual gala soon which would provide a fundraising opportunity.

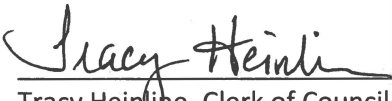
Mayor Barber reported that Christy Salmon with GoRail in Virginia had reached out to him. He explained that GoRail was urging Congress to support continued federal funding for rail safety and grade crossing programs. Mayor Barber asked if Council would like to join and support GoRail to receive funding to improve rail crossings throughout Virginia. He added that he had also received a coloring book flyer from a citizen that Norfolk Southern was handing out to stopped vehicles at crossings educating children to learn about rail safety. Mayor Barber added there was no cost for the Town to support GoRail and a letter would be sent from them to the Senate asking them to help provide funding for railroad crossings. Councilwoman Hicks and Councilman Bishop asked for more information. Mayor Barber noted he would send the information to Council by email.


XI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting 8:22 p.m.


Tracy Heinlin, Clerk of Council


D. Michael Barber, Mayor