

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
MINUTES OF MAY 3, 2010 AT 7:30 P.M.**

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA, ON MAY 3, 2010 AT 7:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Richard G. Ballengee; Vice-Mayor Ann H. Carter; D. Michael Barber; Bradford J. Stipes; D. Henry Showalter; James H. Vanhoozier; H. Earnest Wade. ABSENT: None.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager R. Lance Terpenney; Town Clerk Michele M. Stipes; Assistant Town Manager Helms; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Human Resource Director Clay McCoy; Asst. to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti; Public Relations Officer Becky Hawke; Town Attorney Kai Memmer.

MAYOR BALLENGEE stated there was a quorum present of Council Members.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

MAYOR BALLENGEE reported that the Joint Public Hearing scheduled for tonight has been postponed. He then introduced three additions to tonight's agenda: (1) A Resolution recognizing Leah Piemonte; (2) Huckleberry Trail update; (3) Reponse to Roanoke Times Editorial. Councilman Barber made a motion to amend the agenda to include these items of discussion, seconded by Councilman Wade. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Carter, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier, Wade. NAYS: None.

REGULAR MEETING

MAYOR BALLENGEE called the Regular Meeting of Council to order and asked if there were any additions or corrections to the Minutes of April 20, 2010. Councilman Barber made a motion to accept the Minutes as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Carter. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Carter, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier, Wade. NAYS: None.

CITIZEN HEARINGS:

1. Ms. Paula Alston – Dedication of a reading garden in honor of Ann Carter and Joy Foster. Ms. Alston, who is the Director of the Montgomery Regional Library, invited Council to attend the dedication of a reading garden in honor of Ann Carter and Joy Foster on May 22, 2010 at 1:00 P.M. at the Montgomery Regional Library. Ms. Alston said that Ms. Carter and the late Ms. Foster have been instrumental to the success of the library over the years. Ms. Alston briefly commented on the current library budget, reporting that the library lost fifteen percent of its state funding. Because of the support of Montgomery County, the Town of Christiansburg, and others, the library is able to keep its personnel and regular operating hours, with no cutbacks. The library is currently working on a grant through NEH, which will provide funding for the recording equipment necessary for personal history documentation. Councilwoman Carter thanked Ms. Alston for the honorable recognition and commented that Ms. Alston was the driving force behind the library board. Councilman Showalter asked Ms. Alston to pass along Council's appreciation to the library staff, noting the value of this resource to the Town. Mayor Ballengee thanked Ms. Alston for the report and invitation, commending Councilwoman Carter and Ms. Foster for their service to the community.
2. Citizen's Comments.
 - a. Lisa Lucas Gardner thanked Council for addressing the inoperable vehicle issue. She then questioned the salary of the Fire Chief. Then she commented on EEOC and the Town's job application process, suggesting the Town create an assessment center. Ms. Gardner then suggested the Town erect a public service monument in Town Square honoring fallen law enforcement officers. She said she is also presenting this recommendation to Montgomery County. Mayor Ballengee asked if the Police Department is sponsoring the idea of a monument to fallen officers. Ms. Gardner said the Police Department is not involved, but that the idea is sponsored by a Facebook group. Mayor Ballengee noted that ownership of the property in the downtown square is in question.

DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. Voluntary Group Long-Term Care Insurance – VRS. Town Manager Terpeny presented for Council consideration a Resolution accepting participation in the Virginia Voluntary Group Long-Term Care Insurance Program. Human Resource Director, Clay McCoy, explained that this is a voluntary program through VRS offered to full-time Town employees. Enrollment will provide long-term benefits for nursing and elderly care. There is guaranteed acceptance into the program and employees have the option of continued self-pay if they are no longer employed by the Town. There is no financial cost to the Town to participate in this program. Councilman Barber made a motion to adopt the Resolution accepting the terms and agreeing to participate in the Virginia Voluntary Group Long-Term Care Insurance Program. Councilman Vanhoozier seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: AYES: Barber, Carter, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier, Wade. NAYS: None.
2. Appointments to Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority. Councilman Wade made a motion to reappoint Town Manager Terpeny, and at-large representative Al Bowman, to serve another term on the Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority. Councilman Vanhoozier seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: AYES: Barber, Carter, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier, Wade. NAYS: None.
3. Inoperable Motor Vehicle Ordinance. Attorney Memmer presented to Council a draft revision to Chapter 28 of the *Christiansburg Town Code*. The revision provides a more clear definition as to inoperable vehicles and is more in line with State statute. Attorney Memmer noted that Police Chief Sisson was integral to the drafting of the revision. Chief Sisson has recommended that he be provided adequate time to notify and educate the public on the changes before they go into effect. Considering this recommendation, Council agreed on an effective date of July 1, 2010. Council will review the presented draft revision and act on the matter at the May 18, 2010 regular Town Council meeting.
4. Council discussion regarding hiring a new Rescue Squad Captain. Mayor Ballengee reported that Rescue Squad Captain, Kelly Walters has announced his retirement effective July 1, 2010. At question is the process by which the vacancy is filled. Mayor Ballengee asked for Council's thoughts on filling this position through Council appointment, or through advertising and application. Councilwoman Carter said she believes that since this is a paid position, it should be treated as a regular Town employee and the Town should advertise the position as such, and work through the application process. Councilwoman Carter also stressed that whoever is hired to fill the vacancy should be a qualified paramedic. Councilman Barber commented that he believes it is a disservice to hire someone from outside rather than promoting from within. He suggested Council meet with the members of the Rescue Squad to review qualified applicants from within the Squad. Councilman Showalter expressed his concern that the Town may be required by EEOC laws to advertise the position. Attorney Memmer clarified that the Town is not governed by EEOC laws in this case, and can choose at its discretion whether or not to advertise or simply appoint an individual. Councilman Stipes commented that he wants this position to be a Council appointment and is interested in considering an appointment from within the Squad. Attorney Memmer noted that for the Rescue Squad Captain to be a Council appointed position, the Town Charter would need to be amended to reflect this change. Mayor Ballengee commented that the Council's Vision 2020 mentions the possibility of the Rescue Squad volunteers becoming paid employees, which at that point the Rescue Squad would become a department of the Town. As it is, the Rescue Squad is its own entity, with its own Charter and By-Laws. After further discussion by Council, Mayor Ballengee turned the matter over to the Rescue and Lifesaving Committee, reserving the right to appoint a staff member to the Committee. Mayor Ballengee asked the Committee to begin reviewing interested individuals from within the Squad, while preparing to advertise the position. He further directed the Committee to bring its recommendation to Council by June 1, 2010. Human Resource Director, Clay McCoy, offered to provide Council with a copy of the current job description for this position, noting it can be amended to reflect the needs of the Rescue Squad.
5. Resolution of Recognition. Mayor Ballengee presented Council with a Resolution recognizing Christiansburg High School freshman, Leah Piemonte, for her VHSL State Championship win in February 2010. In addition to winning the State Championship, Ms. Piemonte also established a new State record for scoring 368.6 points for eleven dives on the one-meter diving board. Town Council congratulated Ms. Piemonte for her accomplishments. Councilman Barber made a motion to adopt the Resolution of Recognition, seconded by Councilwoman Carter. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Carter, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier, Wade. NAYS: None.
6. Huckleberry Trail Update. Councilman Stipes reported that more than one year ago the Town was made aware of a significant bequest from the estate of Mrs. Renva Weeks Knowles, which was stipulated to be used for town beautification. It has been determined by the legal professionals involved with the Renva Knowles estate that the Huckleberry Trail Project, and specifically the bridge crossing of Route 114, qualifies has a suitable and fitting memorial of Mrs. Knowles and her bequest. In addition to this, Councilman Stipes said he was recently made aware

that the VDOT Revenue Sharing Program, which should be considered for this bequest, has a 2010 application deadline of June 18, 2010. This revenue sharing program provides for up to a 50/50 match of local revenues that are used for transportation projects of any kind. Transportation projects like the Huckleberry Trail and bicycle/pedestrian facilities are common recipients of this funding. Recognizing the opportunity for the Town to further compliment Mrs. Knowles generous bequest, Councilman Stipes proposed that Town Council confirm its intention to dedicate the funds it receives from the Renva Weeks Knowles estate to construct the Huckleberry Trail Bridge Crossing of Route 114, with clear and suitable recognition of the bequest through naming the bridge after Mrs. Knowles. Councilman Stipes further commented that it is his understanding that, with Council approval, the Knowles estate will prepare a specific proposal to the Town Council including the details of the project and how the bequest will be dispensed. Councilman Stipes informed Council that the estate has retained a local engineering firm to provide ongoing engineering services on this project, and continuing to retain the services of this firm would be at Council's discretion. Councilman Stipes said the amount of the bequest is enough to cover the costs of the bridge, and the amount received through the VDOT grant could extend the Huckleberry Trail to the Recreation Center, or the grant funds could be considered for a different beautification project in town. Councilman Showalter pointed out that the Town has the option to use all the VDOT grant funds for extension of the Huckleberry Trail. Councilman Stipes commented that in order to apply for the VDOT grant, the Town must give some assurance that the funding it would match is available and will be used for the stated purpose. Mr. Joe Simmons, representing the family of Mrs. Knowles, said this project is in compliance with the wishes laid out in Mrs. Knowles' will. After further discussion by Town Council, Councilman Wade made a motion to use the bequest from the estate of Mrs. Renva Weeks Knowles to build the Huckleberry Trail Bridge Crossing of Route 114, and to authorize the Town Attorney to work with Mr. Joe Simmons in drawing up applicable documentation, and further to name the bridge in honor of Mrs. Knowles. Councilman Barber seconded the motion and Town Clerk Stipes polled Council as follows: Barber – AYE; Carter – AYE; Showalter – AYE; Stipes – AYE; Vanhoozier – AYE; Wade – AYE.

Councilman Barber made a motion to authorize Joe Simmons to use the appropriate funds from the bequest to provide for engineering services through the firm retained by the estate, and to begin the application process for the VDOT Revenue Sharing Program. Councilman Wade seconded the motion and Town Clerk Stipes polled Council as follows: Barber – AYE; Carter – AYE; Showalter – AYE; Stipes – AYE; Vanhoozier – AYE; Wade – AYE.

7. Response to the Roanoke Times Editorial. Councilman Showalter expressed his concerns with a quote by Town administration, printed in the Roanoke Times, that real estate taxes would not be increased to help offset the cost of the aquatic center. This quote concerns him because it was not discussed by Council prior to being published in a public manner. Councilman Showalter suggested that Council be provided the opportunity to preview press releases that represent the Town prior to publishing. Councilwoman Carter concurred with Councilman Showalter. Councilman Barber and Wade noted that the Town recently hired a Public Relations Officer to release information concerning the Town, information that is first reviewed by the Town Manager and Mayor, and both Council members are comfortable with this process. Councilman Vanhoozier agreed with the comments by Councilman Barber and Councilman Wade. Councilman Barber further noted that real estate taxes haven't been raised in years, and there has been nothing said or done to imply that these taxes might be raised. Councilman Showalter then asked for clarification by the Town Manager on a perceived discrepancy on expenditures included in the business plan regarding the aquatic center. It was explained that the discrepancy was the result of revenue from hotels and restaurants being included as offset in one figure, but not in the other. Councilman Showalter also noted a discrepancy of four hundred thousand dollars between the amount indicated in the aquatic center business plan for annual operations and the amount stated in the press release. Manager Terpenney commented that, unlike the amount quoted in the press release, the amount indicated in the business plan for annual operations does not include principal and interest on the debt.

TOWN MANAGER REPORTS:

MONTHLY BILLS – On motion by Councilman Barber, seconded by Councilman Wade, Council voted to approve the monthly bills to be paid 10 May, 2010, in the amount of \$1,376,790.29. AYES: Barber, Carter, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier, Wade. NAYS: None.

TOWN MANAGER reported that County Administrator Craig Meadows is currently drafting a tourism initiative document to form an authority to oversee tourism development, which will in effect replace the existing Tourism Development Commission. Administration from each locality will review the document before presenting it to the Town Councils and County Board, which will then be responsible for appointing members to the Authority once it is created.

TOWN MANAGER TERPENNEY updated Council on the AARP tax service offered at the Recreation Center for free personal income tax preparation. Six hundred and eighty-nine (689) Form 1040's were prepared at an average refund of \$1,300.00.

This community service was well received and Town Manager Terpenney commended Tammy Caldwell of the Parks and Recreation for her efforts in organizing the event.

TOWN MANAGER TERPENNEY reported that a work session of Council to discuss the fiscal year 2010-2011 budget is scheduled for May 11, 2010 at 4:00 P.M. The work session will be held in the Council chambers of Town Hall.

COUNCILMAN BARBER informed Council of a fundraiser at the Wendy's on North Franklin Street on May 11, 2010 from 5:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. Fifteen-percent of the proceeds will benefit the Dixie World Series to be held at Harkrader Sports Complex later this year.

COUNCILWOMAN CARTER requested that the drop-off mailboxes at the downtown Post Office be placed back outside as quickly as possible. The drop box was removed to accommodate downtown construction and this has created a hardship for many of the folks who use the downtown Post Office. Assistant Town Manager Helms noted that construction near the Post Office is scheduled for completion in June.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to bring before Council the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 P.M.

Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

Richard G. Ballengee, Mayor