

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
MINUTES OF APRIL 19, 2011 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 APRIL 19, 2011 AT 7:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Richard G. Ballengee; Vice-Mayor Michael D. Barber; R. Cord Hall; Steve Huppert; Henry D. Showalter; Bradford J. Stipes. ABSENT: James W. Vanhoozier.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Interim Town Manager Barry Helms; Town Clerk Michele M. Stipes; Town Attorney Jim Guynn; Assistant to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti; Engineering Director Wayne Nelson; Public Information Officer Becky Wilburn.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.**

Mayor Ballengee welcomed visiting students from Blacksburg High School.

**REGULAR MEETING**

MAYOR BALLENGEE called the Regular Meeting of Council to order and asked if there were any additions or corrections to the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 5, 2011. Showalter asked that the Minutes reflect his request for information about the Fire Department HVAC system upgrade, a budget item being carried over into two budget cycles. Councilman Barber made a motion to approve the Minutes with the requested amendment, seconded by Councilman Hall. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes. NAYS: None.

**CITIZEN HEARINGS:**

1. Police Chief Mark Sisson to administer the Oath of Office to new officers. Chief Sisson presented the Oath of Office to six new members of the Christiansburg Police Office: Officer Heath Hyatt, Officer David Wall, Officer Chad Eversole, Officer Shawn Cox, Officer Benjamin Cronk, Dispatcher Carolyn Light. Mayor Ballengee thanked Chief Sisson and the new officers for their service to the community.
2. Mr. Jack Hinshelwood, Executive of The Crooked Road to address Council regarding the Southwest Virginia Cultural Center, along with Mr. Chuck Riedhammer, Marketing Director, Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission, and Ms. Diana Blackburn, Executive Director of Round The Mountain. Mr. Riedhammer explained to Council the purpose of the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission which is to preserve the cultural heritage of Southwest Virginia by connecting the communities and cultural assets of the region. Mr. Riedhammer presented a short video presentation emphasizing Southwest Virginia and the natural resources and cultural heritage found there, and the focus of the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission on these assets. Mr. Riedhammer reported that the Commission is working to expand opportunities for recreation and downtown revitalization, and the network publishes fifteen different directories for various events and opportunities. The Commission is also working to build a better transportation infrastructure to encourage businesses to locate in Southwest Virginia. Mr. Riedhammer said he is present on behalf of Mr. Todd Christianson whose focus is on community and economic development, not tourism. Mr. Riedhammer reviewed the recent and current marketing efforts of the Commission around the region, and presented the benefits of partnering with the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Initiative. Through the efforts of the partnership, Heartwood: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Gateway was developed and a grand opening is scheduled for June. The Heartwood facility will serve as a focal point and portal to the heritage tourism efforts taking place in Southwest Virginia. The facility is located along I-81 in Abingdon, Virginia. Mr. Riedhammer reviewed Heartwood's offerings and promotional materials designed to get people involved with the venture. Ms. Diana Blackburn presented information about Round the Mountain: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network, which covers nineteen counties in Southwest Virginia, with over 500 members. The focus of Round the Mountain is to promote the artisan trail network in Southwest Virginia through marketing, educational, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Round the Mountain serves as a connection

between tourists and artisans, farms, restaurants, and points of interest. A goal of Round The Mountain is to eventually provide one brochure that will feature all fifteen trails. Ms. Blackburn said several members are Christiansburg residents. Ms. Blackburn reported that a grant through Virginia Tourism Initiative provided funding with a matching grant that paid for the Round The Mountain brochures. Mr. Jack Hinschelwood, who grew up in Christiansburg, then addressed Council with a brief history of The Crooked Road, which was designated in 2003 and is a 233 mile long trail that features major unique musical venues. The Crooked Road as an organization has focused on marketing the musical venues and opportunities, which includes fifty-two affiliated venues and festivals, covering nineteen counties. Mr. Hinschelwood reported that The Crooked Road has seen more than ten new businesses emerge along its route within the last four years, creating hundreds of new jobs for the area. Mr. Hinschelwood said the trail was recently designated as Virginia's Heritage Music Trail by General Legislation, and its mission is to help communities, and the economic development of those communities. Mr. Hinschelwood said the organization participates in joint marketing with various counties in Southwest Virginia and he hopes that Christiansburg will be a part of the Heartwood venue. Councilman Huppert asked if The Crooked Road initiative receives State funding. Mr. Hinschelwood replied that the initiative is funded fully by Southwest Virginia localities, The Tobacco Commission, and ARC. Mr. Riedhammer said one of goals of the Commission is to aggregate and to unify the initiatives to simplify organization and funding. Mr. Hinschelwood asked Christiansburg to consider including the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission in its 2011-2012 Fiscal Year Budget. Councilman Hall noted the detailed information provided in the brochures and asked what kind of monetary commitment they receive from localities. Ms. Blackburn said they've received a good response from localities and that contribution amounts vary. Councilman Showalter commented that he expects the Tourism Commission to promote, feature, and market Christiansburg. Mr. Riedhammer asked that the tourism director, once hired, be made aware of this initiative. Mayor Ballengee stated he hopes this presentation will be made to the Tourism Commission.

3. Mr. John Webb to address Council regarding a proposed bike race in Christiansburg. Mayor Ballengee reported that this matter has been postponed until a future date.
4. Mayor Ballengee added to the agenda a presentation by Mr. Ken Hall of Safe Haven. Councilman Hall, who is a member of the Board for Safe Haven introduced Mr. Ken Hall, Executive Director of Safe Haven. Councilman Hall briefly explained that the objective of Safe Haven is to provide a service that allows children a secure location to visit with parents when necessary. Exchanges are monitored, and the service is valuable in situations with domestic issues. Mr. Ken Hall thanked Council for the opportunity to speak and elaborated on information provided by Councilman Hall, further explaining the goals and services of Safe Haven. Safe Haven is operated on a volunteer basis, except for one paid employee. A Safe Haven visitation center recently opened in Christiansburg at the Presbyterian Church on Roanoke Street and operates as a non-profit 501c(3) with a board of fifteen members. Mr. Hall noted that there are no other centers for supervised exchanges except in Roanoke. Councilman Hall commented that Safe Haven is used when ordered by the Courts, when deemed necessary, sometimes on a permanent basis. Mr. Hall said Safe Haven is appealing to the communities it serves to contribute financially, suggesting a contribution of \$1,500, but expressing appreciation for any amount offered. Councilman Barber asked if state or federal funding is available when the service is ordered by the courts. Councilman Hall replied that no such funds are available, but that funding is provided through fundraising and private donations, including the donation by the Presbyterian Church of the use of its facility. Mr. Hall noted that Safe Haven has not asked for donations from localities until now, and that the organization operates on a small annual budget. Councilman Hall noted that he and Mr. Ken Hall are not related.
5. Citizens' Comments.
  - a. Carol Lindstrom, Depot Street, spoke in support of Safe Haven's request for funding. Ms. Lindstrom said she was a child protective service worker in Florida and she understands the importance of this service for children.

#### DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. Mayor Ballengee reported that last week was designated "Week of the Young Child" and that he had prepared a proclamation supporting this designation and had presented it on behalf of the Town of Christiansburg during a press conference at Head Start. At that time, Mayor Ballengee was presented with a marble painting done by a four year old

student in appreciation of the proclamation. Mayor Ballengee presented the artwork to the Town and said he will display it in lobby of Town Hall.

2. Acceptance of the Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act of 2002 (PPEA). Mayor Ballengee reported that this matter has been postponed until a future meeting.

CLOSED MEETING:

1. Request for a Closed Meeting under Section 2.2-3711 A(5), *Code of Virginia*, for the discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community. Councilman Barber made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Town Clerk Stipes polled Council as follows: Barber – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
2. Reconvene in Open Meeting. Councilman Barber made a motion to reconvene in Open Meeting, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes. NAYS: None.
3. Certification. Councilman Stipes moved 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 Showalter seconded the certification and Town Clerk Stipes polled Council as follows: Barber – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
4. Council Action on the Matter. There was no action taken by Council on the Matter.

TOWN MANAGER REPORTS:

MS. BECKY WILBURN, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER, presented a report on the Priority Based Budgeting survey. The survey, a community outreach effort, asked citizens to prioritize six goals the town strives to achieve through its programs and services. Consultants provided a template, but the Town made the survey its own. Ms. Wilburn reported that the survey presented challenges such as timing, and some confusion in the message of the survey. Ms. Wilburn reviewed the proactive outreach efforts to make citizens aware of survey and the Town's goal in obtaining the information provided by the survey. Ms. Wilburn reported that 1,152 surveys were returned, with a 9.8% return rate on surveys in utility bills, which the consultants consider a success. Ms. Wilburn said she will be participating in a webinar to review the survey process used by Christiansburg. Ms. Wilburn stated that Finance Director Val Tweedie will be reporting on the content of the surveys at a future meeting.

INTERIM TOWN MANAGER HELMS reported that the Town contracted to mow areas in town, including all Town buildings, parks, but not ballfields, and Sunset Cemetery. This contract replaces two full-time and four part-time employees. Councilman Showalter asked for the cemetery mowing schedule so he would be able to answer questions when asked. Mayor Ballengee said that mowing at Sunset Cemetery looks good, and Councilman Stipes applauded the efforts of the Town to cut costs by outsourcing this job.

INTERIM TOWN MANAGER HELMS reported that Virginia Tech's Annual Big Event was held two weekends ago. Adam Carpenetti and Nichole Hair worked with the event planners to organize three hundred and one projects in town for fifteen hundred participant volunteers, all Virginia Tech students. Councilman Barber noted that notice of the event was sent through the Town's utility bills and was paid for by the organizers.

INTERIM TOWN MANAGER HELMS reported that Appalachian Power Company announced that Christiansburg will receive a grant in the amount of three thousand seventy-three dollars (\$3,073) to assist in replacing the light fixtures at the Christiansburg Fire Department.

INTERIM TOWN MANAGER HELMS took a moment to clarify a statement he made regarding enforcement of conditions set forth on issued. Interim Town Manager Helms stated that Town Staff makes every effort to ensure that conditions are met when conditional on proceeding with steps of the operation. Continual monitoring of Conditional Use Permits for compliance is based mainly on complaints. Currently, the Town has four hundred and thirty active Conditional Use Permits, three hundred and ten of which have ongoing conditions.

INTERIM TOWN MANAGER HELMS reported that the job description for Rescue Squad Captain is complete and will be advertised next weekend. Copies of the job description are available to Council members if they would like a copy.

COUNCILMAN SHOWALTER reported that he had been contacted by the Principal of Falling Branch School regarding concerns with the adjacent public park and ride lot and megabus stop. According to the Principal, at times people waiting for the megabus will walk to the school to use the restroom or telephone, creating an uneasy situation. Councilman Showalter asked if VDOT could be petitioned for the placement of a portajohn and other accommodations for those using the park and ride. Interim Town Manager Helms said the park and ride is a VDOT facility and talks are currently being held to expand the park and ride, but bathroom facilities are not under consideration. Mayor Ballengee said he will see that this matter is placed on the next Montgomery County School Board agenda for discussion.

COUNCILMAN STIPES reported that the Commonwealth Transportation Board will meet tomorrow morning to take action on its 6-Year Plan, and he is optimistic that funding for the final phase of the Route 114 widening project will be approved. Councilman Stipes stated that the Town should know by tomorrow if the project will go to construction this fall. Councilman Showalter asked Interim Town Manager Helms to let Council know of the decision.

COUNCILMAN HALL asked for an update on the request for chickens within Town limits. Interim Town Manager Helms said that the Planning Department has a draft ordinance prepared for discussion at the next Planning Commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to bring before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:36 PM.

---

Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

---

Richard G. Ballengee, Mayor