AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 23, RESCUE AND LIFESAVING, TO ADD SECTION 23-8, COST REIMBURSEMENT FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORT, TO THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN CODE AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the Council for the Town of Christiansburg desires to amend Chapter 23, Rescue and Lifesaving, to add Section 23-8, "Cost Reimbursement for Emergency Medical Transport," authorizing the Town to charge reasonable fees for the use of emergency medical services vehicles, including charging insurers for ambulance services as authorized by section §§ 32.1-111.14 and 38.2-3407.9 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 (as amended); and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has found that the public necessity, convenience, and general welfare deem it proper to do so;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA that it hereby adopts and enacts Section 23-8, "Cost Reimbursement for Emergency Medical Transport," of Chapter 23, Rescue and Lifesaving, as follows:

Sec. 23-8. Cost reimbursement for emergency medical transport.

Reasonable fees shall be charged for emergency medical transport services provided by all emergency medical services personnel, whether provided by volunteer or town employees. The schedule of rates for services shall be established by resolution of the Council of the Town of Christiansburg. The funds received from the payment of these fees shall be used to aid in defraying the cost of providing emergency services.

(a) Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Ambulance means any vehicle, vessel, or aircraft, which holds a valid permit issued by the Office of Emergency Medical Services, that is specially constructed, equipped, maintained, and operated, and is intended to be used for emergency medical care and the transportation of patients who are sick, injured, wounded or otherwise incapacitated or helpless. The word "ambulance" may not appear on any vehicle, vessel, or aircraft that does not hold a valid permit.

Emergency medical services personnel means persons responsible for the direct provision of emergency medical services in a given medical emergency including all persons who could be described as attendants, attendant-in-charge, or operators.

Emergency medical transport services means services providing transportation in an "ambulance," accompanied by "emergency medical services personnel," as defined herein.

(b) Billing.

(1) A bill will be generated for ambulance transports by all emergency medical services personnel whether the personnel are volunteers or town employees.

(2) Patients will generally fall into one of the following categories for billing purposes:

a. *Insured, town/county resident or non-resident.* The appropriate insurance carrier will be billed for emergency transport services utilized by Town of Christiansburg and Montgomery County residents, as well as non-residents.

b. *Uninsured town/county residents.* The Town of Christiansburg Compassionate Billing Policy provides for waiver of emergency transport fees for uninsured town and county residents that can demonstrate a financial hardship. A statement showing zero balance will be sent to any patient qualifying for such waiver.

c. *Uninsured non-resident.* A bill will be sent to the patient transported. If the individual has the ability to pay, then payment is expected in full. If the patient can demonstrate financial hardship in accordance with the compassionate billing policy, they may qualify for waiver of fees.

d. *Bill generated/no collection.* There are instances when a bill is generated in which the town would be merely transferring funds from one department budget to another to satisfy the bill. For example, when an on-duty town employee is transported for a compensable workers' compensation injury, the town is responsible for payment of those expenses. If the workers' compensation claim is denied, the employee's health insurance will be billed. The billing contractor will update its records to reflect such adjustment. Designated personnel will notify the town's billing contractor that the bill generated is internal to the town in those circumstances to ensure proper record keeping.

(c) Compassionate billing policy.

(1) No one will ever be denied necessary medical transport service due to either his or her inability to pay or a lack of insurance.

(2) All consumers of ambulance services will be asked, in writing, to provide information regarding available insurance coverage. All consumers of ambulance services will receive written notification of the value of services received and notice of billing forwarded to their insurer(s).

(3) Compassionate billing is intended to eliminate or minimize out-of-pocket expenses for ambulance services received by town and county residents. The town regards taxes paid by town residents and residents of Montgomery County as inclusive of co-pays and/or deductibles for ambulance service for all persons living in a taxpaying household. Elderly or disabled town or county residents qualifying for real estate tax relief shall be deemed qualified for relief from any deductible or co-pay for ambulance services received.

(4) Any town or county resident lacking health insurance may submit a waiver request form stating a financial hardship.

(5) The town's billing process or company will not pursue payment recovery through a debt collection agency without express authorization of the town manager or his designee.

(6) Nonresidents receiving town medical transport will receive a bill, but these nonresidents may also apply for financial hardship waiver.

(7) If any insured party requires EMS transport within a given calendar year that

exceeds his or her policy limits and no additional insurance coverage is available, the fees for service beyond coverage limits will be waived.

(8) If the insurance company deems the transport is not medically necessary the billing company will verify the information that was submitted to the insurance company and resubmit the claim for reconsideration. If the insurance carrier still deems the transport not medically necessary, the town manager or his designee will review the individual case for possible waiver of the fees.

(9) Town volunteer fire and rescue personnel, whether they are town residents or not, will not be charged out-of-pocket expenses for ambulance services.

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This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption. If any part of this ordinance is deemed unlawful by a court of competent jurisdiction all remaining parts shall be deemed valid.

Upon a call for an aye and nay vote on the foregoing ordinance at a regular meeting of the Council of the Town of Christiansburg, Virginia held _____, 2013, the members of the Council of the Town of Christiansburg, Virginia present throughout all deliberations on the foregoing and voting or abstaining, stood as indicated opposite their names as follows:

	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Mayor Richard G. Ballengee*				
D. Michael Barber				
Cord Hall				
Steve Huppert				
Henry Showalter				
Bradford J. Stipes				
James W. “Jim” Vanhoozier				

*Votes only in the event of a tie vote by Council.

SEAL:

_____ _____

Michele M. Stipes, Town Clerk Richard G. Ballengee, Mayor