

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
MINUTES OF APRIL 2, 2013 AT 7:30 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, VA, ON APRIL 2, 2013 AT 7:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Richard G. Ballengee; Vice-Mayor Steve Huppert; D. Michael Barber; R. Cord Hall; D. Henry Showalter; Bradford J. Stipes; James W. Vanhoozier. ABSENT: None.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Barry Helms; Assistant Town Manager Randy Wingfield, Town Clerk Michele Stipes; Town Attorney Theresa Fontana; Assistant to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Police Chief Mark Sisson.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. An ordinance to amend Section 29-14, Tampering with Water and Sewer System Prohibited, of Article I, "In General," of Chapter 29, Water and Sewers of the *Christiansburg Town Code*; Prohibiting Obstruction of Town Water and Sewer Facilities and Meters; Providing an effective date.

Town Manager Helms reported that this proposed ordinance amendment is in response to difficulties the Town has faced over the years in trying to enforce water cut-off for delinquent accounts. The amendment would allow the Town to legally remove any obstruction placed on the meter by property owners attempting to prevent water cut-off. It would also provide for the legal ramifications authorized by state code for tampering with meters or meter locks.

**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 February 19, 2013. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Councilman Barber. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

**I. CITIZEN'S HEARING**

**1. CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

- a. MR. HOWARD THORNTON, 180 Brilliant Drive, addressed Council regarding ongoing attempts to establish a "quiet zone" at the Chrisman Mill railroad crossing. The most recent attempt was in 2004 by Mike Fowler who worked with then-Town Manager Terpenney to apply for "quiet zone" status for Chrisman Mill crossing and Cambria crossing. "Quiet zone" status was approved for the Cambria crossing; however, there were questions concerning the safety at the Chrisman Mill crossing and the application for this area was not approved pending upgrades that would address safety issues. Mr. Thornton said he recently visited the Chrisman Mill crossing and found that the barrier curbing required for "quiet zone" status had not been installed and he asked for a progress report on this matter from the Town. Councilman Stipes said he remembers that alignment requirements and sight distance were also factors in determining not to pursue "quiet zone" status for this crossing.
- b. Ms. Sherri Blevins, 240 Virginian Drive, spoke to Council about the continuing safety concerns at Falling Branch Elementary School and reported on the measures she has taken to bring attention to this matter. Ms. Blevins noted that the extension given for placement of an officer at the school would expire this week and

she requested Council authorize another extension through the end of the 2012-2013 school year. Councilman Hall said he received a letter from Mr. Wendell Jones, chairman of the school board, pledging to address the safety issues within three weeks; however this has not happened. Council expressed concern with the continued lack of response from the Montgomery County School Board and the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors in assisting with the costs to provide an officer at the school, and in addressing the school safety issues in general. Council agreed that a commitment from School Superintendent, Brenda Blackburn, on safety measures the school board is willing to implement, is necessary. Mayor Ballengee noted that the Town has not received a response to its letter to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department.

Ms. Blevins said she intends to approach Sheriff Whitt to urge him to assist in this matter. Councilman Hall gave instances of schools in surrounding counties that utilize a front door buzzer security system, suggesting this type of security system for Montgomery County schools. Councilman Hall stated that the school board has been put on notice of security negligence at Falling Branch Elementary, which, while unaddressed, carries liability issues.

## II. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

### 1. APPOINTMENT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

The background check for Mr. Matthew Beasley has been approved and Councilman Barber made a motion to appoint him to the Planning Commission for a four year term. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hall and Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

## III. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORTS

**MONTHLY BILLS:** Councilman Hall made a motion to approve the monthly bills to be paid on April 10, 2013, in the amount of \$1,030,489.03, seconded by Councilman Barber. Councilman Hall expressed concern with the egregious amount of repairs that were being done to pumps and other equipment at the aquatic center in recent months. Town Manager Helms reported that the aquatic center has seen breakage on numerous pieces of equipment that are no longer under warranty. Council voted on the motion as follows: Ayes: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. Nays: None.

**PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST(S):** Town Manager Helms presented the following request and recommended setting the Public Hearing for May 21, 2013:

1. Conditional Use Permit request for towing service at 820 Park Street in the I-2 General Industrial zoning district.

On motion by Councilman Barber, seconded by Councilman Hall, Council voted to set the Public Hearing for May 21, 2013. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

## PROGRESS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Town Manager Helms reported that there are currently more than twenty cemeteries located within Town limits; the Town is aware of ownership in two: Sunset and Kyle.
- The 2013 TriAdventure Summer Sprint Triathlon will be held in Christiansburg on April 7, 2013.
- Town Manager Helms reported a correction to the Huckleberry Trail report given at the March 19<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, clarifying the status of the phases. Plans for phase 2E have been submitted to VDOT for approval.
- The Christiansburg downtown historic district was placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register on March 21, 2013.
- There will be a work session of Council to discuss the FY 2013-2014 budget on April 9, 2013 at 6:30 PM.
- Spring Clean-up continues through April 13, 2013.
- Council was provided a draft copy of a letter addressed to County Administrator, Craig Meadows, regarding Council's questions concerning the Joinder Study as discussed at the work session on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Council directed that a response deadline of June 1, 2013 (60 days) be provided in the letter for timeliness in obtaining the requested information. Blacksburg and Virginia Tech will be copied on the letter.
- The Cemetery Committee has selected individuals for appointment to the Cemetery Advisory Committee; background checks are pending. The appointees will be introduced to Council at a future meeting.
- Mayor Ballengee referred to Town Manager Helms a citizen request to post a speed limit sign on Forelmont Street.

COUNCIL DISCUSSED THE CONTINUING SAFETY CONCERNS at Falling Branch Elementary School, noting that the deadline for the extending police presence at the school would soon expire. Council expressed frustration that no response had been received from Montgomery County entities that were contacted with a request to assist with the costs of providing an officer at the school. The cost to place an officer at the school during regular school hours is approximately four hundred dollars per day, which continues to be paid solely by Christiansburg. Council stated they welcome any assistance from the Montgomery County entities including the school board, the board of supervisors, and the sheriff's department. Recognizing the continued need for an officer at the school, Council agreed to extend placement of the officer for an additional thirty days. Police Chief Sisson said he would continue to provide an officer at the school, but that the next thirty days might incur overtime pay, which has been authorized by Council, but so far avoided. Police Chief Sisson reported that School Superintendent Brenda Blackburn has responded with an action plan addressing the recommendations of the Police Department, with the exception of locking the front doors of the school. Police Chief Sisson said proactive measures are being taken, but that locking the front doors is necessary for the security of the school. Council discussed the merits of a buzzer system for the front door. Council agreed to send a letter to the chairmen of Montgomery County School Board and Montgomery County Board of Supervisors addressing the possibility of installing a front door buzzer system at the school, and requesting that funds for school safety measures be included in the annual budgets for FY 2013-2014, including sharing in the costs to provide a school resource officer at Falling Branch Elementary School. The letter is to also inform them that Council has extended placement of an officer at the school another thirty days at a cost of approximately four hundred dollars per day. A copy of the letter is to be sent to Sheriff Whitt, County Administrator Craig Meadows, and School Superintendent Brenda Blackburn. Council agreed to request a fourteen day response time in the letter for timeliness. Police Chief Sisson plans to meet with Brenda Blackburn and Sheriff Whitt on April 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss further safety measures at Montgomery County schools and he will pass along some of the concerns expressed by Council.

#### IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 PM.

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Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

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Richard G. Ballengee, Mayor