

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
WORK SESSION MINUTES OF DECEMBER 17, 2013 – 6:00 P.M.  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 17, 2013 AT 7:30 P.M.

A WORK SESSION OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA, ON DECEMBER 17, 2013 AT 6:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Barry Helms; Assistant Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Director of Human Resources and Public Relations Becky Wilburn.

WORK SESSION

1. Council to discuss the process of filling a vacant seat on Council, which is expected to occur January 1, 2014 when Councilman Mike Barber assumes the mayor's seat.

~~Recess until 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 DECEMBER 17, 2013 AT 7:30 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Barry Helms; Assistant Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Interim Clerk of Council Amber Beasley; Town Attorney Theresa Fontana; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Planning Director Nichole Hair; Assistant to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti; Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell. ABSENT: Clerk of Council Michele Stipes.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**REGULAR MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

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 December 3, 2013. Councilman Hall 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.

*Motion by Councilman Vanhoozier to amend the agenda to include reappointment of three members to the Aquatic Advisory Board. Councilman Barber seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None. The matter was placed as item #5 under Discussions by Mayor and Council.*

**II. CITIZEN'S HEARING:**

1. BECKY MARTIN, DIRECTOR OF BLACKSBURG TRANSIT, TO ADDRESS COUNCIL. Ms. Martin introduced to Council members of the Christiansburg Working Group: Harland Brown, BT Operations Manager; Jenny Mills, Blacksburg Transit Supervisor; and Fiona Rhodes, Marketing Specialist. The group came before

Council to recognize Mayor Ballengee for his successful efforts to bring public transportation to the Town of Christiansburg. Ms. Martin spoke about the steps taken to implement the service, and the steps taken over the years to improve service in Christiansburg. The group presented Mayor Ballengee with a Blacksburg Transit clock in show of its appreciation for his dedication and support for public transportation in Christiansburg.

2. SHANE LAVENDER, CPA, AND VALERIE TWEEDIE, FINANCE DIRECTOR/TREASURER, TO PROVIDE AUDIT REPORT TO COUNCIL. Shane Lavender and Val Tweedie used Powerpoint to present and review with Council the Audit Review 2013 and the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. A copy of both reports can be viewed on the Town's website.
3. JIM POLITIS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL REGARDING INDUSTRIAL HEMP FARMING ACT. Mr. Jim Politis updated Council on the progress being made to legalize hemp farming in Virginia. Recently, Congress passed an amendment to add hemp farming to the Farm Bill to be voted on in January. Delegate Nick Rush has agreed to present the amendment to the House of Delegates, if it is not vetoed in January. The type of hemp that would be legalized with the amendment is a non-narcotic grade that is used to make clothing, canvass, rope, oils, soaps, and many other uses. The largest hemp production company is located in Canada and is interested in farming in the New River Valley. The hemp industry is currently approximately one-half billion dollars in the United States. Mr. Politis clarified that modifications would be made to the bill that would address the type of cannabis to be legalized to be non-narcotic. Councilman Hall spoke of his concerns regarding the physical appearance of non-narcotic hemp, which is close to the appearance of marijuana, and the difficulties that may arise in policing narcotics, as well as the concern that the non-narcotic hemp could be concentrated into a product that could produce a chemical high. Mr. Politis said that the industrial hemp could be concentrated, but that the process would be very costly. Anyone interested in farming non-narcotic hemp would be subject to background checks, including individuals associated with universities interested in growing hemp for studies. Councilman Stipes noted that last year when Council considered, and subsequently denied, the request, the matter of hemp farming had not gone before Congress. Councilman Showalter asked what issues could stand in the way of approval in January, and Mr. Politis replied that current education on the benefits of hemp farming to the region is the best approach in seeking approval. Virginia Tech, VACO, National Association of Commerce, and New River Valley Planning District Commission have each given support for the legalization of hemp farming in Virginia. Mr. Politis thanked Council for its consideration in this matter.
4. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS.
  - a. Lisa Gardner, Phlegar Street, spoke in support of legalizing industrial hemp farming in the New River Valley, and of her appreciation of the Blacksburg Transit service in Christiansburg. She then noted that she was interested in the vacant Council seat appointment and asked for respect as Council considered her application.

### III. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. COUNCIL ACTION ON:
  - a. Council's intention to adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 42 "Zoning" specifically, sections 42-625, 42-626, 42-630, and 42-633 of the *Christiansburg Town Code* to clarify the requirements for final site plans, when preliminary and final site plans expire, and fees associated with the submittal of same. The Public Hearing was held December 3, 2013. Councilman Hall made a motion to adopt the amendment with one change, which was to modify Section 42-625(b), Item 5 to state that flooding was to be "avoided" rather than "minimized". Councilman Vanhoozier seconded the motion and Council was polled on the motion as follows: Barber – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.
  - b. Council's intention to adopt an ordinance requesting the General Assembly consideration for an amendment to Christiansburg Town Charter. The Public Hearing was held December 3, 2013. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Councilman Barber. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Barber – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.
2. DISCUSSION REGARDING INDUSTRIAL HEMP FARMING ACT (COUNCILMAN HUPPERT). Councilman Huppert recommended that a resolution in support of the Industrial Hemp Farming Act be added to the January 7, 2014 agenda for Council consideration. Mayor Ballengee asked that Town Manager Helms meet with Mr. Politis to revise the resolution denied by Council on February 7, 2012 to reflect the changes provided by Mr. Politis in his presentation. Council agreed to consider a revised resolution.

3. CONSIDERATION OF AN EMPLOYEE REQUEST FOR AN EXTENSION OF TIME UNDER FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT FOR A WORKER'S COMPENSATION INJURY. Town Manager Helms reported that an employee who was injured on the job has requested an extension of time through February 28, 2014, under the Family Medical Leave Act. He recommended Council approve the request. Councilman Hall made a motion to grant the extension of time through February 28, 2014, as requested, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.
4. DISCUSSION REGARDING APPOINTMENT TO THE VACANT SEAT ON COUNCIL EXPECTED TO OCCUR JANUARY 1, 2014. Council scheduled a special meeting for December 30, 2013, beginning at 4:00 P.M. to review the ten applications received, with applicant interviews to begin at 5:00 P.M. The names of the applicants will be emailed to Council members and to the press.
5. REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE AQUATIC ADVISORY BOARD. Councilman Barber made a motion to reappoint Karen Drake, Jeremy Williams, and Shirley Hallock to serve another term on the Aquatic Advisory Board. Councilman Vanhoozier seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

**IV. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORTS:**

1. PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST: Town Manager Helms presented the requests and recommended setting the Public Hearings for January 7, 2014:
  - a. Street vacation request from Montgomery County IDA for a portion of Technology Drive, S.E. in the Falling Branch Industrial Park.
  - b. Partial pedestrian access easement vacation request for 35 West Main Street.

On motion by Councilman Barber, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier, Council voted to set the Public Hearings for January 7, 2014. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

**2. PROGRESS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Council was provided a list of the 2014 Fire Department Membership and Officers list. Councilman Hall suggested the Town consider giving a holiday gift to the volunteers of both the Fire and Rescue Departments.
- Park and ride near Falling Branch Elementary School. It was reported that VDOT has expressed interest in moving the park and ride to a more suitable location and has committed to building the lot, but property is still needed. It owns a one-acre piece of land that is in a good location, but not adequate in size. VDOT has requested that Christiansburg and Montgomery provide the additional land needed for the lot that would accommodate approximately 200 parking spaces. VDOT's support is for a traditional parking facility that does not include facilities to meet the physical needs of travelers. VDOT is responsible for maintenance of the park and ride at its current location and would continue that responsibility once moved. Council reaffirmed that they would be willing to participate in acquisition of land for the park and ride lot.
- This past weekend, 875 swimmers participated in a three-day meet at the aquatic center.
- Council bid farewell to Mayor Ballengee and thanked him for his many years of service to the Christiansburg community. This was Mayor Ballengee's last regular council meeting serving as mayor of Christiansburg.

**V. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to bring before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:19 PM.