

August 13, 2024

**MINUTES
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 13, 2024**

The Council for the Town of Clifton Forge held a meeting on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Clifton Forge Town Hall, 547 Main Street, Clifton Forge, Virginia.

A Public Hearing to receive citizen input on the 2024 updates to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan was also held during the meeting.

Mayor Jeff Irvine called the meeting to order with the following members present: Mayor Irvine; Vice Mayor Dale Burdette; Councilwoman Debbie Lauder milk; Councilman Ben Nicely. Also present were Clifton Forge Town Manager, Charles (Chuck) Unroe and Attorney Jennifer Baker. Absent from the meeting was Carl (Shorty) Wolfe.

Amendment to Agenda

Mayor Irvine added an item to the agenda, to consider adoption of the 2024 updated to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Clifton Forge, Virginia.

Motion to approve: Councilwoman Lauder milk
Seconded by: Vice Mayor Burdette

Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Lauder milk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes

Public Hearing

Procedural Motion for Public Hearing
Vice Mayor Burdette motioned to approve the procedural motion to limit speaking time on the Comprehensive Plan to five minutes.

This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Lauder milk.

Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Lauder milk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes

Mr. Bryan Hill, Roanoke Valley/Alleghany Regional Commission advised Mayor Irvine he had spent 27 years in his line of work and the Clifton Forge Comprehensive Plan was the 8th plan he had worked on, 4th for the Town of Clifton Forge.

Mr. Michael Foster, 48 Bath Street, Planning Commission member, spoke on behalf of the members of the Planning Commission. He stated that their job was to review and update the existing plan, and that growth and community is the desired result of the updated Comprehensive Plan. The

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Planning Commission went over the plan chapter by chapter, page by page, and sentence by sentence. The town's businesses, churches, neighborhoods, and customers are being recognized in the plan updates. The Planning Commission will continue to push the Town Manager and Council to do what is best. They volunteered their time and energy to update the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Pamela Lightfoot, 924 McCormick, said she did not believe that the updated Comprehensive Plan complied with the Americans with Disabilities Act. She advised anyone who would like to read her concerns to do so on social media and chose to forfeit her allotted five-minute speaking time.

With no one else to speak, Councilman Nicely motioned to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Vice Mayor Burdette.

Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes

Minutes

Councilman Nicely motioned to approve the minutes from the meeting held on July 9, 2024, seconded by Councilwoman Laudermilk.

Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes

Department Reports

Councilman Nicely motioned to approve the department reports (Police Department, Public Works, Library, Water Plant, and Fire Department) as submitted and written. This was seconded by Vice Mayor Burdette.

Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes

Ordinance

To consider approval of an ordinance codifying changes to sections 86-95 and 86-556 of the Code of the Town of Clifton Forge, Virginia, 2015, as amended, relating to rates, fees, and charges for retail water and sewer utility service.

Motion to approve: Councilman Nicely
Seconded by: Councilwoman Laudermilk

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Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes

Ordinance

To consider approval of an ordinance amending and reenacting sections 86-6, 86-9, 86-11, 86-144, and 86-558 of the Code of the Town of Clifton Forge, Virginia, 2015, as amended, relating to the discontinuance of service for unpaid charges to town water and sewer systems.

Motion to approve: Councilwoman Laudermilk
Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes

Mr. Unroe read a letter of appreciation from a Clifton Forge citizen to the Public Works Department for the bulk pick up service in the Town of Clifton Forge.

Bucket Truck

To consider declaring the 2000 Chevrolet 4500 bucket truck owned by the Clifton Forge Public Works Department as surplus property and authorize selling the vehicle as such due to excessive mechanical repairs needed.

Motion to approve: Councilwoman Laudermilk
Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes

Update from Parks and Trails Committee

David Elwood, 1016 McCormick Boulevard, committee member, provided Council with a financial update for the Parks and Trails Committee. The All Abilities Park received 380 dollars, the Sensory Trail has received 340 dollars, and the general park fund has received 484 dollars. Most of these funds have come from milkweed seed sales. Milkweed seeds are being sold at area stores and at Fridays in the Forge events in downtown Clifton Forge.

Bat boxes were donated by committee members and installed by Public Works.

Two metal picnic tables were donated to Smith Creek.

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Mr. Elwood requested that the Parks and Trails committee provide updates to Council on a regular basis.

He advised that the Town's website needs to be updated with current information for Parks and Trails.

Mr. Elwood discussed the issue with graffiti at Smith Creek and what could be done to fix the problem. He said that more police presence would be a good idea.

He discussed an issue with losing bushes on the Sensory Trail and what could be done to correct the problem.

He advised Council that mulch is needed for the Roxbury Pocket Park.

In response to Mr. Elwood's concerns, Mr. Unroe advised that the picnic tables had arrived and will be installed once they are painted.

Mr. Unroe stated that the Town has purchased anti-graffiti paint and needs guidance on how to remove the existing graffiti before the anti-graffiti paint could be applied.

Due to Congressional Spending Requests, 1.8 million dollars have been received by the town for wastewater upgrades and should be available by September of this year. A request for 2.5 million dollars for the all abilities playground has made it to the Senate so far and must go through the rest of the funding process before approval.

Manager's Comments

Mr. Unroe advised Council that Brad Balser had been hired as the new Code Enforcer/Building Maintenance Inspector for the Town of Clifton Forge. Mr. Unroe made the decision to hire Mr. Balser based on his level of experience. Mr. Balser will be completing the required courses over the next 12 months to obtain his certification.

Smith Creek Water Line

There will be a preconstruction meeting for the Smith Creek Waterline on August 27th. The contract has been awarded to AR Coffey from Buchanan, who has a long tenure of work with the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Route 60 Waterline Project

The Route 60 Waterline Project is ready to begin the bidding process. Advertising will start at the end of August, and a contract will be awarded by the end of the year.

Ridgeway Street Paving

The bids for the Ridgeway Street Paving Project will go out soon. The project will happen in late fall or early spring, as it must be completed by June 30, 2025.

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Online Payments/New Website

The online payment system on the new website has been well received. Finance Director Wendy Biggs advised there have been no glitches with online payment services.

Sidewalk Repairs

Good efforts are being made on sidewalk repairs, although there has been a glitch with repairs on McCormick Boulevard. Many citizens do not want the Maple trees along the sidewalk to be removed. Mr. Unroe assured citizens that no trees had been removed without the consent of the property owner first. He advised that the Town was consulting with arborists and tree specialists for recommendations on how to repair the sidewalks while protecting the trees.

Martinsville Trip

Developers for the Jefferson School held a ribbon cutting in Martinsville for the restoration of a store into 27 lofted apartments with nine worker spaces and a community area. The developers will submit a letter of intent to the Town Council once they have reviewed it. Mayor Irvine stated that the facility was beautiful with A1 contracting.

The council opened the floor for individuals to speak regarding their request for proposal for 600 Main Street.

Mr. Eddie Williams, the owner of a bike shop in Covington, stated he would like to bring a bike shop to Clifton Forge. He has hope that the shop will help to revitalize downtown Clifton Forge. The shop is non-profit, and funds raised help schools in Haiti. He said he hopes that Council will strongly consider his application.

Public Comments

Valerie Giberson, 358 Roxbury Street, had Clifton Forge citizen, Pamela Lightfoot, speak on her behalf. Mrs. Lightfoot spoke on the erosion issue behind Ms. Giberson's house due to natural run-off and drainage. She said the creek is in desperate need of dredging. Mr. Unroe advised that the Town has an engineering firm working on the problem to see what the town can and cannot do. He said that it has taken years to come to this point and will not be corrected overnight. Ms. Giberson said she did not know what to do legally or who to turn to. She just wants answers.

Bill Atherholt, Clifton Forge citizen, spoke on the Wall that Heals. He said that the parade will come through Clifton Forge around 1:20 p.m. with the wall and motorcycles, trucks, etc. The opening ceremony for The Wall will be on October 3rd at 10:00 a.m. The Closing Ceremony will be on October 6th at 1:45 p.m. Volunteers are still needed and welcome for this special event.

Council Comments

Councilman Nicely thanked Mrs. Lightfoot for her continued support and told her to keep doing what she has been doing. He thanked Parks and Trails and the Planning Commission. He said he is excited for The Wall that Heals. He advised Chuck to keep kicking it at what he does. He then

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reminded everyone of the STARS Program to be held on August 25, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. in the Masonic Theatre.

Councilwoman Lauder milk thanked the crowd for attending. She told Parks and Trails to keep up the good work. She thinks it is a great idea to include Parks and Trails at meetings regularly. She said she appreciates the work of the Planning Commission. She said that she thinks the best volunteers are in the Town of Clifton Forge and that she is excited about the Wall that Heals. She told Chuck to keep up the good work, and she is looking forward to meeting the new Code Enforcement Officer.

Mr. Unroe thanked Council for passing the budget to allow the town to bring the STARS program back to the Masonic Theatre.

Vice Mayor Burdette thanked everyone for coming out, whether they spoke or did not speak. He thanked the people who volunteered to revise the Comprehensive Plan. He told Mr. Elwood he thought it was a great idea for Parks and Recreation to provide regular updates at meetings. He thanked Public Works for their efforts with the bulk and brush pickup. Vice Mayor Burdette advised that the new water regulations regarding discontinuance of services can have a fiscal impact on the town. He stated that VML requests an impact analysis from the town and how the town's revenue is affected. Mr. Unroe advised that it is impacting the town's revenue, as no action can be taken on delinquent accounts from the month of June until August 14th, due to the law of waiting 45 days. He explained that the town does not like enforcement action but has no choice. The new law is compounding the problem, because customers are falling further and further behind in payments.

Mayor Irvine thanked everyone for coming out tonight. He thanked the Planning Commission for their hard work on the Comprehensive Plan. He thanked Bryan Hill for his expertise in revising the Comprehensive Plan. Mayor Irvine also thanked David Elwood for speaking on behalf of Parks and Recreation, Mr. Unroe for a job well done, and Bill Atherholt for his update on The Wall that Heals. He finished by saying, God bless everyone, and he hopes to see everyone next month.

Closed Session

The Council for the Town of Clifton Forge will enter closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3) to discuss Requests for Proposals for property owned by the Town of Clifton Forge.

Motion by: Councilman Nicely

Seconded by: Councilwoman Debbie Lauder milk

Councilman Nicely: Yes

Councilwoman Lauder milk: Yes

Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes

Mayor Irvine: Yes

Motion to Reconvene Open Meeting

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Councilwoman Laudermilk motioned to reconvene the open meeting, seconded by Councilman Nicely.

Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes

Certification Following Closed Meeting

I move pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3712(D) that the Town Council certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered during the closed meeting.

Motion to approve: Councilwoman Laudermilk
Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes

Adjournment

Councilwoman Laudermilk motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Nicely.

Councilman Nicely: Yes
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes
Mayor Irvine: Yes