

December 10, 2024

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 10, 2024

The Council for the Town of Clifton Forge held their regular meeting on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Clifton Forge Town Hall, 547 Main Street, Clifton Forge, Virginia.

Mayor Jeff Irvine called the meeting to order with the following members present: Mayor Irvine; Vice Mayor Dale Burdette; Councilman Carl “Shorty” Wolfe; Councilwoman Debbie Laudermilk; Councilman Ben Nicely. Also present were the Town Manager, Charles (Chuck) Unroe and Town Attorney, Mike Lockaby.

The invocation was given by Carl “Shorty” Wolfe, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADDENDUM TO AGENDA

Presentation by Bill Atherholt

Motion to approve: Councilwoman Laudermilk
Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

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

AMENDMENT TO AGENDA

Remove closed session from agenda

Motion to approve: Councilwoman Laudermilk
Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes November 12, 2024

Motion to approve: Councilman Nicely
Seconded by: Councilman Wolfe

December 10, 2024

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

PRESENTATIONS

Susan Hammond, Resident Engineer for VDOT, Staunton District #1, presented an update for decking on the bridge on Ridgeway/Smith Creek and an application for Venus Way. She said that Venus Way is at a 4, and that the rating must be 5 or less for VDOT to be able to rehabilitate.

Bill Atherholt thanked the Council and the Town Manager and presented them with certificates.

ACTION ITEMS

- 1) Announcement and award of prize for Council's pick of the business' Christmas decorations

Betsy Rogers (The Depot) won Council's pick for Christmas decorations. Betsy thanked the Council, stating that she owned a small business as well as a new business with 80 vendors. She said that the money will go towards a new booth, a give back booth, where items can be donated. She requested the necessary form and said she needs to find out where the money from the sales needs to go. Mayor Irvine thanked Council for their monetary donations to go towards the prize.

- 2) Department Reports
 - a. Code Enforcement
 - b. Police Department
 - c. Public Works
 - d. Library
 - e. Water Plant
 - f. Fire Department

Motion to approve: Councilman Nicely
Seconded by: Councilwoman Laudermilk

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

- 3)
 - a) To conduct the second reading of the ordinance providing for the registration of vacant buildings

December 10, 2024

- b) To consider approval of the ordinance providing for the registration of vacant buildings

Motion to waive second reading: Councilwoman Laudermilk
Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

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

Motion to approve the ordinance providing for the registration of vacant buildings:
Councilman Nicely
Seconded by: Councilwoman Laudermilk

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

- 4) To consider conducting a first reading of the ordinance providing tax relief to widows of fallen officers

Chief Chris Smith, from the City of Covington, spoke in favor of the ordinance.

Motion to move to second reading on January 14th: Vice Mayor Burdette
Seconded by: Councilwoman Laudermilk

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

- 5) To consider approval of a resolution directing the Planning Commission to consider an amendment to the town zoning map regarding the Jefferson School

Motion to approve: Vice Mayor Burdette
Seconded by: Councilwoman Laudermilk

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

December 10, 2024

- 6) To consider approval of a resolution regarding personal property taxes
Motion to approve: Councilman Nicely
Seconded by: Councilwoman Laudermilk

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

MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Waterline Projects-West Ridgeway-The contract will be discussed at 2 p.m. at Town Hall with Hammond and Mitchell. Time is of the essence. The bridge to 5th Street will be paved.

The Smith Creek Waterline Replacement project is well underway with just a few snags. The project is on course to being completed on time.

Public Works-There have been 8 water leaks in 7 days. VRWA assisted with the Jefferson Street water leak.

Lead and Copper Inventory has been completed, and the inventory is on file and in compliance.

Police Department-The Police Department is short staffed. One new office will be starting in January, and one has completed Academy field training currently.

ARPA-Obligate all funds by the end of year.

Social media-Surplus Funds-Not a surplus; The funds are used to help pay for debt, projects, and pay raises.

Mr. Unroe thanked Robbie Barber and Public Works for placing Christmas decorations around town.

New software will save time, reduce labor, and improve service to residents.

Blighted buildings-K. Webber (DEQ)-asbestos abatement, etc. for Jefferson School building; Brownfield grants/studies through DEQ-Phase/Environmental study-no cost to town.

Residential properties and building registries-Clifton Forge is perfect to work with West Virginia and West Virginia University on developmental programs for these buildings. There are several places on the list for this action.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ann Foster spoke about the Christmas parade being cancelled. She noted that Mayor Irvine was thrown under the bus, as the parade was put on my Clifton Forge Main Street. She said she wants people to participate, and that moving forward, a rain date in advance would be a good idea. Clifton Forge Main Street does not have a rescheduling date. Mrs. Foster stated that the Fosters can sponsor the parade and have folks who will help. She went on to say that we need to consider having other events on different days if that's the issue. Chuck explained that was not the issue, and that extensive planning was made with the Police Department and Public Works. Councilwoman said she likes the idea of a "rain date" and the decision to cancel the parade was not made lightly. She encouraged citizens to enjoy the other parades.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Irvine corrected the Shadow on the parade cancellation and being sworn in. He said that he had nothing to do with cancelling the parade, and that he was sworn in as a Councilman and not Mayor.

Councilman Nicely thanked VDOT for the update. He congratulated the storefront winner. He thanked Mr. Atherholt for The Wall and the first responders. He thanked Chuck for moving forward. He also said that it was unfortunate that the parade was cancelled.

Councilman Wolfe thanked Chuck for all he does. He thanked the people for re-electing him. He said he appreciates everyone who came out to speak. He advised Mr. Atherholt that a great job was done on the Wall.

Councilwoman Lauder milk thanked all who came out and everyone who decorated. She congratulated the Depot on winning the contest. She said the STARS show was wonderful. The Wall was a moving experience, and she appreciates their service. She said that Amanda and crew are "rockstars" for all their hard work. She appreciates the Finance Department. She went on to say the lights at Clifton Forge School of the Arts, Main Street, the Sensory Trail, and Town Hall were beautiful. She thanked Mayor Irvine for his work.

Vice Mayor Burdette agreed with Councilwoman Lauder milk. He said he appreciates those who came out to see The Wall come through Clifton Forge and Covington. He said he appreciates the resource of VDOT/Susan Hammond. He agrees that a "rain date" for the parade is a good idea for the future. He said that he is thinking of Public Works with all the leaks they've had to work on.

Mayor Irvine thanked everyone for coming out. He congratulated the Depot and said that all businesses were beautiful. He thanked Chief Smith for speaking on behalf of the First Responders and Mr. Atherholt for his work on The Wall. He thanked the Public Works Department for all they do, and for their work on the decorations for the trail. He thanked the Finance Department and Main Street for all they do. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

December 10, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to approve: Councilwoman Laudermilk

Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

Councilman Nicely: Yes

Councilman Wolfe: Yes

Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes

Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes

Mayor Irvine: Yes