

January 14, 2025

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 14, 2025**

The Council for the Town of Clifton Forge held their regular meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, in the Council Chambers of Clifton Forge Town Hall, 547 Main Street, Clifton Forge, Virginia.

The invocation was given by Carl (Shorty) Wolfe, Jr., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Mr. Unroe started off by apologizing that there would be no livestream tonight due to illness. He stated that Mr. Wilson (the town's tech individual) would be back next month.

Reorganization

Mr. Unroe called on Council for nominations for Mayor.

Councilwoman Laudermilk nominated Ben Nicely for Mayor.

Councilman Dale Burdette nominated Jeff Irvine for Mayor.

The roll call vote for Councilman Ben Nicely was as follows:

Councilman Nicely: Yes  
Councilman Wolfe: No  
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes  
Councilman Burdette: No  
Councilman Irvine: No

The roll call vote for Councilman Irvine was as follows:

Councilman Nicely: No  
Councilman Wolfe: Yes  
Councilwoman Laudermilk: No  
Councilman Burdette: Yes  
Councilman Irvine: Yes

Councilman Irvine was voted the Mayor of the Town of Clifton Forge by the majority vote of Town Council.

Mayor Irvine then called on Council for nominations for Vice Mayor.

Councilman Wolfe nominated Dale Burdette for Vice Mayor.

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There were no other nominations for Vice Mayor.

The roll call vote was as follows:

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

Councilman Burdette was voted Vice Mayor unanimously by Town Council.

Consent Agenda

Approval of minutes

December 10, 2024

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

Action Items

1. Department Reports
  - Code Enforcement
  - Police Department
  - Public Works
  - Water Treatment Plant
  - Library
  - Fire Department

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

2. To conduct a second reading of the tax relief ordinance pertaining to widows of fallen officers and consider approval of the ordinance.

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

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

Motion to approve ordinance: Councilwoman Laudermilk  
Seconded by: Councilman Wolfe

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

3. a. To consider declaring pipe and ductile pipe as surplus property
- b. To consider declaring a 2013 F350 single cab with salt boxes and plow as surplus property

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

4. To consider giving town employees five additional comp days to be used in calendar year 2025

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

#### UPDATE FROM PARKS AND TRAILS

Courtney Howard provided an update on Parks and Trails. She said they were still waiting for Lumos to get back to them regarding the Wi-Fi before they can continue the process. Once the holiday lights at the trail come down, they will put in the tables that were donated by Pamela Lightfoot. Mrs. Howard thanked the individuals who volunteered for Kriskndlmrkt, especially Pamela Lightfoot. She advised Council she was hoping to purchase a bench swing for the park. She explained their

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plans for the bench swing and asked Council for their approval. Chuck suggested waiting to place the benches until the survey was complete to ensure that the bench was placed in a proper location. Mrs. Howard said it would be nice if they could go ahead and order the swing since the shipping took a while. She said they would order the swing as soon as a color was decided on. She went on to say the next meeting for Parks and Trails will be held on January 21, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall, and everyone was welcome to attend.

Motion to approve the bench: Councilman Nicely  
Seconded by: Councilwoman Lauder milk

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

#### MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Chuck congratulated Mayor Irvine and Vice Mayor Burdette on their appointment as Mayor and Vice Mayor.

Smith Creek Waterline-He said the Smith Creek Waterline project has been slowed down by the weather. There are several hundred feet of pipe in the ground and a thousand feet of pipe to go in the ground. The project is scheduled to be finished by the first part of July.

Route 60 Waterline Project-This project was started this week and is due to be completed by early spring.

Ridgeway Street Paving-The project is moving quicker than we thought. Paving will be done from Roxbury Street to the town limits.

Washington Park-The Washington Park is closed due to a manhole overflow between Washington Park and the Auto store. The DEQ has no definite protocol for cleanup, as there are no streams or rivers affected. The overflow has been treated with lime and will sit until the snow clears. The topsoil will then be removed. The park will remain closed until the cleanup is complete, as the town does not want children to play in unsafe conditions. The trailhead to the Hazel Run trail is still accessible.

Water leak on Madison-Public Works worked on the water leak until 3:30 this morning and were back at work at 7 a.m.

Budget-Wendy and the finance department have started the budget process. They will work with the department heads to compile the budget.

Jefferson School Project-Council will receive the final draft of the performance agreement tomorrow. There have been a few snags when the city reverted to a town, and when the school systems consolidated. The title work will be cleaned up so we can transfer ownership.

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New Software-A contract for a new software program for the town has been signed. It will take 12-15 months to complete.

Personal Property Tax Ticket Issues-The tickets are not generated with our software program or in our finance department. Personal property taxes are due by February 5, 2025. If not paid by this date, penalties and interest will accrue.

Public Works -The Public Works Department stayed the course and did a tremendous job during the big snow event. Mr. Unroe said he is proud of Amanda and her crew. He extended an invitation to the cyber world professional snowplow operators and invited them to work a shift with Public Works and to share their knowledge. He went on to say that they should be thankful they have people to help.

#### Public Comments

There were no public comments.

#### Council Comments

Councilman Nicely thanked Councilwoman Laudermilk for nominating him to be Mayor. He congratulated Mayor Irvine and Vice Mayor Burdette. He thanked Courtney for her work in fundraising for the swing. He said that Public Works provided quality work and said kudos and thank you to them.

Councilwoman Laudermilk congratulated Mayor Irvine and Vice Mayor Burdette. She stated that the Council works together and manages to come to an agreement. She thanked Courtney for coming out and said she was looking forward to the swing. She said she applauds Amanda and appreciates her and her crew more than they know. She told Amanda she is a rock star. She told Chuck to keep up the good work. She said she is excited about the new software program.

Councilman Wolfe commended Chuck for taking up for his crew. He commended Amanda for her work. He told Courtney to choose blue for the swing color and thanked her for all she does for Parks and Trails. He congratulated Mayor Irvine and Vice Mayor Burdette. He said that Council has always worked things out. He thanked the public for electing him again.

Vice Mayor Burdette thanked the people for coming out tonight. He thanked everyone for all they do. He told Wendy she had her work cut out for her and said he appreciates a boss like Chuck. He stated the Council puts themselves in the public eye and can expect speculation on social media, but the employees are just working their jobs and don't deserve to be ridiculed. He thanked Courtney and said it is good they can raise money for items for Parks and Trails. He went on to say that he nominated Jeff Irvine for Mayor because he thought he was doing a good job, and if it isn't broken, don't fix it.

Mayor Irvine thanked everyone for coming out. He thanked Courtney for her work with Parks and Trails. He thanked Public Works for all they do and said they do a great job. He thanked the Police Department for working in the cold. He congratulated Fred Forbes and Lance Carson for being voted Vice Mayor and Mayor of the City of Covington. He congratulated Matt Garten and James Griffith, as well as Kawhana Persinger and Mr. Marshall. He thanked Dale for all he does.

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#### New Business

Mr. Unroe read an email from Roy Wright regarding his resignation from the Economic Development Authority.

#### Closed Session

Councilman Nicely motioned to move into closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Sections 2.2-3711 (A) (3) and 2.2-3711 (A) (1) to discuss town owned real estate and personnel.

This was seconded by Vice Mayor Burdette.

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

#### Motion to Reconvene Open Meeting

Councilman Nicely motioned the Town Council end its closed meeting and reconvene its regular meeting.

This was seconded by Councilwoman Laudermilk.

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

#### Certification Following Closed Meeting

Councilman Nicely-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 Virginian 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.

The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Laudermilk.

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

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Motion to fund Director of Planning and Economic Development 4 months of fiscal year 24-25 (\$35,000 to cover salary and benefits): Councilwoman Laudermilk

Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

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

Mayor Irvine inquired about getting the Intergovernmental committee going again. This would include two members from Covington, two members from the county, two members from Clifton Forge, and two members from Iron Gate. It would include the town/city manager. This would help us all work together. Chuck stated that this would benefit all localities and allow them to interact and get together. The council gave Mayor Irvine their blessing to try and get it going again.

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

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