

February 25, 2025

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
FEBRUARY 25, 2025**

The Council for the Town of Clifton Forge held their regular meeting on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Clifton Forge Town Hall, 547 Main Street, Clifton Forge, Virginia.

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

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

Presentations

Jeremy Holmes provided an update on the Roanoke Valley/Alleghany Regional Commission.

Clifton Forge Main Street presented awards to two new business owners, Betsy Rogers (Depot on Main) and Keith and Celeste Bagley (C& Oh Ice cream Depot). Jennifer Peters from Oh So Foxy was not in attendance.

Mayor Irvine motioned to add three items to the agenda-Pursuant to Virginia Code 3711 (A) (1) to discuss personnel in closed session; A proclamation proclaiming March as Multiple Sclerosis Month, and a resolution declaring April as clean up month. This was seconded by Councilman Nicely. The roll call votes were as follows:

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

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Minutes                      Council Meeting                      January 14, 2025

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

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## Action Items

### 1) Department Reports

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

Motion to approve: Councilwoman Laudermilk

Seconded by: Councilman Wolfe

Councilman Nicely: Yes

Councilman Wolfe: Yes

Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes

Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes

Mayor Irvine: Yes

- ### 2) To consider a request from the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce to close Church Street between Jefferson Avenue and Commercial Avenue for the 2025 Agony in the Alleghanies Gran Fondo, which will be held on May 10, 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

- ### 3) To consider a request from the Clifton Forge Shrine Club to hold a car and craft show on May 17, 2025, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. This event will require the closure of Church Street between Jefferson and Commercial Avenues.

The Clifton Forge Shrine Club is also requesting a beer garden for Jack Mason's Tavern to use during the event and offer vehicle owners the opportunity to participate in a parade of cars, etc., down East Ridgeway and Main Street.

Due to a scheduling conflict, Vice Mayor Burdette motioned to table this request until Mr. Unroe can contact the Shrine Club. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Laudermilk. The roll call votes were as follows:

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

- 4) Clifton Forge Main Street requests a parade permit Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup> for the Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade. This includes the closure of Church Street between CFSOTA and the back parking lot of HMT from 4:30 p.m. until approximately 5:15 p.m.

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

- 5) Street closure request from Alleghany Highlands Community Services Board-requests closure of Church Street between Jefferson Avenue and Commercial Avenue on March 29, 2025, from 6a-5p to help the AHCSB host a Developmental Services Awareness Festival in collaboration with the Town of Clifton Forge.

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

- 6) To consider an appointment to the Economic Development Authority to fill vacant seat of Roy Wright

There were two applications submitted by Pamela Lightfoot and Terry Paxton. Councilman Nicely motioned to schedule interviews with the two applicants, seconded by Councilwoman Laudermilk. The roll call votes were as follows:

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

Update from Parks and Trails Committee

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Pamela Lightfoot provided an update on the Parks and Trails Committee. She said winning color for the bench to be placed on the Sensory Trail was blue, and that trellises will be built after the holiday lights come down. They are still working with Lumos regarding WiFi. Their next meeting will be held on March 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

#### Presentation

Town Attorney Mike Lockaby held a training class on the Freedom of Information Act.

#### Manager's Comments

Smith Creek Waterline-Weather delays have lengthened completion time to late July.

West 60 Waterline-The project is on schedule and the job is being done now.

Wayfinding Signs-Phase 3-Ritelight coming to Clifton Forge on March 7 to mark final locations for signs. The signs should be installed by early summer.

EV Charging Stations-Last summer, Josh Taylor went through the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute. His project was to sponsor EV charging stations in Clifton Forge and Covington, working with Virginia Clean Cities. He was able to secure funding for two charging stations for Covington and two for Clifton Forge. We have received one in Clifton Forge and are waiting for the other. We are working with a local electrical contractor to get them installed. Grant funding is available for installation as well.

The Clifton Forge Police Department and Public Works Department will be conducting a traffic study at Church Street and Commercial Avenue regarding possibly changing the traffic light to four way stop signs.

Ridgeway Street Bridge-Susan Hammond advised the bridge now qualifies for state of good repair funding from VDOT for replacement. They have started the SGR grant process with RVARC and one of their grant writers on this project. The grant writer is provided at no cost to the town through RVARC. The bridge work should be funded by VDOT through the SGR program.

The town has hired Maria Saxton as a full-time Director of Planning and Economic Development. She is a VA Tech graduate and has worked for Hill Studios for the last five years, 2.5 years as a community and housing planner and 2.5 years as the director of community planning. Her driving interests are community development, sustainable designs, and solutions for affordable housing. She will start working for the town on March 3, 2025.

#### Public Comments

Pam Lightfoot, 924 McCormick, said she was pleased to see the presentation from Jeremy Holmes providing an update on the Roanoke Valley/Alleghany Regional Commission. She asked if anyone from the town was represented on the GoVA Region 2 Board.

John Moser, 706 Church, spoke regarding taxes, saying that there needed to be accountability. He inquired about who was paying for the cemeteries in Clifton Forge.

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Teresa McCallister, 1300 Woodlawn, spoke regarding concerns she has about the house appraisals rising so much and said that her elderly neighbors could not afford an increase in taxes.

#### Council Comments

Councilman Nicely praised Public Works for their work ethic, and he said he stands behind them and the work they do. He thanked everyone for coming out. He thanked Pamela Lightfoot for the update on Parks and Trails and Mike Lockaby for the FOIA training. He thanked Chuck for all he does and said he looks forward to working with Maria Saxton.

Councilman Wolfe agreed with Councilman Nicely and said he was glad the Public Works Department was here. He mentioned Main Street recognizing the new businesses. He said that Keith and Celeste had good hot dogs and ice cream. He congratulated Betsy Rogers and Jennifer Peters on their new businesses. He said the children from St. Joseph's will be here on Saturday to provide public service to the town as part of their Appalachian America study. This will be their 17<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. He thanked Pam for telling them about GoVA Region 2. He also thanked Mike for his FOIA class.

Councilwoman Laudermilk said she was thankful for the warm weather. She appreciates the Public Works Department's hard work during the snow and freezing weather. She appreciated the update on RVARC from Jeremy Holmes. She is excited about the new business and says she hopes we can continue the new business coming to town and doing well. She thanked Mr. Lockaby for his FOIA class, and said she was excited about working with Maria Saxton. She told Chuck to keep up the great work.

Vice Mayor Burdette thanked everyone for coming out and being patient with the long meeting. He said that Mike Lockaby did a great job presenting the FOIA class. He agrees with Chuck regarding the Public Works Department and appreciates all they do.

Mayor Irvine thanked everyone for coming out. He thanked Mr. Holmes, Mr. Lockaby, Main Street. He congratulated the new businesses, and thanked Amanda and Public Works for giving him a ride in the snow. He thanked Jack Mason's Tavern, the Arts and Crafts Center, and two private citizens for providing food for Public Works. He thanked Iron Gate's Mayor, Kawhana Persinger, for coming to the meeting. He went on to say that he wants to bring back the Intragovernmental Committee. He has talked to all the localities but Covington, and they are all on board. He hopes to hold the first meeting in March.

#### Closed Session

#### Motion to go into Closed Meeting

Vice Mayor Burdette motioned to go into closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (3) for the purpose of discussing town owned real estate and Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) for the purpose of discussing personnel.

Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

Councilman Nicely: Yes

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

#### Motion to Reconvene Open Meeting

Councilman Nicely motioned to end the closed session and reconvene the open meeting, seconded by Councilwoman Laudermilk.

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

#### Certification Following Closed Meeting

I move pursuant to Virginia Code 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  
Councilman Wolfe: Yes  
Councilwoman Laudermilk: Yes  
Vice Mayor Burdette: Yes  
Mayor Irvine: Yes

#### Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Councilwoman Laudermilk  
Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

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

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