

March 11, 2025

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 11, 2025**

The Council for the Town of Clifton Forge held their regular meeting on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, in the Council Chambers of Clifton Forge Town Hall, 547 Main Street, Clifton Forge, Virginia.

Motion to Reconvene Open Meeting

Mayor Irvine motioned to end Council's closed meeting and reconvene its regular 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 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 made by: Mayor Irvine
Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

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

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 the Town Manager, Chuck Unroe and Town Attorney, Mike Lockaby.

Presentation

A presentation from Clifton Forge Police Chief, Scott Balser, was tabled until next month's meeting due to the officer not being present. The roll call votes were as follows:

Motion to approve: Councilwoman Laudermilk

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Seconded by: Councilman Nicely

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

Public Hearing

The Council for the Town of Clifton Forge conducted a public hearing to receive public input on the possible sale of the vacant lot adjacent to 600 Main Street, Clifton Forge, Virginia.

Jason Helmtoller, 209 Circle H Lane, expressed interest in buying both lots. He said his plan is to build a kitchen onto the side of the building, as building a kitchen in the existing dwelling would take up too much seating room. He said his business would create more opportunities for the town, such as food tax increase and live music. He said the additional space would also allow room for a dumpster and allow him to capitalize on his investment.

Jo Ann Henson, 1415 Main Street, explained she had been in her building (The Red Lantern Inn), for 15 years. She is also interested in the lots and said that her guests would park there. She said that the space needs to be used for parking. She went on to say that we want people to stay and have a reason to come to Clifton Forge. She said she appreciated Council's consideration and thanked them.

Chuck stated that the town supports and appreciates existing and incoming businesses. He asked Mike Lockaby if there could be an agreement in the deed that the owners of 608 Main Street would have access to so many feet of the lot. Mr. Lockaby advised there could be an agreement, and that the lots would need to be re-subdivided.

Consent Agenda Approval of Minutes

Councilwoman Laudermilk motioned to approve the minutes with one correction (Change Mayor Irvine's vote under Action Item 6 to no)

This was seconded by Councilman Wolfe

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

Action Items

- 1) Department Reports
 - Code Enforcement

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- Police Department
- Public Works
- Library
- Water Plant
- Fire Department

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the request

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) CFMS requests the closure of Roxbury to Ridgeway Street, including Commercial Avenue from Ridgeway to Main Street, on Saturday, April 19th from 10:45 a.m. until approximately noon, for the Easter Bonnet/Hat Parade.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the request

Motion to approve: Councilman Nicely
Seconded by: Councilman Wolfe

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

- 3) CFMS requests the closure of Church Street from Jefferson Street to Commercial Avenue on May 17, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., for the Triathlon event.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the request

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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- 4) To consider the request of Christian Kern (Eagle Scout) to create a bee/butterfly garden at the Sensory Trail in the Town of Clifton Forge

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the request

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) To consider an appointment to the EDA (two applications received)

Councilman Ben Nicely motioned to appoint Terry Paxton to the Economic Development Authority, seconded by Councilwoman Laudermilk.

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

- 6) To consider naming Saturday, April 26, 2025, as the Town of Clifton Forge's Community Clean Up Day

RECOMMENDATION: Approve naming Saturday, April 26, 2025, as the Town of Clifton Forge's Community Clean Up Day.

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

Update from Parks and Trails Committee

Courtney Howard said that they were still waiting for Lumos regarding having the Wi-Fi installed at the parks. She said that Brandon from Public Works is working on trellises and landscaping. The new bench swing and the picnic tables will be placed soon. A waterline will be installed to allow for the plants to be watered. They are looking at having some signs replaced. The Community Garden information will be coming soon, and the next meeting for Parks and Trails will be on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

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Manager's Comments

Chuck started off by apologizing for the street closure request of an event that had been cancelled at last month's meeting. He apologized for any confusion and embarrassment that may have caused.

He said the Jefferson School project is moving forward, the financial end is coming together with VML/VACO finance representatives. There is a public hearing scheduled regarding changing the zoning from Clifton Forge public to Clifton Forge business general. Certified letters are being sent to surrounding locations.

The entrance to Mountain View Cemetery is a mess due to the repair of a 1–2-inch waterline. The cemetery will be seeded and strawed before Easter.

Both waterline projects are on track.

Paving

Ridgeway Street from Roxbury Street to the County line at the bridge will be paved. Chuck met with Columbia Gas about paving repairs needed that they have impacted. He said that the town will work with Columbia Gas and get an estimate from the providers for Columbia Gas and our providers for the repairs. There is no definite date, but the town is early on his list.

Maria Saxton has worked for the last five years as the Community and Economic Development Advisor with Hill Studios. She is interested in focusing on one locality, and asked Clifton Forge if they would consider allowing her to focus on them. She started working for the town on March 3, 2025, and has a lot of great ideas. She has been meeting with the Council members and is here to hear what you want and work with Council and the Town Manager to continue moving forward.

In 2021 and 2022, Clifton Forge was identified as a locality in fiscal distress and being monitored. Both years, the town had a score of 47.5.

In 2023, the Town of Clifton Forge was no longer identified as a community in financial distress, with a score of 30. This is due to controlled revenue and good spending decisions, a group effort made by Council, the Finance Department, Public Works, Police, Fire, etc. A huge step has been made in the right direction for the financial soundness of the town.

Public Comments

There were no public comments

Council Comments

Councilwoman Laudermilk thanked everyone for coming out. She welcomed Maria and said she would be an asset to the town. She congratulated Terry Paxton on his appointment to the EDA and thanked Courtney for her update on Parks and Trails. She congratulated Chuck on his

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accomplishment with the town's financial status, told him he was doing a great job and to keep up the good work.

Councilman Wolfe said he enjoyed his interview with Maria. He thanked Courtney for the Parks and Trails update. He said that Chuck was doing a great job and to keep Council informed. He said that Council was doing a good job, and he liked serving Clifton Forge.

Councilman Nicely thanked everyone for coming out. He said that Chuck has a lot of exciting things going on, and the Town is moving forward. He told Jason and Jo Ann that they were doing a great thing for our area. He thanked Pam Lightfoot for applying and congratulated Mr. Paxton on his appointment to the EDA. He welcomed Maria Saxton to the show. He thanked Courtney for the Parks and Trails update and said that the parks were getting better every year.

Vice Mayor Burdette thanked everyone for coming out, especially the business owners on the corner. He thanked Pam Lightfoot for applying and congratulated Terry Paxton on his appointment to the EDA. He said that April is clean-up month. He welcomed Maria, and thanked Chuck for getting her on board. He said that Chuck hit a home run when he hired Kyla.

Mayor Irvine said that Main Street was doing a great job. He mentioned wanting to hold inner governmental meetings and thanked Jason and Jo Ann. He welcomed Maria to town and said great things are coming. He appreciated the Parks and Trails update and thanked Ron Goings for showing up.

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 real estate owned by the town.

The Council for the Town of Clifton Forge will enter closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) to discuss personnel.

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

Motion to Reconvene Open Meeting

I move that the Town Council end its closed meeting and reconvene its regular meeting.

Motion made by: Councilman Nicely
Seconded by: Councilwoman Laudermilk

Councilman Nicely: Yes

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

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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

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Councilman Nicely
Seconded by: Councilwoman Laudermilk

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