

# Candidates for Mayor Town of Christiansburg, VA 2010

*Richard G. Ballengee*

## **Biography:**

### ***Education:***

B.S. Marketing Virginia Tech  
M. Ed. Career and Technical Education School Administration Virginia Tech  
Additional graduate Studies: Radford U., Univ. of Va.

### ***Work Experience:***

High School teacher  
Secondary School Principal  
Elementary School Principal  
Director of Secondary Education  
Instructional Supervisor (Part-time)

Resident of Christiansburg since 1963  
Elected to Christiansburg Town Council 1996  
Elected Mayor 2006

## **Questions:**

**1. List the two most pressing issues you believe will need to be addressed during the next two years and elaborate on how progress can be made.**

1 Two pressing issues in the next two years:

The first issue is to achieve the goals of Council's Vision 2020. Council and the Town staff have prioritized short and long-term goals and have already achieved several goals such as creating the position of Information Officer to keep citizens more informed. Reducing our carbon footprint and conserving energy has already begun. Reducing our dependence on fossil fuels will be a challenge. Our first step was to provide bus service to residential neighborhoods. Identifying and correcting storm water problems are included in the Vision 2020 document.

**2. Flooding, erosion and storm water overflow are big concerns in many neighborhoods. What solutions and approaches would you offer?**

2 Flooding, erosion and storm water.

These are concerns in a few neighborhoods as evidenced by the heavy rain that occurred in May 2009. The Town Engineering Department has identified those areas that are prone to flooding and are taking steps to correct the problem. Additional improvements will be included in the Capital Improvement Plan and will be identified in The Town budget. This is a goal of the

Vision 2020 document and may take several years to achieve, Downtown parking will be a challenge during the construction of the new courthouse. We are presently working with the county on this matter.

**3. How do you propose that the County and the Town work more productively together, and how would you provide leadership for those initiatives?**

3 How do you propose that the County and Town work more productively together.

I am already providing leadership in this area by meeting with Blacksburg and County officials once each month to discuss mutual concerns and solutions. The three entities are working to create a new Tourism Organization that will promote the area. We will continue to work together to establish a regional 911 Authority to hasten response times for emergency situations. We will continue participation in the Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery County Airport Authority. Talks are underway regarding the inclusion of the County in our present water authority. We have the best working relationship now between the County and towns than we have ever experienced.

***Margaret H. "Meghan" Dorsett***

**Biography:**

Meghan Dorsett, owner of the Cambria Depot and Cambria Emporium, is a comprehensive planner and publisher of *The Community Planner*. Meghan worked for the Montgomery County Planning Department from 1999 to 2008. Projects included the Capital Improvements Program, the Comprehensive Plan, six village plans, and, the county-wide trail (VITL) plan. Meghan has a graduate degree in Environmental Resource Planning.

**Questions:**

**1. List the two most pressing issues you believe will need to be addressed during the next two years and elaborate on how progress can be made.**

Dealing with the externalities (consequences) created by rapid and often unplanned growth and provide open access to government. Actively partner with citizens and invite them into the process. Christiansburg is facing a number of challenges which can only be addressed by coming together as a community and finding collaborative solutions.

**2. Flooding, erosion and storm water overflow are big concerns in many neighborhoods. What solutions and approaches would you offer?**

Retrench terrace ditches to slow runoff and increase infiltration; provide channels along all streets to redirect stormwater away from existing developments; adopt low impact development requirements for new development and predevelopment runoff levels; prohibit development on slopes at or above 20%; and develop a system of rain gardens and other collaborative approaches.

**3. How do you propose that the County and the Town work more productively together, and how would you provide leadership for those initiatives?**

Start by listening and stop using the “us versus them” and “we are not x” comparisons. Identify key areas of joint interest (regional water, public sewer, stormwater, recreation, and economic development); and develop joint approaches which provide citizens with more opportunities and better services, at lower costs. For more information, see my full answers at [www.dorsettformayor.com](http://www.dorsettformayor.com).

## **Candidates for Town Council Town of Christiansburg, VA 2010**

***Dan R. Canada***

### **Biography:**

Dan Canada, graduated Marshall University in 1974, served on the Town Council - 2 years, Planning Commission - 8 years (Chairman 4 years), local business owner - 20 years, and 20+ years in Kiwanis raising thousands of dollars for local youth activities. Dan and his wife Vickie have one son, Scott who is a volunteer fireman; and two granddaughters, Samantha and Danielle.

### **Questions:**

#### **1. List the two most pressing issues you believe will need to be addressed during the next two years and elaborate on how progress can be made.**

The two most pressing issues are unemployment and taxes.

Leaders in Christiansburg must keep unemployment and the concerns associated with unemployment in mind during their decision making process.

Both personal and property taxes could sky rocket to cover costs associated with the towns' new aquatic center, the new county courthouse and the demand for new school buildings.

#### **2. Flooding, erosion and storm water overflow are big concerns in many neighborhoods. What solutions and approaches would you offer?**

Replace non-pervious surfaces with pervious concrete and other pervious building materials such as stone and sand.

Benefits of pervious surfaces include: reduces storm water runoff, eliminates the need for detention ponds and other costly storm water management practices, replenishes water tables and aquifers, allows for more efficient land development and minimizes flash flooding and standing water.

#### **3. How do you propose that the County and the Town work more productively together, and how would you provide leadership for those initiatives?**

Find synergies where personnel and purchasing power could be consolidated to save money and resources. The Town of Christiansburg and Montgomery County could work in conjunction with each other to save on third-party outsourcing.

My management skill set has prepared me to identify these opportunities.

## ***R. Cord Hall***

### **Biography:**

I am a 32 year old, married, father of two. I graduated from Radford University and the University Of Virginia School Of Law. My community involvement includes being a member of the Board of Directors for Safe Haven Child Visitation Centers, serving on a domestic violence committee and coaching numerous girls' softball and basketball teams. This is my first time running for public office.

### **Questions:**

#### **1. List the two most pressing issues you believe will need to be addressed during the next two years and elaborate on how progress can be made.**

Budget: Fiscal irresponsibility has become commonplace in Christiansburg. At this time the town is about one million in the red and this is prior to factoring in the aquatic center costs and expenses. To avoid this mistake in the future, Council must properly plan for projects and factor in the associated costs and expenses; meanwhile conducting a proper analysis prior to groundbreaking. The whether or not we can build it attitude should be replaced with a more reasoned approach of whether the facility itself serves the citizens of this town, both physically and fiscally. Council needs to find ways to make up for the revenue shortage, though NOT by raising taxes or cutting programs/departments crucial to ensuring our public safety and welfare. The town needs to simply stop wasting money; accountability is a must.

Public Trust: Going door to door has presented an insight into the minds of Christiansburg residents. By far the most common sentiment is one of general distrust/disdain of Town Council. Christiansburg residents have stated (paraphrasing) that Council does not deliver information appropriately and/or timely; does not represent their true concerns; is mired with conflicts of interest and inadequate associative disclosures; and above all, is not open to insights and points of view from town residents. In the future, through fostering public participation and information sharing, Council must regain public support and trust.

#### **2. Flooding, erosion and storm water overflow are big concerns in many neighborhoods. What solutions and approaches would you offer?**

Externalities are imposed whenever and wherever development occurs. Town Council must factor in these side-effects each time a development proposal is brought before them. The possibility, or perhaps probability of these negative consequences should be disclosed, discussed; and developers should be made to offer solutions for dealing with these issues – as they are in a better position to identify potential problems. Council should be proactive, realizing that an ounce of prevention can actually save the town a whole lot of money in the long run. The solutions is actually enforcing code provisions and mandating proper planning from the outset. Council and by extension the Town Manager is in a unique position to ensure that this practice becomes reality.

#### **3. How do you propose that the County and the Town work more productively together, and how would you provide leadership for those initiatives?**

Remember that Christiansburg residents pay both town and county taxes, thus they have a voice in the affairs of both entities. Concerned citizens should therefore not quarantine their concerns solely within the town.

A few ideas: Requiring the town to submit development requests with proposed occupancy figures to the County (prior to approval) to identify the zoned school and whether the facility could support the projected number of new students. In turn the county could provide the town with information relating to student density per school, allowing Council to note which schools are edging near capacity. Further, shared services could save the town money by having certain purchase made by the County, as County purchasing volume would be much greater than the town itself (similar to a bulk buying discount). A citizen advisory committee could be appointed along with a liaison Council member to study ways by which sharing services could prove beneficial and ease the budget strain.

*Steve H. Huppert*

### **Biography:**

- BBA – Univ. of Georgia, Marketing
- Masters – Va. Tech, Education/Guidance
- 32 years teacher, coach, guidance counselor
- 28 years USAR, retired, LTC
- 30 resident of Christiansburg
- Current member of Christiansburg Planning Commission
- Certified Planning Commissioner (2009)
- Member of Christiansburg Town Council ( 2004-2008)
- Coordinator of Christiansburg grand reopening (2008 )
- Member of Christiansburg Central Business Committee (2004-2008)
- Married 35 years, two daughters, son-in-law, 2 grandchildren

### **Questions:**

**1. List the two most pressing issues you believe will need to be addressed during the next two years and elaborate on how progress can be made.**

Reduced funding from the State has become a major problem for town and county governments, and it will continue for several years. All levels of government need to work to reduce spending and consider areas that will produce additional revenue.

Controlling growth in a sound and sensible manner, while encouraging development within Christiansburg. The planning commission and the town council need to thoroughly study every development to make sure that town code is followed.

**2. Flooding, erosion and storm water overflow are big concerns in many neighborhoods. What solutions and approaches would you offer?**

- \* Discontinue developments in 100 year plan areas.
- \* Encourage low impact developments

- \* Adopt VDOT standards on width on roads.
- \* Over detention of State road requirements
- \* Maintain supervision of problem areas

**3. How do you propose that the County and the Town work more productively together, and how would you provide leadership for those initiatives?**

We are fortunate that Christiansburg has a good working relationship with both Blacksburg and Montgomery County. One of the reasons is communications between the three different governments. The three constantly communicate through phone and email. On a regular basis they meet to discuss particular situations. I support efforts of this nature, and would work to continue these discussions.

***Bradford J. "Brad" Stipes***

**Biography:**

I'm 45 years old, married, with children at CHS, CMS and CPS. I'm a graduate of Montgomery County Schools and Virginia Tech and a local resident for 35 years. I'm a licensed Civil Engineer with 22 years of experience in transportation, traffic, and land development engineering. Prior to Council, I served 7 years on the Town's planning commission, coached little league baseball for 8 years, and served nearly 10 years on the New River Valley Planning District Commission (including two years as Chairman).

**Questions:**

**1. List the two most pressing issues you believe will need to be addressed during the next two years and elaborate on how progress can be made.**

**Route 114 Corridor Improvements:** With the first phase of Route 114 improvements wrapping up, the need to address the remaining capacity/safety improvements for the remainder of Route 114 is critical. I'm fully aware of the needs, issues, and status of this project as well as what it will take to deliver these long-overdue improvements. If re-elected, providing relief from the capacity and safety concerns for our citizens along this corridor will be my top priority during the next four years.

**Aquatic Center:** The successful launch of the Aquatic Center this summer is another key issue for the Town over the next two years. Given the large capital investment and ongoing maintenance costs of the facility, it is imperative that we focus on generating as much external revenue as possible to reduce general fund obligations to the Aquatics Program and to keep user costs to our citizens low. The Town must focus on attracting as much outside revenue as possible from events and tourism.

**2. Flooding, erosion and storm water overflow are big concerns in many neighborhoods. What solutions and approaches would you offer?**

**Flooding, erosion and stormwater overflow:** As a civil engineer, this issue is one that I am particularly knowledgeable of. As part of Council's Vision 2020 process in Fall 2010, we committed to study and improve our present drainage system (status quo). Our study is

presently underway. I will promote changes to Town Code that reduce negative storm water impacts created by new developments. I will push for progressive hydrologic and hydraulic measures that improve our present and better protect our future.

**3. How do you propose that the County and the Town work more productively together, and how would you provide leadership for those initiatives?**

**Town/County relations:** Having spent most of my life here, growing up in Blacksburg and now raising my family in Christiansburg, I can attest to the tremendous progress that's been made in working together between the two towns, Montgomery County, and even Virginia Tech over the last two decades. The present list of collaborative projects is extensive, including the VT- Montgomery Airport, Tourism Initiative, the Huckleberry Trail, the Regional 911 initiative that is presently underway, Falling Branch Industrial Park, and the present work group that will hopefully lead to the County becoming a member of the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-VPI Water Authority. I will continue to think regionally on initiatives that maximize benefits to Town of Christiansburg residents and to take advantage of opportunities to collaborate with our neighbors in which "the whole is greater than the sum of parts."

***H. Earnest Wade***

**Biography:**

My wife, Pam, a former kindergarten teacher in Christiansburg and I reside at 220 Emerald Blvd. We have one son, Matthew, who Graduated from Christiansburg High School and received his B. S. and M.P.A. from Virginia Tech. He is currently employed by the Virginia Department of Social Services in Richmond. I spent most of my working career with Moog Components Group (Poly Scientific) in Blacksburg and retired in 2008 from the position of Plant Manager.

I am seeking my second term on Town Council and am looking forward to continue working to make the Town of Christiansburg a better place to live.

**Questions:**

**1. List the two most pressing issues you believe will need to be addressed during the next two years and elaborate on how progress can be made.**

With the projected slow recovery of the current down economy impacting our revenue, I believe we need to continuously look for ways to control costs to stay within our income limitations. We need to do everything possible to get the unemployed and the under employed back to work by continuing to support our local businesses and to encourage new businesses to locate here. Considering the economic plight of our residents, the last thing we need to is to increase property taxes for our citizens.

As soon as I was first appointed to Council, I began working to get a strategic plan in place by having off-site work sessions; this was finalized last year resulting in our 2020 Vision. We need to find ways to finance and support the Staff 3 Year Work Plan which supports our 2020 Vision.

**2. Flooding, erosion and storm water overflow are big concerns in many neighborhoods. What**

**solutions and approaches would you offer?**

The issue of flooding, erosion, and storm water control was addressed in the Staff 3 Year Work Plan which began with Identifying problem areas and listing 9 other steps including the beginning of construction. If funds permit construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2011.

**3. How do you propose that the County and the Town work more productively together, and how would you provide leadership for those initiatives?**

In my opinion, local government cooperation and joint efforts, evidenced by the bus transit system and the area 911 project, have greatly improved during the past few years. The monthly liaison meetings have provided a means for the two towns and the county governments to get together and address common concerns. I support continuing these meetings and meeting more often when issues emerge that impacts more than one locality occurs.