



NEWS RELEASE

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BLACKSBURG REVISES ITS EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION QUESTIONS ABOUT CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS REMOVED

Blacksburg, Virginia, February 19, 2016 –

The Town of Blacksburg has joined a number of state and local governments in eliminating questions about criminal history from employment applications. The change is based on concerns that such questions can result in discrimination or discourage otherwise qualified candidates from applying for jobs. The federal government has changed its employment applications to eliminate questions about criminal histories, as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia. Other local governments in Virginia such as Norfolk, Charlottesville, Virginia Beach, Arlington County and Fairfax County have removed these questions from employment applications, and locally, the city of Roanoke and Montgomery County have done this.

The Town Council directed Town staff to make the change at its January 19th work session after a presentation by Town Attorney Larry Spencer. Spencer explained that background checks will be done as part of the hiring process, but they will be done at the end of the process, after the best candidate for the position is identified. If the background check reveals a conviction, then the details of the conviction (severity, how old it is, what it involved) will be considered along with the job requirements, and a decision will be made as to whether the criminal history should keep an applicant from working for the Town.

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“I’m happy that the Town is making this change,” said Blacksburg Mayor Ron Rordam. “We think it will send a message that Blacksburg is a progressive community that wants to hire the best qualified candidates for positions with the Town.”

For more information about this change to Blacksburg’s hiring process, contact Larry Spencer at 540-961-1146.

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