

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2023
6:00 PM
MINUTES**

Governing Body Present:

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Council Member	Jesse McQueen
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Abbie Covington
Council Member	Maurice Stuart
Council Member	Oscar Sellers

Staff Present:

City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Manager	Matthew Christian
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
Police Chief	Dennis Brown
Fire Chief	Trey Goodwin
Asst. Fire Chief	Richard Lassiter

Others Present: Linda Bayless, Ronnie Martin, Callie Martin, Mary Graham, Eula Grant, Pat Kathleen Lindsey, Kim Brooks, Hannah Harrington, Nicole Fuller Blake, Betty Fuller, Shirley S. Lassiter, Tommy Brigman, Gene Ross, Deanna Patterson, Jaliyah White, Kingston White, Margaret Williams, Kimberly Brooks, Kyona Rodgers, Natalia Buie, Isaiah Rodgers, Mary Snyder, Donnie Horton, Joy Horton, Barbara Cato, Katelyn Barfield, Kristie Heaton, Kristin Owens-White, Andreas Dietrich, Howard Wallace, Jo Wallace, Calvin White, Gwen White, Scott Waters, Gene McLaurin, Charlie Melvin, Will Toler, Matthew Sasser and others in the foyer that did not sign in.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Invocation

Pastor Chris Hawks of Second Baptist Church offered the Invocation. Mayor Bayless recognized the passing of former Rockingham City Council Member JC Watkins.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Council Member Covington motioned to adopt the Agenda. The second was offered by Council Member Martin. The vote was 4-0.

4. Adoption of Consent Agenda

Council Member Martin motioned to adopt the Consent Agenda. Council Member Covington provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

5. Comments from Attendees

No one presented to address Council.

New Business

6. Presentation by Hamlet Fire and Rescue

(Council Member Sellers joined the meeting at 6:05 pm.)

Fire Chief Trey Goodwin thanked all that were in attendance and invited Mr. Gene McLaurin to the podium. Mr. McLaurin asked former Fire Chief Calvin White and his family to join him. He announced, on behalf of Governor Roy Cooper, he was presenting Chief White with the distinguished Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award. Mr. McLaurin advised the award can only be given by the Governor and only to those that have distinguished themselves with exemplary service. He read excerpts from 3 letters that were submitted to Governor Cooper to consider the nomination. Mr. McLaurin then read the Governor's Award to Chief Calvin White. The former Fire Chief thanked everyone for attending. He offered appreciation to his family, members of the fire department and the City.

7. Consideration of Resolution 2023-01 – Union County Community Action, Inc. Lease

Council Member Martin asked for the Manager's recommendation on renewing the lease. Mr. Christian responded this is a renewal of the existing lease. The facility is in use; they have made improvements and he recommended the renewal. Council Member Martin motioned to accept the recommendation of the City Manager and approve the lease. The second was given by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 5-0.

8. Consideration of Resolution 2023-02 – Surplus of 1991 Spartan Ladder Fire Truck & Garbage Truck

Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Resolution for the surplus. Council Member Stuart provided the second. The vote was 5-0. The City Manager commented the Resolution to Surplus includes both the ladder truck and garbage truck. It is a preventative measure in the event the auction price exceeds \$30,000.00 that the City Manager is allowed to surplus.

9. Consideration of Calendar for Budget Work Sessions

Council Member Covington motioned to adopt the calendar. The second was given by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 5-0.

10. Discussion of NCDOT Sidewalk Project

City Manager Matt Christian updated Council on information he received regarding a NCDOT Sidewalk Project as part of the Regional Transportation Plan. He gave a brief overview of the 2 sidewalks: one is from Hwy. 177 to Wiregrass Rd. on Spring St. and the other is from Bridges St. to Hwy. 38 on Main St. Mayor Bayless commented the City has tried to get the projects done for years. The Manager answered it has been on the prioritization for a long time. The original estimated cost of the project was less than \$200,000.00. A reassessment has the cost near \$1 million. Today's presentation was to provide information. A decision does not have to be made at this time. This will be a locally administered project which means City Staff and Engineers would carry out the project. NCDOT will only provide funding at 80%. It is an 80-20 project with the City of Hamlet responsible for 20%. Council Member Covington inquired if the City would have to make a \$194,000 cash contribution and also have to carry out the project. Mr. Christian confirmed. Mrs. Covington asked if the City would cover the payroll of all involved. The Manager responded the subcontractors would be in the cost share, but staff's time would not have any value assessed to it. Our 20% will consist of engineering, design, and construction. Council Member McQueen commented the sidewalks on Main Street, Hamlet Avenue, Entwistle Street, and others in town, could all use some attention. Mr. Christian responded the NCDOT projects are great projects, and the City would be leveraging \$200,000.00 to get \$800,000.00 from NCDOT. He said the NCDOT projects, and the existing sidewalks are competing projects. Mr. McQueen stated the City would be adding

sidewalks when they can't keep up with the current sidewalks. The Manager stated they could discuss it further during the Budget Work Sessions. He will check on the deadline to make a decision. Council Member Sellers asked which sidewalks have the most traffic. Mr. Christian felt a study would be required to give accurate information. He added the 2 NCDOT projects were prioritized due to the proximity to local housing. Council Member Covington inquired if the City had to choose both or none. The Manager answered he would check on that information. At this time, the projects are only conceptual.

11. Budget Amendments January 2023

City Manager Matt Christian advised the first amendment is for emergency repairs for the bulldozer at the landfill. The repairs will replace both tracks and service the equipment that is not operable now. The repairs would be covered using ARP Funds. The second Budget Amendment is for needs at the firing range. The \$1700.00 added to the firing range expense is balanced by the revenue already received for recycling brass from the firing range. Council Member Covington inquired if there has been any clarification from the County on their intentions for the \$2 million they received in November. Mr. Christian answered he has not received any notification from the County. He added the ARP Funds he was referring to in the Budget Amendments are the funds the City received directly. Mrs. Covington was curious if there was a nebulous financial resource that the City could possibly plug into with some of its needs. Council Member Martin motioned to approve the Budget Amendments. The second was provided by Council Member Covington. The vote was 5-0.

12. Acceptance of Grant for AEDs

Mayor Bayless stated the Grant is for AEDs to the Police Department and questioned if there would be one in every car. Mr. Christian advised there would be one on each shift; a supervisor and a patrol car on each shift would have one. Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Grant. The second was given by Council Member McQueen. The vote was 5-0.

13. Proclamation for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Mayor Bayless read the Proclamation.

Other Business

14. City Manager's Report

City Manager Matthew Christian announced City offices will be closed on Monday, January 16, 2023 in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. He advised many programs will be taking place during the upcoming weekend. The Manager reported the City's water bills have experienced a delay in being delivered and announced customers can call for the balance or pay online. Mr. Christian reported basketball had a good turnout for registrations and is ongoing. He thanked Council for their support to have the gym floors renovated. Also announced was the ladder truck has been purchased and received. It is available for use. In addition, the City purchased a vacuum truck from the Town of Southern Pines for a fair value that will assist in maintaining the sewer system and storm drains. Council Member McQueen inquired on the late delivery of the water bills. He stated he did not want customers' water cut off if they have not received a bill. Council Member Martin said if the customer is not at fault, there should be no cutoffs. Council Member Sellers added there should be no late charges. The Manager asked Council to formulate their wishes into a motion and he will carry it out. Mayor Bayless agreed there should be no late charges. Council Member Covington inquired when the bills were mailed. Mr. Christian answered the City received confirmation from the vendor on January 5th. Council Member Martin asked if a motion was needed. The Manager deferred to Attorney Morphis for input. Mr. Morphis stated Council could move to waive late fees and water cut offs for the month. The Manager

asked if the delay could be until the month of February, assuming everything gets back on track for the normal February billing cycle. The City will not add late charges or do cutoffs until they would normally do them in February. Council Member McQueen offered the motion. Council Member Sellers gave the second. Mayor Bayless inquired if the Clerk had the motion. Gail Strickland read the motion as: Council moves to waive any late fees for a month and cancellation of services for a month. The vote was 5-0.

15. Comments of Council

Council Member Martin expressed concern of the South Hamlet Park. He wants to see the park in operation by Spring and asked Council to begin discussions to make this happen. He reported the City received insurance money for the damaged equipment and suggested putting up cameras, if needed. Mr. Martin also asked Council to support Chip Gordon and the American Legion Baseball Program that will be starting soon. He has advised Mr. Gordon to bring his requests to Council at the February Meeting for consideration. The Council Member wished everyone a safe and Happy New Year. He congratulated Fire Chief Calvin White and recognized him as a great servant to the City. Council Member Martin stated he had a great deal of respect and owed a debt of gratitude to Mr. JC Watkins. Mr. Watkins served on Rockingham City Council when Mr. Martin was appointed as Rockingham Police Chief. He expressed his appreciation to him and the other Council members for giving him the opportunity.

Council Member Sellers agreed with Mr. Martin's assessment of playground equipment for South Hamlet and the need for Council to assist Mr. Gordon with the needs for the American Legion. Mr. Sellers offered his appreciation to Hamlet's Animal Control Officer, saying he is doing a good job on the stray animals. He wished all a happy and healthy New Year and encouraged citizens to bring their concerns to the City Manager or Council.

Council Member Stuart commended Fire Chief Calvin White on his service to the City of Hamlet. He advised he will continue the meetings of the concerned citizens in South Hamlet to get the Park operational for the children. Mr. Stuart recognized the life and accomplishments of Mr. JC Watkins, saying he owed a debt of gratitude to him for paving the way for him and others. He thanked Council for their contribution to the MLK Foundation, of which he sits on the Board. The Council Member announced the numerous MLK activities that are upcoming and encouraged everyone to support the foundation with their attendance. He reflected on the legacy of Dr. King and what it means to everyone today.

Council Member Covington echoed the sentiments of Mr. Stuart about Mr. JC Watkins. She said both he, and his wife Ruth, were pioneers that set the best examples for the progress of our community in education, wisdom, and truthfulness. Mrs. Covington stated many of the traits found in Mr. Watkins are also found in Fire Chief Calvin White and we are fortunate to have men that set the best examples for our community. Mrs. Covington announced one of the MLK events is a free concert, featuring Dante Bowe, on Saturday at Rockingham Middle School. The Council Member stated we are starting a new year. She asked the City Manager to try to get information on alternative funding sources for major projects the City needs, to see if there are any special projects the City can pick off of the \$2 million grant program, and to find out if the County intends to refund our portion of the sales tax next year so the City will know how to budget.

Council Member McQueen asked everyone to reflect on the legacy of Dr. King and his accomplishments. He said Mr. JC Watkins served this county well and his passing will be a great loss to the community. Mr. McQueen, calling Fire Chief Calvin White a great guy, fire fighter and friend, said the town is better due

to his tenure here and he is a better person for being around him. He offered his congratulations to Chief White for his receiving the Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award. Mr. McQueen thanked Council for continuing with business during the December meeting when he was absent visiting family.

16. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Bayless commented how helpful Mr. JC Watkins was to him when he was elected to Council. He said both he and Mrs. Watkins will be missed. The Mayor stated he has known Fire Chief Calvin White since the day Calvin rode his bicycle to the Fire Department. He said the Fire Chief has been a tremendous blessing to the City and will be missed. Mayor Bayless wished everyone a Happy New Year and offered his appreciation to Council and the City Staff and Employees.

17. Adjourn

At 6:50 pm, Council Members Sellers and Covington provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk

