

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021  
7:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Due to Governor Cooper's Order in regards to the Coronavirus, the meeting had limited seating. Additional seating was provided in the foyer.**

**Governing Body Present:**

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Mayor Pro Tem	Jesse McQueen (via phone)
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Maurice Stuart
Council Member	Oscar Sellers
Council Member	Abbie Covington

**Staff Present:**

City Attorney	Kevin Hornik
City Manager	Matthew Christian
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
IT	Zach Garner

**Others Present:** Gavin Stone, Charles Craven, Mark Finkelstein, Adam Kiker, Rob McIntyre and Don Norton

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**2. Invocation**

A Moment of Silence was observed.

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

Council Member Sellers motioned to adopt the Agenda. Council Member Martin provided the second. The vote was 5-0. Mayor Bayless advised Council Member McQueen was participating via phone.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the December 8, 2020 Regular and Closed Session Meetings were approved by motions of Council Members Covington and Sellers. The vote was 5-0.

**5. Comments from Attendees**

Mr. Gerard Morrison spoke with Council by phone regarding several concerns. He expressed the need for the elected officials and appointed board members to have contact information on the City's website. Mr. Morrison inquired if there are term limits for the Board and suggested Council consider a district system that would give more accountability and improve communication between the citizens and Council. Lastly, he provided information on improvements to the County's water and sewer

infrastructure that were provided by a grant from the Golden Leaf Foundation at which time he suggested the addition of fiber optic cable. Under current circumstances, it would have been visionary for students and businesses to have access. Mr. Morrison asked Council to provide feedback on his comments.

**New Business**

Mr. Hornik advised the Board that they must identify themselves during comments and a roll call must be taken for any vote since Council Member McQueen is participating remotely.

**6. Public Hearing – Application to USDA – WWTP Improvements**

Mayor Bayless opened the floor to the Public Hearing. Mr. Christian invited Rob McIntyre and Adam Kiker from LKC to speak to the Board. Mr. Kiker gave a brief overview of the project, saying the improvements are to address the regulatory challenges at the WWTP and increase the capacity from 1 million gallons per day to 2 million. Their team is working on an application to USDA for funding. He feels they have a good plan in place. The public hearing for public comment is a requirement in the application process. No public comments were received. The Public Hearing was closed

**7. Consideration of LKC Letter Agreement – WWTP Improvements**

Mayor Bayless advised the Board has a Letter of Agreement from LKC for the WWTP Improvements. Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Agreement. Council Member McQueen provided the second. The vote was taken by roll call with 5 ayes received.

**8. Consideration of Modifications to Sellers Special Use Permit**

Mayor Bayless explained a Special Use Permit was previously approved for a Solar Farm. Changes have been made in the development plans and the company is requesting changes. Mr. Mark Finkelstein addressed Council regarding the issue. He advised the plan has been redeveloped and none of the panels will be in the City's ETJ area, but the project does include a temporary settlement basin. He asked that Council determine the basin is not subject to the SUP or that they approve the basin. Council Member Sellers inquired on the size of the basin and the danger it may have to the community. Mr. Finkelstein responded the approximate area reserved is 200 ft. x 75 ft. but it is part of a 40-acre site. He also pointed out that the City requires significant setbacks. Council discussed issues with children and insects disturbing neighboring properties. Council Member Covington inquired if the basin would be fenced. Mr. Finkelstein reported it is outside of the fenced area. City Manager Matt Christian suggested 3 options for Council to consider: Council could defer the zoning to the County, they could amend the existing SUP at Council's discretion or they could require a new SUP process. Council discussed potential runoff to which the Manager advised the basin would be designed to meet the State's requirements. Council Member Covington motioned to amend the existing SUP that the basin be placed in the permanent fencing. Council Member Martin provided the second. The vote was taken by roll call with 5 ayes received.

**9. Proposed Utility Adjustment Policy**

City Manager Matt Christian advised, at the direction of Council, he researched and prepared the policy to give clarity to explained leaks and unexplained leaks. He welcomed comments and questions from Council. Council Member McQueen asked if the policy covers secondary meters the same as primary meters. Mr. Christian confirmed. Mr. McQueen stated he would like to give credit to the persons that had a leak through no fault of their own in October. The Manager replied Council can make the effective date of the Policy retroactive. Council Member McQueen motioned to approve the Policy effective

October 1, 2020. The second was given by Council Member Stuart. The vote was taken by roll call with 5 ayes received.

**10. Resolution 2021-01 Title VI Policy to Prohibit Discrimination.**

Mayor Bayless explained to remain eligible to receive federal funds, the Federal Highway Administration and the NC Department of Transportation are requiring all municipalities to have an official Title VI Policy adopted by Council. The motion to approve the Policy was made by Council Member Covington and second by Council Member Sellers. The vote was taken by roll call with 5 ayes received.

**11. Update to Personnel Policy – Consideration of Emergency Paid COVID Sick Leave**

The City Manager advised the Cares Act, which provided for 80 hours of paid leave for COVID, expired 12-31-2020. The proposed policy is an extension of the emergency paid sick leave. It is important to have the paid leave for the employees and organization to make sure we are providing a safety net for testing. The motion to approve the Policy was made by Council Member Stuart and second by Council Member Sellers. The vote was taken by roll call with 5 ayes received.

**12. Proclamation for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

Mayor Bayless read the Proclamation and encouraged the citizens to observe the day with appropriate activities and programs that honor the memory and legacy of Dr. King.

**13. Approval of Tax Releases**

Council Member Martin motioned to approve the Tax Releases. The second was provided by Council Member Stuart. The vote was taken by roll call with 5 ayes received.

**14. Budget Amendments Third Quarter**

City Manager Matt Christian stated the amendments are the routine shifting of the budget, making sure funds are in place to complete the projects for the year. Council Member Covington motioned to approve the amendments. The second was given by Council Member Sellers. The vote was taken by roll call with 5 ayes received.

**Other Business**

**15. City Manager's Report**

City Manager Matthew Christian commended staff for their safety in 2020, reporting the City had only 2 workers comp claims. Also reported was a \$16,000.00 bid to demolish a house Council approved has been awarded and 3 other homes have been removed by their owners after violation notices were sent from the City. He commended Kim Lyerly on her efforts. Mr. Christian reported he has received notification from the railroad that portions of N. Bridges St. and Main St. will be closed for railroad crossing maintenance; N Bridges St beginning January 27<sup>th</sup> and Main St. beginning February 4<sup>th</sup>. The Manager gave recognition to Mr. Yan Solihin for a \$4,000 donation he made to the City to provide supplies for the COVID pandemic. He advised the County Health Department now has COVID vaccines and citizens can contact them for information.

**16. Comments of Council**

Council Member Sellers wished everyone a Happy New Year and stated he would like to see more participation from citizens in the meetings and voicing their concerns.

Council Member Stuart thanked the employees for their work ethic and the City Manager for the COVID Paid Sick Leave Policy. He thanked Council for the MLK Proclamation and reported Monday's Celebration will be on Zoom. He encouraged citizens to check the newspaper for details.

Council Member McQueen, expressing concern of the overrun at the surrounding hospitals due to COVID, asked Council to allow the Manager to contact the State for the status of use of Sandhill's Hospital. Council Member Covington responded that she has spoken with the personnel that set-up the hospital and, at this point, they have not given any indication that they would be opening; they have not seen the need at this time.

**17. Mayor's Comments**

Mayor Bayless wished all a Happy New Year and reported the hospital is giving COVID vaccinations for those over the age of 75.

**18. Motion to go into Closed Session per NC General Statute §143-318-11(a)(3) (6) Attorney-Client Privilege and Personnel.**

Mayor Bayless asked for a motion to go into Closed Session per NC General Statute §143-318.11 (a)(3) (6) Attorney – Client Privilege and Personnel. At 7:52 pm, Council Member Covington offered the motion. Council Member Sellers provided the second. The vote was taken by roll call with 5 ayes received.

At 8:39 pm. Council Members Covington and Sellers motioned to return to Open Session. The vote was taken by roll call with 5 ayes received.

**19. Motion to Adjourn**

At 8:41 pm, Council Members Sellers and Covington provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote was taken by roll call with 5 ayes received.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk

