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**CITY OF HAMLET REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
HAMLET CITY HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026
6:00 PM
Minutes**

Governing Body Present:

Mayor	Amy Guinn
Mayor Pro-Tem	Abbie Covington
Council Member	Oscar Sellers
Council Member	Maurice Stuart
Council Member	Tony Clewis

Staff Present:

City Manager	John Terziu
Asst. City Manager	Mackenzie Webb
City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Clerk	Heather Hawks

Others Present:

1. Call to Order

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

2. Invocation/Moment of Silence

Pastor Tommy Legrand provided the invocation.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Council Member Clewis motioned to adopt the agenda. Council Member Stuart provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Consent Agenda

Council Member Stuart made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda; Council Member Sellers provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

5. Black History Month Proclamation

Mayor Guinn read the proclamation recognizing and honoring Black History Month, including the past and present contributions and rich history of the African American community in Hamlet.

6. VFW Proposal

City Manager Terziu stated the City of Hamlet owns the real property located at **146 Veteran's Drive**, Richmond County Parcel No. **749114247146**. The property is not currently required for direct municipal use. The proposed lease contemplates use of the property as a **restaurant and community-oriented "community hub"**, which may include food and beverage service, coffee, ice cream, recreational amenities, and related accessory uses, and is intended to advance the City's economic development objectives, including job creation, increased visitor activity, and activation of the lakefront area. Any proposed use of the property remains subject to completion of all required rezoning and land-use approvals in accordance with the **Hamlet Zoning Ordinance**.

Key provisions of the proposed Lease Agreement and Option to Purchase include:

- **Lease Term:** Up to ten (10) years, commencing (to be determined), with termination by either party upon at least **180 days' written notice**.
- **Monthly Rent:** **\$1,500 per month**, payable in advance, with a **2% annual increase**.
- **Market Adjustment:** City Council may, in its reasonable discretion, adjust rent to current market rate (not to exceed a **20% increase**) no more than once every ten years, based on written documentation from a qualified real estate professional.
- **Security Deposit:** **\$3,000**.
- **Proposed Permitted Uses:** Restaurant, retail, recreational, and community-hub uses consistent with the Hamlet Zoning Ordinance following a proper and legal rezoning; **residential, manufacturing, and industrial uses are prohibited**.
- **Tenant Improvements:** Lessee is responsible for all renovations and upfit, with a **dollar-for-dollar rent credit not to exceed \$10,000**.
- **Utilities and Maintenance:** Lessee is responsible for utilities and routine maintenance; the City remains responsible for the **roof, foundation, structural supports, and exterior walls**, except as otherwise provided in the lease.
- **Insurance:** Lessee is required to maintain **commercial general liability insurance of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence**, including liquor liability if alcohol is served, and naming the City as an additional insured.
- **Option to Purchase:** After ten (10) years from the lease commencement date, the City may sell the property for the greater of **\$250,000 or the then-current fair market value** as determined by the Richmond County Tax Office. Any sale of the property is subject to the upset bid requirements of G.S. 160A-269.

John Martin presented a proposal to establish a grill and bar that would include family-oriented amenities such as children's games, pool tables, outdoor seating, paddle boats, a nature trail, a greenhouse, and a potential artificial beach area for swimming.

Council Member Sellers inquired whether a designated swimming area would be included and raised questions regarding liability.

Mr. Martin stated that he would like the project to include an artificial beach with a designated section designed to be safe for children. He indicated that life jackets would be provided and emphasized that safety would be a priority.

Council Member Clewis asked about the proposed hours of operation.

Mr. Martin stated that operations would initially begin Wednesday through Saturday evenings, with plans to eventually expand to seven days per week. He further indicated a desire to remain open until 2:00 am.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington inquired about indoor seating accommodation.

Mr. Martin responded that seating would be available indoors, on the patio, and in additional outdoor areas.

Council Member Clewis inquired as to where the contract addresses dollar-for-dollar improvements and stated that such improvements should require prior approval.

City Attorney Morphis advised that language could be added to the contract specifying that major improvements are subject to approval by the City Manager.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington also inquired about the terms of the proposed initial lease agreement which could extend to ten years.

City Attorney Morphis advised that lease terms should be negotiated between the Council and Mr. Martin.

Mr. Martin expressed a preference for a ten-year lease term.

Council Member Clewis asked whether Mr. Martin would proceed with only the bar and grill portion of the project if the additional amenities were not feasible.

Mr. Martin responded he would proceed regardless.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked about the amount of property included with the VFW parcel.

City Manager Terziu stated that a survey would be required to determine the exact property boundaries.

City Attorney Morphis recommended that Council establish specific lease terms and direct Mr. Martin to return with a detailed proposal. Once those details are defined, the matter can return to Council for further discussion.

City Manager Terziu stated that the property would likely be rezoned to Conditional rather than Business.

City Attorney Morphis explained that with conditional zoning, Council may impose specific conditional outlining permitted uses.

Council Member Sellers asked whether Mr. Martin was planning on purchasing the property in the future.

Mr. Martin confirmed he would like to purchase the property.

City Manager Terziu noted that the proposed lease includes a 180-day termination provision, applicable to both parties.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked Mr. Martin if he would classify his restaurant as a family friendly environment.

Mr. Martin responded he wants it to be family friendly and a place where everyone is comfortable.

City Manager Terziu stated the matter would be brought back to Council for discussion and approval.

Mr. Joe Brown, a citizen of Hamlet and Planning Board member, approached the podium at the request of Council Member Sellers to address concerns regarding liability, particularly in situations involving children, alcoholic beverages, and proximity to water.

City Attorney Morphis responded that liability would be addressed in three areas: liability for business operations inside the building with an insurance requirement, liability for operations outside the building, and liability related to water uses. He stated that as Mr. Martin advances the project, he would need to return with a second proposal specifically addressing how liability concerns will be managed. He further noted that state statute requires 30 days' public notice but does not require a public hearing.

Mr. Latimer attempted to comment at this time.

Mayor Guinn stated this isn't a public hearing and said we needed to get the meeting back on track. She apologized for allowing Mr. Brown to come to the podium during this time.

City Manager Terziu also stated this is not a public hearing.

7. WWTP Proposal

City Manager Terziu stated the City of Hamlet is advancing the financing of major upgrades and renovations to its Wastewater Treatment Plant through a financing package supported by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), including grant funds, long-term low-interest revenue bonds, and associated interim construction financing. Under North Carolina law and the requirements of the North Carolina Local Government Commission (LGC), the City is required to retain qualified Bond Counsel to prepare financing documents, provide legal opinions, and assist with compliance throughout the financing process. Sanford Holshouser, PLLC previously submitted a proposal to serve as Bond Counsel for the City's USDA wastewater project and has experience representing North Carolina local governments in similar utility financings. **Bond counsel fees are proposed at \$12,500 for interim construction financing and \$12,500 for permanent USDA bond financing, for a total cost not to exceed \$25,000, payable at closing.** Approval of Bond Counsel is a necessary step to proceed with the LGC application and subsequent issuance of revenue bonds and bond anticipation notes.

City Attorney Morphis advised that approval from the Local Government Commission is required for the \$12 million financing of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He noted that the process involves several legal steps and certifications and emphasized the importance of ensuring the financing is handled properly to avoid future issues. He recommended approval of the proposal for Sanford Holshouser, PLLC to serve as Bond Counsel for the City's USDA Wastewater project.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to approve the award of Bond Counsel services to Sanford Holshouser, PLLC, for the Wastewater Treatment Plant financing project and authorized the City Manager to execute all necessary engagement documents and related financing. Council Member Clewis provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Clewis made a motion to approve Resolution No. 26-05 supporting an application to the North Carolina Local Government Commission for approval of the issuance of water and sewer revenue bonds and associated interim construction financing for wastewater treatment plant upgrades and renovations. Council Member Stuart provided the

second. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Review of Grant Rezoning Application

Assistant City Manager Webb stated Nathan K Grant, the owner of property located at the corner of Freeman Mill and Gin Mill Rd (Tax Map 748001368486) has filed a rezoning request to rezone the parcel from RA-20 Residential Agriculture to I-2 Heavy Industrial. The Planning Board unanimously recommended rezoning at their January meeting.

Additional Notes:

- 17.81 Acres
- Located in the ETJ
- Surrounding Properties zoned RA-20 (Residential Agriculture), B-2 (Business), and I-2 (Heavy Industrial)
- Water and Sewer Utilities available

Mr. Grant stated he was approached regarding the development of an RV park in Hamlet to provide accommodation for individuals expected to come to the area in connection with the new Amazon facility.

Mayor Guinn asked whether the proposed RV park would be open to the public and not limited to Amazon employees.

Mr. Grant confirmed it would be open to the public.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington inquired whether I-2 was the appropriate zoning classification.

Assistant City Manager Webb stated that I-2 is the only zoning district within the City that permits RV parks.

Council Member Stuart asked whether I-2 zoning is exclusively for RV use and what the property's current zoning classification is.

Assistant City Manager Webb stated that the property is currently zoned as RA-20, Residential Agriculture. She further explained that I-2 is designated as Heavy Industrial but is the only zoning district that allows RV parks.

Mayor Guinn opened the public hearing.

Allison Thomas stated her property is located adjacent to the proposed RV park site. She expressed concerns that the development could decrease property values and create noise issues, as well as concerns regarding the type of individuals who may enter the community.

Ryan Smith also stated she is concerned about the potential noise levels in what she described as a quiet community.

Mayor Guinn closed the public hearing.

Council Member Clewis asked whether Ryan Smith resides near the property being rezoned.

Ryan Smith stated she does not live near the site and had been confused about the location. She thanked Council Member Clewis for the clarification.

Council Member Clewis asked how notification letters are distributed.

Assistant City Manager Webb stated that letters are mailed to property owners with adjacent properties to the parcel being considered for rezoning.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked whether the rezoning would apply to the entire parcel.

Assistant City Manager Webb responded that it was her understanding that the rezoning request applies to the entire parcel.

Marqueta Harrington raised her hand to speak.

Council Member Sellers asked if Mayor Guinn was going to allow her to come to the podium to speak.

Mayor Guinn responded that the public hearing had been closed.

Allison Thomas asked why Ryan Smith was allowed to come back to the podium, but this person isn't allowed to speak.

Esco Latimer interrupted, stating they can't do this.

City Manager Terziu informed Council they are allowed to close the public hearing and then ask people specific questions because that is not part of the public hearing.

Mayor Guinn called Marqueta Harrington to the podium to speak.

Marqueta Harrington stated she is opposed to the proposed RV park because there are children in the area and expressed a desire to maintain a quiet neighborhood.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington inquired if anyone had come to the Planning Board meeting in opposition of the proposed RV park.

Assistant City Manager Webb responded that only Ms. Thomas came to the Planning Board meeting.

Council Member Stuart stated that Richmond County is expected to change significantly over the next one to five years. He stated he is a family-oriented individual and supports growth of the community. He indicated his support for the rezoning request and for economic development initiatives.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion that the rezoning is consistent with the City of Hamlet Zoning Ordinance; Council Member Stuart provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Stuart made a motion to recommend rezoning of Parcel #748001368486 from RA-20 Residential Agriculture to I-2 Heavy Industrial, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

9. Public Comments

Allison Thomas asked for clarification regarding the consistency statement and asked how many notification letters were distributed for the rezoning. Assistant City Manager Webb responded that seven letters were mailed.

Dennis Cozart stated that Doc Hills Family Care Home has completed its first full year of operation. She noted that the speed sign has not been operational for some time and that it assists in reducing speeding when active. She requested consideration of installing a four-way stop at the corner of High Street and Spring Street. City Manager Terziu stated he would speak with Chief Carston and follow up.

Esco Latimer expressed concerns regarding the City's Rules of Decorum. He stated that profanity and personal attacks are protected under the First Amendment and further stated that if a public figure is involved, public criticism is permitted. He added that if Mr. Joe Brown was permitted to speak, he and Denise should have been allowed the same opportunity.

Don Norton stated he takes issue with the City Manager's statement that he assaulted him. He also expressed ongoing concerns regarding the wetlands.

Amber Daniels apologized for what she described as ongoing disrespect during Council meetings. She announced that her All-Aboard Gaming Club event will be held at Riverside Bakery on February 14th from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm with Valentines' Bingo and door prizes. She also reminded citizens that early voting begins Thursday, February 12th at 6:00 pm.

10. City Manager's Report

City Manager Terziu stated the City continues to make deliberate progress across critical infrastructure, economic development, housing, and quality-of-life initiatives while maintaining fiscal discipline and long-term sustainability. Major capital projects are advancing through the required legal, financial, and regulatory processes to ensure responsible execution and compliance with state oversight. At the same time, downtown reinvestment, housing partnerships, and private-sector confidence signal positive momentum for job creation and community vitality. Continued investment in leadership development, organizational capacity, and strategic partnerships will remain essential as the City positions itself for sustained growth and long-term success. He gave updates on projects including the Water Treatment Plant, Wastewater Treatment Plant, 65-Acre Property Sale and Economic Development, Habitat for Humanity Property Transfers, Hamlet City Lake Trail Update, NCCCMA Professional Development Seminar, Downtown Investment and Small Business Momentum, and Stormwater System Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) Story Map Review.

11. Comments of Council

Council Member Sellers had no comments at this time.

Council Member Clewis apologized to Council for asking a question after a speaker had concluded her remarks. He thanked all City employees for their hard work during the recent winter storms. He noted that projects such as the Water Treatment Plant in local government must follow local government procedures, which require time to complete. He stated that rezoning matters are taken very seriously and are carefully considered. He thanked City Manager Terziu for his ideas and passion for current projects and concluded by expressing his desire to see Hamlet continue to thrive.

Council Member Stuart thanked all City employees for their efforts during the winter storms. He reminded residents that early voting begins Thursday in Rockingham. He stated February is Black History Month and encouraged the community to celebrate Hamlet's rich history of African American contributions. He thanked all attendees for coming to the meeting.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington thanked all City employees, the Fire Department, Doc, and the Police Department for their hard work during our winter storms. She thanked Amber Daniels for her comments in support of Council and stated that Council is here to serve the people and support the community.

12. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Guinn thanked all City employees, the Fire Department, the Police Department, Public Works, and Doc for their hard work during our winter storms.

13. Motion to go into Closed Session per NCGS § 143-318.11 (a)(3)(6) for attorney-client privilege and personnel.

At 7:28 pm, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington motioned, seconded by Council Member Clewis to go into closed session for attorney-client privilege and personnel. The motion passed unanimously.

Return to Open Session

At 8:19 pm, Council Member Clewis motioned to return to Open Session, seconded by Council Member Stuart. The motion passed unanimously.

14. Motion to Adjourn

Council Member Sellers motioned, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Covington to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 7:19 pm.