

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2022  
6:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Mayor Pro Tem	Jesse McQueen
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Oscar Sellers
Council Member	Abbie Covington

**Staff Present:**

City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Manager	Matthew Christian
Executive Assistant	Ashleigh Sligh
Police Chief	Dennis brown

**Others Present:** Howard Wallace, Margaret Williams, Jo Wallace, Carolyn David, and Cynthia Battle

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

**2. Invocation**

A Moment of Silence was observed.

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

Council Member Covington motioned to adopt the Agenda with the removal of Item #15, Budget Amendments. Council Member Sellers provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the May 24, 2022 Meeting were approved by motions of Council Members Sellers and Covington. The vote was 4-0.

**5. Comments from Attendees**

Ms. Cynthia Battle presented Council to discuss 2 issues. Her first concern was speeding on Charlotte St. at the lower end, toward Food Lion. She felt a speed bump was needed. Her second issue was regarding her water account which she has set on draft. She was out of town June 1<sup>st</sup> – June 10<sup>th</sup>. When she returned, her water was off. Her bank had not made her payment. Mayor Bayless advised the City has procedures in place for water payments and suggested she speak with the City Manager. He advised the City will look into the speeding on Charlotte St.

**New Business**

**6. Manager's Presentation of the Budget Message**

City Manager Matt Christian presented the recommended FY 2022 – 2023 Budget and read the Budget Message.

**7. Public Hearing #1 – Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget**

Mayor Bayless opened the floor to the Public Hearing. No one presented. The Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

**8. Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget Ordinance No. 2022-02**

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

**9. Adoption of Fee Schedule – Resolution 2022-06**

The City Manager advised the Fee Schedule is attached to the Budget Ordinance. There are no increases in garbage, water and sewer rates or taxes. Council Member McQueen inquired if the increase from \$25.00 to \$50.00 for cutting water on after 4 pm covered the City's expenses for the service. Mr. Christian responded for a normal water cut on, it would cover the wages for the employee; for other issues it may not. Council Member Covington motioned to adopt the Fee Schedule. The second was offered by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 4-0.

**10. Public Hearing #2 – Rezoning Moratorium**

Mayor Bayless opened the floor to the Public Hearing. He stated Council has decided to implement a moratorium on all rezonings at this time. City Manager Matt Christian reported the moratorium would expire December 31, 2022. With no further comments or questions, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

**11. Consideration of Ordinance 2022-03 – Rezoning Moratorium**

Council Member Sellers motioned to adopt the Ordinance. Council Member McQueen provided the second. Council Member Covington inquired when the moratorium would be effective. Mr. Christian responded immediately, but the City has received one rezoning application that is in the process and will be heard. Mr. Morphis added the moratorium is for amendments to the zoning map only, not text amendments or the Subdivision Division Ordinance. The vote was 4-0.

**12. Appointments to Hamlet Senior Center Advisory Board**

Council Member Covington motioned to make the 4 appointments: Pete Wheeler, Joyce Santos, Imogene Thomas, and Barbara Brown. Council Member Sellers provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**13. Appointments to Hamlet Depot Board**

Council Member Covington motioned to appointment Jonathon Lewis to the Depot Board. Council Member Sellers provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**14. Nomination for LRCOG Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Mayor Bayless reported for the last 6 years he has served as the County's Municipal Representative on the Transportation Advisory Committee. Council needs to make another appointment that will go before the County Commissioners. Council Member Sellers motioned to nominate Mayor Bayless as the County's Representative for the TAC. Council Member Martin provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**15. Budget Amendments**

Council removed Item #15, Budget Amendments, from the Agenda.

**16. Approval of Tax Releases**

Council Member Covington inquired on the City's loss of \$4,000.00 in taxes for properties the County foreclosed on. Attorney Morphis confirmed when real property is sold at foreclosure, the liens are cancelled. He advised in recent foreclosures by the County, he has been contacted by the Foreclosure Attorney and provided the tax amount owed to the City. In those cases, the City's taxes have been paid, minus the Attorney fee of \$250.00. He will check on the \$4,000.00 property listed on the Tax Releases. Council Member Sellers motioned to approve the Tax Releases. The second was provided by Council Member Martin. The vote was 4-0.

### **Other Business**

#### **17. City Manager's Reports**

City Manager Matthew Christian reported upcoming events as Yoga in the Park June 16<sup>th</sup>, a blood drive June 16<sup>th</sup> at the Ballroom, the next food truck event June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Box Car Concert Series on June 26<sup>th</sup>, and the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks. There will be some children activities at the Depot on July 4<sup>th</sup>. More information is available on the City's website and the City and Depot Facebook pages.

#### **18. Comments of Council**

Council Member Covington expressed appreciation to all the volunteers that worked to bring American Legion Baseball back to Hamlet. She encouraged everyone to attend the games.

Council Member Martin reiterated Mrs. Covington's positive comments regarding the American Legion Games. He inquired on the replacement of the playground equipment at South Hamlet Park that was destroyed. Mr. Christian advised there are no current plans to replace due to issues in the area. It is believed the destruction of the equipment was arson and a recently installed fence was torn down again. Council discussed the need to have the playground for the children and the possibility of placing cameras for security. The City Manager responded he will get quotes and order the equipment with the money received from the insurance. Police Chief Brown reported the Police Department plans to utilize cameras in the area.

Mayor Bayless reported to the Chief vandalism issues he was advised of on Hamlet Avenue at the Soup Kitchen where tires had been cut. He suggested possibly installing a camera in that area. Council Member Covington advised it was not a problem with vandalism; it was an issue between the landlord and tenant. The tenant was evicted, and the landlord thought it was retaliation.

Council Member Sellers agreed with the others on the need for the playground equipment. He thanked the attendees for coming to the meeting and encouraged all to come to the July 4<sup>th</sup> activities.

Council Member McQueen asked Council for clarity on issues with people putting building materials and furniture out for the City to pick up. He stated it is clearly against the policy. He has ridden around town and the debris is everywhere, including materials that may contain asbestos. Mr. McQueen added there must be consequences for the violations. The City Manager responded he plans to meet with Public Works Director Billy Stubbs and put together a letter that will be mailed to all residents to educate them on the City's services. Once the citizens are educated, if the expectations are not met, code enforcement will have a recourse to follow up. Mr. McQueen stated he had inquired before if the City could cut off services for violations. Mr. Christian answered he and the Attorney would look into it. Mr. Morphis advised the City can have a policy with consequences. Council Member McQueen thanked everyone that participated in the budget process. He said it has been a challenging 3 years; the City has worked well with what they have. This year, the City had to make some purchases. He said there is still not an equitable distribution of sales tax that comes from Richmond County to the City of Hamlet. He added

the City has increased its employee pay, but with money the County has kept from the City, the County can increase their employees' salaries. Council Member Covington added she went to the Town of Ellerbe's Meeting and saw the impact the change in sales tax distribution had on them; it is devastating. She said the issue needs to be fixed.

**19. Mayor's Comments**

Mayor Bayless reminded Council several years ago the City required citizens to get a permit and pay a fee to have items picked up. Several complained and Council changed it back; now we pick up everything. The Manager explained the ones picking up the garbage are also the ones that clean the streets. It may be difficult to determine if wood placed for pick up are flooring or a table. He said the City needs to address the system and educate employees on the process of picking up. He also added when storms occur, resulting in large amounts of debris, the employees will get behind in picking up.

Mayor Bayless wished everyone a Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July and thanked the Hamlet Fire Department for their assistance in the JP Stevens Fire.

**20. Motion to Adjourn**

At 6:39 pm, Council Members Sellers and Covington provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk

