

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, JULY 12, 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
Council Member	Maurice Stuart

Staff Present:

City Attorney	Al Benschhoff
City Manager	Matthew Christian
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
Police Chief	Dennis Brown
Police Major	Hudson Chitwood

Reverend

Others Present: Pam Dillman, Paul Dillman, Lewis Eakes, Chris McDonald, Reverend Bill Monroe, Howard Wallace and Margaret Williams

1. Call to Order

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

2. Invocation

Reverend Bill Monroe of Calvary Baptist Church offered the Invocation.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Council Member Covington motioned to adopt the Agenda. Council Member Sellers provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

4. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the June 14, 2022 Meeting were approved by motions of Council Members Sellers and Martin. The vote was 5-0.

5. Comments from Attendees

Mr. Chris McDonald, President of Richmond County Disc Golf Group, provided a proposal of a Disc Golf Course at City Lake. The 501c3 has an 18-hole course at Hinson Lake and wishes to branch out to the Hamlet area. The plans are for a championship course northeast and southwest of the American Legion Building. It will include baskets, pads, trashcans, benches, signage, flowers, and shrubbery. The projected costs are \$30,000 - \$40,000. Funding will come from fund raising or private donations. Council discussed the marshy areas and maintenance of the course. Mr. McDonald advised the members, along with the City of Rockingham, maintain the Hinson Lake course. He wanted to present the idea to Council

before moving forward with more plans. Mayor Bayless asked Mr. McDonald to bring a plan back to the Board. Council thanked him for his efforts to do something positive for the citizens of Hamlet.

Mrs. Pam Dillman and Mr. Lewis Eakes spoke to the Board. They have a 501c3 for the Hamlet City Lake Committee. Mrs. Dillman explained the Committee took the City's proposed project from 3 years ago and are working to help the City meet their goal. Mr. Eakes and Mrs. Dillman provided information on upcoming fund raisers: Axe to Grind will host a Pie Eating Contest on July 30th, food will be sold at the Seaboard Festival, the largest Ghost Walk in Richmond County will take place September 24th, a Murder Mystery Weekend at the Depot is planned for February 2023 and a Candlelight Service at City Lake in April 2023 with live music and food trucks. The City Lake Project includes a splash pad, boating, and kayaks. Volunteers from the Hamlet Business Development Association will assist with the plans. Mrs. Dillman asked the Council Members to get involved. Council thanked Mrs. Dillman and Mr. Eakes for their presentation.

New Business

6. Consideration of Resolution 2022-07 – Contract with Richmond County Building Inspections

Mayor Bayless reported the City has contracted with Richmond County for years to do building inspections. Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Resolution and Contract. The second was provided by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 5-0.

7. Appointment to the Hamlet Planning Board

Council Member Martin motioned to re-appoint Mr. David Quick to the Planning Board. The second was offered by Council Member Covington. The vote was 5-0.

8. Approval of Tax Releases

The Mayor announced the Tax Releases are for vehicles in the amount of \$303.11. Council Members Covington and Stuart provided the motion and second to approve the tax releases. The vote was 5-0.

Other Business

9. City Manager's Reports

Before giving his comments, City Manager Matthew Christian allowed Police Chief Dennis Brown to introduce Major Hudson Chitwood to Council, an accomplished detective and UNCP Graduate. He will be second in command in the Department. The Major expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to show what he can do for the community. The City Manager thanked everyone that attended the fireworks. He announced the next Food Truck event at the Depot will be July 22nd. The Manager reported the Senior Center has 2 seats left for their upcoming trip to Italy and they are planning a 2023 trip to Florida. Parks and Recreation has sign-ups for soccer taking place at City Hall.

10. Comments of Council

Council Member Martin thanked the residents that supported the American Legion Baseball Program and encouraged them to attend the playoff games. He added Hamlet had a great turnout for the July 4th Fireworks and Council hopes to make it bigger and better next year.

Council Member Sellers thanked the presenters for their plans and interest in Hamlet. He encouraged more residents to attend the Council meetings and expressed appreciation to the City employees.

Council Member Stuart thanked Chris McDonald for his plans for the Disc Golf Course. He said the plan is not for profitable gain and the Group is not asking for much from the City. He also thanked Pam Dillman

and Lewis Eakes for their presentation. Mr. Stuart commended the Senior Center for the activities they provide and thanked the Chief of Police for the new hire, adding everyone should be treated fairly and the Major will be a tremendous asset. The Councilman reminded everyone that the anniversary of the death of Hamlet born, legendary saxophonist, John Coltrane is July 17th; he encouraged everyone to remember his life and legacy.

Council Member Covington discussed the fireworks and commended the talent that was displayed in the chalk art. She is excited about the plans presented for City Lake and offered to help personally. Mrs. Covington thanked the Recreation Department for all they have done this summer and mentioned the positive comments she has received on Parks & Rec Director Maurice McLaurin.

Council Member McQueen stated he has enjoyed being out in the community at the Legion Baseball games. He said the field looks the best it has in years and the fireworks were great. He reported to the City Manager that he received a call that someone may be staying in the James Building. He asked Mr. Christian to have someone check on it along with the overgrowth at the warehouse on Battley Dairy Rd., and the grass in the A&P parking lot. Mr. McQueen thanked the presenters for their great ideas and proposals. He suggested they contact the City for in-kind assistance. The Councilman added Major Hudson will be a wonderful asset to the Police Department and town.

11. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Bayless said he enjoyed the July 4th activities; next year they plan to have more food trucks. He expressed appreciation for the presentations on City Lake. He mentioned the Opera House and the need for someone to take the building on as a project. The Mayor reported vendors should contact the Seaboard Festival Committee now for entry in the festival.

12. Motion to

At 6:45 pm, Mayor Bayless asked for a motion to go into Closed Session per NC General Statute §143-318-11(a)(6) for personnel. The motion was given by Council Member Sellers. The second was offered by Council Member Covington with a vote of 5-0.

Return to Open Session

At 7:25 pm, Council Members Sellers and Martin motioned to Return to Open Session. The vote was 5-0.

Mayor Bayless reported Council discussed the Manager's contract. Council Member Covington provided the motion to amend the contract to include automatic renewal, amend the professional development language to be less restrictive, adjust the salary to \$114,000.00, retroactive to July 1, 2022 and allow the Mayor to sign the contract. The second was offered by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 5-0.

13. Adjourn

At 7:27 pm, Council Members Sellers and Stuart provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail M. Strickland

Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk

