

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2021  
7:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Oscar Sellers
Council Member	Abbie Covington

**Staff Present:**

City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Manager	Matthew Christian
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
IT	Zach Garner
Public Works Director	Billy Stubbs

**Others Present:** Reverend Dan Blair, Adam Kiker, Rob McIntyre, Tim Brown, Howard Wallace, Margaret Williams and Chip Gordon. Lynn Whittington, USDA Representative, joined the meeting by phone for Item 7A

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Bayless called the Meeting to Order at 7:00 pm.

**2. Invocation**

Reverend Dan Blair of Fellowship United Methodist Church and First Methodist Church offered the prayer.

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

Council Member Covington motioned to adopt the Agenda with the addition of Item 7A WWTP – USDA Funding and Item 7B Acceptance of American Rescue Plan Acts Fund. The second was offered by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 3-0.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the July 13, 2021 Special Meeting, Closed Session and Regular Meeting were approved by motions of Council Members Sellers and Martin. The vote was 3-0.

**5. Comments from Attendees**

Mr. Chip Gordon addressed Council to thank them for their support of American Legion Post 49 and provided a shirt as a token of appreciation for each Council Member. He advised they plan to build the program back to what it once was and hope to host tournaments in the next few years.

Mr. Howard Wallace thanked Council for their positive code enforcement action on Pine Street. He asked Council to consider demolishing the other 2 Eden properties on Pine St. He presented pictures to

Council and gave a brief history of the Pine Street properties. Council Member Sellers explained other streets in the area have the same issue of dilapidated houses. Mayor Bayless explained the City does not have the money to demolish all the needed structures. He added the City does not get any money back from demolitions; if the property is foreclosed by the County, they receive the funds. Mr. Wallace thanked Council for their efforts.

Mr. Tim Brown, who resides on Entwistle St., apologized for his previous comments that may have offended Council. He asked if the WWTP funds can be used to replace infrastructure such as water lines. He explained he has replaced his water heater 3 times due to black sediment that is in the water. The City Manager responded he will have Staff check on his issue.

#### **New Business**

##### **6. Consideration of Ordinance 2021-06 – Ordinance to Demolish**

Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Ordinance. The second was offered by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 3-0.

##### **7. Bridges Street Sewer Repair – Consideration of Contract with LKC Engineering**

The Mayor advised the City has a major sewer issue on Bridges St. The preliminary project cost is \$311,600.00. He asked for a motion on the approval of the LKC Contract. Council Member Martin motioned to approve the Contract. The second was offered by Council Member Covington. The vote was 3-0.

##### **7A. Waste Water Treatment Plant – USDA Funding**

(Documents were distributed at the meeting)

Mayor Bayless announced the City of Hamlet will receive \$6 million in grant funds from USDA and will be responsible for the amount of \$11,600,000.00 for a total of \$17,600,000.00. Lynn Whittington, USDA Representative, joined the meeting by phone. She reviewed the Letter of Conditions. Council Member Sellers inquired if the interest rate would ever increase. Mr. Christian answered the current interest rate is now 1.375%. It will not increase, but it may be at a lower rate when closing. Mayor Bayless asked where the City stood in compliance with the requirements of USDA. The City Manager responded the City has worked to get to this point to get the award and will continue to meet all the compliances USDA dictates. Ms. Whittington advised the next step, if Council wishes to proceed, is to pass a Resolution. Council Member Covington provided a motion to accept Resolution 2021-05 (Attachment A) which she read. The second was provided by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 3-0. Ms. Whittington exited the meeting.

Mr. Christian asked Council if they had any questions for Rob McIntyre and Adam Kiker with LKC Engineering. Mr. Kiker spoke with Council, saying the City's USDA Grant was the largest individual grant he was aware of. He advised his team will now design the drawings and prepare the documents. They will be interacting with staff almost daily over the next year. Council Member Covington asked when the project should go to bid. Mr. Kiker answered it would be 12-18 months. Mrs. Covington asked if they would be able to comply with USDA's 3-year deadline. Mr. Kiker answered they will manage with USDA regulations but they must have the whole system designed before they can bid the project.

##### **7B. Resolution – Acceptance of American Rescue Plan Act Funds**

(Document distributed at Meeting)

Mayor Bayless read the Resolution. Council Member Covington motioned to adopt the Resolution.

Council Member Sellers gave the second. The vote was 3-0.

**8. Mayoral Appointment to the Hamlet Housing Authority**

Mayor Bayless re-appointed Mr. Scott Waters to a 5-year term.

**9. Approval of Tax Releases**

Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Tax Releases. The second was offered by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 3-0.

**10. Order of Collection for Tax Collector**

Mayor Bayless read the Charge for the Tax Collector. Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Order of Collection. The second was offered by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 3-0.

**11. Approval of Annual Tax Settlement**

Mayor Bayless read the Settlement for Current Taxes for Fiscal Tax Year 2020-2021. Council Member Covington asked Finance Officer Jill Dickens if the \$1,980,455.91 was the amount billed. Ms. Dickens confirmed. Mrs. Covington inquired if the taxes billed plus the late listing penalties and interest totaling \$2,016,214.55 was the amount billed and the \$1,859,807.69 credits was the amount received. Ms. Dickens responded that was her understanding. Council Member Covington inquired on the 2020 tax collection rate. Ms. Dickens reported the rate as 94.07%.

Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Tax Settlement. The second was offered by Council Member Martin. The vote was 3-0.

**12. Discussion of City Facilities Regarding COVID**

The City Manager recommended the public wear masks in all public buildings and employees wear masks when interacting with the public or out of their department. Council Member Covington confirmed we are requiring anyone coming into the building to wear a mask. Mr. Christian confirmed. Mrs. Covington stated the City employees have worked during COVID and Council owes it to the employees to protect them. The Mayor added Council will let the Manager proceed as needed with COVID regulations.

**Other Business**

**13. City Manager's Report**

City Manager Matthew Christian stated he is excited about the USDA grant funding. He reported the City had a good turnout for soccer registration and games will begin soon. He mentioned the County has experienced a tremendous loss in Chief Clemmons and offered his appreciation to the emergency workers that assisted with the service.

**14. Comments of Council**

Council Member Covington echoed sentiments of the City Manager regarding the grant, saying financially the City needed the funds. She commended the American Legion Baseball Program and stated she was proud of the attendees. She added she hopes the City can find a way to have an exemplary field before tournaments are held there. Mrs. Covington extended sympathy to the law enforcement community and expressed appreciation to the surrounding counties that stepped up to assist, allowing the local officers to grieve.

Council Member Sellers thanked the City Manager, Mayor, Council and employees for their work. He expressed his sympathy to the community for the loss of Sheriff Clemmons and gave his condolences to the Richard Condor family. Mr. Sellers thanked Chip Gordon for bringing the Legion team back to Hamlet.

Council Member Martin concurred with other Council on their remarks of appreciation and sympathy.

**15. Mayor's Comments**

Mayor Bayless stated he has been waiting for 16 years to get something done on the Sewer Plant. He thanked Council and the Manager for their efforts. Mr. Bayless offered condolences to the Clemmons family and Condor family. The Mayor advised, as of now, the City is looking forward to the Seaboard Festival and Fair. He also said a decision needs to be made soon on the Christmas parade. Council discussed possibly having the parade on Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, if floats are available. The City Manager will check with the float company for availability of floats.

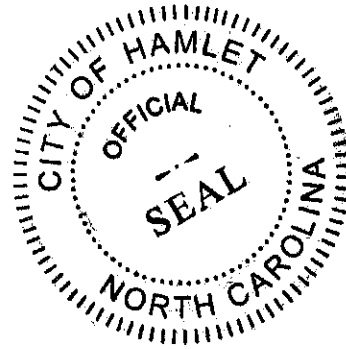
**16. Motion to Adjourn**

At 8:05 pm, Council Members Sellers and Covington provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk



**BE IT RESOLVED**

That the CITY OF HAMLET accepts the conditions set forth in a Letter of Conditions dated AUGUST 10, 2021, and RUS Bulletin 1780-27, "Loan Resolution (Public Bodies)" for the WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT EXPANSION PROJECT:

That the MAYOR AND CITY CLERK be authorized to execute all forms necessary to obtain a loan and grant from USDA Rural Development, including, but not limited to the following forms:

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| RUS Bulletin 1780-27 | Loan Resolution (Public Bodies)        |
| RUS Bulletin 1780-12 | Water and Waste System Grant Agreement |
| Form RD 1942-46      | Letter of Intent to Meet Conditions    |
| Form RD 1940-1       | Request for Obligation of Funds        |

That if the interest rate charged by USDA Rural Development should change between this date and the date of actual approval, MAYOR AND CITY CLERK be authorized to execute new forms reflecting the current interest rate and revised payments as required by USDA Rural Development.

That the CITY OF HAMLET elects to have the interest charged by USDA Rural Development to be the lower of the rate in effect at either the time of loan approval or loan closing.

That the CITY OF HAMLET hereby agrees to abide by the mitigation requirements in the Letter of Conditions.

This resolution is to become a part of the official minutes of the CITY OF HAMLET'S meeting held on AUGUST 10, 2021.

Motion made by Council Member Abbie Covington and seconded by Council Member Oscar Sellers that the resolution be approved

MOTION PASSED with 3 FOR AND 0 AGAINST

BY: William Bayless  
WILLIAM BAYLESS, MAYOR

ATTEST: August 10, 2021 BY: Gail Strickland  
(Date) GAIL STRICKLAND, CITY CLERK

