

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2021  
7:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Manager	Matthew Christian
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
IT	Zach Garner
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
Police Chief	Dennis Brown

**Others Present:** Margaret Williams, Wanda McQueen, Kendale Robinson and David McCall

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Moment of Silence**

A Moment of Silence was observed.

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

Council Member McQueen motioned to adopt the Agenda with the addition of Item Number 13A – Second Quarter Budget Amendments. The second was offered by Council Member Covington. The vote was 5-0.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the November 9, 2021 Regular and Closed Session Meetings were approved by motions of Council Members Sellers and Covington. The vote was 5-0.

**5. Comments from Attendees**

Mr. Kendale Robinson, president of HBDA, thanked the City Staff, Council and Manager for their assistance with Hamlet's Old Fashion Christmas.

Mr. Gerard Morrison had requested to be contacted by phone for Public Comments. He announced a Kwanzaa Celebration at the Hamlet Senior Center December 29<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 am – 3:30 pm, announced the John Coltrane Event will be October 2022 and wished everyone a Happy Holiday. He suggested Council look at a true representation of the citizens of Hamlet by dividing the City into districts.

**Reorganization of Board**

**6. Oaths of Office to Mayor and Re-elected Council Members**

Mayor Bayless turned the Meeting over to City Clerk Gail Strickland. Oaths were administered to re-elected Mayor Bill Bayless and re-elected Council Members Jesse McQueen and Eddie Martin.

**7. Nomination and Appointment of Mayor Pro-Tem**

Council Member Martin nominated Council Member McQueen to serve as the Mayor Pro-Tem. The second was offered by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 5-0.

**8. Appointment of Council Representative to Hamlet ABC Board**

Council Member Martin nominated Council Member Stuart to serve as the Representative to the Hamlet ABC Board. The second was offered by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 5-0.

**9. Appointments of Council Representative and Alternate to Lumber River COG**

Council Member Covington nominated Council Member Stuart to serve as Council's Representative to the Lumber River COG. The second was offered by Council Member McQueen. The vote was 5-0.

Council Member Martin nominated Council Member Sellers to serve as the Alternate to the Lumber River COG. The second was offered by Council Member McQueen. The vote was 5-0.

**New Business**

**10. Adoption of 2022 Regular Meeting Schedule**

Council Member Covington motioned to adopt the Schedule. The second was offered by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 5-0.

**11. Appointment to Hamlet Planning Board**

Council Member Covington motioned to re-appointment Mrs. Amy Guinn to the Planning Board for a 3-year term. The second was offered by Council Member Martin. The vote was 5-0.

**12. Mayoral Appointment to Hamlet Housing Authority Board**

Mayor Bayless appointed Mr. Calvin White to fill a vacancy on the Board with the term ending September 15, 2024.

**13. Approval of Tax Releases**

Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Tax Releases. The second was offered by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 5-0.

**13A. Budget Amendments**

The City Manager reported the amendments in the General Fund are primarily adjustments in the police department for filling part time positions. The amendments in the Enterprise Fund are the front end of the WWTP project. Mayor Bayless inquired on the Tsunami cameras. Police Chief Brown explained the company could no longer provide the City with the needed service. They are purchasing a pod system that the City will own. It allows 16 cameras to link to the one. Cameras can be added all over the City. The motion to approve the budget amendments was made by Council Member Covington. The Second was given by Council Member Martin. The vote was 5-0.

**Other Business**

**14. City Manager's Report**

City Manager Matthew Christian reported on several City Christmas events that were successful. He thanked the community for their support. He added Old Fashion Christmas was great and it got people into the businesses. The Manager offered thanks to the employees that have worked throughout the year. He announced the Planning Board is meeting next week to begin the development of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Announcements will be made for meetings that will engage the community. Once the plan is prepared, it will come back to Council for adoption. The timeline is 6 months.

**15. Comments of Council**

Council Member Martin offered appreciation for the cards and phone calls he received as he recovered from his surgery. He stated all of the Christmas Festivities were great. Mr. Martin announced that Post 49 held a camp with coaches from other colleges present. As a result, 2 of the players have signed with Methodist College and 2 have received offers from other colleges. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and thanked the citizens for allowing him to serve on Council another term.

Council Member Sellers thanked the City employees for the great work they do and his colleagues for the support they are giving to everyone. He asked everyone to remember the tornado victims in their thoughts and prayers and wished all a Merry Christmas.

Council Member Stuart thanked the City employees for working hard during the pandemic and thanked his colleagues for the support they offer him. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Council Member Covington welcomed Mayor Bayless and Council Members Martin and McQueen back to Council in their re-elections. She thanked everyone that had anything to do with the parade, saying there was so much commitment from the participants; everyone went above and beyond. Mrs. Covington thanked the employees for the years of commitment they have made to the City. She wished the citizens a Merry Christmas.

Council Member McQueen thanked the voters for their support and thanked Council for their confidence to re-elect him as Mayor Pro Tem. He offered thanks that the Council was able to work together to get things done. Mr. McQueen stated the parade was the highlight of 2021 for the County. He thanked the City employees that have worked during the pandemic the last 18 months. The Councilman congratulated Mayor Bayless and Council Member Martin on their re-election and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**16. Mayor's Comments**

Mayor Bayless thanked the citizens for his re-election. He advised the City has several projects ongoing. He thanked Council and the City employees for making the City run smoothly. The Mayor asked citizens to give Council a call if they have a problem. He congratulated Mechelle Preslar for her hard work on all the Christmas events. He encouraged everyone to visit the shops in Hamlet. Mr. Bayless reported donations of water and can goods for the Tornado victims are being accepted at any Fire Station through Saturday. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**17. Motion to go into Closed Session per NCGS §143-318.11 (a)(3)(6) for Attorney-Client Privilege and Personnel**

At 7:41 pm, Mayor Bayless asked for a motion to go into Closed Session for Attorney-Client Privilege and Personnel and read the Statutes. Council Member Covington provided the motion and Council Member McQueen provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

**Return to Open Session**

At 7:58 pm, Council Member Sellers provided the motion to return to Open Session and Council Member Martin provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

**Clarification of COLA**

During Closed Session, Council discussed the need to clarify the Police Department would not be included in the 2.5% Cost of Living Adjustment approved at the Special Meeting since Council approved the Police Professional Officer Certification Program. Council Member Covington provided a motion to exempt anyone from the COLA adopted earlier that is covered by the new Police Professional Officer Certification Program. The second was offered by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 5-0.

**18. Motion to Adjourn**

At 7:59 pm, Council Members Stuart and Covington provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk

