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**CITY OF HAMLET REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
HAMLET CITY HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2026
6:00 PM
Minutes**

Governing Body Present:

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

Staff Present:

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

1. Call to Order

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

2. Invocation/Moment of Silence

Pastor Quick provided the invocation.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Council Member Clewis motioned to adopt the agenda. Mayor Pro-Tem Covington provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Consent Agenda

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda. Council Member Stuart provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

5. Public Hearing for FY26-27 Annual Budget

Mayor Guinn stated that Council conducted two public work sessions, both were open to the public. The proposed budget was also discussed during the May 12 Council Meeting. She reminded attendees that comments during the Public Hearing would be limited to three minutes per speaker.

Mayor Guinn opened the floor to the Public Hearing.

Council Member Sellers inquired about the dates of the budget work sessions.

Mayor Guinn responded that the first budget work session was held on March 18, and the second was held on April 28.

Esco Latimer stated that he had reviewed the City's budgets from the previous three years and compared them to the proposed budget. He expressed concerns regarding the Depot budget and the Senior Center budget. He also questioned the salary increase for Mechelle Preslar, the increased funding requested for the Senior Center, and the reduction of \$16,000 in the Streets and Highways budget.

Pat Preslar stated that citizens have the right to request and review budget information rather than rely on speculation. He stated that employee salaries are public record and Mechelle Preslar's salary is \$70,000. He stated that she has over 25 years of municipal experience with considerable contributions to the community since she began working for the City, including the implementation and growth of events in downtown Hamlet. He expressed concern regarding misinformation being spread on social media related to the budget.

Amber Daniels inquired about animal control services within the City of Hamlet. She shared concerns regarding stray dogs in her neighborhood and uncertainty about whether to contact county animal control. She also commended Mechelle Preslar for her contributions to community events in Hamlet over the past several years. Lastly, she stated that municipal budgeting differs significantly from budgeting within a private business. Council Member Sellers responded that residents who are unable to reach county animal control may contact the City Manager or Chief of Police for assistance.

Mayor Guinn closed the Public Hearing.

6. Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget Ordinance

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington motioned to adopt the Ordinance. Council Member Sellers commented he would like the vote on the budget to be tabled for further study. The second was offered by Council Member Clewis. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor of adopting the budget as presented with Council Member Sellers abstaining from voting. ***(§ 160A-75. Voting. G.S. 160D-601, a failure to vote by a member who is physically present in the council chamber, or who has withdrawn without being excused by a majority vote of the remaining members present, shall be recorded as an affirmative vote.)**

7. Hamlet Flag Day Proclamation

Mayor Guinn read the proclamation in recognition of Flag Day.

Other Business

8. Public Comments

Mayor Guinn reminded attendees of the Rules of Decorum adopted by Council in January 2026 and emphasized that all participants conduct themselves respectfully during the meeting.

Denise Cozart expressed appreciation to the Hamlet Police Department for its efforts in addressing concerns on Spring Street. She also thanked Mr. Bloomfield and Mr. Pruitt for their work cleaning the area from Wilmington Street to Kent Street.

Esco Latimer raised concerns regarding the train derailment near the fairgrounds. He stated that he had collected a water sample from the ground and believed it may contain diesel fuel. He encouraged the City to contact CSX regarding the matter and stated that he intends to have the sample analyzed. Council Member Sellers responded that CSX is responsible for the cleanup of any spill or debris resulting from the derailment.

Gerard Morrison wished everyone a Happy Black Music Month, Happy Juneteenth, and Happy Father's Day. He encouraged the community to celebrate the diversity of musical genres and musicians during Black Music Month. He also reminded attendees of the John Coletrane Edutainment Festival, scheduled for October 3rd, and encouraged residents to celebrate and preserve Hamlet's cultural heritage, including consideration of a Heritage Trail in Hamlet.

Pat Preslar thanked Eddie Martin, Doc Sylvain, and Jerry Lamont for their efforts in preparing the baseball field for Post 49 games. He stated there was good attendance at the first game and everyone had a great time.

9. City Manager's Report

Assistant City Manager Webb provided updates on several ongoing projects. She reported that construction of the Water Treatment Plant continues to progress as planned. She also stated that bids have gone out for the City Lake Trail Project and that work on the approved portion of the City Lake Trail is expected to begin in the fall and that the City recently issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for engineering services to assist with planning and infrastructure improvements. Additionally, she reported that the 65-acre property is anticipated to close by the end of the month and that the City has received a tree grant that will support a replacement plan for trees throughout the community.

Assistant City Manager Webb also highlighted several upcoming community events, including the Crime Stoppers 2026 Summer Kickoff scheduled for June 12 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm at Hamlet Main Street Park, Food Truck Friday June 12 from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm, the Boxcar Series on July 26 featuring the Beach Fever Band, and the Independence Day Celebration with fireworks on Friday, July 3, beginning at 6:00 pm. She concluded by thanking Eddie Martin and Doc Sylvain for their hard work on preparing the Memorial Park baseball field for the Post 49 season.

10. Comments of Council

Council Member Martin thanked Doc Sylvain and Jerry Lamont for their hard work in preparing the Memorial Park baseball field for the opening game of the Post 49 season. He stated we had a great turnout for our opening game last week and stated he is looking forward to a great season.

Council Member Sellers requested that the minutes reflect his opposition to the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget. He also inquired why Maurice McLarurin had not participated in preparing the baseball field for Post 49 games, stating that the field is owned by the City of Hamlet.

Council Member Clewis inquired about the parking situation on Spring Street specifically Corning and Spring Street. Mayor Guinn responded that the City is awaiting the installation of "No Parking" signs on Spring Street. He also addressed comments made during the budget discussion, stating that during his ten years of service on Council, he had not been approached by an employee requesting a raise during the budget session. He further stated that Council approved a 2% cost-of living adjustment for all City employees in the current fiscal year. He thanked Gerard Morrison for

his comments and community involvement. He encouraged Mr. Morrison to further develop his Heritage Trail concept and present it to Council for consideration.

Council Member Stuart stated that he shares concerns regarding parking issues on Spring Street. He recognized June as Men's Mental Health Awareness Month and invited residents to participate in related community activities including joining his group, Momiles. He commented on the positive impact of music and thanked Gerard Morrison for his comments. He acknowledged Father's Day and Juneteenth, encouraging residents to learn more about the significance of Juneteenth and its place in American history. He thanked all speakers for their comments and emphasized that public participation is welcomed when conducted in a respectful manner.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington reiterated that June is a month marked by numerous community celebrations and observances, including Juneteenth, Father's Day, Men's Mental Health Awareness Month, Black Music Month, and Post 49 baseball activities. She thanked Denise Cozart for her efforts to improve Spring Street and expressed appreciation to Gerard Morrison for highlighting the importance of Black Music Month and the positive influence of music within the community.

11. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Guinn reminded citizens that Hamlet's Independence Celebration will be held on Friday, July 3rd. She stated that the Visitor Center will have 250 moon pies and Cheerwine in recognition of America's 250th anniversary, with the items being distributed by the City Council members.

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

At 6:37 pm, Council Member Clewis motioned, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Covington, to go into closed session for attorney-client privilege and personnel. The motion passed unanimously.

Return to Open Session

At 7:04 pm, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington motioned to return to Open Session, seconded by Council Member Clewis. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to appoint Assistant City Manager Webb as Interim City Manager, Council Member Martin provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Motion to Adjourn

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington motioned, seconded by Council Member Clewis to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 7:04 pm.