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**CITY OF HAMLET REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
HAMLET CITY HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2025
6:00 PM
Minutes**

Governing Body Present:

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

Staff Present:

City Manager	John Terziu
City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Clerk	Heather Hawks

Others Present: Edna Miles, Will Toler, Trey Goodwin, Esco Latimer, Linda Ross, Joe Brown, Helena Brown, Pat Preslar, Mechelle Preslar, Sean Smith, Harold Wallace, Amber Daniels, Robert Brown, James Carsto, Mary McLaurin

1. Call to Order

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

2. Invocation/Moment of Silence

Pastor Linda Ross provided the invocation.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Council Member Clewis motioned to adopt the agenda. Council Member Martin provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Consent Agenda

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

5. City Manager's Report

City Manager Terziu reported that the City of Hamlet continues to make steady progress across all areas of municipal operations, including strategic infrastructure investment, economic development, community engagement, and organizational leadership.

He provided key updates on Water and Wastewater Projects, Economic and Residential Development, Partnerships and Regional Collaboration, Community Events and Downtown Development, Organizational Culture and Leadership, Public Misinformation, Professional Engagement and Recognition, Community Engagement, and Code Enforcement and Blight Removal.

In conclusion, City Manager Terziu noted that staff morale and interdepartmental cooperation remain at record highs, and Hamlet's reputation for professionalism and teamwork continues to strengthen across the region. Community events, food trucks, and downtown engagement initiatives have energized residents, while ongoing code enforcement and blight removal efforts are transforming the city's visual landscape. Despite continued misinformation from a small number of individuals, Hamlet remains committed to transparency, integrity, and tangible progress for its citizens.

New Business

6. City Lake Trail Decision Point

City Manager Terziu stated with the remaining ARPA funds of \$200,000 he recommends focusing on extending the west side of the trail due to time constraints. This will be a multi-year project that will take place in phases and as a federally funded grant, it must adhere to strict deadlines for expenditure.

Council Member Clewis inquired if the project includes lighting.

City Manager Terziu stated the funds are for the trail only.

Council Member Martin made a motion to accept City Manager Terziu's suggestion to focus on extending the west side of the trail, Mayor Pro Tem Covington provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Consider Certification Policy

City Manager Terziu, along with Benita Mullis, presented a new Certification Policy outlining the process for employees to receive a 2.5% to 5% salary increase upon completion of specific certifications. The certifications must be approved by Department Heads, and final approval will require the City Manager's signature.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to accept the Certification Policy and Council Member Martin provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Consider Conveyance of City-Owned Real Property to Habitat for Humanity

City Manager Terziu proposed the sale of six city-owned parcels to Habitat for Humanity of the Sandhills, a topic discussed at the previous council meeting. He stated that the partnership would present a valuable opportunity for the City of Hamlet to collaborate with Habitat for Humanity in bringing affordable housing to the community. He requested council approval to sell the parcels at their current tax value.

Council Member Clewis made a motion for the city to sale six parcels to Habitat for Humanity of the Sandhills at their

current tax value, Mayor Pro-Tem provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Consider Exchange of Surplus Police Vehicles

City Manager Terziu stated Chief Carsto requested the replacement of four surplus 2022 Ford Maverick vehicles with two 2025 Ford Explorer Police Pursuit SSV vehicles, as discussed at last month's meeting. A public notice was placed in the newspaper; however, no bids were received. He stated we have two options: Option 1 - Trade in four vehicles and pay off two new vehicles. Option 2 - Trade in four vehicles for four new vehicles and finance the balance, which would require \$65,000 upfront from the current police budget and an additional \$22,000 per year for three years.

Mayor Guinn confirmed that the difference represents the financing loan, which City Manager Terziu affirmed.

Council Member Stuart inquired whether the trade-in would occur directly through the dealership. City Manager Terziu confirmed this.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington clarified that Option Two involved trading in four vehicles and receiving four in return. City Manager Terziu confirmed this.

Council Member Sellers stated he is in favor of option two, four for four.

City Manager Terziu explained that the current Ford Mavericks are not pursuit-rated, and most have nearly 100,000 miles on them.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked about the cost to outfit each new police vehicle.

City Manager Terziu estimated approximately \$10,000 per vehicle.

Council Member Sellers asked what option the City Manager recommends.

City Manager Terziu stated he recommends option two.

Council Member Stuart asked which option Chief Carsto recommends.

Chief Carsto also recommended option two, stating it would be more cost-effective in the long run.

Council Member Clewis noted that the city would receive \$19,500 for each Maverick on trade-in, which he described as an excellent return.

Council Member Martin made a motion for Option 2 with police vehicles allowing the trade-in of four Ford Mavericks for four Ford Explorers, with financing of the difference over four years, Council Member Stuart provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

10. Public Comments

Esco Latimer addressed the council, expressing concern about misconceptions circulating in the community regarding his past. He stated that such misinformation could affect his ability to see his daughter. Council Member Sellers inquired about the outcome of his previous charges. Mr. Latimer stated the charges were dismissed. He also asked when the new

water plant would be operational. He stated he requested that residents receive water testing kits and asked what measures would be taken if similar water issues occur in the future. City Manager Terziu stated Water Treatment Plant renovations are set to begin in January or February 2026.

Sean Smith stated that the Town Manager had not been present for the past four to six weeks. He also asked whether the investigation regarding the sexual harassment allegations would be reopened. City Attorney Morphis responded that personnel matters are not discussed in open session.

Helena Brown asked if streets would be reopened in time for the Seaboard Festival.

Dr. Amber Daniels commended Maurice for an excellent soccer season and for ensuring the safety of the children. She thanked City Manager Terziu for helping relocate soccer games to safer fields and expressed appreciation for Mayor Guinn and Council Member Stuart's attendance at the John Coltrane Festival. Dr. Daniels also announced that the Girl Scouts Fall Sale is underway and encouraged community support.

Pat Preslar asked requested permission to plant shrubs at the Veterans Memorial on Boyd Lake Road. Council Member Clewis made a motion for Pat Preslar to plant Shrubs at the Veterans Memorial on Boyd Lake Road, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Comments of Council

Council Member Martin had no comments.

Council Member Sellers thanked all attendees and gave special recognition to Mechelle Preslar for her efforts in bringing the mural to the Birmingham building. He also thanked election candidates for attending the meeting and wished them success.

Council Member Clewis emphasized that Facebook should be used responsibly. He encouraged residents to make Hamlet a place where everyone can live and thrive. He addressed Mr. Latimer's comments, noting that with approximately 4,500 customers, if water testing kits cost \$^ each, the total expense to the City would be about \$27,000. He also shared that a state representative had tested the city's water and confirmed it was safe. He mentioned the road behind Fairview Heights School that requires patching and apologized for missing the John Coletrane Festival due to illness. He reminded everyone that early voting starts October 16th and voting locations have changed.

Council Member Stuart reiterated that early voting begins October 16 and encouraged all residents to vote early.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington also encouraged early voting, emphasizing the importance of participation, and invited everyone to attend the Seaboard Festival on October 25.

12. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Guinn reminded everyone that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and highlighted the importance of early detection. Council Member Stuart added that everyone has been touched by breast cancer in some way and encouraged continued awareness and support for prevention efforts.

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

At 6:52 pm, Council Member Clewis motioned, seconded by Council Member Martin, to go into closed session for attorney-client privilege and personnel. The motion passed unanimously.

Return to Open Session

At 8:00 pm, Council Member Clewis motioned to return to Open Session, seconded by Council Member Stuart. The motion passed unanimously.

14. Motion to Adjourn

Council Member Clewis motioned, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Covington to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 8:00 pm.