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**CITY OF HAMLET REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
HAMLET CITY HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, JANUARY 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	Maurice Stuart
Council Member	Tony Clewis

Staff Present:

Assistant City Manager	Mackenzie Webb
City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Clerk	Heather Hawks

Others Present: Esco Latimer, Jimmy Strickland, Mary McLaurin, Tommy Legrand, Gerard Morrison, Jonathan Hill

1. Call to Order

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

2. Invocation/Moment of Silence

Pastor Tommy Legrand offered the Invocation.

3. Adoption of Agenda

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

4. Consent Agenda

Council Member Clewis made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda, Council Member Martin provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Comments from Attendees

Esco Latimer thanked Council for his recent appointment to the Planning Board. He thanked Officer Dalton Millen for his hard work on code enforcement. He stated he has reviewed our comprehensive plan online and we need to enforce things like cars parking in the fire lane at Food Lion to be consistent with the plan. Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked City Attorney Morphis if police can issue citations on private property. City Attorney Morphis stated citizens can be cited for parking in fire lanes because it violates our ordinance.

Gerard Morrison stated we need a district representative system put in place. He also would like to see board membership more diverse in Hamlet. He mentioned our Strategic Plan and wants to see it executed this year and would like to see better communication with citizens.

Johathan Hill would like to see a no kill shelter for animals in Hamlet and asked for guidance on how to get that started. Mayor Pro-Tem Covington stated the shelter in Rockingham has a strong foster program in place and Moore County has an established no kill shelter that might could give guidance. She also stated Richmond County Humane Society would be a good resource. Council Member Clewis said to also check with Tessie Caulder on what it would take to start a no kill shelter.

Greg Shelly stated he thinks it would be a good idea to have a sign at the Depot with phone numbers of taxi services, the Police Department and the Fire Department. This would be for travelers who ride the Amtrack train and arrive during early morning hours needing a point of contact.

New Business

6. Honor Retirees

Mayor Guinn presented Gary Blue and Danny Nesbitt with plaques honoring their years of service with the City of Hamlet, thanking them for their commitment and dedication.

7. Martin Luther King Jr. Proclamation

Mayor Guinn read the proclamation honoring Martin Luther King Jr.

8. Renaming of North Bridges Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Street

Mayor Guinn opened the floor for public comments to rename North Bridges Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Street (from N. Bridges and Main to N. Bridges and Hwy 74).

Reverend Legrand asked if the re-naming could run all the way to Gin Mill Road. Council Member Stuart asked Rev. Legrand to help him talk to residents in the area about the change. Reverend Legrand agreed to help if they decided to proceed with extending it to Gin Mill Road.

Helena Brown from Saint Peters United Methodist Church stated the street being renamed would not include their church. She also mentioned she would like to see Dr. King honored in a more visible way possibly 177 being renamed.

Mary McLaurin asked why North Bridges Street was chosen because it is not visible or well-traveled. She stated she nor her family want to see it changed to Martin Luther King Jr. Street.

Council Member Stuart stated other families may feel the same way, but the MLK signage would make it special and visible to travelers and residents passing on Main St. and HWY 74.

Reverend Legrand asked if lighting and sidewalks could be added to the street to improve the appearance.

Gerard Morrison suggested renaming a park to honor Dr. King, possibly one near the John Coltrane artwork in downtown Hamlet.

Mayor Guinn closed the public hearing.

Council Member Stuart made a motion to rename North Bridges Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Street, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Covington. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

9. Comments of Council

Council Member Martin wished everyone a Happy New Year and stated baseball season will be here before we know it.

Council Member Stuart stated there will be a series of events this weekend sponsored by the MLK Foundation. He encouraged citizens to attend the festivities that will end with a luncheon on Monday to celebrate the life of Martin Luther King Jr.

Council Member Sellers wished everyone a safe and healthy New Year and thanked attendees for coming to the meeting.

Council Member Clewis wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked the citizens for attending and their input.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington congratulated Gary Blue and Danny Nesbitt on their retirement and commitment to the City of Hamlet stating they have been excellent employees. She also thanked the citizens for their comments stating the Council listens, but sometimes there isn't an answer that everyone likes. She also mentioned our new City Manager will be starting soon and we are looking forward to a great year.

10. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Guinn wished everyone a Happy New Year and encouraged everyone to take part in the festivities going on this weekend in celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

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

At 7:00 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 7:21 pm, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington motioned to return to Open Session, seconded by Council Member Clewis. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Motion to Adjourn

Council Member Sellers motioned, seconded by Council Member Clewis to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 7:21 pm.