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**CITY OF HAMLET REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
HAMLET CITY HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 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:

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

Others Present:

1. Call to Order

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

2. Invocation/Moment of Silence

Pastor Larry Frye provided the invocation.

3. Adoption of Agenda

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

4. Consent Agenda

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

5. Audit Presentation

Ken Anderson presented the audit report, noting that the report was good overall and all figures had been verified. He stated the City of Hamlet carries no debt, which he attributed to strong budgeting practices. He further reported that the property tax collection rate – excluding vehicle taxes – was 94.51% as of June 30, 2025. This is a one-year collection, but the City continues to collect over a 10-year period. The life of the tax levy is somewhere over 99%.

He gave key updates:

- The City received an unmodified opinion on the June 30, 2025, Financial Statements which is considered a favorable audit outcome.
- For the General Fund Balance, the current year expenditures exceeded revenues by \$345,509.00.
- For the Enterprise Fund Balance, the current year revenues exceeded expenditures by \$107,612.00.
- The City had no budget over-expenditures.
- The City was subject to a single audit during the audit. American Rescue Plan Act Funds were expended within three different funds this year. The ARPA Fund, Water System Improvements Capital Project, and the Stormwater System AIA Capital Project, totaling \$1,281,991.00. He stated no compliance issues were identified.
- The Audit Report was submitted to the Local Government Commission and was accepted.
- One new announcement is for this year; we had to start accruing sick leave.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked whether Mr. Anderson had ever encountered a situation in which city funds were misappropriated.

Mr. Anderson shared that in his 20 years auditing the City of Hamlet, he had encountered one instance many years ago when a Senior Center employee used a City credit card for personal purchases. The issue was discovered, and the employee was terminated.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked whether adequate checks and balances are in place within the City.

Mr. Anderson confirmed that checks and balances are in place and are essential to preventing such issues.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington then asked Mr. Anderson to explain how grant funding works within a municipality.

Mr. Anderson explained that the City currently has several major grants underway. He outlined that grant-funded projects involve multiple steps, and the state remains involved throughout the process. He stated once the engineer is approved to oversee the project, they work with the state through the entire process. He emphasized that grants operate on a reimbursement basis and that no funds are provided upfront.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington noted that accusations had been made regarding how grants and City funds were being spent and this was the reason she asked Mr. Anderson to explain the process more clearly.

Council Member Clewis asked whether any issues discovered during the audit would be reported to the state.

Mr. Anderson confirmed that any findings would indeed be reported and would need to be addressed.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked if we had any findings in the audit.

Mr. Anderson stated we had a performance indicator, same as last year, regarding the aging water system. Once the new assets are in place, it should be resolved.

6. City Manager's Report

City Manager Terziu highlighted 2025 for the City of Hamlet. He stated in 11 months, the City of Hamlet executed a historic turnaround, reviving stalled infrastructure projects, stabilizing finances, strengthening public safety, modernizing internal systems, accelerating downtown revitalization, and securing unprecedented external investment.

He stated Hamlet delivered more infrastructure progress, professional system modernization, public safety stabilization, and community revitalization than had been achieved in the prior decade combined. These outcomes reflect a government focused on accountability, disciplined execution, fiscal responsibility, transparency, and long-term strategic planning. Hamlet enters 2026 with the strongest financial and operational footing in many years.

He stated the results achieved in 2025 belong to the department heads, frontline employees, first responders, operators, inspectors, administrators, maintenance crews, and every staff member who showed up daily, often under immense pressure, and refused to accept mediocrity as the standard. They are the ones who carried out the plans, answered the calls, ran the equipment, wrote the grants, enforced the codes, kept our utilities flowing, protected our neighborhoods, and served our residents.

He stated his role was to remove barriers, to restore professionalism, to empower leaders, and to strive for excellence. He wanted to give this team freedom, trust, and structure to perform at the level they always were capable of reaching.

He stated the 2026 strategic priorities focus on accelerating revenue growth, completing critical infrastructure investments, advancing public safety, and modernizing zoning to sustain long-term economic expansion.

Reorganization of Board

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

City Clerk Hawks issued oaths to Mayor Guinn, Council Member Clewis, and Council Member Martin.

8. Reappointment of Council Representative to Hamlet ABC Board

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to reappoint Council Member Stuart to the Hamlet ABC Board, Council Member Clewis provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Reappointment of Council Representative to Lumber River COG

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to reappoint Council Member Stuart to the Lumber River COG, Council Member Sellers provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

10. Adoption of 2026 Regular Meeting Schedule

City Manager Terziu stated he added in Budget Work Sessions to the 2026 Regular Meeting Schedule.

Council Member Stuart inquired if the Budget Work Sessions would be on Tuesdays.

City Manager Terziu responded not all of the Budget Work Sessions would be on Tuesdays.

Council Member Stuart made a motion to adopt the 2026 Regular Meeting Schedule; Mayor Pro-Tem Covington provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Public Hearing No. 1 – Conditional Zoning District for 234 Battley Dairy Rd.

Mary and William Snider, the owners of property located at 234 Battley Dairy Rd (Tax Map 748103139746) has filed a request to implement a conditional zoning district for the parcel from I-1 Light Industrial to CZ-25-01 Conditional Zoning District. Under this conditional zoning district, all uses under I-1 will remain permitted with the additional uses of “multifamily dwelling”, “recreational vehicle parks or campsites”, and “warehouse”. The “multifamily dwelling” refers to plans to use the front portion of the existing building as an apartment for the owner. The “RV park or campsite” use refers to plans to use the site for private temporary residences for the owner’s employees. The site will not be open to the public. The “warehouse” use is the current existing non-conforming use of the property and will act as storage for contracting work, bringing structure into conformity. Under conditional zoning districts, the planning board also has to right to set conditions upon the property such as buffering between the property and surrounding residential properties.

Assistant City Manager Webb stated the Planning Board unanimously approved this rezoning.

Mayor Guinn opened the public hearing.

Council Member Stuart asked City Manager Terziu his opinion.

City Manager Terziu responded he talked to neighbors of the property, and they would like to see it be redeveloped with someone using the property.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington inquired what the life span is for conditional zoning.

City Manager Terziu responded it can be amended at any time making it flexible.

City Attorney Morphis stated if the property owners would like to change it in the future it would need to come back to council for review.

Mayor Guinn Closed the public hearing.

Council Member Sellers made a motion to adopt the required Consistency Statement finding that the proposed zoning map amendment for 234 Battley Dairy Road is consistent with the City of Hamlet Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan, Council Member Martin provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Stuart made a motion to approve the rezoning of 234 Battley Dairy Road from I-1 Light Industrial to CZ-25-01 Conditional Zoning District, Council Member Clewis provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Public Hearing No. 2 – Rezoning 1416 Hylan Ave.

Chris Haur, the representative of Ferrofab, the owners of property located at 1416 Hylan Ave (Tax Map 748103139746) has filed a rezoning request to rezone the parcel from I-1 Light Industrial to B-3 Neighborhood Business. Please note that this rezoning request is not for the entire parcel, but rather the front portion of the property that has been subdivided prior to the planning board meeting.

Assistant City Manager Webb stated the Planning Board approved this rezoning with one member in opposition.

Attorney Riana Smith stated the property is 1.59 acres that would be subdivided, and they are asking for it to be rezoned from I-1 Light Industrial to B-3 Neighborhood Business. It will be a commercial building that sells food and various household items. She stated it will be a less intensive use by going from Light Industrial to Neighborhood Business. She stated she has spoken with DOT and gotten approval based on the area. It would generate revenue in Hamlet also providing jobs. Lastly, we believe it is consistent with your Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Plan.

Mayor Guinn opened the public hearing.

Casey Cranford stated that she lives directly across from the lot being considered for rezoning from Light Industrial to Small Business and is here on behalf of many neighbors who share the same concerns. She stated they are not anti-development and are not trying to hold back progress in Hamlet. She stated they support responsible growth. But are strongly oppose this specific rezoning because it places a commercial business directly in front of our homes in a way that harms our safety, property values, and quality of life. She stated her main concerns are increased crime, traffic, and their property value decreasing. If the lot must be rezoned, we ask Council to consider rezoning to residential, which is much more compatible with the surrounding homes and safer for our families. She stated we love our neighborhood, and we want to protect it. She urged Council to consider the real safety risks, the traffic impact, and the effect on our property values — all supported by Hamlet's own crime and housing data. She thanked Council for listening and for their service to our community. She stated we are happy to meet, answer questions, or walk the site with any Council Members.

Christian Chavis stated that she also lives across from Ferrofab and her primary concerns include increased traffic on Hylan Avenue, safety related to higher traffic volumes, and decreasing property values. She noted that her home was shot into on July 4th and state that placing a business across from her residence raises additional safety concerns for her children.

Mayor Guinn closed the public hearing.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to adopt the required Consistency Statement finding the zoning map amendment for 1416 Hylan Avenue is consistent with the City of Hamlet Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan, Council Member Clewis provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Sellers made a motion to deny the rezoning of the front portion of 1416 Hylan Avenue from I-1 Light Industrial to B-3 Neighborhood Business, Council Member Stuart provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Public Hearing No. 3 – Rezoning 493 N Hwy 177

Richard Bledsoe, the owner of property located at 493 N Hwy 177 (Tax Map 749204539407) has filed a rezoning request

to rezone the parcel from RA-20 Residential Agriculture to B-2 General Business. The neighboring parcel also owned by Bledsoe was re-zoned B-2 a few months prior.

Assistant City Manager Webb stated the Planning Board unanimously approved this rezoning.

Mayor Guinn opened the public hearing.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington inquired if this was the second parcel of property abutting the previous rezoning we approved last month.

Assistant City Manager Webb responded that is correct.

Mayor Guinn closed the public hearing.

Council Member Stuart made a motion to adopt the Consistency Statement finding the zoning map amendment for 493 North Highway 177 is consistent with the City of Hamlet Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to approve the rezoning of 493 North Highway 177 from RA_20 Residential Agriculture to B-2 General Business, Council Member Clewis provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

14. Discussion: Fence at Buttercup Field

City Manager Terziu stated we received a quote to replace the fence that was torn down at Buttercup Field. The quote included installing 630 feet of 6-foot-high galvanized chain-link fencing at a cost of \$14,123.00, which includes concrete and labor.

Council Member Stuart inquired how many times the fence has been replaced.

Doc Sylvain responded that the fence has been replaced numerous times.

Council Member Stuart asked for the opinion of Parks and Rec Director Maurice McLaurin regarding the replacement.

City Manager Terziu stated he will follow up with Director McLaurin for his input.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked whether cameras are installed at Buttercup Field.

City Manager Terziu confirmed that cameras are in place.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington expressed concern about the cost and emphasized the importance of being responsible with taxpayer dollars. She recommended obtaining multiple quotes.

Mayor Guinn asked whether the current quote was for a 6-foot fence.

City Manager Terziu clarified that it was and suggested gathering estimated for various fence heights to compare options.

Council Member Stuart stated his appreciation for bringing the matter before Council and reiterated his belief that a fence is necessary at Buttercup Field.

Council Member Sellers stated he has spent many hours at Buttercup Field, and he believes it is an asset.

Council Member Clewis agreed that additional bids are needed for an informed decision.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to get more bids on different height fences and bring back to Council in January, Council Member Clewis provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

15. Public Comments

Mr. Latimer asked about ARPA Funds and how much money is left. He stated we've had 7 years since Matt Christian was here, and the Lake Trail should have been finished by now. He stated the grants and budget online only shows \$19,000.00 for grants. He stated he is still working on the Hamlet Senior Center IT program for Senior Citizens and installed cameras for a resident recently. Lastly, he stated he is still picking up trash and cleaning up along Hwy 74.

Mr. Smith stated he missed Council Member Stuart after being absent from the last two meetings. He inferred that Council Member Stuart had been absent on purpose in light of the issues involving Esco Latimer and the Planning Board. He stated Mayor Pro-Tem Covington had violated protocols by appointing City Manager Terziu without Council approval, by rejecting his resignation and allowing him to live outside of Hamlet, and by firing our Police Chief. He stated he believes the City is paying for the degree that John is obtaining from UNC but doesn't have any proof of it. He stated he began his day at the Moore County Detention Center, and he went to the Courthouse where the clerk identified John Terziu's son's attorney.

City Attorney Morphis informed Mr. Smith this is not pertaining to City business and cannot be discussed. (Mr. Smith continued to talk over City Attorney Morphis). (Mayor Guinn called for order in the meeting).

City Attorney Morphis informed Mr. Smith that he was not allowed to discuss public official's children in in public at this time. He stated Mr. Smith was out of line and could criticize elected officials, but he is not allowed to bring in people's families during public comment time.

City Manager Terziu addressed Mr. Smith about his comments and Mr. Smith proceeded to yell "Ass Clown" at City Manager Terziu across the room.

Chief Carsto reminded Mr. Smith to watch his language during the meeting.

Council Member Clewis responded to Mr. Smith that Council did not take Mr. Latimer off the Planning Board, Mr. Latimer did that to himself. Secondly, he stated there no checks being written to UNC. He informed Mr. Smith to keep his name off social media and not to speak about him in the future. Council Member Clewis apologized for stooping to Mr. Smith's level.

Don Norton stated he has called about certain issues and asked if there is a time limit on things getting done. He stated one issue was cars being parked on Spring Street. He stated Mr. Clewis talked about Nebo Church last month and he felt like he was making fun of the church.

Council Member Clewis responded that he went to the service at Nebo Church and it was wonderful that the church has been around 225 years. He stated that church helped sculpt Hamlet and he absolutely was not making fun of Nebo Church.

Amber Daniels thanked Council for the discussion on repairing the fence at Buttercup Field. She asked if there was a possibility for the speed limit to be lowered on 177 because of a history of reckless drivers speeding in that area.

Council Member Stuart responded to Mr. Smith's comments stating he didn't appreciate being looped into any issues Mr. Smith has with anyone in the room. He stated he is a caretaker for his mother, and this is why he was absent from the last two meetings.

16. Comments of Council

Council Member Martin commended City Manager Terziu for his involvement in the City of Hamlet for a job well done.

Council Member Sellers thanked all attendees for coming and wished everyone a safe Holiday.

Council Member Clewis addressed comments made during the meeting, stating that bullying can be defined as highlighting an inconsistency that a person has in their own life. He apologized for allowing the discussion to escalate and stated that he would follow up with Don Norton regarding the issue raised. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Council Member Stuart thanked all City employees, the Police Department, and Fire Department for their hard work throughout the month. He noted the Christmas Tree Lighting and Christmas Parade were wonderful events and wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Happy Kwanza.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington thanked employees and volunteers for their efforts in coordinating City events, including the Christmas Tree Lighting and Parade. She wished everyone a safe and Happy Christmas.

17. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Guinn thanked employees for the wonderful events this December. She thanked the City Manager for his report and his effective budgeting. She wished everyone a safe Holiday and Happy New Year.

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

At 7:49 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 8:18 pm, Council Member Sellers motioned to return to Open Session, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Covington. The motion passed unanimously.

19. Motion to Adjourn

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington motioned, seconded by Council Member Sellers to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 8:18 pm.