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

Staff Present:

City Manager	John Terziu
Assistant City Mgr.	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

Mayor Guinn called for a moment of silence.

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 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 stated the City of Hamlet continues to move forward across every area of municipal operations, strategic infrastructure investment, economic development, community engagement, and organizational leadership.

In conclusion, The City of Hamlet continues to move forward with purpose and measurable results. We are advancing critical infrastructure, strengthening public safety, modernizing our development codes, and forming partnerships that bring outside expertise and resources into our community. Total grant funding secured is \$21,989,000 (excluding USDA loan support). In addition, the City has secured an approved USDA low-interest loan in the amount of \$11,559,000. Together, these investments total \$33,548,000 and clearly demonstrate the City of Hamlet's unwavering commitment to accountability, transparency, and dedication. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient Hamlet – one that honors our past, delivers in the present, and prepares for the future.

City Manager Terziu read a message honoring those that lost their lives or loved ones on September 11, 2001.

New Business

6. National Senior Citizen Month Proclamation

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington read the proclamation honoring older Americans and recognizing September as National Senior Center Month.

7. Proclamation for Constitution Week

Mayor Guinn read the proclamation urging all citizens to reflect on the privilege of being an American in honor of Constitution week, September 17 – September 23, 2025.

8. Water/Wastewater Updates

Adam Kiker gave an update on our Water Plant Rehabilitation which will include a new filter building with three new filters, controls, and instrumentation, two new concrete storage tanks to replace the two existing tanks, and chemical feed changes to improve water quality. The project has bid, permit issued, and construction activities should begin early 2026.

Adam also gave an update on our Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion which will include expansion from 1.0 to 2.0 MGD, motivated by capacity challenges experienced 2018-2021. This expansion will be funded primarily by USDA Rural Development which will include a USDA Loan in the amount of \$11,569,000 and a USDA Grant in the amount of \$6,000,000. The new discharge permit has been issued, design is almost complete, and construction permitting will start by the end of 2025.

Hamlet received \$4,925,000 in grant funds from 2023 state budget to be used for water and sewer projects. Planned uses will be toward the budget shortfall for the water plant project in the amount of \$3,429,885 and toward budget shortfall for the sewer plant project in the amount of \$1,495,115. Other water and sewer pipeline projects have been considered and will depend on the budget for the water plant project.

Hamlet received \$300,000 in grant funding in the spring of 2025 to perform inventory and assessment studies which includes \$150,000 for water systema and \$150,000 for sewer system. Each of these requires a 5% match by the city.

Council Member Sellers asked if employees would be trained on the new equipment.

Adam Kiker stated employees will be trained on all new equipment.

Mayor Guinn asked if it includes inside and outside the water plant.

Adam Kiker stated it includes both and overall, Hamlet received over \$21 million dollars in grants, which is wonderful.

9. Habitat for Humanity Properties

Farrah Newman, the Deputy Executive Director with Habitat Humanity, showed a Pinckney Construction Pathways Program video. She stated that the home buyers they support help support towns and cities typically in the service industry. She added it would be a great opportunity for the City of Hamlet and a wonderful partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

Council Member Stuart asked what price range encapsulates affordable housing, in her opinion

She stated they base their homes on 30-80% of the person's income and guarantee an affordable mortgage.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington stated she thinks this is a phenomenal idea and asked what the potential capacity is.

Farrah Newman stated she has picked out 6 parcels she is interested in. She thinks it is smart to build inside a city where water, sewer and roads are already in place.

Council Member Martin asked if it will be one home per lot.

Farrah Newman stated yes, single family detached with a yard.

Mayor Guinn stated it's a wonderful program and the homeowners are very appreciative to get these homes.

City Manager Terziu stated this is only information at this point, no motion is in order, however, we have several possibilities.

10. Resolution to accept NC DEQ Appropriations Act Funding

The City of Hamlet continues to pursue strategic investment in its water and wastewater infrastructure to ensure reliable, safe and compliant service for residents and businesses. In 2023, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted Session Law 2023-134, which allocated Directed Project funding through DEQ for local government infrastructure needs. The city submitted an application detailing multiple critical system improvements. DEQ has formally awarded Hamlet \$4,925,000 in grant funds to support these projects, eliminating the need for additional local borrowing or rate increases to cover these costs.

Council Member Stuart clarified we don't have to match it.

City Manager Terziu stated that is correct.

Council Member Clewis made a motion to adopt the resolution accepting the NC Department of Environmental Quality Appropriations Act Directed Projects Grant in the amount of \$4,925,000 and authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington provided the second. The motion passed 4 to 1 with Council Member

Sellers in opposition.

11. Bledsoe Rezoning

Assistant City Manager Webb stated Richard Bledsoe, the owner of property located at 493 N Hwy 177 (Tax Map 749204630558) has filed a rezoning request to rezone the parcel from RA-20 Residential Agriculture to B-2 General Business. The Planning Board met in August and recommended to approve the rezoning.

Mayor Guinn read the statement submitted by Mr. Richard Bledsoe requesting a re-zoning of the property.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to open the public hearing, Council Member Clewis provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Sellers asked how a property would be useful if it was covered in wetland.

City Manager Terziu stated the question was not relevant to the Bledsoe rezoning.

Council Member Sellers stated fine, have your way.

Esco Latimer commented on the rezoning stating he believes this is spot zoning and goes against our comprehensive plan. He also believes Mr. Bledsoe should include the parcel beside it.

Council Member Stuart asked if Mr. Latimer voted against it in the Planning Board Meeting last month.

Esco Latimer stated he did vote in opposition.

Council Member Clewis asked if this parcel is in our ETJ.

Assistant City Manager Webb stated that is correct and our zoning map and future land use map goes out to the ETJ. It's an area that supports this transitional neighborhood commercial activity as a corridor into the city.

City Manager Terziu clarified that Mr. Latimer's statement about the property being spot zoning is inaccurate according to General Statute §160 -D.

City Attorney Morphis stated even if the parcel isn't in line with the comprehensive plan the board can still vote to rezone it.

Mayor Guinn moved to close the public hearing, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington provided the second, the motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Clewis made a motion to adopt a statement of consistency for parcel PID 749204630558, finding that the proposed rezoning from RA-20 to B-2 is consistent with the hamlet Comprehensive Plan and promotes reasonable, orderly, and beneficial growth in accordance with the City's adopted policies, Mayor Pro-Tem provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Clewis made a motion to rezone parcel PID 749204630558 from RA-20 to B-2, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Potential Sale of Hamlet Property, PID: 749113049020

Assistant City Manager Webb stated the City has received interest for a parcel of city-owned property identified as Parcel ID: 749113049020, an approximately 2,500 sq ft lot. The parcel is land-locked, surrounded by properties on Front St. and Hamlet Ave with access to a service road. The property is vacant and zoned Central Business (B-1). The property has a tax value of \$2,327. Pursuant to NCGS 160A-269, if the City Council chooses to proceed, the upset bid process must be initiated.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked how selling the property would affect the service road.

Mayor Guinn asked if the access road crosses the property.

Assistant Manager Webb stated the road crosses the property but not completely.

City Manager Terziu stated we could adopt an easement, but he wanted council to make the decision. If he is wanting the property for long-term parking, we could lease it to him.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked who owns the adjacent lot.

Assistant City Manager Webb stated the church on East Hamlet Avenue, and they also own the small parcel next to it.

City Attorney Morphis stated it looks like it started out as a public right-of-way and became a parcel.

Council Member Martin stated we need to make sure it doesn't interfere with the access road.

Council Member Clewis stated we need to find out what they want to use it for and then decide.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington stated we need more information from the buyer and then make a decision next month.

Mayor Pro-Tem made a motion to defer consideration on the sale of the property for staff to do more research, Council Member Clewis provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Memorial Baseball Filed Spring Turf Management

City Manager Terziu stated we are requesting Council approval of a budget amendment to allocate funds in the current fiscal year for the annual turf management of Memorial (Legion) Field, and to recommend a directive that this funding be incorporated into the City's annual operating budget until such time as Council formally acts to discontinue it. He continued Memorial Field is a central community asset, hosting youth sports, school athletics, civic gatherings, and regional tournaments. Due to its high use and exposure, consistent professional turf maintenance is required to ensure the field remains safe, playable, and visually representative of the community. Hodges Lawn & Landscape, Inc. provided a formal estimate dated August 18, 2025, for comprehensive turf management services totaling \$18,880 per year.

Council Member Stuart asked if this was new turf or maintenance.

City Manager Terziu stated its maintenance.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington suggested leasing the field in the future for tournaments to recoup some of our costs.

Council Member Stuart made a motion that the City Council adopt the budget amendment to appropriate \$18,880 for turf management services at Memorial field for the current fiscal year and further direct the City Manager to continue

including this funding in each annual budget until such time as the Council issues a formal directive to discontinue it, Council Member Sellers provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

14. Hamlet Police Department Vehicles

Chief Carsto stated the Hamlet Police Department seeks to professionalize and bring uniformity to its fleet by replacing four surplus 2022 Maverick vehicles with two 2025 Ford Explorer Police Pursuit SSV Vehicles. The Ford Explorers are pursuit-rated SUVs specifically designed for law enforcement duty cycles. They provide greater durability, improved officer safety, more space for equipment, and better performance in emergency response. He then presented 3 options with option 2 as his preference.

Council Member Stuart asked if the company maintains the cars through the lease option.

Chief Carsto stated they have the 3-year or 36,000 miles bumper to bumper or 5-year 100,000 miles warranty. Otherwise, we would maintain oil changes and basic maintenance on them. We would save \$80,000 because of the trade-in value on these vehicles.

Mayor Guinn asked how many Police Officers we currently have on staff.

Chief Carsto stated 12 to 13. He stated they are working on recruiting a few officers currently.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington asked if we would surplus all four Mavericks.

City Manager Terziu stated we would surplus all four. This is a motion to go through the ten-day public notice and then we would move forward.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion for City Council to direct staff to publish the required ten-day public notice of intent to exchange/sell surplus police vehicles, as outlined in NC. General Statute §160A-271, with Council to consider adoption of the resolution at its October 14, 2025, regular meeting, Council Member Martin provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

15. Hamlet Police Department Sidearm Retirement

City Manager Terziu stated Captain Norris has honorably served the Hamlet Police Department for 3 years and 7 months and will retire effective November 1, 2025, with 28 total years of service. N.C.G.S. §20-187.2 grants municipalities the discretion to award a retiring officer their service sidearm either at fair market value or for the ceremonial value of \$1. It is a longstanding tradition in North Carolina to honor retiring officers in this manner as a symbol of appreciation for their dedication and sacrifice.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion that the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2025-19, authorizing the sale of a service sidearm, specifically a (Glock 36 Serial #BYZH540), to retiring Police Officer, Captain Matthew Norris for the ceremonial sum of one dollar (\$1.00), pursuant to N.C.G.S. §20-187.2, Council Member Martin provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

16. Road Closure for Seaboard 5k

Mechelle Preslar stated the 41st Annual Seaboard 5K will be on Saturday, October 25, 2025. For the safety of the runners and spectators, McDonald Avenue, between Rice Street and Austin Street, will be closed from 6:00 AM until 10:00 AM on Saturday, October 25, 2025.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2025-20 where the city agrees to close McDonald Avenue, between Rice Street and Austin Street, on October 25, 2025, between the hours of 6:00 AM until 10:00 AM, Council Member Sellers provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

17. National Railroad Static Display

Mechelle Preslar stated the National Railroad Museum and Hall of Fame, Inc ("Museum") owns an Engine 1114 and Caboose 5241 that are presently located on real property at Main Street Park, Hamlet, NC that is owned by the City of Hamlet. The City and the Museum entered into a 25-year agreement on July 23, 2012, that stated the Museum would allow the engine and caboose to be opened to the viewing public at the City's said real property during regular business hours. The Museum board met on June 15, 2025, and voted to approve a transfer of ownership of Engine 1114 and Caboose 5241 to the City of Hamlet.

Council Member Sellers made a motion for the City to assume ownership of Engine 1114 and Caboose 5241 as of September 9, 2025, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

18. Public Comments

Robert Cummings stated he lives in East Rockingham, and he has Hamlet water. He stated his water smells so bad he has to buy water filters, and his bill has gone up. Council Member Stuart asked for his address which is 240 Aleo 8th Avenue.

Esco Latimer voiced his concerns on the water in Hamlet and stated he requested a copy of our water report but was told he needed to fill our public records request. He also stated he never came to attack council or administration here, online or in person.

Ray Mills stated he would like to address the downtown areas lack of progress over the last few years and issues with our water. He also welcomes council to Axe to Grind on October 2nd to openly discuss our downtown area and how to move forward. Lastly, he stated he will be running for Mayor as a write-in candidate.

Doctor Amber Daniels thanked City Manager Terziu for making it possible for the soccer games to be played at Memorial Park. She challenged him to look at the other parks in Hamlet and evaluate their safety.

Pat Preslar asked council to consider dedicating the Veteran Park Monument in memory of Bobby Moser because of his service in Hamlet for more than 20 years. Pat thanked council for their hard work, stating he has been in their shoes and knows how hard it can be serving the community.

Gwen Suit stated her neighbor has a tent in his yard, and she would like Code Enforcement to check it out. She lives on Madison Avenue.

Vincent Scott stated he lives on Minturn and there are several places in the road that need to be checked where water leaks were repaired that haven't been repaved which has led to potholes over time.

Shawn Smith stated the potholes on Minturn slow people down so we should not repair them.

19. Comments of Council

Council Member Martin had no comments.

Council Member Sellers thanked all attendees for coming to the meeting. He then publicly shamed the City Manager, stating he didn't appreciate being interrupted earlier in the meeting. However, and for the record, the meeting recording clearly demonstrates the City Manager never interpreted him. The fact is that the City Manager only responded to Councilmember Sellers question about wetlands on a piece of property not being discussed.

Council Member Clewis thanked Seth Dixon for being here tonight and he thanked all other attendees for coming to the meeting. He covered several topics including negative comments on social media and attacking other people's family members. He thanked city employees for taking part in United Way Days of Caring. He then stated the employees at the Water Department test water every few hours and send it to the state to ensure our water is clean. Next, he addressed Amtrak moving slowly on Main Street with the repairs near the Depot. After that, he stated he is all for the racetrack but not when the County is taking people's hard-earned money. He stated, "the grant should have been a loan". Hamlet Police Department will host Shop with a Cop this December and he is encouraging everyone to contribute financially if possible. He thanked Pat Preslar and Doc for pressure washing the Veteran monument on Boyd Lake Road. He also told Mr. Ray Mills he was in business for 17 years through hard times when they closed the road going across the bridge and on Main Street where his business was located. He clarified, we want your business to be prosperous, and we are working as hard as we can to help you be successful. He stated he has lived here a long time, owns a business here, and wants Hamlet to be successful.

Council Member Stuart thanked everyone for coming to the meeting because that is how things get done in Hamlet. He thanked all city employees and reminded everyone that September is Suicide Prevention Month.

Mayor Pro-Tem Covington thanked Mr. Clewis for what he said and emphasized not to rely on what you see on social media, check the facts. She thanked Adam Kiker for his presentation with information about our water and our water system improvements that are soon to come. She said we have dealt with this issue for 40 years and our infrastructure is ancient. The city employees sitting in this room work their butts off. She stated you insinuate we don't do our jobs, and you insult us. She stated we appreciate the people of Hamlet, and we are glad you are here, be part of a city not part of a problem. She also stated someone had contacted the city about building a memorial at Mary Love Cemetery to cut down on the cost of burials. It would be a building that will house the urns of 100 individuals because we don't have grave space.

20. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Guinn stated that this council pays for, uses, and drinks the same water as everyone else, we are all in this together. She reminded everyone about the Lions Club this week and Senior Center Bingo at the fair 5-8pm.

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

At 8:11 pm, Mayor Pro-Tem Covington motioned, seconded by Council Member Clewis, to go into closed session for attorney-client privilege and personnel. The motion passed unanimously.

Return to Open Session

At 9:01 pm, Council Member Sellers motioned to return to Open Session, seconded by Council Member Stuart. The motion passed unanimously.

22. Motion to Adjourn

Council Member Sellers motioned, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Covington to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 9:01 pm.