

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2023
6:00 PM
MINUTES**

Governing Body Present:

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Mayor Pro Tem	Jesse McQueen
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Abbie Covington
Council Member	Maurice Stuart
Council Member	Oscar Sellers

Staff Present:

City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Manager	Matthew Christian
City Clerk	Cindy Terry

Others Present: Matt Lamb, Howard Wallace, Jo Wallace, Bishop Thomas McDonald, Errica Santiago, Gerard Morrison, Amy Guinn

1. Call to Order

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

2. Invocation

Bishop Thomas McDonald of Last Days Deliverance Apostolic Faith Church offered the Invocation.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Mayor Bayless requested Council amend the agenda to move the proclamations to the beginning of New Business. Mayor Pro-tem McQueen moved to adopt the agenda with the changes. Council Member Sellers seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0.

4. Adoption of Consent Agenda

Council Member Martin motioned to adopt the Consent Agenda. Council Member Covington provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

5. Comments from Attendees

Gerard Morrison spoke about the upcoming John Coltrane Festival which will be held at 12:00 p.m. on October 7, 2023 at 1935 Ghio/Osborne Road in Hamlet, NC. He also advised that the walking trail at City Lake does not have a marker or any other mention of John Coltrane. Mr. Morrison then requested Council to remember the caliber of people who are from Hamlet such as J. Kenneth Lee who was the first black student to finish UNC Law School, as well as Thurgood Marshall who grew up on Charlotte Street.

New Business

6. Proclamation – Jamie Graham, World Corn Hole Champion

Mayor Bayless gave remarks regarding Jamie's recent corn hole championship and expressed best wishes for the future.

7. Proclamation - Adult Education and Literacy Week

Mayor Bayless read the Proclamation that the week of September 18-24, 2023 be proclaimed Adult Education and Literacy Week at Richmond Community College.

8. Presentation by MeterSys

Andy Honeycutt presented options for the water meter pilot program. Option 1 would be a Full Meter System Inventory that would consist of a complete meter inventory of the approximately 4,100 meters in the City's water utility, identifying meters that are retrofit compatible, and updating meter information within the City's Customer Information System. An additional project within this phase would be surveying of meter service lines required for lead and copper compliance by October of 2024. By combining the meter inventory with the lead and copper survey, the City will combine multiple data collection needs into one program of work. Option 2 is an AMI Pilot Program with incumbent meter supplier. This option would consist of cooperation with City staff and the incumbent meter supplier, developing an AMI pilot program covering up to 1,000 meters connected to a network and integrated with the billing system. Option 2 may be combined with Option 1 for both field data collection and the installation of a pilot AMI program. A separate purchase order and engagement would be required with Consolidated Pipe and Supply for certain meters, software, and network devices for system improvements. Option 3 is an AMI solution selection through competitive bid. This option would consist of developing and issuing a Request for Proposals to AMI vendors and selecting the solution best suited for the City of Hamlet. Option 3 may be combined with Option 1 for both field data collection and bid solicitation for AMI. Council Member McQueen asked about the City's current 39% unaccounted water. Mr. McQueen wanted to know whether once the new meters are in place, what the City's unaccounted water would be versus the present percentage. Mr. Honeycutt advised that he believes the projected percentage of unaccounted water usage could lower by 4-10%. Council Member McQueen then asked how much we would save by retrofitting meters instead of purchasing them. Mr. Honeycutt stated that the price for retrofitting existing meters would be approximately \$80.00 per meter, and that new meters would cost approximately \$300 per meter.

[Note: Motion and vote for Item 8 were made following the conclusion of item 10]

Council Member Sellers moved to approve the meter inventory with the lead & copper assessment, and appropriate \$152,022 from ARPA funds to fund the project. Council Member Covington seconded the motion. The vote was 4-1, with Council Member McQueen casting the dissenting vote.

9. Presentation of Streetscape Design Options

City Manager Christian then presented Council with the streetscape design options. He advised that the City has purchased 12 sets of benches that also come with matching planters and trash receptacles. Ten sets would be utilized now, with the additional 2 sets to be placed at a later date. A visual presentation was used in deciding which direction the benches would be placed i.e., facing streets or facing buildings or a combination of both. There was discussion of the pros

and cons of the options presented, including safety concerns. A motion was made by Council Member Covington, seconded by Council Member McQueen authorizing the City Manager to use his best judgment as to the placement of the bench sets.

10. City Lake Park Update

City Manager Christian then presented the proposed plans for City Lake Park's walking trail. He reminded Council that the City applied for an \$800,000 grant from the Rural Transformation Grant program and was awarded \$400,000. The grant funds can only be used for construction. He advised that he learned two key things in his discussions with NC Commerce: 1) The project can be phased; and 2) In order to accept this grant award and complete the project, the City must pay for the design and engineering fees. Council Member Sellers asked whether all of the property on the east side is accessible. Mr. Christian advised that yes, the property is accessible, although wetland delineation by the Army Corp of Engineers will be needed. Mr. Christian also stated that a "boardwalk" or "bog walk" may be needed in the wetland areas. Council Member McQueen asked about the right of ways where the trail crosses the Lakeside Venue and whether the City would have to purchase same. The Manager stated that the City would have to purchase the right of ways from the landowner; this land is in a trust and the City has been in contact with the trustee. Council Member Sellers asked about the ability for walkers to cross the dam. Mr. Christian stated that for the time being, the existing sidewalk at the front of the park would have to be used to go around the dam but hopes for a bridge/crossover in the future. Council Member Martin then asked whether the dam has been declared structurally sound by the state. The manager advised that the dam is structurally sound but needs repairs. The City recently completed a structural assessment and are working with engineers on next steps.

Manager Christian reported to Council that ARPA funds can be allocated for the walking trail project. Discussion occurred about how much remains in the ARPA Funds. Manager Christian stated that approximately \$1,000,000 remain in the ARPA fund. At this time, it was noted that no action was taken on the water meter proposal in Item 8.

Council Member McQueen motioned to use ARPA Funds, not to exceed \$150,000, be used for the design and engineering fees for the City Lake project. The motion was seconded by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 5-0.

Other Business

11. City Manager's Report

City Manager Christian advised that a disc golf course discussed at the last meeting was now in the planning phase. He also reminded Council that the Boxcar Concert Series will begin September 22 from 6:00-8:00 p.m., that a book signing by Shannon Haywood is being planned, and that the Seaboard 5K still accepting registrations.

12. Comments of Council

Council Member Martin reminded everyone that the American Legion projects including installing the batting cages is coming along well, and there will be a barbeque sale to raise funds for the American Legion Post 49 program. Council Member Sellers thanked the attendees for coming to the meeting and reminded everyone to support the American Legion. Council Member Covington reported that she attended the Crimestoppers ribbon cutting today at the courthouse. She also praised Police Chief Brown and his wife for their participation in Crimestoppers and advised that Chief Brown's wife has headed up 2 kickoffs for the

Crimestoppers organization. Mrs. Covington stated that she attended the John Coltrane Festival last year and encouraged everyone to attend to hear some great jazz music. Lastly, Council Member Covington advised that there will be a ribbon cutting for the new brewery combined with a murder mystery program, and that Buie's is starting up their steak and jazz nights. Council Member Stuart thanked the Hamlet Police Department for their presence at the 9th Grade Academy. Council Member McQueen remarked about the overgrown grass behind the old A & P. City Manager Christian advised that he sent a message to the Public Works Director earlier that day regarding same. Mr. McQueen also advised that he had recently received a text thanking the City for marking the tennis/pickleball court. Mayor Bayless questioned whether the City has a complete landscaping staff. Mr. Christian advised him that all landscaping positions had been filled.

13. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Bayless reminded everyone that the Lion's Club Fall Fair is in town September 14-17, and that plans are being made for this year's Christmas on Main.

14. Motion to go into Closed Session per NC General Statute §143-318-11(a) (3)(6) Personnel and Attorney Client Privilege

At 7:17 Council Member Sellers made a motion to go into closed session. The motion was seconded by Council Member Martin, and the vote was 5-0.

Return to Open Session

At 7:55 pm, Council Member McQueen made the motion to return to Open Session. The second was given by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 5-0.

15. Motion to give the City Manager authority to revise Organizational Chart to create two new positions.

Council Member Covington made a motion, seconded by Council Member Sellers that City Manager Christian has authority to revise the City of Hamlet's Organization Chart to create two new positions. The vote was 5-0.

16. Adjourn

At 7:59 pm, Council Members Sellers and Martin provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,


Cindy Terry, City Clerk

