

Town of Hertford
Regular Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, January 8, 2024 – 6:00PM
Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W Grubb Street

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Regular Session Meeting at the Horace Reid Community Center (also by Facebook) on Monday, January 8, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Sandra Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem
Connie Brothers Keith Rouse
Rhonda Waters

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Town Manager
Ashley Eure, Acting Finance Director
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
John Leidy, Attorney

A quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Councilman Rouse, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson to approve the agenda with the following additions under New Business: 7e) Appointment of Alternate for Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments; 7f) Request for extension of time to bring 1000 West Grubb Street into compliance; and 7g) Request for Motorcade on January 15th for Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday. Councilman Rouse seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the minutes from December 11, 2023, Regular Session and Organizational Meeting. Councilwoman Waters seconded the motion and it passed, 5-0.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Russell Rouson addressed Council regarding a new youth program in Hertford, designed for young men ages 12-15. The purpose is to instill such values as positive image, character building, mental health, conflict resolution, career goals, and decision

making. Mr. Rouson explained that the program will benefit our youth and our community by decreasing crime and making people feel safer. The group will meet on Saturdays at 112 Miller Street, from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

- a) **Addendum (Supplement) to Audit Response for LGC** – Because Hertford is on the Unit Assistance List (UAL), we are required to file a response to any material findings in our audit. The Town did respond to the material findings, but the North Carolina Local Government Commission (LGC) requested additional information from the Town regarding a weakness disclosed in our audit report. The Town is aware of this “weakness” and has opted for one of the three solutions suggested by the NC Rural Water Association based on the rate study they did for the Town.

Mayor Hodges asked for questions, comments, or a motion regarding the supplemental audit response. Councilwoman Waters made a motion to approve the response as written. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved, 5-0.

- b) **Council’s Letter to LGC for Removal from the UAL** – Manager Cole composed a letter to the LGC requesting that Hertford be removed from the UAL. The Town has accomplished the statutory requirements to be removed, including Council and staff training and timely audits. Manager Cole is not aware of a published periodic review schedule that the LGC follows and has requested that. Mayor Hodges commented that being on the UAL has helped the Town get training and grant funds as well as encouraged the Town to plan more.

Mayor Hodges asked for questions, comments, or a motion regarding the letter for the LGC. A motion to approve the letter requesting to remove Hertford from the UAL was made by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson and seconded by Councilman Rouse. The motion passed, 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Budget Amendments** – Acting Finance Director Ashley Eure explained the four (4) budget amendments.

FY24-14 is the conversion of account numbers in our previous software systems, Edmonds, to the standard chart of accounts in our new software system, Black Mountain.

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY24-14. Councilwoman Brothers seconded his motion and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

FY24-15 is for expenditures that Council has already approved in our last budget but will be paid out in our current budget.

Councilwoman Brothers motioned to approve Budget Amendment FY24-15. A second was made by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson, and the motion carried, 5-0.

FY24-16 is to balance out accounts that became off balance during the conversion. With added new account numbers, some items in the budget shifted to different account lines within each department.

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY24-16. Councilwoman Brothers seconded his motion and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

FY24-17 is an amendment to balance out the budget lines and move extra funds from debt services to salary lines in different departments.

A motion to approve Budget Amendment FY24-17 was made by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson and Councilman Rouse seconded her motion. It passed unanimously, 5-0

- b) **Resolution FY24-11 Sale Authorization and Process for Town-Owned Property** – The Town rezoned property Henry House purchased from Clark Harris from residential to commercial to expand his bakery business. Adjacent to the property Mr. House purchased is a .17-acre lot owned by the Town, which was also rezoned, and Mr. House would like to purchase it. The purchase process for Mr. House to purchase that lot is a bid process used by municipalities that includes advertising if anyone would like to upset Mr. House’s bid of \$10,000. Once Council approves the offer, the Town will advertise the sale and accept sealed bids for a 10-day period. If the bid is upset, the process starts all over. Resolution FY24-11 is the process we must follow to sell that lot and allow anyone else to bid on it.
Councilwoman Waters motioned to accept Mr. House’s bid and begin the bid process for that lot. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Brothers and passed, 5-0.
- c) **Ordinance FY24-7 Hertford on Ice Street Closures** – February 17th, 2024
Downtown Hertford will host Hertford on Ice and street closures are required to accommodate the safety and activities of this winter festival. There will be an ice rink and about five (5) other activities. Tickets can be purchased for the activities, or an all-day wristband will be available to purchase.
Councilwoman Brothers motioned to approve the street closures for February 17th and Councilwoman Waters seconded. The motion was approved, 5-0.
- d) **Manager’s Update** –
1. Town Council Retreat is scheduled for March 2nd and 3rd. The retreat will be held at the Albemarle Commission Auditorium. This year, Council will not be using a facilitator. Manager Cole has asked Council to review the Strategic Plan and contact her if there are any other topics to be included.

2. Manager Cole mentioned an article she emailed to Council and noted that people are attracted to Perquimans County, but there is a shortage of housing here.
 3. Harbor Town is having a representative check the water at our Marina and Missing Mills Park docks to see if it is sufficient for the ferry boats. Hertford is the recipient of \$2M for dock rehabilitation in association with the Harbor Town Cruises.
 4. The S-Bridge does not have a full-time bridge tender on site. This has an impact on any water vessel needing passage and relying on cameras to summon a bridge tender. Also, there has been talk that the S-Bridge will close during icy conditions. EMS and school buses would need to be notified of such closings.
 5. The old S-Bridge truss has still not been turned over to the Town.
- e) **Appointment of Alternate to Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments –** Manager Cole received one application for the vacancy of the PZBOA Alternate and that was from Brenda Holowell-White. Councilwoman Brothers motioned to accept Mrs. Holowell-White’s application as alternate to the PZBOA. Councilwoman Waters seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 5-0.
- f) **Request for extension of time to bring 1000 West Grubb Street into compliance –** Mr. Robinson spoke to Council regarding some issues he has faced while renovating the house at 1000 West Grubb Street. Significant progress has been made, as confirmed by Council, but the fabrication of customized items for a house of its age is taking extra time. Council agreed to extend the two-year deadline by an additional year to bring the house up to compliance. The new deadline is March 31, 2025. A motion was made by Councilwoman Brothers to extend the deadline by one year to bring the house at 1000 West Grubb Street up to compliance. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded her motion and it passed, 5-0.
- g) **Request for Motorcade on January 15th for Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday –** Manager Cole informed Council that a Motorcade is planned and will be coming through Hertford on Monday, January 15th, the birthday of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Motorcade will end at the First Baptist Church on the corner of Hyde Park Street and King Street. No street closures are required but Council approval is necessary for the Motorcade to come through Hertford. Councilwoman Brothers motioned to approve the Motorcade coming through Hertford. A second was made by Councilman Rouse and the motion carried, 5-0.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilman Rouse stated that he is proud to be serving on Council and looking forward to the new year. He would like to speak with Mr. Rouson more about the youth group for young men. Councilman Rouse has spoken with citizens in Hertford, and they too are excited about the new year with a new Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson wished all a Happy New Year. She is looking forward to fulfilling her responsibilities as Mayor Pro Tem and Finance Officer. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson said there was a big turnout for the Open Door Food Pantry ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, January 5th. The Open Door Food Pantry accepts donations, preferably monetary.

Councilwoman Brothers also wished everyone a Happy New Year. She is looking forward to new opportunities in Hertford. She noted that a new reporter, Kesha Williams, from the Daily Advance is covering our Town Council meetings. Councilwoman Brothers thanked Council and all those that came out to Toys for Tots. 800+ children were recipients in Chowan, Perquimans, and Pasquotank Counties.

Councilwoman Waters commended Manager Cole for taking the initiative to remove Hertford from the UAL. She reiterated that Open Door Pantry needs monetary donations as they are servicing many more families/residents. She wished the residents a Happy New Year and is glad to be a part of Council.

Mayor Hodges agreed that Toys for Tots was a great success and thanked Councilwoman Brothers for her work on that program. He noted that Council was present for the Open Door Pantry ribbon cutting. United States Senator Thom Tillis is working with Manager Heath and asked for a tour of Hertford regarding Town projects. Mayor Hodges and Councilman Rouse will meet with Perquimans County Schools Superintendent Dr. Turner to discuss happenings in the school system and partnering. He also commended the Town Staff for their work, including conducting the software conversion during the audit.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Brothers moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Waters seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.