

Town of Hertford
Regular Session Meeting
Monday, January 13, 2025 – 6:00 PM
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 on Monday, January 13, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

Doris Walton, Interim Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
John Leidy, Attorney

A quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Minister Bonner of the Assembly of Children of God Christian Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to approve the agenda with the following amendment: under New Business, switch items 7c and 7i in the order they are presented. Councilwoman Brothers seconded her motion, and it carried, 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of 1) December 9, 2024 Regular Session Minutes was made by Councilman Rouse. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

CITIZENS CONCERNS

Sara Winslow expressed concern regarding the lack of staffing and lack of mail delivery in Hertford. She said that some people don't drive and are not able to get to the Post Office to pick up their mail. Ms. Winslow is also concerned about the lack of mail delivery because at this time of year, there are many important documents being sent through USPS.

Barb Morris addressed Council regarding The Landings of Albemarle. She is aware that they made a payment for a small fraction towards their outstanding account with the Town of Hertford Utilities. She would like the residents to be advised and updated on how the Town is moving forward with this matter.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

a) Upset Bid for Railroad Properties 3rd Round

101, 103, and 105 Railroad properties were put up for a 2nd round in the upset bid process. Bidding ended at 5 PM on December 31, 2024. During the 2nd round, we received a bid of \$22,000 from John Nixon that upset the previous high bid of \$18,000. We are required by statute to put it back out for the upset bid process. The upset bid process continues until the highest bid is not upset when the properties are put out again for the upset bid process.

A motion to move forward with the third round of the upset bid process for the Railroad properties was made by Councilwoman Brothers and Councilwoman Waters seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

b) Upset Bid for Woodland Avenue Property 3rd Round

During the 2nd round of the upset bid process, which ended at 5 PM on December 31, 2024, we received a bid of \$21,500 from Leary Winslow to upset the previous high bid of \$14,000 for 305 and 307 Woodland Avenue. We are required by statute to put this out for another round of the upset bid process. The upset bid process continues until the highest bid is not upset when the properties are put out again for the upset bid process.

A motion to move forward with the second round of the upset bid process for the Woodland Avenue property was made by Councilwoman Brothers and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0

c) Electricities/Utility Financial Solutions UFS – Contract for Financial Study

Manager Walton explained to Council that we budgeted \$12,500 for the Financial Study. We were told the cost of the study increased to over \$13,250. The Town secured a \$5K betterment grant from Electricities to help fund the study. With the increase in price and the grant, we will only need to use \$8,250 of the \$12,500 we budgeted. Manager Walton and Mayor Hodges discussed the importance of the study to provide us insight regarding where we are at, what we need to do to make us viable, are our rates appropriate, etc? Mayor Hodges added that this study is important and advantageous when we are applying for grants and as the Town goes into budget season.

d) National Fitness Campaign

A video of the fitness platform was presented. Manager Walton explained that we need a commitment of \$50K from Council to move forward with this project. There is a PARTF grant to help fund the project and this can be tied to the Riverfront Walk. Town and County residents have completed surveys to gauge the interest of a fitness platform in Hertford. Council and Manager Walton discussed interest, financial commitment, and ties to the Riverfront Walk. Council would like more surveys to be completed and will revisit this at a future meeting.

e) Withers Ravenel Contracts for Administrative and Engineering Services

These contracts are for the WWTP Rehabilitation under the CBG-I grant we received for \$3M.

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve the WR contracts. Councilwoman Brothers seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

f) Withers Ravenel Contract for Task Order #13 – SRF-W-0002

This contract is for additional work for WWTP that was not covered under CBG-I but funded by SFR.

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to approve WR Contract for Task Order #13. Councilwoman Brothers seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

g) Approval of Grant Project Ordinance for CDB-I Grant

We received \$2.895M in 2023 and \$105K in 2018 from CDBG funding, totaling \$3M. The funding is for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Rehabilitation. Need approval to adopt Grant Project Ordinance for WWTP Rehabilitation Program.

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve the adoption of Grant Project Ordinance for WWTP Rehabilitation Program. Councilwoman Waters seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0

h) Approval of Signatory Form and Certification and Resolution for Signatory Form and Certification.

CDBG-I Guidelines require us to have a specific checking account for the grant and a minimum of two signatories. Manager Walton suggests having four signatories to avoid any potential issues, such as a signor being unavailable for a multitude of reasons, during the life of the grant. CDBG has a strict policy of three days to cut a check once a request for funding has been received. Penalties for not adhering to that 3-day policy could include a

reduction in grant funding. She is asking for Council's approval on the resolution to authorize the attached signatures as authorized signatories.

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve the establishment of the checking account for CDBG-I grant, signatory form and resolution. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0

i) Budget Amendments

FY25-23 – Move \$10K that came from the County into the Fire Budget.

Fire Revenue 39-4221	\$10,000.00
Fire FICA 39-5400-421	\$1,298.65
Fire Buildings 39-5400-522	\$150.00
Fire Supplies 39-5400-551	8,551.35

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-23. Councilwoman Waters seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

FY25-24 –Break out interest into the right account number and add new account number for electrical work and pest control for community building.

Decrease Debt Services 10-6000-564 Principle	\$189.56
Increase Debt Services 10-6000-565 Interest	\$189.56
Decrease Council Utilities 10-5100-526	\$3000.00
Increase Council Utilities 10-5100-522	\$3000.00

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-24. Councilwoman Brothers seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

FY25-25 – Move the Fire Grant from General Fund to the new Fire Fund.

Decrease General Misc Grant 10-4610	\$40,000.00
Decrease General Fire 10-5400-739	\$40,000.00
Increase Fire Misc Grant 39-4610	\$40,000.00
Decrease Fire Transfer from General Fund 39-4910	\$40,000.00

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-25. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

FY25-26 – Move funds from Contingency to Professional Services for an Electricities Financial Projection and Rate Study.

Decrease Electrical Contingencies 52-5900-577	\$8,250.00
Increase Electric Professional Services 52-5900-511	\$8,250.00

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-26. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

FY25-27 – Move funds to set up new checking account for CDBG Grant as per the guidelines.

Decrease Wastewater Contingency 51-5870-577	\$600.00
Increase Wastewater Transfer out 51-5870-741	\$600.00
Increase CDBG Transfer In 41-4951	\$600.00
Increase Engineering & Design 41-5860-562	\$600.00

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-27. Councilwoman Brothers seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

MANAGER’S UPDATE

Manager Walton addressed the Budget Schedule for FY25-26 that was distributed to Council. Milestones include meetings with Department Heads 2/13, Department Head presentations to Council 3/10, and Public Hearing 5/5. RFQs have gone out for work at the Hertford State Theatre. We must use contractors that are consistent with the preservation of historical buildings. Manager Walton hopes to have information regarding those to bring to Council in February as there is 30 days to reply. On Wednesday at 10 AM, the League of Municipalities will be having interviews at our office with Doris and Ashley Eure. They are doing a feature article on our Town. The article will focus on how well we used our ARPA funds, including using those funds to purchase the new firetruck, and our successful transition to Black Mountain Software. The Town utilizes all three modules of the Black Mountain Software: utilities, finance, and human resources. Hertford will be showcased in their upcoming newsletter.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Rouse expressed concern about cars parked on both sides of Market Street between Covent Garden and Hyde Park. Mayor Hodges stated that on-street parking is permitted.

Councilwoman Waters congratulated Manager Walton and her staff for being chosen as an example of the successful transition to and use of all three modules Black Mountain Software offers. She asked if there is a projected date of when the infrastructure work will start around Town. Manager Walton said she has not yet gotten an answer but hopes to find out during her meeting Thursday, and she will share whatever information she receives. A CodeRED will be issued to the residents in the affected area when work begins and door to door notices may also be given.

Councilwoman Brothers wished everyone a Happy New Year. She thanked the people who came to the meeting tonight. She expressed gratitude that there was no injury or loss of life in Hertford due to the freezing weather we have experienced. Councilwoman Brothers asked Manager Walton about updates to the renaming of the S-bridge and the mural to honor deceased Hertford resident Charles Coleman Jr. Manager Walton stated that Mr. Coleman's image will be included in the new mural. Manager Walton met with County Manager Heath and renaming the bridge is not an option. Mr. Coleman will be honored in the new mural near the intersection of Church Street and Highway 17. Councilwoman Brothers then asked if the partial speed bump on King Street either be removed or replace the missing part of the bump. She is concerned that there will be a collision due to drivers trying to avoid the bump. Mayor Hodges suggested that Council consult with the Sheriff's office on how to proceed and manage traffic safely. Next, Councilwoman Brothers asked about the trash at the pallet business on West Grubb near the railroad. Manager Walton met with the housing inspector, Earl Solesbee, today. She, Mr. Solesbee, and the fire marshal will be meeting with Joel, the business owner, in the first week of February. They will discuss the hazardous situation that the business property has become and tell him what needs to be done by him. He will be told if he does not adhere to those instructions what action will be taken to rectify the hazardous situation. Councilwoman Brothers thanked the first responders and noted that there have been several shootings, and some of that footage captured via Ring cameras is being posted on social media.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson began by wishing all a Happy New Year. She noted that the Town staff, fire department, and Council had a nice Christmas luncheon before the Christmas closure and thanked Manager Walton.

Mayor Hodges acknowledged the Christmas luncheon and said he was unable to attend because he and his family were away for the holidays. He thanked Toys for Tots and Councilwoman Brothers for her work with the program coordinating and volunteering. Mayor Hodges also thanked the Sheriff's Department for the holiday lights and going out in the cold to spread holiday cheer dressed as Santa, etc. He congratulated the Town staff on the recognition for the successful Black Mountain conversion by the League of Municipalities and the upcoming feature article. Mayor Hodges said he was on the League's legislative policy committee. There have been many meetings working to define the League's legislative goals for the next two years and those will be voted on this coming Monday. He will be voting in favor of the goals/policies he helped write. Mayor Hodges is hoping that there will be a meeting with Representative Goodwin and the team regarding the Hertford State Theatre funding. Harbor Town Cruises also reached out to all five cities to find out what events they have coming up so that they may schedule their boats to support those events. There is still the question of the \$2M infrastructure funding that was made available, so we are hoping to meet with them in the next week or two about what we're planning to do with waterfront and related projects to support economic development, tourism, and recruiting our Town. Mayor Hodges thanked all those who came out to the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Waters and Councilman Rouse to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM. The motion passed unanimously.