

**Town of Hertford**  
**Work Session Meeting**  
**Monday, January 26, 2026 – 6:00 PM**  
**Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W Grubb Street**

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Work Session Meeting at the Horace Reid Community Center on Monday, January 26, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ashley Hodges, Mayor  
Keith Rouse  
Evan Copeland

Connie Brothers, Mayor Pro Tem  
Sara Winslow

**STAFF PRESENT**

Doris Walton, Town Manager  
Gina Durante, Town Clerk  
Chad White, Public Works Director

A quorum was present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Pro Tem Brothers made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilman Copeland seconded her motion, and it carried, 5-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilwoman Winslow motioned to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the Budget Schedule for FY26-27. Her motion was seconded by Councilman Rouse, and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

**CONTINUED BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **a) Approval of Text Amendment to Include Fabricated Metals in Zone C-6 by Right**

The Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments approved a text amendment to include fabricated metals under Manufacturing/Processing under the C-6 zone. Manager Walton explained that currently C-6 allows “machine and welding, metal fabrication” under Commercial Sales and Repairs & Storage. By adopting this text amendment, fabrication in C-6 will be zoned properly and this will prevent questions in the future as there will be consistency in the ordinance.

Mayor Pro Tem Brothers made a motion to approve the text amendment to add fabricated metal products as a permitted use in C-6 district by right. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0.

### **b) Approval of New Oil Service Contract with Jernigan Oil**

Manager Walton stated that the Town maintains oil and propane reserves for emergencies and inclement weather for heating our buildings and fueling our equipment, generators, and pump stations. We have been using Reed Oil which has been recently acquired by Superior Plus Propane. After reviewing our propane and oil needs and invoices from Superior, we contacted Jernigan Oil to compare rates. Manager Walton recommends that the Town switch from Superior to Jernigan Oil for these services as it is projected that the Town will save more than \$1K annually.

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Winslow and Mayor Pro Tem Brothers to approve the service contract for Jernigan Oil for the Town’s Propane and fuel. The motion was approved by Council, 5-0.

### **c) Approval of Feasibility Study for Use of the Hertford State Theatre**

Manager Walton attended a conference in Pittsburgh that discussed the uses of the theatre to best serve the Town. The Hertford State Theatre will serve as an attraction and source of economic growth for our Town. It is recommended that a feasibility study be conducted to determine realistic and financially sustainable uses of the theatre. Findings from the study will guide us in such interior feature renovations as lighting, seating, speaker placement, etc. The study conducted by a reputable firm will also help us to acquire more funding through grants, donations, and partnerships. Mayor Hodges concurred with and commented on the importance of a professional study and Council discussed it. Manager Walton stated that there is \$20K in the budget for this study, which seems to be a standard rate.

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve the feasibility study for the use of the Hertford State Theatre, and it was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Brothers. The motion carried, 5-0.

**d) Call for a Public Hearing to Receive Comments on Local Historic Preservation District to be Held March 9, 2026**

Manager Walton would like to schedule a Public Hearing for comments on the Local Historic Preservation District on March 9, 2026. The hearing will allow those within the historic district or surrounding area to speak on the zoning of the district. To become a local certified government, and qualify for certain grant funding, we are required to have a Historic Preservation Committee, and it must be in operation for at least one year, and then we can apply for federal funding.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Winslow to approve the Public Hearing on March 9, 2026, for comments on the Local Historic Preservation District. Mayor Pro Tem Brothers seconded, and it was approved, 5-0.

**e) Approval of RFP for New Audit Firm**

Manager Walton explained to Council that, although it is not required, it is recommended and considered best practices by LGC, that every five years a municipality change their audit services. Martin Starnes and Associates has been our audit firm for the last five years. Manager Walton would like to post the RFP for audit services on our website and the local government finance listserv. We will also send a direct solicitation to other firms, including our current provider of audit services, Martin Starnes and Associates.

Councilman Copeland and Councilman Rouse made a first and second motion approving the Town Manager to move forward with the RFP process for audit services. The motion was approved unanimously by Council, 5-0.

**f) Discussion – Work on Town Roads**

Manager Walton acknowledged the inconveniences and issues on our Town streets and roads that the residents have made concerns/complaints about. There are many concerns about the asphalt that has not yet been replaced where new waterlines have been put in place. EnviroTech is contracted to do the street repair/repaving. Manager Walton has been informed by them that in order to perform the asphalt and pavement repair, the outside temperature must be at least 45-50 degrees for a minimum of two weeks for the repair to cure properly. She stated that with the inclement weather we have had and the storm that is forecasted, no street repairs can be done. It will be revisited with EnviroTech after the next two weeks. The pothole on Market Street cannot be fixed until other repairs are done but it will be packed. Our street repairs are dependent upon the weather. Councilwoman Winslow suggested that EnviroTech check areas on streets that they have packed, as weather and traffic has caused some of those to require repacking. Manager Walton explained that some areas cannot be closed or paved until Phase 2 work is completed as we would be closing and then reopening areas. Council agreed

that our street repairs must be completed in a cost-effective manner with the funds we were granted. Public Director White added that the Town's contractors have faced some delays in receiving parts and/or products. Mayor Hodges commented that the Town hired some of the best firms in North Carolina and we have nearly \$18M to complete all this work at one time. He asked that the Monthly Newsletter advise customers of the temperature requirements for asphalt and provide updates and timelines for the progression of the work. Manager Walton will post updates in the newsletter, on the Town's Facebook page, and on our website. Mayor Pro Tem Brothers thanked the Town staff and contractors who are helping to improve our streets. Councilwoman Winslow added that the residents need to be made aware that only the asphalt that was cut out for the waterline replacements will be repaved. Entire streets are not being repaved. Mayor Hodges noted that breaks in the waterlines should be infrequent when the replacement project is completed. Councilwoman Winslow asked that EnviroTech not leave "Closed Road" signs out over the weekends. Mayor Hodges concluded the discussion by expressing his appreciation for all the work being done.

### **MANAGER'S UPDATE**

Manager Walton stated that she would like to issue an RFP for IT services. She reported that the Utilities and Administration buildings have been experiencing intermittent internet outages over the last few weeks due to hardware issues, and today we were without internet the entire day. We were not able to make or receive phone calls, process utility payments, or print from our computers. Our current provider for IT services, VC3, has been in place since September 2021. She is going to revisit our contract with them. Manager Walton spoke to the head of sales at VC3, and he was not advised of any of the outages we have been experiencing which is concerning. VC3 is not a local company so when we have issues there are unacceptable delays in getting support from them, and in the case of today, we were told it would be at least two days. Manager Walton would like to have an IT contract with a company that can respond in 30-40 minutes, not a delayed time frame. Council discussed looking at a different internet provider as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Brothers and Councilman Copeland motioned and seconded to authorize Manager Walton to issue an RFP for IT services for the Town. The motion passed unanimously.

Manager Walton updated Council on the Hertford Connectivity Plan, connecting the Marina to the four corners at Grubb and Church Streets with decorative brick. We received no bids when we put it out for bid the first time. We are putting it out for a second round this week. Our architect has indicated that there will be at least one bid coming to us during the second round.

Lastly, Manager Walton asked Council if they had considered any topics they would like to discuss at the retreat. She offered three dates that the Albemarle Commission is available for us. Council agreed that the retreat will be held February 21, 9 AM – 4 PM at the Albemarle Commission. Councilwoman Winslow asked if Manager Walton could send out last year's agenda to Council.

### **COUNCIL REPORTS**

Councilwoman Winslow had no report.

Councilman Rouse shared concerns that there were no events in Hertford to recognize Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Mayor Hodges stated that the Town supports planned events, and that will not change.

Councilman Copeland thanked Mayor Hodges for taking him on a tour of the Hertford State Theatre. He also thanked the Public Works staff for all their work on projects around Town in partnership with our contractors.

Mayor Pro Tem Brothers asked people to check on their neighbors during this severe cold weather we are experiencing. She asked if there are emergency shelters available and Manager Walton informed her that the County provides those through Social Services. Mayor Pro Tem Brothers thanked all those who are working on the improvements in Town and those attend and watch our Town Council meetings.

Mayor Hodges thanked Public Works staff and our contractors. He thanked the residents for their patience during the waterline replacement project and commented on how much better things will be when the project is complete. He commended Public Works and County staff for all their storm preparations for the predicted storm that didn't happen. Mayor Hodges also thanked Manager Walton for staying on top of the numerous projects in Town and keeping things running smoothly, as well as taking the initiative to improve what's not working well. It is a lot of work that she manages well. Mayor Hodges thanked those that attended the meeting either in person or via Facebook.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion and a second were made by Mayor Pro Tem Brothers and Councilman Copeland to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM. The motion passed unanimously.