

Town of Hertford
Regular Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, January 9, 2023 – 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 9, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Earnell Brown, Mayor
Jerry Mimplitsch

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Sandra Anderson
Connie Brothers

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Interim Town Manager
Johny Howell, Attorney (subbing for John Leidy)

STAFF NOT PRESENT

Gina Durante, Town Clerk

A quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Sheriff Shelby White, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDAS

A motion was made by Councilman Jerry Mimplitsch to remove Item 10, the closed session, and approve the agenda with that deletion. Mayor Pro Tem Ashley Hodges seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges and seconded by Councilman Mimplitsch to approve the Consent Agenda, which is the minutes from the December 12, 2022 Regular Session. The motion passed unanimously.

CITIZENS CONCERNS

No one signed up to address Council during Citizens Concerns.

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT

Sheriff Shelby White briefed Council on law enforcement in the Town. He said crime (including violent and property crime) is down 15%. That figure includes violent crimes, larceny, motor vehicle theft, fraud embezzlement, recovery of stolen property, but larcenies and recovery of stolen property had increased. The feedback that he is getting from the residents is positive. The residents at Wynn Fork and Stokes, especially are pleased with the foot patrol. In the two and a half years since the Sheriff's Department assumed full responsibility for law enforcement in the Town, they have had three shots fired incidents. It is believed those involved people who knew each other, but no one will talk. The Sheriff's approach is to be proactive. They react to tips by saturating the area where any criminal activity is planned. The Sheriff suggested in the future placing cameras in higher crime areas and maybe acquiring license plate readers (LPRs).

CONTINUED BUSINESS

- a) **Response to Audit Findings** - Interim Town Manager Janice McKenzie Cole explained that there were five findings in the FY22 audit, and we are required to respond to LGC explaining how we are resolving those weaknesses. A copy of the response is attached. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges and seconded by Councilman Mimplitsch to approve the response. The motion passed unanimously.
- b) **Selection of Surveyor for Barrows Alley** – Manager Cole explained the need to have Barrows Alley surveyed to determine what is roadway and what, if anything, the Town owns that is available to be designated as parking spaces. An RFP (Request for Proposals) was issued, sent to four surveyors and a bid was received from one. Coastal Engineering in Kitty Hawk bid \$5,200. They are an established reputable firm. A motion was made by Councilman Mimplitsch and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges to accept their bid. The motion passed unanimously.
- c) **Selection from bidders for STRAP grant** - Manager Cole explained the STRAP grant for \$46,000 is the one awarded by the Dept of Agriculture to remove about 3500 feet of vegetation debris from Jennie's Gut. The Town issued an RFP that was sent to three possibilities. We received two responses. One bid from Frankie Brown of Browns Land Developing was for \$40,136 and another from Jimmy Droze of J&J Environmental in Edenton for \$50,000. Frankie Brown has worked with the Town on other projects and his work has been satisfactory. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges and seconded by Councilman Mimplitsch to accept the bid made by Frankie Brown of Browns Land Developing for \$40,136. The motion passed unanimously.

- d) **Withers-Ravenel Task Order #4.** – Manager Cole states that this is the Task Order for the Golden Leaf grant for the storm drain assessment master plan. A motion was made by Councilman Mimplitsch and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges to accept Task Order #4. The motion passed unanimously.
- e) **Fire Truck** – After consultation with Drew Woodard, the Hertford Fire Department Chief, the decision was made to pass on our first option to purchase the demo truck that is currently available and wait for another that has already been started and should be ready in about one year. An advantage is that the one currently under construction will be customized e.g., color for our Fire Department. To secure this, we will have to sign a contract, but we have not received it yet.

NEW BUSINESS

- 8. a) **Notice of Violation** - The DEQ Division of Water Resources inspected our waste water treatment plant and cited us for four violations. We were facing a fine of up to \$25,000. We responded, got it down to two violations, and a fine of \$1,000.
- b) **Capital Management Trust Fund** - As per Council's request, Manager Cole gave a quarterly report covering the first three months of interest earned on the initial amount of \$2.5M that we deposited. The Trust Fund, has yielded interest in the amount of \$22,279.03 in the first three months which was the 4th Qtr of 2022.
- c) **Request to purchase Town of owned property** – An adjoining homeowner has expressed interest in purchasing 213 & 215 W Grubb Street. Manager Cole recommended against the Town selling this property. Council took no action.

Manager's Report

Department of Commerce Rural Transformation Grant – The Town of Hertford received a \$750,000 grant to connect downtown to the docks. This is a grant that Allison Platt wrote. The Town's match is to pay for the landscaping. In addition, the Town will be responsible for converting space in the rear of the Administration Building to public restrooms, which renovation will be handled in house. Councilman Mimplitsch moved that the Town proceed with the renovations of that space. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

S-Bridge Truss - Work has begun on installing the S-Bridge Truss

West Hertford Historic District - The Town is proceeding with getting West Hertford declared an Historic District. We are in the process of preparing the RFP for the survey to be done. Especially since we don't know what the costs will be, we are separating the survey from the nomination process that comes next. The H-CAT Housing subcommittee also prepared a letter to Council indicating that they see this as a priority and asking the Town to pursue it.

4th of July Fireworks - Everyone needs to be reminded that the Town does not assume responsibility for the July 4th fireworks. Historically it has been the initiative and efforts of private individuals. Those who previously did it are no longer able, thus we did not have any last year. If there are others who would like to step up, this is the time to start planning.

Spray Field – The permit for the spray field has now been rescinded.

New positions – Manager Cole has hired an Assistant to the Manager who will be starting on Thursday of this week. There is also a need to hire a part -time planner to concentrate on the Main Street initiative.

ADA Compliance for Curbs – We have received a letter from the Department of Transportation that they have funds to bring intersection curbs into ADA compliance. We can provide them a list of the locations we want brought into compliance, but we must provide a 20% match. We have no idea what the costs would be. Manager Cole will look into this further.

Junked cars – our designated Nuisance Enforcement Officer will be working on enforcement of the ordinances that apply to junked/abandoned/nuisance vehicles. We still need to update the Town Ordinance to change the authorized official from the police chief to the nuisance enforcement officer.

Demolition of houses - We currently have five houses that we have referred to the County Building Inspector to inspect and, if appropriate, to begin the process for demolition.

Council's Reports/Concerns

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges in his capacity as the finance officer explained that he developed a tool to facilitate an ongoing comparison between our current revenue, especially utilities, and our expenditures to date, instead of waiting until it is time to work on the budget for the following year. This allows us to make adjustments, if possible, in our spending mid-year. First Tryon is also moving forward with their model which will look at this in more detail, more granulated. He also reported that LGC is using us as a test site for a new template they have developed for use in the budgeting process. He thanked Rhonda Waters and those on her H-CAT Housing Subcommittee for arranging the upcoming meeting with those coming to speak to us about how to build new housing. He stated that he met with some of the downtown developers and thanked them. Chris Miller who just purchased commercial property downtown wants to meet with us. And he has spoken with Lem Helms. He thanked Public Works for keeping things running during the inclement weather around Christmas. He thanked Allison Platt and Manager Cole for the work on the Rural Transformation Grant. He attended the holiday luncheon for staff and the food was great. He also thanked the residents on Front & Church streets for their Christmas tree decorations.

Councilman Mimplitsch commented on the courthouse display and thanked Sheriff White and the County Manager for making that beautiful display possible. He also thanked all those who dressed up and thanked Manager Cole. He thanked Drew Woodard, Fire Chief for his Department's willingness to wait on getting a new fire truck. He also spoke about what a joy it has been to work with this Council.

Mayor Brown thanked Council for the flowers. She said Seeds of Success (SOS) was having a retreat this week regarding their activity calendar. She was meeting with the Superintendent. SOS wants to offer more hours for the youth. She expressed concern about transportation for the children from Wynne Fork to the Community Center where SOS meets. She has contacted Ms. Holley, director of Hertford Housing Authority regarding a Town Hall for community engagement. She also indicated that she met with Dr. Bagwell, President of College of the Albemarle regarding partnerships for volunteers and internships. She would like to see high school students involved as volunteers also.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 1st at 3pm, the Friends of the Library Black History Month Program will offer readings from literature and its current relevance. The readers will be the Honorable Janice McKenzie Cole, Mayor Earnell Brown, Mr. Keith Rouse, and Mr. Ed Sanford.

On the motion of Mayor Pro Tem Ashley Hodges and second of Councilman Mimplitsch the meeting was adjourned with a unanimous vote.

Meeting ended at 7:35pm