

Town of Hertford
Work Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, January 23, 2023 – 6:00PM
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 (also by Facebook) on Monday, January 23, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Earnell Brown, Mayor
Jerry Mimplitsch
Connie Brothers

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem
Sandra Anderson

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Interim Town Manager
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 Councilman Mimplitsch, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges to approve the agenda with one change, that we go into Closed Session pursuant to §143.318.11(a) (5) and (6). Councilman Mimplitsch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEE

Manager Cole introduced Doris Walton, Assistant to the Town Manager. Ms. Walton brings a wealth of experience in this position as she previously served as Assistant to the Town Manager in Elizabeth City.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

- a) **Request to sell Town owned property at 213 and 215 West Grubb Street** – Mayor Brown asked Council to discuss the sale of the properties at 213 and 215 West Grubb Street as per an email from a resident who currently owns adjacent property to those lots. Councilwoman Anderson stated a neutral position but would have no issue with selling the lots. Councilman Mimplitsch is against the

sale of the lots for the purpose of the potential buyer to extend his current property/yard. Mayor Pro Tem concurred and stated that although the Town does not have a plan for these lots at this time, we should not sell. Councilwoman Brothers asked if the email from the interested buyer included a plan for those lots, but it did not. Manager Cole said he told her he wanted to extend his yard. Manager Cole expressed concern of land being purchased because of speculation that property values will increase in time and concern about flooding issues on those lots as they are low-lying. Mayor Pro Tem agreed with Manager Cole regarding the flooding issue. The drainage infrastructure is across Grubb Street near those lots, and as part of the infrastructure study being done and the sink issues on Grubb Street, if those lots needed to be dug up, the Town would be facing easements and allowances to do so if the lots were sold. Mayor Brown stated that the flooding on Grubb Street is visible during rainy weather. She also said that because of the infrastructure work happening, the Riverfront project, and the interested buyer having no plans for the lots other than to extend his property/yard, that she is not in favor of selling those lots. Councilman Mimlitsch agreed with Mayor Brown and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges regarding the flooding issues and the Riverfront project. Mayor Brown asked for a motion how Council would like to move forward. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to direct Manager Cole not to sell the referenced lots at this time. Councilman Mimlitsch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **WithersRavenel Task Order #7** – Manager Cole explained that this is the task order for the AIA Grant for Sewer Assessment (\$150,000). Council has previously approved Task Orders 1-4. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to accept Task Order #7 as presented. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- b) **Budget Amendment** – Manager Cole explained that wayfinding signage is being placed on Hwy 17 at a cost of \$32,282.89. The County is partnering with us on this and paying approximately one third, or \$10,000. Manager Cole is asking to use money out of the General Fund for the signage due to other expenses the Town has that are not fixed amounts (supplies for the public restroom renovations) that will be funded through Planning. Mayor Brown asked for a motion to approve Budget Amendment #FY23-7. Councilman Mimlitsch made the motion and Councilwoman Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- c) **Manager's Update**– Manager Cole informed Council that our surplus property has been sold except for one item that was not bid on. The property sold for \$26,200. The online auction is set up so that bids have to be accepted within 24 hours, so Manager Cole accepted them. She wanted to thank Jeremy Haislip at

Public Works for identifying the items and Sarah Nixon and Harry Sanchez for researching the cost of these items.

COUNCIL'S REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilwoman Brothers announced that she is back after being out sick and ready to work. She thanked Manager Cole for the long hours and hard work she puts in for the Town. In December, during the extreme cold weather over Christmas, she received a message from Jonathon Nixon in reference to those temperatures. Councilwoman Brothers drove around town checking on Hertford citizens and seniors to ensure they were okay and asking if they needed anything. She did find people without shelter behind a store. She was able to provide them with care packages (consisting of blankets, towels, socks, gloves, personal care items, and snacks) that she keeps in her car. Councilwoman Brothers was contacted by Elizabeth City asking if we were able to take in people who were looking for shelter. Hertford doesn't have such accommodations, so those people did find shelter in Elizabeth City. Edenton and Gates County have also inquired if Hertford has a place for those seeking shelter. Councilwoman Brothers asked if there is a place in town that could provide shelter to those in need when the temperature drops dangerously low? There are people in dilapidated homes with no utilities and squatters who are also in need. Councilwoman Brothers said she was able to provide meals for about 45 families. She also wanted to thank Mrs. Muriel Harmon for helping a family. Mayor Brown suggested that shelter in extreme cold is a topic to be discussed at the retreat and Council working collectively to provide for the residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges is continuing to work and prepare with Manager Cole for budget season, collecting information and documents. He thanked Rhonda Waters for putting together the HCAT subcommittee meeting today with retired Eddie Miller and Area Specialist Calvin Askew, both from the USDA, and thanked the Public Library for the meeting space. They provided a lot of information for improving housing for Hertford. County Manager Heath, Manager Cole, Doris Walton, and three members of Council attended.

Councilwoman Anderson is in the process of organizing volunteers for committees, organizations, nonprofits, and businesses. She is contacting them to find out what their needs are, what skills they are looking for in volunteers, and what hours they are needed. Susan Cox was able to provide her with a list of business that she is contacting. Councilwoman Anderson would like to get high school students involved who need volunteer hours for graduation, maybe college students. Currently, there seems to be the same people volunteering for most events, and they are getting burned out.

Councilman Mimplitsch attended the TDA board meeting last week. Stacey Layden has created a magazine to hand out to owners of Airbnbs and Bed and Breakfasts that will advertise local businesses. He recognized her hard work at TDA and all the events Hertford has had since August. He noted that the holiday lighting at the courthouse was amazing, and the Sheriff's Department has a 5-year plan to grow that display so it will encompass all downtown Hertford. He also reported that the lights came down from the courthouse with no damage to the building. Councilman Mimplitsch was glad to have all Council members back healthy.

Mayor Brown said the Martin Luther King, Jr. parade was held on January 16. She was impressed with the parade which consisted of 15-20 vehicles in the motorcade. The current route of the parade is from the high school to Winfall. Sheriff White had suggested changing the route in the future, to begin in Winfall and end on King Street. Mayor Brown likes that suggestion and would like to add speakers on trucks as the parade goes through town to broadcast Dr. King's speeches. The Chamber of Commerce has rented three out of their four office spaces, and the fourth spot is to be filled soon. On January 31st at 11:00 AM there will be a ribbon cutting for Drive on Drive, a new business providing driving lessons. There will be a Meet and Greet, 10:00 AM on January 25th at the Hertford Housing Authority. Mayor Brown thanked Ms. Arnesa Holley for hosting the event. There will be a Q&A and if you cannot attend or prefer to submit your question in writing, there are flyers available to do so.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Brown read the announcements.

On the motion of Mayor Pro Tem Ashley Hodges and second of Councilman Mimplitsch to enter Closed Session pursuant to §143.318.11(a) (5) and (6) with a unanimous vote.

Council entered Closed Session at 6:41 PM.

Council came out of Closed Session at 7:12 PM.

Mayor Brown asked for a motion to retain Interim Town Manager as the permanent Town Manager of Hertford. Mayor Pro Tem made the motion and Councilman Mimplitsch seconded. Council unanimously voted to retain Interim Town Manager Cole as permanent Town Manager.

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to adjourn, and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded. The motion passed unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.