

Town of Hertford
Regular Session Meeting
Monday, February 10, 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, February 10, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

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

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 Councilman Rouse, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of a Closed Session (following Council Reports) pursuant to §143-318.11 (a)(3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion, and it carried, 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of 1) January 13, 2025 Regular Session Minutes; and 2) January 27, 2025 Work Session Minutes was made by Councilman Rouse. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

CITIZENS CONCERNS

Barb Morris asked Council if there was an update in the status of the outstanding delinquent balance on Albemarle Landings utility account. Ms. Morris attended an event at the Perquimans County Senior Center and the representative from Albemarle Landings assured Ms. Morris that their delinquent utility bill has already been paid in full.

Chris Lane, on behalf of the Perquimans County committee for America's 250th, requested the closing of the S-bridge and Church Street (leading into downtown) on December 5, 2025, for the opening of the Grand Illumination. They are organizing a reenactment of Betsy Dowdy riding across the bridge to meet General Skinner and hand him a letter warning that the British are coming. This will kick off the Grand Illumination celebration. The bridge and Church Street closure would only be for a very short time.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

a) National Fitness Campaign Update

Manager Walton reminded Council that she first brought the National Fitness Campaign proposal to them at our January 13th session. At that time, Council requested additional input from the residents regarding their opinion of a fitness court. Manager Walton told Council that over 900+ surveys were mailed out with utility bills last month. Out of all those sent, 25 completed surveys were returned. All surveys combined indicate 60% of the residents support the fitness court, and 40% do not. Some of the comments indicate that the residents are unaware of how this will be funded and think that infrastructure grant money or other designated funding would be used for this. Manager Walton stressed that is NOT the case and the Town will be applying for grants and searching for partnerships to fund this. Council had specific questions about the fitness court (maintenance, configuration, etc.) so Manager Walton will be scheduling a streamed meeting with our Fitness Campaign representative, James, and Council. In the meantime, due to grant application deadlines, Council wants Manager Walton to move forward although they have not decided on the fitness court.

Councilman Rouse made a motion to direct Manager Walton to move forward on the grant application and authorizes her to find additional grant funding. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded his motion, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Adopt CDBG-I Required Policies

Manager Walton explained these are the policies and all the requirements needed to be in compliance that we need to have in place so that we can move forward with the Community Development Block Grant. Mayor Hodges added that we have dealt with these issues before with CDBG-I.

A motion to accept CDBG-I Program Manual Resolution was made by Councilwoman Brothers and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0

b) Accept Bid for 305/307 Woodland Avenue Property

During the 3rd round of the upset bid process, which ended at 5 PM on February 3, 2025, we did not receive any bids to upset the high bid from 2nd round of \$21,500 from Leary Winslow.

A motion to accept Leary Winslow's bid of \$21,500 for 305/307 Woodland Avenue property was made by Councilwoman Waters and Councilman Rouse seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0

c) Upset Bid for Railroad Properties 4th Round

101, 103, and 105 Railroad properties were put up for a 3rd round in the upset bid process. Bidding ended at 5 PM on February 3, 2025. During the 3rd round, we received a bid of \$25,100 from Gracie Felton that upset the previous high bid of \$22,000. 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 in the upset bid process.

A motion to move forward with the 4th round of the upset bid process for the Railroad properties was made by Councilman Rouse and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

d) Budget Amendments

FY25-29 – After Budget Amendment FY25-27 was approved, we learned that the cost of checks was going to be \$335.11 instead of \$100.00 due to the extra language that is required to be printed on the checks.

Decrease Wastewater Contingency	51-5870-577	\$235.11
Increase Wastewater Transfer Out	51-5870-741	\$235.11
Increase CDBG Transfer In	41-4951	\$235.11
Increase CDBG Engineering & Design	41-5860-562	\$235.11

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-29. Councilwoman Brothers seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

FY25-30 – Funds need to be added to the Tax Collection Fee line due to the way we need to post these fees in Black Mountain Software.

Decrease Admin Property Insurance	10-5210-525	\$2,247.70
Decrease Admin Utilities	10-5210-526	\$5,752.30
Increase Tax Collection Fee	10-5210-537	\$8,000.00

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-30. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

e) Adopt ABC Board Resolution

Manager Walton gave Council a copy of the ABC Board Resolution that the County's attorney prepared. Our attorney, John Leidy, has made some changes, which are in red. Manager Walton asked Council to review it with Attorney Leidy's changes and if there are no objections from Council, we can adopt the resolution at our next meeting.

f) Discussion of Council Retreat March 1, 2025

Manager Walton stated that the theme of the Council Retreat will be "Reimagining the Town of Hertford." She asked Council to bring forth ideas of what they would like to see changed within the Town. Manager Walton reminded Council that last year we discussed the Town's 35-year outlook through the eyes of the Town Staff. This year we would like to see what Council would like to have accomplished with the current Riverfront plan. What do you want to change or see developed within the year or next two years? The Council Retreat will be held at the Albemarle Commission on Saturday, March 1, 2025, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM.

MANAGER'S UPDATE

Manager Walton shared that she and Mayor Hodges met with County Commissioner Heath and Wallace Nelson about the Industrial Park. The County and the Town shared what each entity's part is and our respective visions. It was a good conversation and Manager Walton feels that she and County Manager Heath have a good rapport. County Commission Nelson is supportive of keeping the lines of communication open between the County and Town.

Attorney Leidy stated that an agreement between the Town and Albemarle Landings has not been reached. The Albemarle Landings continues to carry a significant delinquent balance on their utility account with the Town.

COUNCIL CONCERNS/REPORTS

Councilman Rouse said he is often asked when work will begin on the Riverfront. Mayor Hodges stated that the timing is not known.

Councilwoman Waters had no report. She thanked everyone for their thoughts and prayers.

Councilwoman Brothers stated that the NBA will be hosting a basketball camp in Perquimans County. There will be NBA players there working with the kids. They would like to have a basketball game with Chowan, Perquimans, and Pasquotank Counties following the camp. She has another meeting regarding this and will keep us posted on date and location.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson had no report.

Mayor Hodges stated that there was a meeting with the County. Topics discussed included the ABC Board and covering the County under the Town's license as the state made it clear that they would not be issuing an ABC License to the County, legislative priorities for the Town and County, Hertford State Theatre, School Board, etc. Mayor Hodges asked Commissioner Nelson and Manager Heath for a commitment to enforce codes, and they agreed to help. Mayor Hodges noted that the County Attorney is also the Mayor of Edenton, so his perspective is interesting. There was a meeting with Harbor Town Cruises to discuss the \$2M funding that we and the other harbor towns were awarded. Peter Thompson and Nick Didow were there and explained that Harbor Town has the authority to approve contracts and execute payments, not the towns. The Town should not be issuing any RFQs as we have no authority over that money and how it is used. Mayor Hodges will have a meeting regarding the parking requirements for apartments above our downtown businesses. There will be a follow-up meeting regarding the visit and tour to the Beacon Theatre in Hopewell that he, Manager Cole, and Janice McKenzie Cole participated in. Mayor Hodges would like to include Council in a visit to the renovated Turnage Theatre in Little Washington later in the month. He noted that their theatre also hosts plays, arts, and events for the community.

Councilwoman Brothers asked Manager Walton if there were any updates on the meeting she was scheduling with the pallet business owner, the fire marshal, and building inspector. Manager Walton is expecting they will have that meeting next week.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson motioned to go into Closed Session pursuant to §143-318.11 (a)(3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged. Councilwoman Waters seconded the motion to enter Closed Session. The motion carried, 4-0. Council went into Closed Session at 7:10 PM.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Council returned to Open Session at 7:35 PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Waters and Councilwoman Brothers to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 PM. The motion passed unanimously.