

**Town of Hertford**  
Regular Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)  
Monday, February 12, 2024 – 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 February 12, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**STAFF PRESENT**

Janice McKenzie Cole, Town Manager  
Doris Walton, Assistant Town Manager  
Gina Durante, Town Clerk  
John Leidy, Attorney

A quorum was present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brothers to approve the agenda as presented, and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously, 5-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the minutes from January 8, 2024, Regular Session and January 22, 2024, Work Session, and Budget Amendment FY24-18, Official Report of Manager's Transfer Funds for adjustments made by Manager Cole for the uniformity of our recordkeeping (with an official report at a later meeting). Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion and it passed, 5-0.

**CITIZEN CONCERNS**

None

**CONTINUED BUSINESS**

- a) **Request for Zoning Change for Don Juan Property** – Manager Cole reminded Council that Mr. Joseph Anlauf of Anlauf Engineering had come before them November 13, 2023, requesting that an area at Don Juan be rezoned from commercial to R6 because the PZBOA did not make a ruling. Council discussed the rezoning as they have viewed other R6 developments. Council is concerned that R6 housing lots may be too congested. Mayor Hodges stated that if Council doesn't approve the rezoning of Don Juan property to R6, Mr. Anlauf can return to the PZBOA and request it be rezoned to an R8 or R10.

Councilwoman Waters motioned to disapprove the request by Mr. Anlauf to rezone the Don Juan property from commercial to R6. Councilwoman Brothers seconded her motion. The motion to disapprove carried, 5-0.

- b) **Amend Ordinance FY24-7 Street Closures for Hertford on Ice** – Manager Cole was advised by the vendor that additional set-up time is required for Hertford on Ice. She is asking Council to approve the Amended Ordinance FY24-7 to close the noted streets 11:00 AM on February 16, 2024 - 11:59PM on February 17, 2024.

Motion was made and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson and Councilman Rouse to approve the amended Ordinance FY24-7 to begin street closures on February 16, 2024 at 11:00 AM. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) **Purchase of foreclosed property from County** – Manager Cole informed Council that the dilapidated property at 513 West Grubb Street has been turned over by ZLS to the County. ZLS held a foreclosure sale on the property with no bids, so the property was reverted to the county. The Town has been mowing this property for years and the unpaid mowing fees total \$39,000. Manager Cole shared her concern of someone buying this property from the County and doing nothing with it. She explained that if the Town were to purchase the property, the sale from the Town to a potential buyer could have stipulations and control that the buyer agrees to have the interior and exterior of the property rehabilitated and brought up to code in a reasonable amount of time. This property would also contribute to the West Hertford Historic District. The County has agreed to sell it to the Town for the taxes due and attorney fees, totaling \$8,623.21.

A motion and a second were made by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson and Councilwoman Waters to purchase 513 West Grubb Street from the County for \$8,623.21. The motion passed, 5-0.

- b) **Budget Amendment FY24-19** – Manager Cole asked Council to approve Budget Amendment FY24-19 to take money out of the fund balance to purchase 513 West Grubb Street from the County. When the property is sold, money will go back into the fund balance.

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve BA FY24-19 to purchase 513 West Grubb Street for \$8,623.21 out of the fund balance. Councilwoman Waters seconded and the motion carried, 5-0.

- c) **Resolution of Intent to Close Punch Alley between Front Street and the Water** – Manager Cole told Council that she has been approached by the Front Street neighbors who live on either side of an unpaved grass lot that is part of Punch Alley, to turn that lot over to them. The two homeowners have maintained and mowed the lot for many years. This part of Punch Alley extends to the river from Front Street but does not provide access to the river. The Town does not maintain this lot nor are any utilities associated with it. Manager Cole advised Council that there is a statute that will allow it to be permanently closed. The Town is required to post the intent to close in the newspaper for four weeks, post intent to close in the alley, and inform the adjacent residents. Once those actions have been completed, the Town will hold a public hearing. Attorney Leidy stated that this part of Punch Alley can be closed by a resolution if nobody who is served by that road is deprived of any access, which is the case here. Manager Cole further explained that a public hearing could be scheduled in conjunction with the April 8 Regular Session Meeting so that the notice in the newspaper will fulfill the required 4 week running. If Council votes to close that part of Punch Alley, by statute you can give the property to those homeowners on either side with rights to the middle. The Homeowners would be responsible for having the lot surveyed. There will be no financial compensation to the Town.

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Brothers and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson to approve FY24-12 Resolution of Intent to Close Punch Alley between Front Street and the river. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

- d) **World Water Day Walk** – Manager Cole explained to Council that a group of students from Perquimans County High School will have a simulated walk for water. Proceeds raised from this event will go towards sponsoring a well in a remote African village where there is not clean drinking water. The event will be held on March 22, 2024, and no street closures will be required. The participants will walk from the Hall of Fame Square to Market Street, Covent Gardens, Grubb Street, and back to Church Street where the walk started.

Councilman Rouse motioned to approve the event and Councilwoman Waters seconded. The motion carried, 5-0.

- e) **Budget Schedule** – Manager Cole gave Council a proposed schedule for the FY2024-2025 Budget season. The schedule will also familiarize Council with the staff schedule. The Public Hearing is scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup> at the Work Session Meeting and Budget Approval for June 10<sup>th</sup> at the Regular Session Meeting.

f) **Conventions:**

1. National League of Cities Congressional City Conference/Hill Day  
March 11-13, 2024, Washington D.C.
2. Town & State Dinner 2024 from Jones Street to Main Street  
April 10, 2024, Goldsboro

Manager Cole and Council discussed the two conventions coming up in the next two months. Mayor Hodges began the discussion stating that he is unable to attend either convention. It was expressed and agreed that the event in WDC would be very costly and the opportunity to speak with our legislatures would be very limited as there will be many attendees vying for the opportunity to speak with them. Manager Cole, Councilwoman Waters, Councilwoman Brothers, Councilman Rouse, and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson will attend the Town and State Dinner in Goldsboro where our representative Ed Goodwin and other members of the State Legislature will be on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

**MANAGER'S UPDATE**

- a) Around February 22<sup>nd</sup> the tax revaluations will be mailed to homeowners. By the time there are appeals and certify it, it will probably be the end of March when we know the value of town properties, which is important as we work forward into budgeting.
- b) Work is still being done for the Hertford on Ice, Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are still needed for the event. Mayor Hodges thanked Melton Grove for providing their vans to shuttle guests from parking lots to the event. Some of the downtown merchants agreed to contribute and purchase some wristbands and there will be a drawing at 5 PM on Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> to win those wristbands (\$30 value) for the Hertford on Ice. Susan Cox of Downtown Hertford is the contact for those who may not be able to purchase tickets/wristbands. SOS has made an appeal through the Chamber of Commerce for people to contribute so that kids in their program can attend. A few churches are purchasing wristbands to give to their members. The event is fundraiser and proceeds will benefit Downtown Hertford.
- c) More new businesses have opened and are planning to open in Hertford. Pirates Plunder opened downtown, and a restaurant is opening in the yellow building near the intersection of Dobbs on Church Street. On the 17/Ocean Highway, the Peppered Peacock will open where the Open Door Pantry used to be.

**COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS**

Councilwoman Waters stated that she and Councilman Rouse attended the Essentials of Municipal Government training January 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. They were able to sit with council members from Winfall. The training was informative, and they had good interactions with other council people from across the state. Councilwoman Waters is attending UAL training tomorrow, February 13. On Friday she was invited by Manager Cole to go on a grand tour of Edenton with Samuel Dixon, which included viewing newer renovations around their town. He also took them into the Hayes Farm which is in its initial stages of renovations. They discussed ideas for Hertford.

Councilwoman Brothers thanked those that attended the meeting. She expressed concern that after our last rain and windstorm some of the trees and utility poles in Town have shifted and the possible negative impact those could cause around town. Councilwoman Brothers thanked everyone for their prayers for her family's loss.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson said the Alpha Kappa Alpha Founders Day had a great turnout. She noted that Mayor Hodges welcomed the sorority and had a lot of knowledge of AKA and honored the sorority with a proclamation. She thanked the businesses that stayed open, and she gave the sorority information about Hertford on Ice, February 17<sup>th</sup>.

Councilman Rouse was in Edenton on Friday and met with Miss Mitchell of the Boys and Girls Club. He was there at 3 PM when the kids were bussed in. Approximately 150 kids per day attend. Councilman Rouse was very impressed with the operation of the program and that the kids are provided with a full meal each day that they are at the Club. He looks forward to working again with Miss Mitchell and meeting with Miss Lassiter in Hertford. He plans to visit Elizabeth City's Boys and Girls Club as well. Councilman Rouse looks forward to seeing a youth program in Hertford grow and explore grant opportunities and/or the Boys and Girls Club National Fund.

Councilwoman Brothers mentioned a Town Resolution to recognize our first responders the third Saturday of every August. Mayor Hodges acknowledged that the resolution is still in place, and we will plan an event to recognize them.

Mayor Hodges noted that the Alpha Kappa Alpha Founders Day was a great event. He suggested that if they don't already, the Perquimans County History Museum should have material about the sorority as their accomplishments are national and global. He thanked them for coming to Hertford. He has been getting feedback from citizens regarding speeding and noise enforcement. There are ongoing talks with the Perquimans Sheriff regarding these issues and how they are being enforced by them. There was a citizen suggestion that the speed limit on South Church Street from Dobbs to the bridge be reduced from 35 MPH to 25 MPH because it is a residential area. The Town would need to discuss that with NCDOT. Mayor Hodges said that he and Councilman Rouse met with Dr. Turner and Mr. Bunch about activities at the high school. He thought that starting a youth council to involve young people in government

to familiarize them with it at a young age would be beneficial. Mayor Hodges has spoken to a representative at Congressman Davis's about taking a group of high school students to Congressman Davis's office in Greenville to meet the Congressman and engage with his staff. He attended the NC Mayors Association Meeting on Wednesday and Thursday. It was informative and interesting. Democratic Representative Amos Quick, the Democrat Whip, and Republican Representative Stephen Ross, Chairman of the Finance Committee, spoke about the most effective way to engage with them and other towns spoke about how they go about engaging with them. He also spoke with towns about economic development. It seems towns are either trying to grow or "busting at the seams with growth" in North Carolina.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to:

- a) to discuss a matter that is confidential pursuant to State law (G.S. §143-318.11(a)(1),
- b) to consult with the Town attorney to preserve the attorney-client privilege (G.S. §143-318.11(a)(3),
- c) to approve minutes of previous closed sessions.

Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion, and it carried 5-0.

Mayor Hodges called for a five-minute recess before entering Closed Session at 7:29 PM.

### **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

Council returned to Open Session at 8:07 PM.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilwoman Waters moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.