

Town of Hertford
Work Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, February 26, 2024 – 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, February 26, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Ashley Hodges, Mayor
Connie Brothers
Rhonda Waters

Sandra Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem
Keith Rouse

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Town Manager
Doris Walton, Assistant Town Manager
Ashley Eure, Finance Director
Gina Durante, Town Clerk

A quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brothers to approve the agenda. Councilwoman Waters seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT

Perry James, Senior Consultant of Municipal Accounting Services -
Mr. James is a Senior Staff member of the League who played an integral role in the creation and implementation of the MAS program and Black Mountain Software. His presentation on "How Your MAS Investment Increases the Effectiveness of Your Town's Financial Management Program" included the following 10 Keys:

- 1) Insist On and Validate Organizational Excellence
- 2) Budgeting Conservatively and Accurately
- 3) Oversee a Timely Audit Process

- 4) Manage Actual-to-Budget Results Each Month
- 5) Manage Fund Balance
- 6) Verify Strong Internal Controls
- 7) Ensure Pre-Auditing is Performed
- 8) Know When Debit is an Appropriate Tool
- 9) Manage Assets and Liabilities
- 10) Formalize Oversight Duties of the Board

Mr. James presented Finance Director Ashley Eure with a certificate of achievement “For the satisfactory completion of the conversion to Black Mountain Software as part of the NC League of Municipalities Municipal Accounting Services program. The dedication shown to improve your municipality’s fiscal responsibility and your valuable contributions toward the successful implementation of the Municipal Accounting Services program are admirable.”

He also presented Mayor Hodges with a plaque for recognition of the Town of Hertford “As a Successful Participant in the Municipal Accounting Services Program. For its commitment to the pursuit of excellence in municipal financial management and successfully completing the software conversion process, which is designed to strengthen the town’s fiscal operation.”

CONTINUED BUSINESS

- a) **Public Works Building** – Manager Cole presented Council with two bids for the new Public Works Building to be located at Meads Circle. She recommends the lower bid of \$411,860 from Classic Steel Buildings. The bid is basically for the building shell, a 60’ x 200’ steel building constructed with insulation and doors installed. Staff at Public Works will be completing the interior work and outfitting it to meet their needs.

Manager Cole asked Assistant Manager Walton to advise Council of two options suggested for funding the new building and that a budget amendment would be needed. The first option is to fund the entire purchase amount of \$411,860 out of the fund balance, which is currently \$1.8 million. The second option is to fund \$311,860 out of the Fund Balance and the remaining \$100,000 out of the Electric Capital Outlay because the Electric Department will be housed in the new building. Our Fund Balance is currently at 36% (of Operating Costs), and if Council chooses option 1 that will leave our Fund Balance at 28%; if they choose option 2, our fund balance will be 30% and the Electric Capital Outlay balance will be \$105,000. Assistant Manager Walton, Manager Cole and Council discussed the options. Mayor Hodges expressed his pleasure that the Town is acquiring no debt with this purchase.

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Brothers and Councilman Rouse to accept the bid from Classic Steel Buildings for \$411,860. The motion carried, 5-0.

Mayor Hodges then addressed (6b) Budget Amendment FY24-21: He stated that this is the budget amendment for transferring \$311,860.00 from the Fund Balance to Streets Capital Outlay to purchase the new Public Works Building.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Waters to approve Budget Amendment FY24-21 as written. Councilwoman Brothers seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Proposed 2024 Audit Contract – Manager Cole gave Council the proposed contract for the next audit. Once Council approves the contract, it still must be approved by the Local Government Commission before it is valid. Mayor Hodges asked why there is an increase in the audit fees for 2024 and Finance Director Eure explained it is due to grants we have received and there is more work in the audits for those.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to approve the 2024 audit contract as presented and Councilwoman Waters seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b) Budget Amendments –

FY24-20: Manager Cole explained this amendment requires Council's approval to move funds, \$697.29, from Contingencies to Property & Liability Insurance line to cover the cost of a claim for damage to an automobile due to a Town water leak.

Councilwoman Brothers and Councilwoman Waters made a motion and a second to approve Budget Amendment FY24-20. The motion carried, 5-0.

MANAGER'S UPDATE

- Manager Cole received an email from Harbor Town Cruises that our docks at the municipal building are sufficient for the ferry but neither of our docks are sufficient for the dinner boats. Boats are expected to start running in May. We can now start planning how to use the \$2 million that was earmarked by the legislature for each of the Harbor towns.
- Manager Cole contacted DOT and the S-bridge truss is ready to be turned over to Hertford. DOT has completed what they needed to do on the truss and are

now exploring the formality for transferring it to the Town. We are planning to use some of the \$2 million from the legislature to attach us to the S-bridge truss as that would be dock work.

- On the Town's behalf, Withers Ravenel has applied for the LASII grant and a grant through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. On February 20th, SWIA (the appointing committee) awarded Hertford \$4.8 million through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. It is part grant and part loan, \$1.5 million is the grant and \$3.3 million is a loan. The Town does not have to make an immediate decision to accept the \$4.8 as there is no time constraint on the grant. Withers Ravenel suggested that we re-apply for the CDBGI grant because we are now eligible since our SCADA system is running. The CDBGI grant has a limit of \$3 million. If we were to receive the CDBGI, we could accept the \$1.5 million from CWSRF and we would have our funding for the repairs. An application was also submitted for the LASII grant for stormwater. Withers Ravenel feels if we hold off, there may be additional money from the legislature, and so they're not going to make those determinations until July.

COUNCIL'S REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilwoman Waters stated that she has received a lot of positive feedback about Hertford on Ice. She attended UAL training on wastewater in Greenville, February 13th, with Finance Director Ashley Eure and Public Works Director Dave Forsythe. Councilwoman Waters said it was very informative and interesting.

Councilwoman Brothers thanked the citizens of Hertford for their continued support and those that attended the meeting. She expressed traffic concerns for vehicles turning left onto Market Street as they head from South Church Street towards downtown. Another concern is an 18-wheeler being parked on the north side of West Grubb Street near Perry Street and Woodland Street. Cars are unable to see around it as they are turning onto West Grubb Street. Councilwoman Brothers also asked for prayers for the family of former Councilwoman Jo Ann Morris after her passing, and former Councilman Frank Norman as he battles medical issues.

Councilman Rouse said that residents have expressed their concern to him regarding their utility rates. He advised them to attend the first Town Council meeting of the month so they may address their concerns to Council. Councilman Rouse continues to explore the Boys and Girls Club and establishing that organization in Hertford. There are still meetings he needs to schedule. He does see a need to have a program that includes teens that are 15, 16, and 17 years old. Councilman Rouse would like to see the club up and running by this summer.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson said that she, Diane Cangemi, and Jill Cohen met with Nick Didow and a group of MBA students from UNC Chapel Hill on Saturday. The purpose of the meeting was to come up with affordable, feasible things the town of Hertford, its businesses, and/or its entrepreneurs could do to attract and welcome more tourists.

They met in groups spending time with herself, Diane, and Jill and then continued to rotate until they met with each group of students. The students asked what kinds of things they thought could bring tourists and people to Hertford - festivals, concerts, activities for youth, housing, adult education, vocational courses in our schools. Following that, they walked through downtown, through Barrows Alley, and to the Hertford Marina. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson explained that we are trying to beautify that area and thinking of ways to welcome the ferry passengers to Hertford.

Mayor Hodges asked Manager Cole if she heard anything about operations of the new S-bridge from DOT, but she has not. There is a meeting with the Chairman, Vice Chairman, County Manager, and commissioners on Thursday at 4 PM. He thanked Downtown Hertford, Public Works, Manager Cole, Finance Director Ashley Eure, and Assistant Manager Doris Walton for all their hard work for Hertford on Ice. Mayor Hodges thanked all for their prayers and well wishes as his father-in-law recovers from heart surgery.

Councilwoman Brothers noted that Friday, March 1st at 9:30 AM there will be a cemetery clean-up at both Roadside and Cedarwood cemeteries. Volunteers are welcome to help.

Manager Cole reminded Council that March 2nd and March 3rd will be the Town Council Retreat at the Albemarle Commission Auditorium

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to adjourn, and Councilwoman Waters seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM.