

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Keith Rouse
Connie Brothers

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Sandra Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem
Rhonda Waters

STAFF PRESENT

Doris Walton, Interim Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
Ashley Eure, Finance Director
Chad White, Public Works Director
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 Mayor Hodges, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Brothers motioned to approve the agenda, and Councilman Rouse seconded her motion. The motion carried 3-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of 1) February 10, 2025 Regular Session Minutes; and 2) February 24, 2025 Work Session Minutes was made by Councilwoman Brothers. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed, 3-0.

CITIZENS CONCERNS

None

CONTINUED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

a) Public Works Budget Requests Presentation for FY25-56

Finance Director Ashley Eure and Public Works Director Chad White presented Council with budget requests for Public Works FY25-26. Director Eure highlighted the budget changes from last year in the following departments:

Streets

Solid Waste

Water

Water Distribution

Sewer Collection

Sewer Treatment

Electric

Council discussed and had questions answered by the presenters.

b) Resolution to Close Punch Alley between Front Street and the Perquimans River

A resolution for the intent to close Punch Alley between the Perquimans River and Front Street was adopted in February 2024. The survey of the property is completed, and the property is ready to be conveyed to the owners on each side. The resolution for the closing of Punch Alley is the last item to be approved so that the property can be conveyed.

The first and second motions were made by Councilwoman Brothers and Councilman Rouse. The motion passed, 3-0.

c) Approve Environ-Tech for Meads Lift Station Relocation and Sewer Rehabilitation – Contract and Resolution

After two rounds of bidding, the Town received only one bid from Environ-Tech Unlimited Construction Services, LLC. Withers Ravenel recommends the award of the contract to go to them.

Councilwoman Brothers motioned to approve the contract with Environ-Tech for the Meads Lift Station Relocation and Sewer Rehabilitation. Councilman Rouse seconded her motion and it carried, 3-0.

d) Approve Environ-Tech for the Collection System Improvements/WWTP – Resolution

After two rounds of bidding, the Town received three bids for Collection System Improvements. Withers Ravenel reviewed the three bids and now recommends the award of the contract to go to Environ-Tech Unlimited Construction Services, LLC, and they also provided the lowest bid.

Councilman Rouse motioned to approve the contract with Environ-Tech for the Collection System Improvements. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion, and it passed, 3-0.

e) Approve 5th Round of Upset Bid Process for 101, 103, and 105 Railroad Avenue

The 4th Round of Upset Bid process for 101, 103, and 105 Railroad Avenue ended on March 3, 2025. Four bids were received with the highest bid to upset the current high bid of \$25,000 is \$31,000. Manager Walton explained that the Town can either take the properties off the market or are required to put the properties out for a 5th round of the Upset Bid process.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brothers to approve a 5th round for upset bids. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed 3-0.

f) Approval to Submit PARTF Grant for the Fitness Court

Manager Walton received confirmation from the NFC (National Fitness Campaign) that the Town received a grant from them in the amount of \$30K for the fitness court. Additional funding is still needed for the fitness court, so Manager Walton is seeking Council's approval to submit a bid for the PARTF Grant that has an application deadline of May 1st, 2025.

Councilman Rouse made a motion to authorize Manager Walton to move forward with the PARTF Grant application. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Brothers, and it passed unanimously, 3-0.

g) Budget Amendments

Budget Amendments FY25-34

- 1) Move funds from Drug Screening to Property Insurance to cover workman's comp claim payment.
- 2) Move funds from Supplies to Property Insurance to cover workman's comp. claim payment.
- 3) Move funds from Sewer Collections contingencies to Professional services to make payment to the railroad for our sewer lines that is on their easement.

- 4) Move funds from Sewer Collections fuel to Sewer collections supplies to purchase gravel and run electric lines to the new Pole building at the Sewer plant.

Move funds from Electric Contingencies to Bank fees to pay the bank fees for the rest of the year

Decrease Streets Drug screenings	10-5740-517	\$184.22
Increase Streets Property Insurance	10-5740-525	\$184.22
Decrease Fire Supplies	39-5400-551	\$112.22
Increase Fire Property Insurance	39-5400-525	\$112.22
Decrease Sewer Collections Contingencies	51-5860-577	\$2,000.00
Increase Sewer Professional Services	51-5860-511	\$2,000.00
Decrease Sewer Collections Fuel	51-5860-553	\$5,000.00
Increase Sewer Supplies	51-5860-551	\$5,000.00
Decrease Electric Contingencies	52-5900-577	\$1,500.00
Increase Electric Bank Fees	52-5900-532	\$1,500.00

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-34. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed, 3-0.

Budget Amendment FY25-35

Move funds from Fire Debt Services Principle to Fire Debt Services Interest because when the Fire Department was moved to their own fund from the General Fund, it did not transfer correctly.

Decrease Fire Debt Services Principle	39-6000-564	\$971.54
Increase Fire Debt Services Interest	39-6000-565	\$971.54

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-35. Councilwoman Brothers seconded, and the motion passed, 3-0.

Budget Amendment FY25-36

Move funds from Fund Balance to Professional Services to pay the Interlocal Risk Financing Fund of North Carolina for legal fees in a personnel matter.

Decrease Fund Balance	10-4999	\$10,000.00
Increase Admin Professional Services	10-5210-511	\$10,000.00

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-36. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed, 3-0.

h) Street Closure Ordinance for Betsy Fest April 26, 2025

Street Closure is required for the safety and enjoyment of the first annual Betsy Fest. Church Street will close from Grubb Street to Market Street, and Market Street to the Chamber of Commerce building.

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve Ordinance FY25-14. Councilwoman Brothers seconded, and the motion passed, 3-0

MANAGER'S UPDATE

Manager Walton informed Council that the NCLM is no longer offering staff medical insurance. They will still be offering Liability and Workman's Comp. Ashely Eure and Sarah Nixon are working to secure new and comparable medical insurance for the staff.

Manager Walton met with Senator Till's aides and discussed how under supported eastern NC is. She discussed Town projects, including the Hertford State Theatre, funding needs, expansion of waterlines needed for new homes to grow Hertford, and money for electric as substation transformers are very expensive. She felt that it was a productive meeting and he will connect with Manager Walton in a few weeks.

At the corner of Grubb and Church Streets, the white gas station and house next door have been sold. The new owner is motivated to do something good for the Town that will thrive. The owner is closing the gas station to public parking while work is being done.

We will be creating a Historic Preservation Commission Board. With the designation of Historic West Hertford, we need to be a certified local government and that includes having an HPC Board.

There was a meeting with the Hertford Housing Authority regarding how to understand and read the utility bill and a "chain of command" when issues arise. April 15th there will be a meeting to explain and show how smart meters work.

Harbor Town has stated that they will have a ferry available for rides during the Betsy Fest, April 26. People will have the opportunity to purchase tickets for a short ride. Manager Walton also met with Peter Thomson of Harbor Town to discuss the grant money our town received. Manager Walton expressed the upgrade on the docks that the Town wants. She asked Council to consider what their "wants" are for that grant money, so that she can convey that to Mr. Thomson as plans are being drawn up with our Town's vision. She was told there will be a preliminary drawing by July 1st.

COUNCIL CONCERNS/REPORTS

Councilwoman Brothers thanked everyone for their continued prayers for Councilwoman Waters and her family.

Councilman Rouse asked if there was an update regarding the old S-bridge Truss. Manager Walton has asked if the \$2M for the dock upgrades could be used to link the truss to our marina. She explained that where it is, it is not ADA compliant and we are looking for a design to get to it from Missing Mill Park, possibly using the old boardwalk. We are trying to be very creative with that \$2M but anything we do must align with Harbor Town's vision as well. Councilman Rouse asked if Hertford would do anything for our girls' high school basketball team participating in the state championship playoffs. He would like to see a victory celebration downtown for them.

Mayor Hodges noted that Mayor Pro Tem Anderson serves on the Downtown Hertford Board and is away at a Mainstreet Conference. He stated that the Town has been awarded an exceptional amount of grant money and expressed his gratitude for those awards. The Council held their annual retreat on March 1, 2025. Mayor Hodges also spoke about the meeting between HHA and Town leaders. He emphasized how important communication is between the residents, Town, and HHA Director. He thanked Public Works Department for their work and support during this most recent wind and rainstorm. Mayor Hodges shared that the DOT released a report and there is no mention of the conversion of the 17 Highway to the 87 Highway through their 2035 plan. Any property owners on the 17 should have no concern about the DOT acquiring your property until after 2036.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

CLOSED SESSION

Councilwoman Brothers 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. Councilman Rouse seconded the motion to enter Closed Session. The motion carried, 3-0. Council went into Closed Session at 7:38 PM.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Council returned to Open Session at 7:58 PM

ADJOURNMENT

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Brothers and Councilman Rouse to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 PM. The motion passed unanimously.