

**Town of Hertford**  
Work Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)  
Monday, March 25, 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, March 25, 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  
Ashley Eure, Finance Director  
Dave Forsythe, Public Works Director  
Drew Woodard, Hertford Fire Department Chief  
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 Keith Rouse, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson to approve the agenda with the following amendments: under New Business, add 6d) Approval of bid for EDA Grant; and 6e) Putting an ATM in the Municipal Building lobby. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Waters, and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilwoman Waters motioned to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of Ordinance FY24-8 Road Closure for the Memorial Day Ceremony, May 27, 2024, 9 AM to 1:30 PM. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded the motion and it carried, 5-0.

**CONTINUED BUSINESS**

**Presentation of Budget requests for Hertford Fire Department** – Fire Chief Drew Woodard presented the Hertford Fire Department’s FY24-25 Budget requests.

Chief Woodard explained requests, answered questions, and discussed them with Council and Manager Cole.

**Presentation of Budget requests for Water Treatment, Wastewater Collections, Wastewater Treatment** – Public Works Director David Forsythe presented budget requests for the following Public Works departments:

1. Water Treatment
2. Wastewater Collections
3. Wastewater Treatment

Director Forsythe explained requests, answered questions, and discussed them with Council and Manager Cole.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **a) Budget Amendments**

1. **FY24-24** – Finance Director Eure explained that in the Fire Department budget we are moving funds from their Supplies (\$750.00) to cover a bill for their Equipment, and in Streets we are moving funds from Vehicles (\$361.00) into Buildings.
2. **FY24-25** – Finance Director Eure explained that this amendment is to move the remaining ARPA funds (\$13,813.70) to Sewer Capital Outlay to enclose a shelter to protect and extend the life of the truck that is parked under it.

A motion and a second were made by Councilman Rouse and Councilwoman Brothers to approve Budget Amendments FY24-24 and FY24-25. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

- b) **Resolution to Request the Assignment of a Bridgetender to the Hertford S-Bridge** – Manager Cole advised Council that since the new S-Bridge opened in October 2022, there has not been a bridgetender onsite. When a vessel needs the bridge opened, there is a number to call, and someone, usually from outside of Perquimans County, comes over to open it. Manager Cole, Mayor Hodges, the County Manager, and Chair of the County Commissioners have discussed taking a position regarding this issue. Manager Cole has contacted EMS, the schools, and the sheriff's department about this. EMS and the sheriff's department expressed concerns about how this could impact an emergency or urgent situation. Manager Cole called the number for vessel passage under the bridge, and she was referred to the supervisor, John Lane. He advised Manager Cole that since they have had control of the bridge, there have been three times that leisure boats have needed the bridge opened to pass under it, which was six

openings for round trips. The bridge has been opened for Mr. Bobby White moving tugboats, but Mr. White contacts them in advance to arrange the bridge openings. The Division Maintenance Engineer contacted Manager Cole today because a resolution is on our agenda. He reiterated how few times the bridge has been opened and explained that the new S-Bridge is higher than the old S-Bridge and does not require as many openings as the previous bridge. Manager Cole told him that she will ask Council to table the resolution until all parties can meet to discuss a solution, which could include notifying dispatch to let EMS and the sheriff's department of a bridge opening and possibly opening the bridge remotely. Mayor Hodges stated that there needs to be process in place for opening the bridge.

A motion and a second were made by Councilman Rouse and Councilwoman Waters to table the resolution until all parties can meet. The motion carried, 5-0.

- c) **Authorization to use money from the cemetery fund for signage and a shed** – Manager Cole explained to Council that a cemetery clean-up scheduled for March 1<sup>st</sup> was posted on our Facebook page and included in utility newsletters for the two months prior to the clean-up. There were many unapproved items and old arrangements on the gravesites and headstones that made it difficult for mowing and caused the cemeteries to appear unkempt. After the clean-up, the Town received many complaints that people were unaware or displeased that such items were being removed, even though they violated cemetery regulations. Manager Cole is asking Council to authorize the use of money from the cemetery fund to purchase signage and a shed. The signage would indicate the rules/regulations for items left on gravesites and scheduled cemetery clean-up dates. The shed would be used to store items removed from the gravesites that people may want to retrieve.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Waters to authorize the use of money from the cemetery funds for new signage and a shed. Councilman Rouse seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

- d) **Bid for EDA Grant for Boardwalk and Retaining Wall** – Manager Cole reminded Council that the Town received a \$180K grant from EDA for the construction design of the retaining wall and boardwalk for the Riverfront Project, which required matching. The Town and County are each providing a \$60K match, for a total of \$300K for the construction design. Previously, the Town had put it out for bids as an RFQ, but we didn't get a price. It was put out as an RFP and two proposals were received; however one would not give a price as they felt that they didn't have enough information to ensure that they could do it for \$300K. The Timmons Group, located in Elizabeth City, proposal is recommended by Manager Cole and PW Director Forsythe as the Timmons Group went out to look at the location, they have worked in Hertford, and they have done and are working in neighboring municipalities.

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to accept the proposal from the Timmons Group for construction design services for the boardwalk and retaining wall for the Town of Hertford Riverfront Project.

Mayor Hodges thanked the County Manager and County Commissioners for keeping their \$60K earmarked for the match through multiple budgeting cycles. He also thanked EDA and our state and federal representatives who made this happen. He noted that we will be getting \$300K worth of work done for only \$60K out of the Town budget.

- e) **ATM Machine in Municipal Building Lobby** – Manager Cole received a call from a vendor asking if we would like to install an ATM machine inside the Municipal Building lobby. Notary fees by Town staff are required to be paid by customers in cash only. It was estimated that 1 in 3 customers needing notary services must leave the building to get cash for those fees. There is no contract with the vendor, nor is the Town responsible for maintaining or replenishing the ATM. The charge for the ATM is \$3 per transaction, of which the Town would receive \$0.50 per transaction. Council discussed the convenience of the ATM to our customers and the revenue the Town would receive.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson motioned to approve the placement of an ATM machine in the Municipal Building lobby. Councilwoman Waters seconded the motion and it passed, 5-0.

## **MANAGER'S UPDATE**

1. Manager Cole noted that Anlauf Engineering went back before the Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments with a new proposal requesting to rezone the Don Juan property to R8. The PBZOA recommends the rezoning, but before Council can vote on it, we are required to advertise the Public Hearing for rezoning in the newspaper for two consecutive weeks, as well as send out a mailing to the neighboring property owners advising them of the Public Hearing for intent to rezone. Manager Cole estimates that Council can hold the required Public/Legislative Hearing on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, before Council can vote.
2. The contract has been signed for the new Public Works Building and it should be delivered in approximately 2-3 weeks. She noted that Mayor Hodges has stated that he would like to have a groundbreaking ceremony. Manager Cole will contact Council via email with some dates for the ceremony. Mayor Hodges asked when the new fire truck is being delivered. Manager Cole stated that she

will call and find out the delivery date as the vendor had thought it would be in March. Mayor Hodges would like to have a ceremony for the fire truck as well.

3. Manager Cole provided an update of the Harbor Town Dinner Boat and Ferries. The dinner boat is being replaced by a “Mississippi-style” paddle boat and it will be able to dock in Hertford. That paddle boat is on its way from Florida. The second ferry has arrived, so Harbor Town is setting up opening ceremony dates with the towns. Previously, Hertford had requested a Thursday or Friday as our first choice and Harbor Towns has a schedule for Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at noon. Harbors Towns has indicated that they will have a ferry ride prior to the ceremony and asked that we assist them in selecting 25 passengers. Manager Cole suggests that those selected passengers include: the County and Town Managers, mayors, Chairman of County Commissioners, Director of the Chamber of Commerce and a Board Member, Director of Tourism Development Authority and a Board Member, Mainstreet Director and a Board Member, business leaders from downtown, and Perquimans County School Superintendent and students. The remaining passengers would be chosen from a lottery of any Perquimans County residents. The lottery would be posted through social media and flyers around town.

### **COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS**

Councilwoman Waters stated that she is glad signage will be placed at the cemeteries.

Councilwoman Brothers said that she will have information for the Juneteenth Celebration at the next Town Council Meeting so plans for the celebration can proceed. Manager Cole acknowledged Councilwoman Brothers’s appreciation and gratitude for the prayers, support, flowers, and condolences for the Brothers family during their time of loss.

Councilman Rouse announced that there will be a meeting on Saturday, April 6, 1:00 PM, at the Horace Reid Community Center, 305 West Grubb, to begin work on the Hertford youth program. Councilman Rouse will share the flyer on social media, give to the churches, and gave a copy to Council members. All are welcome to attend and share ideas, concerns, and thoughts for a Hertford youth program. Councilman Rouse said that he has been asked by residents why there is no urgent care center in Hertford? Mayor Hodges noted that urgent care centers are businesses, and we could research and try to recruit such a business in our town. Manager Cole will research who owns the urgent care centers in Elizabeth City and Edenton and ask if they would be interested in expanding.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson had no report.

Mayor Hodges began by thanking PW Director Forsythe, Manager Cole, Assistant Manager Walton, Finance Director Eure for all the effort and detail that is being put into the budget process. He noted that there is a lot of visible work being done by Public Works around town, including the intersection of Market Street and Academy Street. Mayor Hodges confirmed that all Council members (except himself) and Manager Cole will be attending the State Dinner on April 10<sup>th</sup>. He said that we are still waiting to hear about the grant from the Boys and Girls Club. Mayor Hodges closed by saying there are a lot of good and positive things happening in Hertford.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Hodges read the announcements.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilwoman Waters motioned to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Rouse seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.