

Town of Hertford
Regular Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, March 13, 2023 – 6:48 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 (also by Facebook) on Monday, March 13, 2023, at 6:48 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Earnell Brown, Mayor
Jerry Mimplitsch

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem
Sandra Anderson

COUNCIL MEMBER(S) Absent

Connie Brothers

STAFF PRESENT

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

A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilman Mimplitsch to approve the agenda as presented and Councilwoman Anderson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously, 4-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilman Mimplitsch made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and it was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges. It passed unanimously, 4-0.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Tim Brinn commended the Council on the Strategic Plan he was reviewing today. Although some progress has and is being made to improve the appearance of the town, he is concerned that there is still much work to do. The town's population has not grown in many years, and there seems to be no increase in residential building or restoration of properties, many of which are dilapidated. Some house values have incurred high percentages of depreciation as the home may have been left to family members who do not want the property nor are they paying taxes or utilities, both of which decrease Hertford's revenue. Mr. Brinn is concerned about downtown and the possibility of losing a merchant in the same time frame that the Harbor Town Ferry may make its first stop in Hertford.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **New Contract for FY23-24 legal services with Hornthal Riley Ellis & Maland**
Attorney John Leidy explained the new contract, effective July 1, 2023. There is a proposed reduced monthly retainer of \$1200 since meetings are executed in a timelier manner than previously. The hourly rate would increase to \$220. Council discussed the rate and agreed that the proposed rates are acceptable to the Town. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to accept the new contract and Councilwoman Anderson seconded. The contract was approved unanimously, 4-0.
- b) **New Contract for FY23-24 Audit by Martin Starnes & Associates**
We have been given a new contract for next fiscal year. Fee for audit will be \$40,325 and possibly an additional charge of \$2,500 for a single audit. NC Local Government Commission still must approve the contract after our vote. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to approve the contract as presented, and Councilman Mimplitsch seconded. It passed unanimously, 4-0.
- c) **School of Government – Development Finance Initiative**
Manager Cole explained this is an assessment to study the sprayfield that we are not using. The assessment includes market studies, parcel analysis, and vacant land use. The cost for the assessment is \$45,600 and would be done in a four-month period. Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to approve the DFI proposal as presented, and Councilman Mimplitsch seconded. It passed unanimously, 4-0.
- d) **WithersRavenel Task Order #6**
Manager Cole explained that this is the last task order for the AIA Grant, \$150K, and is for the Water Assessment. Councilman Mimplitsch made a motion to accept Task Order #6 to approve the water assessment, as presented. Councilwoman Anderson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 4-0.
- e) **Holy Trinity 1.75 run/walk May 6th from the church across the S-Bridge**
Manager Cole asked Council to accept the ordinance to close Church Street for the run/walk to support the Open Door Food Bank. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to approve the ordinance to support the event. Councilman Mimplitsch seconded it and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.
- f) **Budget Amendments**
Manager Cole explained the three budget amendments for Council's approval.
FY23-10 to accept remaining funds from Gov Deal sales.
FY23-11 to move money within the fire department budget to provide sufficient funds for their grant match.
FY23-12 to move funds from the General Fund to Planning to pay for the SOG-DFI Proposal, the spray field study.
Councilman Mimplitsch made a motion to approve FY23-10, FY23-11, and FY23-12. and it was seconded by Pro Tem Hodges. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

g) SOG-EFC

Assistant Walton demonstrated the online program, Environmental Finance Center. This tool is available to municipalities free of charge through the SOG. This tool allows us to view other municipalities and view how our rates compare to others. It can also help in assessing changes in rates for our residents by showing our Operating Expenses versus Operating Revenue.

h) Website Preview

Manager Cole displayed a preview of our new town website. There will be drop down categories, events, pictures.

i) Managers Update

Manager Cole announced that CodeRed communication with residents is up and functioning as Assistant Walton has taken the lead. It will be used for emergency communications, as well as advising impacted residents of infrastructure issues and/or actions taken with their utility services, and information to be shared.

Manager Cole addressed the issue on Grubb Street curbs across from the US Post Office. The large trucks delivering mail are damaging the curbs and tearing up the strip of grass between the sidewalk and curb. The grass strip has become muddy and there is standing water in the curb. Manager Cole discussed this with the Postmaster onsite and he requested that she put the issue in writing and send it to the Head Postmaster. Manager Cole has concerns that when the brick work from the marina to downtown is installed, the postal trucks will damage that, too. Council discussed ideas to protect the curbs, grass, and future brick work.

Manager Cole advised Council that the staff at the Municipal Office are starting this month with in-house mailing of utility bills. Besides the savings for the Town, it will allow more options with our newsletter that is enclosed with the monthly bills.

Manager Cole gave an update to Council on the Barrows Alley surveyor findings. About half of the area in Barrows Alley belongs to the Town, including the area that has been used for postal employee parking. The PZBOA will be physically looking at the surveyor's findings and discussing how to move forward reclaiming what belongs to the Town and how Barrows Alley can be developed.

There is a possibility of a downtown merchant vacating their building due to leaks not being repaired by the landlord. Manager Cole has spoken to the landlord regarding the landlord repairing the property. No resolution has been reached.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilman Mimplitsch stated that the Indian Summer Festival will be held September 8th and 9th, 2023. A band has been booked for Friday night and a radio station selected for Saturday. Stacy Layden will have vendor sign-up sheets for the Indian Summer Festival available in the next week or two.

Councilwoman Anderson shared that the Juneteenth Celebration will be the weekend of June 17th, 18th, and 19th and more information will be coming from Councilwoman Brothers regarding that event. Councilwoman Anderson announced that the Saturday Morning Live Market will take place on June 10th & 24th, July 15th & 29th, and August 12th & 26th. July 15th SML Market will be a Christmas in July event and vendors can sell Christmas items. Flyers and vendor applications are available at the Municipal Building and the HHI website.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges thanked Manager Cole and Council for a productive retreat. He also thanked Assistant Walton for the information she shared regarding the website for NC utility rates. Next Friday he has a meeting with Harbor Town Cruises to discuss the next phase of activities; a schedule for the fast ferry boats is coming and we will post it on our website. There was an email received by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges regarding tax audit penalties and how local government staff is protected. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges encourages residents to support NC House Bill 205. He asked for prayers for Councilwoman Brothers and her family. He also expressed thanks for the well-wishes and prayers for his father-in-law.

Mayor Brown shared that she and Manager Cole attended a UNC affordable housing seminar hosted by the in New Bern. Some of the topics covered were strategizing public vs. private housing programs and networking. She attended a meeting with 4H extension program to develop an advisory board to work with the schools and solidify a partnership with Seeds of Success. Mayor Brown is on that board. There will be a movie in both May and June at Central Park. Mayor Brown has been working with the PC Rec Center on this and has secured two PG-13 movies to be screened. Neither movie screening will conflict with any other Town events.

Manager Cole interjected that an email went out Friday, March 10th, that requires a response by Friday, March 17th, from Congressman Davis's office that they are reinstating the Community Project Funding. Manager Cole is looking to see if there is anything they can do for the Riverfront, or housing. Manager Cole will speak with Ms. Waters and respond by Friday. Manager Cole and Assistant Walton will be attending the NC Mainstreet Conference in Statesville tomorrow through Thursday.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Brown read the announcements.

Mayor Brown asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilman Mimplitsch made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded. It passed unanimously, 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24PM.