

Town of Hertford
Public Hearing and Regular Session Meeting
Monday, April 14, 2025 – 6:00 PM
Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W Grubb Street

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Public Hearing and Regular Session Meeting at the Horace Reid Community Center on Monday, April 14, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Ashley Hodges, Mayor
Keith Rouse

Sandra Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem
Rhonda Waters

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Connie Brothers

STAFF PRESENT

Doris Walton, Interim Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
Ashley Eure, Finance 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 Councilman Rouse, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Waters motioned to approve the agenda, and Councilman Rouse Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded her motion. The motion carried 4-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of 1) March 10, 2025 Regular Session Minutes; and 2) March 24, 2025 Work Session Minutes was made by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed, 4-0.

CITIZENS CONCERNS

Gracie Felton addressed Council regarding the increase in water and sewer costs. She questioned how many years will it keep increasing.

Connie Jaklic commented on how pleasantly surprised she is that new houses are being built in Hertford and the remodels of existing older homes and commercial businesses. She expressed the positivity in that for the Town. She asked if there will be any fireworks in Hertford for the Fourth of July.

Ray McCormick shared his concern for the number of stray cats in Hertford. He asked if there is anything residents/citizens can do about it?

PUBLIC HEARING

At 6:13 PM, the Public Hearing was held to clarify the project description for the FY 28/13 Community Development Block Grant – Infrastructure (CDBG-I) Wastewater Treatment Plant Rehabilitation Project and allow residents an opportunity to express their views.

Manager Walton introduced David Gale of Withers Ravenel to read the Memo summarizing the public hearing for the Town’s FY18/23 Community Development Block Grant Infrastructure (CDBG-I) Program, being presented for adoption at the Town Council Meeting on April 28, 2025.

Jake Siegel of Withers Ravenel read a second memo summarizing the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) / Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) report required by the Town of Hertford for participation in the CDBG Infrastructure program. The town is eligible to participate in the following NC Small Cities Community Block Grant (CDBG) programs funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Mayor Hodges opened the floor for public comment. There was discussion regarding replacement parts, loan forgiveness, records of previous violations, and wastewater overflow. Mayor Hodges asked Council for questions and discussion. There were no questions or discussion.

The Public Hearing closed at 6:44 PM.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

a) Approve 6th Round of Upset Bid Process for 101, 103, and 105 Railroad Avenue

The 5th Round of Upset Bid process for 101, 103, and 105 Railroad Avenue ended on April 3, 2025. Four bids were received with the highest bid to upset the

current high bid of \$31,000 is \$34,000. Manager Walton explained that the Town can either take the properties off the market or are required to put the properties out for a 6th round of the Upset Bid process.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Waters to approve a 6th round for upset bids. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.

b) Approval of Archsmith Studio to restore Hertford State Theatre

Manager Walton reminded Council that in August 2024, a Rural Downtown Economic Development grant from the State Department of Commerce was awarded to the Town in the amount of \$850,000. In February, an RFQ was put out for the historical preservation and renovations for the theatre. We received no responses, so we reissued that RFQ, including advertising in the Daily Advance. Archsmith Studio was the only response we received. After reviewing the RFQ, Manager Walton is recommending that Council approve Archsmith Studio for the restoration of the Hertford State Theatre.

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve Archsmith Studio’s proposal and begin negotiations on a contract to restore the Hertford State Theatre. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson, and it passed unanimously, 4-0.

c) Budget Amendments

Budget Amendments FY25-38

- 1) Move funds from Planning Staff and Development to Advertising to cover the advertising cost of the Railroad houses.
- 2) Move funds from Water Contingencies to Utilities and Communication to cover utility costs for the rest of the fiscal year.
- 3) Employee salaries were entered into the system with different percentages than what was budgeted.
- 4) Employee salaries were entered into the system with different percentages than what was budgeted.
- 5) Employee health insurance amount was entered into the system incorrectly.

Decrease Planning Staff & Development	10-5610-513	\$870.92
Increase Planning Advertising	10-5610-515	\$870.92
Decrease Water Contingencies	51-5820-577	\$21,934.00
Increase Water Utilities & Communication	51-5820-526	\$21,934.00
Decrease Governing Body Salaries	10-5100-411	\$37,858.10
Increase Admin Salaries	10-5210-411	\$37,858.10

Decrease Planning Salaries	10-5610-411	\$16,687.71
Increase Admin Salaries	10-5210-411	\$16,687.71

Decrease Water Salaries	51-5820-411	\$8,228.48
Increase Electric Bank Fees	51-5280-425	\$8,228.48

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-38. Councilwoman Waters seconded, and the motion passed, 4-0.

Budget Amendment FY25-39

- 1) Move funds from Training and Travel in Council and Administration to Dues and Subscriptions in Council and Administration to cover the increased cost of Zoom.
- 2) Move funds from Fire Supplies to Fire Fuel to cover the cost of fuel the rest of the fiscal year.

Decrease Council Training & Travel	10-5100-513	\$1,445.12
Increase Council Dues & Subscriptions	10-5100-534	\$1,445.12

Decrease Admin Training & Travel	10-5210-513	\$1,223.88
Increase Admin Dues & Subscriptions	10-5210-534	\$1,233.88

Decrease Fire Supplies	39-5400-551	\$1,000.00
Increase Fire Fuel	39-5400-553	\$1,000.00

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-39. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded, and the motion passed, 4-0.

Budget Amendment FY25-40

Move funds from Training and Travel and Vehicle Maintenance to Water Capital Outlay to replace half of the compressed air driven valves in the Water Plant. We have budgeted in the FY25-26 to replace the other half.

Decrease Water Travel & Training	51-5820-513	\$1,641.76
Decrease Water Vehicle Maintenance	51-5820-524	\$4,157.47
Decrease Water Building Maintenance	51-5820-522	\$1,355.47
Increase Water Capital Outlay	51-5820-561	\$7,154.70

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-40. Councilwoman Waters seconded, and the motion passed, 4-0.

d) Street Closure Ordinance for Memorial Day May 24, 2025

Street Closure is required for the safety and enjoyment of the American Legion Memorial Day Ceremony. Church Street will be close from Grubb Street to Market Street, from 9 AM to 1:30 PM.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to approve Ordinance FY25-16. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed, 4-0

e) Budget Overview for Consideration

Manager Walton updated Council on the results for alternate health insurance for the Town staff as NCLM will no longer be providing health insurance coverage. She also informed Council that we are entering our 4th year of increase to the basic sewer charge and rates by 2.4%. She is recommending a \$2.00 increase to the basic electric charges for residents and businesses. Solid waste (trash service) will increase from \$15 to \$18 and remain at \$18 for the next two years. Manager Walton is recommending a 3% COLA for Town Employees. She is asking Council to approve a \$0.03 increase on property taxes to fund the COLA. Manager Walton is recommending that Council donations totaling \$10,000 be removed. She informed Council that the Perquimans County Sheriff's Office has asked for an additional \$25,000 in their contribution from the Town. Manager Walton will present two versions of the FY25-26 Budget, one with 3% COLA and the other without.

MANAGER'S UPDATE

Manager Walton informed Council that The Landings at Albemarle's first payment installment for their delinquent account has been received. We expect the second and final installment to be received by June 10th, 2025.

The budget schedule has been slightly delayed due to the information from the County we are waiting on.

Four applications have been received for the Historic Preservation Commission. Three of those applicants do have the specific credentials necessary to sit on that board. We would like to have a five-chair board. Manager Walton and Janice Cole sent applications to two potential candidates to complete.

Three Robo-calls have been made, door hangers hung, and online posts asking residents to clear the area around their water meters to prepare for the replacement meters. The Town will not be responsible for damage to any personal items left in those areas that residents have been asked to clear.

There is a scheduled power outage on April 27, 2025 at 12:01 AM through 5:00 AM. There is a necessary repair to be done at one of our substations.

Commercial building and business owners were sent a building registration form to complete regarding vacant commercial buildings in accordance with the ordinance that those structures must be kept to a minimum guideline outlined in the ordinance. We have received ONE registration, and that is from Charles Purser who purchased the gas station across from the One Stop.

On April 15 there will be a smart meter presentation at HHA to inform residents of how those meters operate.

Today, April 14th, is North Carolina Lineworker Day. Manager Walton recognized James Hanks and Michael Holmes for their dedication and hard work for the Town.

Yellow lines on the curbs where fire hydrants reside have been repainted at the request of the Sheriff's Office.

Manager Walton stated that the Town doesn't sponsor the fireworks, but we will help with the event. Last year, the Town assisted in games, scheduling food trucks, prepping the venue, securing a DJ, EMS onsite, etc.

COUNCIL CONCERNS/REPORTS

Councilwoman Waters had no concerns and no report.

Councilman Rouse shared that several people have asked him why the cemetery hasn't been mowed? Public Works Director Chad White stated that we have a contract with a company to mow our cemeteries twice a month. PW Director White has already reached out to them to begin mowing, but he will follow up after hearing this information.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson reminded everyone that the Betsy Dowdy Fest will be April 26th. The event will start with The Rotary Pancake Breakfast available at Holy Trinity Church from 7 AM – 12 PM. The official hours of the festival are 9 AM – 7 PM.

Mayor Hodges thanked PW Director White and the Administration staff for all their work and information on the budget process. In reference to the citizen concern regarding the stray cats, he noted that Animal Control through the Perquimans County Sheriff's Office could be contacted. Mayor Hodges addressed Ms. Felton's concerns about rate increases. He explained different scenarios that force rate increases and those that would prevent rate increases. Growth in our Town, which would lead to growth in our customer base, would prevent rate increases.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None, but Manager Walton added that the cemetery was cleaned about 10 days ago. She also noted that there are signs posted regarding allowable items to be set at gravesites.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Waters and Councilman Rouse to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

ASHLEY HODGES
MAYOR

DORIS WALTON
INTERIM TOWN MANAGER

GINA M. DURANTE
TOWN CLERK

JOHN LEIDY
TOWN ATTORNEY



COMMISSIONERS:

SANDRA ANDERSON
MAYOR PRO TEM

CONNIE BROTHERS

KEITH ROUSE

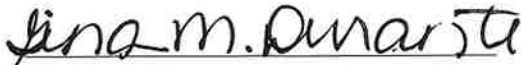
RHONDA WATERS

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY OF TOWN COUNCIL OF HERTFORD MINUTES

I, Gina M. Durante, Clerk of the Town of Hertford, do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Hertford Town Council held on April 14, 2025, at the Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W. Grubb Street, Hertford, NC 27944.

The minutes were unanimously approved during the Hertford Town Council Work Session held on April 28, 2025, at the Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W. Grubb Street, Hertford, NC 27944, after a motion from Councilwoman Connie Brothers and a second from Councilwoman Rhonda Waters to approve the minutes from April 14, 2025.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Town of Hertford on this 29th day of April, 2025.


Gina M. Durante, Clerk

