

**Town of Hertford**  
Regular Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)  
Monday, May 13, 2024 – 6:00PM  
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, May 13, 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  
Johny Leidy, Attorney

A quorum was present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The invocation was given by Councilman Rouse, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Waters and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilman Rouse motioned to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of:

- a) Minutes for the 4/08/24 Regular Session & Public Hearing, 4/15/2024 Special Call Meeting, 4/22/2024 Work Session & Public Hearing, and 4/29/2024 Special Call Meeting
- b) Ordinance closing Grubb Street for Fireworks related activities 7/6/24
- c) Ordinance closing E Academy Street for Juneteenth Observance 6/15/24

Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion and it passed, 5-0.

### **CITIZEN CONCERNS**

Rosie Overton introduced herself and said that she works for the Children's Home Society of North Carolina. She stated that there is a great need for foster care in our area and brought information regarding the program and how citizens can get involved and open their home for kids in need of safe shelter.

Quentin Jackson was signed in as a speaker but was not present to address Council.

### **CONTINUED BUSINESS**

- a) **Grant Project Ordinance Golden Leaf** – Manager Cole reminded Council that they previously passed an ordinance accepting the Golden Leaf Grant of \$650,600 for Jennie's Gut Drainage Improvements to fix the culvert. This ordinance is to set up the fund through which the grant monies will be processed.

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Brothers and Councilwoman Waters to set up the funding accounts for the Golden Leaf Grant. The motion carried, 5-0.

- b) **Presentation of Budget Officer's Proposed Budget** – Manager Cole presented the proposed FY2024-2025 Budget for the Town of Hertford. (Copies to view will be available 5/14/2024 at the Town Clerk's Office, the Perquimans County Library, and posted on the Town website [townofhertfordnc.com/finance](http://townofhertfordnc.com/finance).) The Public Hearing will be Tuesday, May 28, 2024, at the Work Session and the public may comment or speak about the proposed budget. Council will vote to approve a budget at the June Regular Session, June 10, 2024.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) **Resolution Ordering Demolition of Unsafe Building** – Manager Cole explained that this resolution is ordering the demolition of 409 N Dobbs Street which has been deemed unsafe for human habitation and occupancy by the building inspector.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Waters to pass Resolution FY24-20 ordering the demolition of the structure at 409 Dobbs Street. It was seconded by Councilman Rouse and passed, 5-0.

- b) **Budget Amendments** – Finance Director Eure explained the three budget amendments to Council.

1. **FY24-33** – Balance line items pre-approved by the Town Manager.

- a. Cover cost of 3 months of payments to Julius Williams for ORC Services (\$1,300.00)
- b. Cover cost of fuel for 3 months (\$2,000.00)
- c. Cover the cost of an employee in the Water Dept. to take the Well 2 Exam (\$50.00)
- d. Balance lines within the department (\$190.00)
- e. Pay their portion of bank fees (\$160.00)
- f. Pay for the service to the air compressor (\$1,000.00)
- g. Pay their portion of bank fees (\$200.00)
- h. Cost for the Mayor to go to CityVision Conference (\$583.30)
- i. Pay insurance claim due to power surge (\$425.51)
- j. Cover the cost of a rental pump for the pump station (\$2,500.00)

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY24-33 and Councilwoman Brothers seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **FY24-34** – Balance line items that exceed the Town Manager’s authorized limit.

- a. Cancelled PO in Planning due to not being able to get the item and using the funds to pay for the Town’s new website through Admin (\$6,000.00)
- b. Move funds to cover extra attorney bills within the department (\$8,000.00)
- c. Move funds to balance lines within the department (\$3,104.00)
- d. Move funds to balance lines within the department (\$3,000.00)
- e. Move funds to pay for meter site testing within the department (\$8,000.00)
- f. We are short on this line item because GFL imposed annual increases over the 3-year term of the contract that the Town was not aware of, and thus had not passed on to the residents. This is to move funds from the Fund Balance to Solid waste. (\$32,600.00).

A motion was made by Councilman Rouse to approve Budget Amendment FY24-34. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded the motion and it carried, 5-0.

3. **FY24-35** – Balance line items that exceed the Town Manager’s authorized limit.
  - a. Move funds to have Eastern Utility Contractor set new poles on Willow Street and Perry Street within the department (\$12,800.00)
  - b. Move funds to pay an engineering firm to do the layout of the new Public Utilities Building within the department (\$10,000.00)

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson to approve Budget Amendment FY24-35. Councilwoman Waters seconded the motion and it carried, 5-0.

### **MANAGER’S UPDATE**

Manager Cole shared that the School of Government DFI who do the spray field study for us, has assigned a team of graduate students to us to do an assessment of a redevelopment zone this summer. The redevelopment zone would give us a plan and executive designation that might make it easier for us to purchase some of the dilapidated buildings, give us more authority with code enforcement, purchasing and/or demolishing them, and developing a plan to have investors come in. The area they are looking at is a central location that is not part of the East or West Hertford Historic District. The students will be in Hertford for a site visit at the end of May and then it is a 13-week process. There will be no cost to the Town for this assessment.

Manager Cole reminded Council that they gave her permission to bid on property ZLS was auctioning. She was successful in being the highest bidder. No other bids have been received and the bid upset period has ended. No deposits were required and ZLS will return July 30, 2024, to certify the sale.

Regarding the County merger with our ABC store, it has been verified that we don’t have to have an agreement with the County prior to the vote in November when the merger is on the ballot as a referendum. We can wait until the citizens of Perquimans County approve it (or not) before details of the agreement are worked out if that’s what Council chooses to do (or not).

### **COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS**

**Councilwoman Waters** had no report.

**Councilwoman Brothers** reported that a couple gentlemen she knows volunteered their time and services to clear out debris and a tree at the roadside cemetery that have been there over a year. A resident ran over a large snake on Railroad Avenue causing damage to the front of her car. Councilwoman Brothers asked that cleanup at the area

on Railroad be done. She acknowledged that we do have some extraordinary volunteers in the Town.

She announced that Saturday, June 15, 2024, is the Juneteenth Celebration starting at 10:30 AM with a ceremony in front of the Colored Soldier Monument and a Freedom Walk to Central Park. There will be entertainment, the Battle of the Beats which features various DJs and artists. At 3 PM there will be a gospel concert. She thanked the Art League for the contribution they will be making to the event.

**Councilwoman Rouse** had a meeting on May 8<sup>th</sup> with five residents regarding the youth program. There will be another meeting by invitation only on June 4<sup>th</sup> at the Community Center to discuss and brainstorm youth interests and the vision for the program. Councilman Rouse will meet and collaborate with a Winfall resident who works with youth services. He would like the youth program Hertford develops to be open to kids throughout Perquimans County. Councilman Rouse mentioned a mobile home on King Street that is dilapidated and has been vandalized, and questioned if it could be demolished or removed. He spoke of cleaning up the community so the youth and the children will take pride in their home and the Town. Councilman Rouse would like to find funds to compensate the youth that get involved in the clean-up around town and improve the appearance of Hertford.

**Mayor Pro Tem Anderson** commented on the Council for being a great team. She mentioned that she would be happy to mentor and help with Councilman Rouse's youth program. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson recognized Councilwoman Brothers is celebrating a birthday today and wished her a happy birthday.

**Mayor Hodges** noted that last Tuesday there was a meeting with a professor from UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health Chapel Hill. Mayor Hodges, Manager Cole, Finance Director Eure, and Public Works Director Forsythe met with him to discuss how Hertford has been able to accomplish projects with the grant money we have received. He stated that many communities who have received grant money don't have the capacity to accept the grant money and do something with it. The professor stated that Hertford is unusually successful in getting grant money and executing the grants. He wanted to understand how Hertford has been able to make all this happen so that other communities may benefit from our practices. Mayor Hodges summarized that they told him it is all about the people. We have a unique, qualified, competent, and hardworking staff. Mayor Hodges credits Manager Cole and the entire staff for the work they are doing.

Last week Mayor Hodges attended the Perquimans County High School Senior Presentations. It was a very rewarding experience and next year he hopes to involve more Council members. Students are required to do an oral presentation and slideshow and are graded on it. They introduce themselves and talk about their personal life challenges they have faced, dreams, aspirations, career, and plans. Mayor Hodges reiterated that it was very rewarding to be a part of the presentations and hear their thoughts regarding their future.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- |             |               |   |
|-------------|---------------|---|
| May 14      |               | Second Primary Election   |
| May 16      |               | Opening of Juvenile Detention Center in Winfall   |
| May 18 & 25 |               | Seeds of Success Youth Program will be painting a mural on the side of the Horace Reid Community Center       |
| May 24      | 8am – 5pm     | Open Door Food Pantry Jail-a-Thon   |
| May 27      | 11am          | American Legion Memorial Day Ceremony, Church Street  |
| June 5-7    |               | Seeds of Success Youth Program Improv Camp and Performance at Carolina Moon Theater                           |
| June 7      | 5pm – 9pm     | The Block is HOT Party sponsored by the PQ County Sheriff’s Department, Church Street                         |
| June 7      | 10am – 2pm    | World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Walk sponsored by Albemarle Commission Area Agency on Aging in Elizabeth City |
| June 15     | 11am – 6:30pm | Juneteenth Celebration at Central Park  |
| July 6      |               | July Fourth Festivities and Fireworks, Missing Mill Park  |

**CLOSED SESSION**

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to go into Closed Session to approve previous Closed Session Minutes, and pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11 (3) to consult with 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. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion and it carried, 5-0 at 7:29 PM.

Council took a 5 minute recess before going into Closed Session.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

Council returned to Open Session at 8:00 PM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Waters and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was approved 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.