

Town of Hertford
Public Hearing and Work Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, May 22, 2023 – 6:00 PM
Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W Grubb Street

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Public Hearing and Work Session Meeting at the Horace Reid Community Center (also by Facebook) on Monday, May 22, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Earnell Brown, Mayor
Connie Brothers
Sandra Anderson
Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem (arrived at 6:37 PM)
Jerry Mimlitsch

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
Doris Walton, Assistant to the Town Manager
Ashley Eure, Account Specialist

A quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order.

Public Hearing was held for residents to comment/respond to the Proposed Annual Budget for the Town of Hertford Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Manager Cole presented the Proposed Annual Budget to Council.
Mayor Brown asked for any residents who would like to speak.

- **Sara Winslow** asked if funding for the West Hertford Historic District study was included in the budget. She also commented on the water and sewer rates. She thanked Council for the opportunity to speak.
- **Yvonne Brown** asked if residents are being charged for the water leaks in public streets or public areas. She was advised that residents only pay for their own water usage, and water usage for each residence is tracked through an individual residential meter.
- **Mark Christiansen** asked if the budget was on schedule and Mayor Brown replied that yes, the budget is on schedule, this is the Public Hearing, and the budget will be approved June 12, 2023. Mr. Christiansen then asked how the budget is tracked. Mayor Brown explained that the weekly invoices and revenues are tracked and compared to each budgeted item.

The Public Hearing ended at 6:10 PM.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Pastor Bullard of the First Baptist Missionary Church in Hertford followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilman Mimplitsch to approve the agenda with an amendment to add item 6D Gas Line Easement under New Business. Councilman Anderson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 4-0.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES

Manager Cole introduced two new employees to the Town.

- Trish Gregory Rand, Main Street Project Director
- Chavonte Hunt, Utility Supervisor, Trainee

CONTINUED BUSINESS

- **Report on Junked Cars** – Town Clerk Durante presented the progress made on removing, moving, licensing, and storing of Junk, Abandoned, and Nuisance Vehicles in accordance with the Town Ordinance. To date, 93 violation letters have been sent and 62 of those vehicles cited have been either removed, covered, or licensed. There are 17 vehicles that are in a pending status waiting response on a first or second violation letter within their allowed time frame. The owners of eight vehicles are currently in communication with the clerk to resolve their violation, and sometimes that means granting them a little more time. There are six vehicles that remain unresolved and Clerk Durante will share that list with Manager Cole for further action.
- **Discussion of the Budget** – Mayor Brown invited Council to express any comments or questions to Manager Cole regarding the Revised Budget presented to them. There were no comments from Council. Manager Cole explained that there were a few revisions made to the proposed budget. The Revised Budget will be posted on the Town of Hertford website, a copy will be available at the Perquimans Public Library, and a copy is available at the office of the Town Clerk for public viewing. Mayor Brown thanked Manager Cole, Ashley Eure, and Doris Walton for their work on the budget. Manager Cole advised Council that the budget was presented to the LGC (Local Government Commission) prior to the May 16th deadline.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Marine Industrial Park Subdivision** – The Planning and Zoning Board has approved a 5-acre land transference to Story's at the Marine Industrial Park. The Council now needs to vote on it. Councilman Mimplitsch made a motion to approve the County's conveyance of those 5-acres at the Marine Industrial Park to Story's in concurrence with the PZBOA. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 4-0.

- **Budget Amendment** – Manager Cole explained the two budget amendments. Amendment 14 is for the transfer of \$60K from vehicle expense to capital outlay, and \$9K interest earned on our direct ARPA funds. Amendment 15 is for ARPA funds that Council agreed to use for payment to WithersRavenel for preliminary engineering report. Mayor Brown asked for a motion to approve both budget amendments. Councilman Mimplitsch made the motion and Councilwoman Anderson seconded. The motion passed, 4-0.

- **Manager's Update** –
 1. The CodeRed communication/alert system was used last week to notify residents that had not paid their utility bill yet of the cutoff date, Tuesday, May 23. CodeRed uses the phone numbers of customers we have in our database, so it is important that customers update their information if there have been any changes. It was used last month to alert Front Street residents of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church walk to support the Open Door Food Pantry that there would be foot traffic on their street. It will also be used to inform residents of work being done near them, workers near or on their property, or any public service announcements pertinent to all Hertford or specific Hertford residents that are municipal customers.

 2. Manager Cole stated that the Town is being sued for a minor traffic accident that occurred in early 2021. Minimal damage incurred by the individual's vehicle was repaired and paid for by the Town's insurer, League of Municipalities. The driver is now claiming physical injury and the matter has been turned over to our insurer's attorney for discovery and legal proceedings.
(Mayor Pro Tem Hodges arrived at 6:37 PM)

 3. Manager Cole has been monitoring the progress of the Brinn House that closed March 2022. The new owners were given two (2) years to get the house/property up to code, and they now have only ten (10) months remaining. Manager Cole will be notifying them by mail of their timeline.

 4. The Harbor Town ferries will be adjusting the schedule they sent out a couple weeks ago. They are working through an issue with the Coast Guard and will keep the towns updated when a new ferry schedule is released.

- **Gas Line Easement** - There has been a request by the resident at 106 East Academy to get natural gas to their home. They have asked for an easement to run the natural gas line. Public works has looked into the request and there are no issues. Our attorney has looked over the request and responded that it is a standard agreement. There will be no cost to the town. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to approve the easement and Councilwoman Brothers seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Brown read the announcements.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

- Councilwoman Brothers had no report.
- Mayor Pro Tem Hodges apologized for arriving late to the meeting but explained he was at the Board of Education Meeting. There was a recognition ceremony for students that entered a math competition, the marching band for their many awards in various competitions this year, and the middle school band received a superior rating for the first time in 18 years. The Hunter Safety Team was recognized including Collin Winslow. The Open Door Pantry is holding a fundraiser and each arrestee/participant has been served with a warrant for their arrest on May 26th. Participants are hoping to raise \$1,000 each to post their bail.
- Councilman Mimplitsch thanked all Town staff for their work. He is excited about the new staff and what positive roles they will contribute to Hertford.
- Councilwoman Anderson also thanked the Town staff for their work. She reiterated that the first Saturday Morning Live Market will take place June 10th. Applications for vendors are available at the municipal building, Planters Ridge, and the lobby of the Carolina Trophy shop.
- Mayor Brown announced that there was a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Perquimans High School track and soccer field. On May 26th at 2:00 PM there will be a ribbon cutting for Carolina Moon Insurance in front of the Chamber of Commerce. The movie night at Central Park held last Saturday was a success. It was a free event and well attended. The Beautification Committee is holding a meeting Tuesday, May 23rd at Brew to Rescue. The committee needs more volunteers.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to adjourn, and Councilman Mimplitsch seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 PM.