

Town of Hertford
Regular Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, June 12, 2023 – 6:00 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, June 12, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Earnell Brown, Mayor
Connie Brothers

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem

COUNCIL MEMBER(S) Absent

Sandra Anderson
Jerry Mimlitsch

STAFF PRESENT

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

A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brothers to approve the agenda as presented and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded the motion. It passed unanimously, 3-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and it was seconded by Councilwoman Brothers. It passed unanimously, 3-0.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Yvonne Brown addressed Council regarding two concerns on the 400 block of Dobbs Street. Two large potholes remain on the street in front of her house and a third is forming. There are cones over the potholes which reduce that street to one lane. The potholes have been there for quite some time and Ms. Brown is asking that they be properly fixed or filled with a material that will not come out when cars drive over it before an accident occurs or a window breaks due to flying gravel. Ms. Brown's second concern is the large accumulation of garbage at 411 Dobbs Street. The owner is deceased, and no one is maintaining the property. The trash and rubbish are unsightly and pose health hazards. Snakes, rodents, roaches, insects have inhabited the piles of garbage and debris. Ms. Brown stated that there is a man who is willing to put the

rubbish and trash on the street for the town to pick up, but a schedule with the town needs to be established.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

- a) **Approval of the Town Budget for FY 2023-2024, including utility rate change** – Manager Cole presented the Town Budget for FY 2023-2024 (attached).

Following Manager Cole's presentation, Mayor Brown read prepared statements by Councilman Mimplitsch and Councilwoman Anderson stating their approval and support of the Annual Budget for FY 2023-2024. Councilwoman Brothers thanked Manager Cole and her staff for their hard work and dedication in preparing the upcoming budget. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges noted that the budget is detailed and transparent to our residents and provides sophisticated revenue expenditure forecasting. He also thanked Manager Cole and her staff for their work. Mayor Brown stated that she is very pleased to have a budget that is consistent with the priorities Council identified in the Strategic Plan. She thanked Manager Cole and the finance team.

Mayor Brown asked for a motion to approve the Town Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made the motion and Councilwoman Brothers seconded it. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **County Proposal Regarding Hertford's ABC Store**

Manager Cole began by noting that Hertford has an ABC Store and although our Town is wet, the County is dry. The Crawfish Shack, which is in our county but outside of the Town limits, hosts many events and would like to sell liquor by the glass. The owners reached out to the County Commissioners who then reached out to the ABC Board. The ABC Board stated that there are 100 counties in NC and 170 ABC Stores, and they (the ABC Board) have no intention of licensing anymore. County Commissioners are requesting that the County be permitted to merge with the Town's ABC board to enable businesses in Perquimans County (at this time, specifically the Crawfish shack) to sell liquor by the drink. Manager Cole was advised that even if the Town agrees, it will have to be on the ballot as a referendum in the next election. Council discussed the issue of the merger and its advantages and concerns. Manager Cole expressed that she is in favor of meeting with the County Manager, the County Commission Chair and Vice Chair, Mayor Brown, Mayor Pro Tem Hodges, and herself to discuss this topic further. Mayor Brown added that this will be an agenda item at the next quarterly meeting with the County.

- b) **Subdivision Changes**

Manager Cole wanted to make Council aware that there is a request going before the PZBOA to rezone the old apricot factory on Don Juan Road to R-6, residential zone. Manager asked what they intended to do there, and she was given a subdivision map with 119 lots, at 6,000 sq ft per lot. She suggests that prior to considering the zoning change request, she is recommending to the PZBOA a change in our subdivision regulations that require greenspace, sidewalks, bike lands, community centers, etc. Hertford wants growth, but it needs to be smart, well-planned growth. Other considerations include the infrastructure which must be extended to serve that area and 100+ homes. Manager Cole was advised by our attorney that a system development fee can be imposed to pay for a proportional part of the expense of that expansion. Procedures would be put in place before that would happen prior to approval.

c) Approval of Mowing Fee Rate Change

Manager Cole explained that currently the Town charges a different mowing fee depending upon whether the Public Services workers use a weed eater, mower, blower, or Round-Up. This can be very arbitrary. We would like to impose one uniform reasonable fee of \$25.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to have one uniform mowing fee of \$25 and Councilwoman Brothers seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

d) Managers Update

- Signage is up on Highway 17 advising commuters that Hertford is just off the highway.
- The new town website is up and running. It is still a work in progress, but the transition has been smooth, and the new site is much easier to update. Comments are welcome as we continue to build and improve the website.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilwoman Brothers noted that the Juneteenth Celebration, Monday, June 19th at 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM, will start at the Colored Union Soldiers Monument with a Freedom Walk at Hyde Park to Central Park. There will be music, a renowned gospel singer, the North Carolina Association of Black Storytellers, several vendors, and two food trucks. Councilwoman Brothers thanked the Perquimans Art League for their donation in funding the NC Association of Black Storytellers and the recording artist. It will be a day of learning, fellowship, and food, so please join us.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges reiterated his appreciation to Manager Cole and the staff for their work on the budget. He also noted the Jail-A-Thon hosted by the Open Door Food Pantry was a fun and successful fundraiser, and he thanked the community for their support. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges encouraged all to attend Hertford's Juneteenth Celebration on Monday.

Mayor Brown stated that she and Manager Cole attended a meeting in Plymouth with Harbor Town Cruises. Also in attendance were the mayors from Plymouth and Edenton, the Perquimans County Manager (Frank Heath), the Hertford Main Street Director (Trisha Rand), and the Perquimans County TDA Director (Stacey Layden). There has been a change in the schedule as Harbor Town has additional requirements from the Coast Guard that they must meet. Mayor Brown stated that the proposal for the Golden Leaf Grant to assist towns in which these boats will stop was not approved.

Representative Goodwin has put in a request for \$10 million as a backup so that the towns can do the upgrades needed to accommodate the boats. Manager Cole added that Town Manager Assistant Walton and Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce Director Diane Cangemi also attended the meeting. Manager Cole shared information on passenger fees, expected span of travel time from port to port, and that the boats will operate during the day only. Harbor Town is expected to have special introductory rates when they begin operations and Manager Cole is working with them to possibly offer some complimentary rides to promote the boats. She spoke with Pete Thompson of Harbor Town, Inc., about the schools using them for a fee. Manager Cole also reiterated that Representative Goodwin has asked the legislature for \$10M as a backup to the Golden Leaf Grant.

Manager Cole also stated that the old S-Bridge truss remains covered as she has been informed that there is an issue with the paint supply.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Brown read the announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Brown asked for a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Councilwoman Brothers seconded. It passed unanimously, 3-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 PM.