

**Town of Hertford**  
Work Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)  
Monday, July 24, 2023 – 6:00 PM  
Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W Grubb Street

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Work Session Meeting at the Horace Reid Community Center (also by Facebook) on Monday, July 24, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

Earnell Brown, Mayor  
Sandra Anderson  
Jerry Mimplitsch  
Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem  
Connie Brothers

**STAFF PRESENT**

Janice McKenzie Cole, Town Manager  
Gina Durante, Town Clerk

A quorum was present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Councilman Mimplitsch to approve the agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

**CONTINUED BUSINESS**

- a. **ABC Board Merger with County** – Last week Manager Cole, Mayor Brown, Mayor Pro Tem Hodges, County Manager Heath, and County Commissioners met to discuss the possibility of merging Perquimans County into Hertford’s ABC Commission and Board so businesses outside the town and in our county can sell beer, wine, and/or liquor by the glass. Hertford is the only town in Perquimans County that can sell liquor, the county is dry except for our Town. Topics discussed in the meeting included: revenue sharing, distribution of ABC Board Members, and what impact expanding our ABC board to all the County would have on Hertford regarding town and county growth in the future. Council discussed, and it was decided that the town and county attorneys could each put together a recommendation for proceeding.

***(MAYOR PRO TEM HODGES CALLED FOR A 5 MINUTE RECESS AT 6:12 PM)***

- b. Historic Preservation Commission** – Manager Cole discussed the intent to amend the Ordinance of the Town of Hertford, North Carolina To Prevent Demolition By Neglect Of Historic Structures. Before putting this back on the agenda, Manager Cole would like Council to discuss regulations regarding reconstruction and rehabilitation of historical structures that are in the ordinance. Some of our surrounding towns adhere to very detailed, precise, and sometimes costly regulations regarding this issue. The Town also needs to form a Hertford Historic Preservation Commission and the members should have knowledge of historical structure preservation. Council discussed the strict regulations some towns follow, and the consensus was that Hertford will have regulations that are not so strict as that can make reconstruction and rehabilitation cost-prohibitive for owners. Hertford Planning and Zoning Board Member Rhonda Waters joined the discussion and agreed that we do not want to have overly strict guidelines like some nearby towns. Currently, we have no guidelines in place for our historic districts. We want to adopt guidelines that will allow residents to be able to afford to reconstruct or rehabilitate their historic properties and qualify for tax credits that are based on using materials, colors, etc. under the town regulations.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- a. New UAL Training** – Manager Cole advised Council Members that because we are on the UAL List, all continuing elected officials, finance officers, and managers are required to take a four-hour, in-person UAL training and the two-hour online prerequisite prior to the in-person training. The nearest location for the training is Greenville on October 25, 2023.
- b. Disposal of Donated Items** – Manager Cole distributed a list and pictures of surplus items that she is requesting permission to offer/donate to any persons or groups that will pick them up. The items are no longer useful or needed by the Town and have little or no monetary value. Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to allow Manager Cole to donate the listed items. Councilman Mimlitsch seconded her motion, and it passed 5-0.
- c. Manager's Update**
- We are preparing for the audit and making the transition to the new Black Mountain software.
  - We are moving forward on grants with Withers Ravenel and the work they are doing.
  - We have gotten what we need for the Department of Commerce Rural Transformation grant for streetscaping and connecting downtown and the docks. We are a bit behind, and need to move quickly to get this done in the time the grant allows. RFQ has been issued and we are waiting on bids now so design and work can begin.
  - We are at the end of the EDA grant application for Stage 1 construction design for the Riverfront Plan. There were a few additional items the EDA

requested by July 20<sup>th</sup>. Sharon Smith and Manager Cole were able to get those items completed. Manager Cole is hoping for a decision soon.

- As a backup to that EDA grant, we have also applied for a grant through the Attorney General's Office. Allyson Platt worked on that, and we will find out in December if we receive EEG grant.
- The Department of Agriculture grant to clean out Jennies Gut is complete. The grant allowed for cleaning out the vegetation but not the sediment. Council was given a copy of the final report on Jennies Gut Drainage Improvement Feasibility Study by SWCA Environmental Consulting and Engineering. They did have three recommendations which we will look at after Withers Ravenel completes the AIA studies.
- The Golden Leaf Grant, our stormwater masterplan, is still moving forward.
- The DFI from the School of Government made a visit to the spray field and interviewed stakeholders. They are now looking into marketing and will come back to the Town with a plan/information.
- We are moving forward with the new metal building for Public Works. PW Director David Forsythe is working with Withers Ravenel on the layout and our employees will be able to do most of the work.
- There was a meeting with First Tryon last week to develop our CIP (Capital Improvement Plan). The plan will include things that could not be included in this current fiscal year budget, and long range needs five years out. CIP is important and will help us to get off the UAL list.
- We have put out the RFQ for the West Hertford Historic District. Manager Cole expressed concern that the new historic district has been identified as the 400 block between Railroad and Edenton Road Street, which is a remnant of the African American community. The existing historic district ends at Hyde Street. There are not enough contributing buildings in that area (Hyde to Railroad/Edenton Road Street) to be designated as a historic district. Her concern is that people will be investing on either side of that area and the impact that will have on it.
- We were approached by Kathy Davison and a gentleman from Fibe, a fiber optics company, and they are interested in running fiber in Hertford. We are currently serviced by Mediacom, which is cable, and fiber is much faster. They have a program whereas those households that qualify for school lunches will be able to get their fiber optic internet service at no charge. When the fiber is installed, it will be available to all residents. There is no cost to Hertford to install the fiber on our poles, and they are sending Manager Cole additional information to determine if it is beneficial to the town.

### **COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS**

Mayor Brown thanked all the citizens who contributed their time, efforts, and funds to the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. She also thanked Tim Brinn, the Town staff,

Chamber of Commerce for their extra efforts in making the event successful and well attended. Mayor Brown wanted to thank Manager Cole for all her preparation that ensures efficient and productive council meetings. There is a lot of homework, research, analysis, documentation, phone calls, that go into the meetings and the recommendations she provides. Mayor Brown wanted to thank the many tireless volunteers and partners who were part of the Seeds of Success Summer Camp. She also thanked Perquimans Art League, State Employee Credit Union, Manzer's Nursery, Hertford Dance Studio, Melton Grove Baptist Church, Saunders Grove Missionary Baptist Church, The Garden Restaurant, Hertford Public Works Department, and the Hertford Fire Department.

Councilman Mimplitsch thanked the businesses that are staying open for the Friday Night Strolls and SML. He reminded everyone that the Indian Summer Festival is coming September 8th & 9th. There are only a few remaining spots for vendors, so anyone interested in a spot should contact Stacey Layden at TDA. There will be more food this year and a band, Light Years, is in place for Friday night. The festival will be even bigger this year.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges noted that at the Christmas in July events, Santa Claus and Elf, who made it out to the Friday Night Stroll and SML, were in full holiday gear despite the 98° temperature. He commented that the fiber optic opportunity is a huge opportunity for the residents, businesses, and schools. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges thanked Manager Cole for all she does and acknowledged that there is a lot going on as per the Manager's Update.

Councilwoman Brothers thanked the residents for continuing to come to the meetings and thanked Manager Cole for all she does. She also relayed some neighborhood citizens' concerns for the upkeep of Hertford, west of the railroad tracks. There are areas with excessively high grass that needs to be cut for public safety. Councilwoman Brothers asked that if the Town can't cut the grass, can someone be hired to do so? Also, she stated that on August 21<sup>st</sup>, she will be hosting a cookout for the teachers and staff as it is the first required workday of the school year. Anyone who would like to attend is invited and the location will be announced soon. Councilwoman Brothers noted about four years ago, the Town adopted a resolution to honor all First Responders on the third Saturday in August. Due to Covid, that event has not happened, and she is asking if the Town can honor first responders on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, as per the resolution.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Brown read the announcements.

Manager Cole added that HHI has decided to cancel the three (3) remaining Saturday Morning Live Markets scheduled for this summer. Vendor turnout and attendance have been low, possibly due to the excessive heat we have been experiencing. HHI will revisit the SML and possibly reschedule it during the cooler months of the year. On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 PM-6 PM, the staff of North Carolina Main Street is coming to conduct a session to develop a strategic plan for our Main Street Program. They have already begun working with us and Trish Gregory Rand, our Main Street Project Director. They had a preliminary meeting with us via Zoom. Manager Cole is inviting as many people as possible to come and contribute to the August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting and rejuvenate our volunteer pool.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Brown asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilman Mimlitsch made a motion to adjourn, and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded. The motion carried, 5-0

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.