

Town of Hertford
Regular Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, August 12, 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, August 12, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Sandra Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem
Connie Brothers Keith Rouse
Rhonda Waters

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Town Manager
Doris Walton, Assistant Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
Harry Sanchez, Water Plant Operator
John 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 Mayor Pro Tem Anderson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson to approve the agenda with the following additions under New Business: 7d) Event Road Closures. Councilman Rouse seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of:

- a) Minutes from July 8, 2024 Regular Session and Jul 22, 2024 Work Session
- b) Appointment of Mayor Hodges as the Deputy Finance Officer
- c) Reappointment of Diane Stallings to the ABC Board

The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson, and it carried, 5-0.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Mr. Calvin Cotton addressed Council regarding Utilities. He provided Council with a handout of proposed recommendations to be considered. Mr. Cotton has concerns regarding the rising cost of utilities, residents on fixed incomes, and the billing schedule. (Attachment included)

CONTINUED BUSINESS

- a) **First Responders Recognition (9/11/2024)**– Councilwoman Brothers noted that there is a Town Resolution indicating that the 3rd Saturday of August is First Responders Recognition Day. This year the event will be held on September 11, 2024, 5pm, at the Perquimans County Recreation Center. Councilwoman Brothers estimated that there will be approximately 350-400 attendees, and that number includes their families. The American Legion has committed to contributing \$1,000, and Perquimans County will be contributing \$300, and the Town of Hertford is proposing to contribute \$300, as well. We are expecting the Town of Winfall to contribute, too. This will be a larger event than in the past as family and peers will be present to see their colleagues honored.

Councilman Rouse moved to approve the Town’s contribution of \$300 towards the First Responders Recognition Day on September 11th. Councilwoman Waters seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Resolution FY25-2 Approving Local Water Supply Plan** – Manager Cole explained that each unit of local government that provides public water service is required to prepare and submit a Local Water Supply Plan on a regular basis. Harry Sanchez, Hertford’s Water Plant Operator, was present to explain how the plan was developed and answer any questions. Mr. Sanchez told Council that numbers from previous years to 2023 are used and they break down those numbers from individual entities and then all the way to daily usage. This report shows water we used and what our future looks like, it is a very progressive plan. It shows how water usage decreased after leaks were repaired, too. It includes work that has been done and work that is on the agenda.

Councilwoman Waters motioned to adopt the Local Water Supply Plan. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded the motion, and it carried, 5-0.

- b) **Mobile Food Services Ordinance** – Manager Cole explained that the PZBOA held a meeting and discussed food trucks and feel they are beneficial for the Town. The Town Ordinances currently do not have any articles pertaining to Mobile Food Services. An ordinance for Mobile Food Services to be included in our Town Ordinances was given to Council for review. The ordinance has several requirements and regulations listed for a mobile food service including, but not

limited to, purchase annual permit, get written permission of property owners to be on their property, have health department documentation, specify locations complying with criteria for restaurant District Uses, provide trash receptacles and potable water, control noise level, and more. Council discussed the ordinance and possible options for Mobile Food Services to expand to areas in Town that are not private property, like Central Park, for example. Manager Cole will take those suggestions back to the PZBOA.

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Waters and Councilwoman Brothers to adopt the Mobile Food Services Ordinance as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Article III Mobile Food Services Ordinance will be publicly posted at:
Municipal Building Lobby
Perquimans County Courthouse
Perquimans County Building Inspectors Office

- c) **Ordinance FY25-2 Amend the Town of Hertford Town Ordinances, Section 7 Building Regulations** – Manager Cole distributed copies of this Ordinance to Council prior to the meeting. She explained that this ordinance is specific to commercial buildings. It will require commercial building owners to fix the appearance so that the building does not appear vacant and improves the appearance of the Town. Manager Cole said that building owners will be required to register their vacant commercial building with the Town, specify their intent for the building, and submit a plan on how they intend to make the building **not** look vacant. Such items that will be required to be corrected are, but not limited to, overgrown vegetation, chipped paint, broken/boarded windows, accumulation of newspapers/mail/flyers, trash/debris, deteriorating porch/steps/roof. If an owner lives out of the area, they are required to name a local person or firm to manage their property and are a local contact. Submitting a plan allows the Town to conduct inspections. This ordinance is consistent with efforts to improve the overall appearance of Hertford. Manager Cole stated that no vote on the Ordinance is needed tonight as this is a first draft, she just wanted Council to discuss.
- d) **Event Road Closures** –
1. Ordinance FY25-3 Indian Summer Festival September 6 & 7
A motion and a second were made by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson and Councilwoman Brothers. It passed unanimously, 5-0
 2. Ordinance FY25-4 Movies on the Courthouse Lawn September 17
A motion and a second were made by Councilman Rouse and Councilwoman Waters. It passed unanimously, 5-0
 3. Ordinance FY25-5 PQ Water Wars on the Courthouse Lawn September 3

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Brothers and Councilwoman Waters. It passed unanimously, 5-0.

MANAGER'S UPDATE

Manager Cole stated that there have been about 79 kayak rentals between March and July 26, 2024. She noted that of the three buildings scheduled to be demolished, one has been taken down and debris is currently being removed. The West Hertford Historic District study is nearly complete. There will be a Public Hearing September 9 and then it will be on an agenda in October 2024. She thanked County Planning, specifically Trevor, for maps they put together. In 2021, the Town applied for a FEMA grant of \$150K with an \$18K match. We were just notified that we have been awarded it. The FEMA grant works with our masterplan and can be streamlined with our studies of storm drain issues, and possibly money from another grant can be used for the \$18K match.

Manager Cole tendered her letter of resignation, effective October 31, 2024. All of Council expressed their gratitude and admiration for her hard work and dedication. A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Brothers and Councilwoman Waters to accept Town Manager Janice McKenzie Cole's letter of resignation, effective October 31, 2024. The motion carried, 5-0.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilwoman Waters expressed her appreciation and gratitude to Manager Cole. She is saddened by her resignation but happy for her and wishes her well. She recalled a speech Manager Cole gave that included a comment about "leaving a job much better than you found it," and Councilwoman Waters stated that Manager Cole has certainly done that.

Councilwoman Brothers thanked Mayor Hodges and others for attending a Back-to-School cookout last Saturday. About 65 kids attended and school supplies were also handed out.

Councilman Rouse said that he was appreciative and grateful for Manager Cole's service. He is concerned about the house next door to him on Dobbs Street that has overgrown knee-high grass. He is concerned about that and how to address it.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson thanked Manager Cole for her dedication and hard work and noted her admiration for Manager Cole.

Mayor Hodges stated that we have at least five more meetings with Manager Cole and then thanked Manager Cole. He stated that the Town has purchased the State Theater downtown for \$100K. The Town did not purchase the building behind the theater as originally discussed. We may buy the building behind it in the future. He confirmed with

Manager Cole that a grant writer is working on the grant now that the Town is the owner of the theater, which is a requirement of the grant. Mayor Hodges thanked Assistant Manager Walton for getting the Community Center mics working and also replacing technical equipment damaged in storms at no cost. Mayor Hodges had the opportunity to get feedback from Missouri family that was docked at our marina for shelter while Hurricane Debby passed through the area. They commended the Town staff on their graciousness and how nice the Town is. Our docks and the surrounding still water provided them with shelter and protected them from the storm. They noted what a beautiful harbor Hertford has from a boater's perspective. He has had discussions with the Sheriff's Office regarding the trucks "blasting" through town (namely on Grubb Street and Church Street) and looked into noise ordinances and fines. Mayor Hodges thanked Councilwoman Brothers for helping with fallen tree branches that came down on Covent Garden and Market Street. The Town may need to look into tree trimming. Brightspeed has been doing work and digging in town. Many residents have called regarding the fiberoptic lines laying all over as Brightspeed is installing more lines. The Town is aware of the issue and in communication with them regarding it. The Town is working behind the scenes with the installers to get everything cleaned up.

Manager Cole noted that there have been Town staff out sick, so we are a bit short-handed. Mayor Hodges asked for prayers and patience for our staff.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Waters moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Brother seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 PM.

PROPOSAL

Utility Billing Recommendations
For the Residents Of The Town Of Hertford, North Carolina 27944
Presented to the City Council of Hertford, North Carolina

Presented by: Mr. Calvin Cotton, [REDACTED] 107 Woodland Ave., Hertford, NC 27944
[REDACTED]

Recommendations:

The purpose for these recommendations is to decrease the amount of utility cut-offs for the low-income and senior residents of the Town of Hertford, North Carolina. I offer these recommendations:

1. Change the utilities billing due date from the 10th of each month to the 20th of each month.
2. Increase the number of billing extensions from 3 times per year to 6 times per year for those on fixed or limited income and for those ages 65 and above.
3. Develop and offer a payment plan to assist the residents who are most vulnerable to adverse impact due to financial shortfalls should they become 1 to 1½ months behind in payments.
4. Get another utility provider.
5. Use the monthly town events calendar to provide Hertford residents one to two months advance notice when the City Council schedules meetings to discuss and propose financial increases that impact the residents of the Town of Hertford, North Carolina.