

Town of Hertford
Work Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, August 26, 2024 – 6:00PM
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, August 26, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Town Manager
Doris Walton, Assistant Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk

A quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Councilwoman Brothers followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Waters and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

None

CONTINUED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Bid Selection and Resolution for Water Treatment Plant Work**– Three bids were received on August 15, 2024, for the Hertford SRF Water Treatment Plant. A Base and an Alternate Bid were provided by each bidder. The Base Bid

includes a manual control valve, and the Alternate Bid includes an automatic valve at the elevated tank, which is preferred. Withers Ravenel prepared the comparison and have recommended the Town accept the bid from Peters and White Construction. Whether we can get the automatic valve will depend on the final construction cost coming in under the remaining funding of the NCDWI grant.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Brothers to award the contract for the water treatment plant to Peters and White Construction with a Base Bid of \$1,562,900 and an Alternate Bid of \$1,662,900. Her motion was seconded by Councilman Rouse, and passed, 5-0.

b) Utility Billing Changes – Manager Cole reminded Council that at our Regular Session earlier this month, Mr. Cotton addressed Council with billing concerns, and she said many residents are expressing the same concerns. Staff from the Town met and came up with a new schedule (attached). This new schedule accommodates updated pay periods and Social Security checks that are now mailed out on a staggered schedule. The new billing schedule allows people more time to get their money to pay during the month with no extensions needed. The new schedule will be effective November 2024. The change will be communicated to our residents via CodeRed, Utility Bill Newsletter, and The Town of Hertford Facebook page. (Attached)

c) Budget Amendments

FY25-6 - Our Vac truck is in need of repairs, and it is essential to our work.

- 1) Move funds from Contingency lines in Sewer Collections and Treatment to M/R Vehicles in each department.
- 2) Also reallocate funds in the Water Capital Outlay to M/R Vehicle to pay the balance of the Southern Van bill to repair the Vac truck.
 - a) Sewer Collections Contingencies to M/R Vehicles (\$12,466.20)
 - b) Sewer Treatment Contingencies to M/R Vehicles (\$12,466.20)
 - c) Water Capital Outlay to M/R Vehicles (\$20,000.00)

Councilman Rouse motioned to approve Budget Amendment FY25-6. Councilwoman Brothers seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

MANAGER'S UPDATE

Manager Cole stated that the RDED grant application for the State Theater rehabilitation was submitted on Thursday. We have asked for \$850K, and we showed

71 jobs of the 69 jobs required by the grant. A decision on that grant should be made at the end of October.

The Town offices have been busy responding to various complaints/observations. Manager Cole met with the business owner of H&J Pallets to discuss what could be done to improve its appearance and to move objects away from our electrical facility for safety reasons. The business owner said that the property owner is opposed to putting up a fence. There have been complaints about the overgrown grass at a house that HUD is now responsible for. The company managing it is not responding to our calls or messages, so the Town cut the grass. Manager Cole did note that she mentioned at our last meeting that we have been short-handed due to staff out with illness.

Manager Cole has made arrangements with the person who did the structural evaluation of the State Theater to come back and determine if there is any immediate work (shoring up?) that must be done before the grant is issued. He is scheduled to be in Hertford the second week of September

The two houses on Dobbs Street have been taken down. There are concerns/challenges with taking down the house on Edenton Road Street next to the cemetery, but it should be taken down soon. The lot on King Street adjacent to the park is being cleaned up as well.

There will be two Public Hearings in September. There will be a hearing for the West Hertford Historic District and the NRAC will have it on their October agenda. Manager Cole has someone looking into the triangle area at Edenton Road and Railroad Streets between Market Street and the end of the cemetery to be identified as a historic segment of the community that's not included in East or West Hertford. That work is just about completed, and we hope to have it finished by the end of September.

The other public hearing is for system development fee study on the costs and/or how those costs can be shared with any new subdivisions for the infrastructure that would have to be put in. Those will be at our September 9, 2024, Regular Session Meeting

We are scheduled for a site visit on September 26th with DEQ to confirm that we are in compliance with how we are conducting the administering of our grants. It is like an audit, and working with Withers Ravenel has made this a smoother process for us than if we were starting from scratch on our own.

We accepted the bid from the Timmons Group for the Entitlement Funds for work on Barrows Alley and Marina Industrial Park, so they are working on their contract and fees. They are doing work on the EDA grant we received for the Riverfront. We are juggling a lot of things.

Councilwoman Waters asked about work being done on the water and sewer lines. Manager Cole answered that bids are coming in on Friday, so hopefully at our next

meeting Council can select which company to use and begin work soon. When the permanent work is being done, it will impact the residents of Woodland Circle, for example, with parking their cars as the street will be closed during the permanent fix. We understand it will be an inconvenience, but we will give the residents as much notice as possible.

Mayor Hodges asked about Harbor Town Cruises. Manager Cole replied that she received an email that the Albemarle Queen paddle boat is in operation. Mayor Hodges also asked about our plans for the \$2M for work on our dock improvements. Manager Cole informed him that no one bid, and we are putting it out again. Someone who was recommended to us is coming to look at it tomorrow morning. She met with Town Manager of Edenton's Town Manager who has similar concerns as us regarding use and control of \$2M grant. They are hoping to meet in front of the legislators this week.

There was a press conference last Tuesday, August 20, in Edenton. The US Attorney from Raleigh came to Edenton to talk about the task force that was set up with local law enforcement in the Northeast to crack down on violent crime. He reported that 20+ suspects have been indicted, and the District Attorney who handles seven of our counties had another 20 or so. They discussed the numerous weapons they had taken off the street to reduce violent crime. He asked Manager Cole to speak at the press conference because she was instrumental in this task force. She contacted the US Attorney's office late last year about bringing federal resources to our area and they responded to that request.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilwoman Waters shared a concern from a citizen regarding residents using their homes as a place of business, specifically an auto repair/mechanical shop with cars and motor equipment and car parts in the front yard. Manager Cole responded that we would check our ordinances.

Councilwoman Brothers commented on the numerous "junk" vehicles in the same lot as H&J Pallets. The Town Clerk will follow up on those. First Responders Appreciation Day will be held on September 11th, A Day of Remembrance, at the Perquimans County Recreation Center at 5 PM. The event is sponsored by American Legion Post #126, Perquimans County, The Lend a Hand Ministry, Town of Hertford, and Town of Winfall. Councilwoman Brothers asked if the Town could participate in the National Clean Up Day on September 21st. Manager Cole will put it in the next Utility Bill Newsletter. Mayor Hodges suggested organizing a cleanup in the off-season (January or February), identifying an area of Town to clean up and contacting Chris Staley of Green Waves Lawn Care to provide labor and landscaping/lawn care.

Councilman Rouse thanked Manager Cole for her response and the work done regarding the property at 307 Dobbs Street. Councilman Rouse thanked Mayor Hodges

for being a part of the Perquimans County High School 50th Reunion. Councilman Rouse recapped the reunion that was held over the weekend. The alumni took a tour of the high school Friday, attended the football game where they were recognized on the field at halftime, and then enjoyed karaoke at the Hertford Bay Tap House. Saturday, they had breakfast at Captain Bob's, a banquet at Louise's Event Center, and then went back to the Tap House. They attended fellowship services Sunday at New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church before departing. He noted that they were the first fully integrated class at PCHS. Councilman Rouse stated that in the future they may plan a joint reunion for the classes of PCHS.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson asked about the Town sponsoring a shredding event. Councilwoman Brothers shared that the Perquimans County Center for Active Living is hosting a Shred & Shield event on September 24, 10 AM – 1 PM. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson also said that she has received many comments regarding an increased number of mosquitoes in Hertford. The rain we were getting has contributed to the increase in mosquitoes.

Mayor Hodges attended the Chamber of Commerce meeting last Thursday. He said there is a lot of work being done in business development - reaching out and engaging with people. There was discussion about how to recruit more people to come to the Town and Perquimans County. Mayor Hodges spoke to many people at the 50 year high school reunion last weekend and noted that they are a very special class, and it was a special time. He thanked Manager Cole and her staff for the grant work, there have been a lot of submissions, a lot of wins, a lot of work going on... and we are ready for more. Mayor Hodges spoke at the convocation at Perquimans County High School, as he has done in the last two years. He described it as a pep rally for the school system. Staff, administration, and teachers are together discussing their vision for the school year and how to make it happen. He said there was a lot of positivity and positivity for the students.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 3 rd	6 PM	Water Wars on the Courthouse lawn
September 3 rd	6 PM	Spaghetti Dinner, Brew2Rescue, \$12.50/ticket
September 6 th & 7 th		Indian Summer Festival
September 13 th	5 – 8 PM	Friday Night Stroll, Downtown
September 17 th		Movie on the Courthouse Lawn

September 21st

9 AM

Open Door Pantry Walk for Hunger, 8-9 AM
Registration, walk begins at 9 AM

CLOSED SESSION

Councilman Rouse made a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to **NCGS § 143-318.11 (a)(1)** To prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes; and **NCGS § 143-318.11 (a)(6)** To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion. It passed unanimously and Council went into Closed Session at 7:05 PM.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Council returned to Open Session at 8:08 PM

ADJOURNMENT

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Waters and Councilman Rouse to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.

New Utility Billing Schedule

	<u>Current</u>	<u>New</u>
Mailed	22 nd	30 th
Received	@ 29 th	@7 th
Due	10 th	20 th
Late Fee	11 th	21 st
Cut-off	20 th	30 th
Cut-off extension	30 th	No extension

Effective: November 2024 billing