

Town of Hertford
Regular Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, September 11, 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, September 11, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Earnell Brown, Mayor
Jerry Mimplitsch
Sandra Anderson

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem
Connie Brothers

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
John Leidy, Attorney

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

Councilman Mimplitsch requested the following amendments to the agenda: remove Item #9 Closed Session; under Continued Business, add 6c Resolution to Apply for LASII Construction Grant; and under New Business, add a third budget amendment to 7c Budget Amendment. A motion was made by Councilwoman Brothers to approve the agenda with those changes and Councilwoman Anderson seconded. The motion to approve the agenda carried, 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilman Mimplitsch made a motion to approve the Regular Session Minutes August 14, 2023, Work Session Minutes August 28, 2023, and the FY 2023-2024 Strategic Plan on the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges. The motion passed, 5-0.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Prior to 6:00 PM, no citizens signed in to speak. Mr. Quentin Jackson arrived after 6:00 PM and the sign-up sheet had been removed by the Town Clerk at 6:00 PM. He objected to not having the opportunity to sign in to speak when he arrived. Mayor Brown continued with the Agenda.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

- a. **Preliminary Resolution for Fire Truck Financing** – Manager Cole presented a purchase plan for the new fire truck for our volunteer fire department. The cost is \$650,000. Earlier this year Council determined that half the amount would be taken from our Fund Balance, and we would seek a loan for the remaining balance. First Tryon has been our liaison dealing with the Local Government Commission (LGC) and they (First Tryon) sent RFPs to several banks/financial institutions. Of the responses received, First Tryon recommended Cogent Leasing & Financing, Inc. The preliminary resolution along with our application is required to go to the LGC indicating that this is the route we want to take to acquire the new fire truck. Manager Cole is asking Council to consider the preliminary resolution for approval so it can be submitted with the application.

Council and Manager Cole discussed interest rates in the final resolution and early payoff options/penalties. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to accept the preliminary resolution as presented and Councilwoman Brothers seconded. The motion was approved, 5-0.

- b. **Kayak Rental Pricing** – Manager Cole informed Council that Edenton does provide kayak rentals through their Park Service at lower fee than what Council had previously discussed regarding the fees our Town will charge. Council may want to reconsider and adjust the rental fees we will be charging to be competitive, as the kayak rentals are not being installed as a revenue source, but as a draw/experience for people to kayak in Hertford. Council and Manager Cole discussed the Town's flexibility regarding various options for pricing, discount codes, cost-sharing, and percentage agreements with Rent.Fun Kayak, and our ability to adjust those. Manager Cole will follow up with Rent.Fun Kayak regarding the amount the Town will charge for our kayak rentals.
- c. **Resolution to Apply for LASII Construction Grant** – Manager Cole reminded Council that at our previous meeting they approved Withers Ravenel Task Order #9, to apply for the LASII Construction Grant pertaining to stormwater. Now we need to pass this resolution giving Withers Ravenel permission to apply for the grant in the name of the Town.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to accept the resolution and Councilman Mimplitsch seconded. The motion was approved, 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Selection of Contractor for West Hertford Historic District Study & Nomination** – The Town sent an RFP to the 13 contractors on a list of consultants provided to us by the State Historic Preservations Office for our Survey and National Register Nomination Report for the West Hertford Historic District. We received a single response and that was from J. Daniel Pezzoni of Landmark Preservation Associates. The company was highly recommended by references, the pricing is in the range that Manager Cole anticipated, and his timeframe of completion coincides with ours. She is very satisfied with the proposal and recommends that Council approve it.

Councilman Mimlitsch made a motion to approve the proposal from Landmark Preservation Associates and Councilwoman Anderson seconded. The motion was approved 5-0.

- b. Resolution Accepting Electricities Funds** – Mayor Brown noted that this resolution is to accept \$5,000 from Electricities. Electricities has offered Betterment Project Funding of \$5,000 to assist the Town in tree trimming. The Town will use these funds to help pay for the cost of trimming the trees around the electrical wires.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to accept the \$5,000 grant from Electricities and Councilman Mimlitsch seconded. The motion was approved 5-0.

- c. Budget Amendments** – Manager Cole outlined the three budget amendments for Council.
- 1) FY24-7** This amendment is regarding the funds we accepted from Electricities System Betterment Grant. The \$5,000 grant will be moved into the Professional Services General Fund to help offset the cost of additional tree trimming.
 - 2) FY24-8** Funds will be moved from contingency account in Sewer Collections to Vehicle Maintenance to have Southern Vac fix the 10' hose, \$11,251.27.
 - 3) FY24-9** Move \$2,500 from Contingency Account in Streets to Professional Services Fund for LAS11 Construction Application WR Project No. 23-0067-002, WR Task Order #9 that was previously approved by Council.

Mayor Brown asked for a motion to approve the three budget amendments. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to approve Budget Amendments FY24-7, FY24-8, and FY24-9. Councilwoman Anderson seconded and the motion was unanimously approved, 5-0.

- d. Managers Update** –
1. The Town got approval on the EDA Grant for construction design for the wall and boardwalk, which was the next step in the Riverfront plan. The

grant is for \$180K with a \$60K match from the Town and a \$60K match from the County. When we found out we would not be getting the other permissions that we needed for the entire boardwalk, we decided to only take it up to Missing Mills Park. We have applied for the Attorney General's grant as a back-up in case the EDA grant didn't come through, or it will help us get further with the design for this, if needed. Manager Cole thanked Sharon Smith and the Albemarle Commission for all the work helping Manager Cole to get this together and to the EDA's satisfaction. Manager Cole did note that Mayor Pro Tem Hodges was also very involved in this at the earlier stages as well. Mayor Brown asked if these drawings would go to the S-Bridge truss, and Manager Cole replied that they should.

2. We are currently administering 10 different grants and we are still applying for more.
3. We have gotten the auditors all the paperwork we are required to do, so there shouldn't be any hold-up on our end in our audit being on time.
4. We are in the middle of the conversion to the new software designed by the legal municipalities and being implemented by Black Mountain. We have already gone live with payroll and other finance features. Today we went live with utilities. All our line numbers are being changed and that is affecting some of our processes as those are all updated to the newly assigned line number.
5. Public Works Director David Forsythe, with the help of Larry Sandeen, is working to get the Capital Improvement Plan and Asset Management Plan prepared, and those plans, even in a preliminary form, will give the Town additional points with the CDBG-I Grant.

Mayor Brown commended Manager Cole for bringing in qualified and dedicated staff to help with all the administrative work, and the foresight to hire that additional staff.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges asked for an update on the King Street leak. Manager Cole replied that it is a very complicated issue due to the way the pipe is made and the way in which it curves. It is so tricky that it could easily be broken, which could leave a large area without water. This leak does not fall under any of our grants, and we are outsourcing the repair to be corrected safely. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges also mentioned that some residents have inquired about using health cards to pay for utilities. We have not been able to get information from these cards that we need to process such payments. Manager Cole has asked that a card be presented to her so she can explore further what needs to be done to obtain the information the utility department needs to process a payment. Councilwoman Brothers offered her health card to be used for inquiry purposes.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

Mayor Brown thanked Town Manager Cole for her perseverance in the EDA grant, and all the other grants we are applying for and administering. There was a ribbon cutting today for a new antique store that opened on Church Street, Something Old, Something New Antiques. Mayor Brown emphasized the importance of supporting our local businesses. She acknowledged the very successful Indian Summer Festival, and thanked Stacey Layden, her team, the County, and the many volunteers who made the event a great success, and expressed her appreciation for all the organization, logistics, and teamwork. The event was very well-planned and executed. Seeds of Success had a lemonade booth, and it was hands-on teaching experience for them as they practiced such skills as customer service, math (receiving money and making change), public speaking, and entrepreneurship in running a small business. Mayor Brown asked the citizens to be aware of the greenspace that Central Park provides for our community. If pet owners could refrain from using the park as a place for their pets to relieve themselves, it would be greatly appreciated as our residents and visitors use the park as a place to sit, play, and gather. Let's keep it clean and beautiful for all to enjoy.

Councilman Mimplitsch also noted the huge success of the Indian Summer Festival. He has served on the TDA board. He said it's been a lot of fun and a lot of work putting this event together, and so great and rewarding to see the community come together for it. Councilman Mimplitsch thanked TDA, Town Manager Cole, County Manager Heath, the Layden family, the Greenes, the Flaughers, the Morrisseys, EMS, the Sheriff Department, Missy Mimplitsch, and all the vendors. He heard from some vendors that this was "the best they had done." He discussed the team effort that he witnessed before, during and after the event, and despite being exhausted at the end of the day, volunteers were in happy spirits.

Councilwoman Anderson reiterated the success of the Indian Summer Festival. She was told by many vendors that they had their best day in sales all year at our event. She added that the lemonade sold by Seeds of Success was especially delicious!

Councilwoman Brothers noted the team effort and success of the Indian Summer Festival. She inquired about putting together a team of volunteers to clean up the area by the railroad tracks, especially between Dobbs and Grubb, and maintaining the grass cutting. Councilwoman Brothers is concerned for the safety of the kids as they walk to school by the high grass. She asked if someone could be hired or given permission to cut it and keep it trimmed.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges acknowledged the success of the Indian Summer Festival. He noted that there are still challenges in Hertford such as the water leaks, bad pipes, parts of the town that are not being trimmed or maintained. A new business opened today,

and people continue to come to Hertford for events like the Indian Summer Festival, a Friday night football game, and more, because the community comes together, and people want to be a part of that community spirit. That spirit is what brought Mayor Pro Tem Hodges and his family to Hertford, and he encourages others to move here for that reason. He recognized County Manager Heath for scoring the winning touchdown in the Perquimans County and Pasquotank County Sheriff's football game on Friday, September 8th, and congratulated Sheriff White and his team on their victory. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges also added that the goal of the West Hertford Historical District is to get residents or people considering buying in that area tax credit incentives for fixing up their homes. It has been gratifying to see our grant work come together and help the community. He thanked Manager Cole for all her work on the grants.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Brown read the announcements.

The following items were also announced:

- 9/23 Seeds of Success's Back to School Safety Presentation by the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department will be held at the Community Center from 1-3 PM.
- 9/27 Community Outreach Event "Civics 101: Hertford City Government, Part 1", presented by Mayor Brown and Councilwoman Anderson, will be held at the American Legion Post 126 from 6-8 PM. Refreshments will be provided. This is the first presentation of the five-part series from the League of Women Voters.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Brown asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded. It passed unanimously, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 PM.