

Town of Hertford
Work Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, September 9, 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, September 9, 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
Johny Hallow III, Attorney

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.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR WEST HERTFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Dan Pezzoni of Landmark Presentation Associates remotely presented the study he performed for the West Hertford Historic District. Mr. Pezzoni said that this is a draft presentation of what he will be presenting in October to the State Historical Preservation Office. (Presentation is attached.)

Council asked Mr. Pezzoni to reiterate the advantages of having a second historical district. It is an advantage to have a home in a historically designated area. Another advantage for the property owners of contributing buildings/houses is that there are state and federal tax credit programs. Not every home is a contributing property in the proposed West Historic District, and the map on page 2 of the presentation indicates if a home is or is not a contributing property. Owners can receive tax credits for preservation work that meets the criteria. Exterior improvements of the contributing houses in the historical district must maintain the original look and integrity of that district and houses must be 50 years old or more. There were no comments from the Public.

The West Hertford Historic District Public Hearing ended at 6:34 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT FEE

Daryll Parker of Willdan Financial Services presented in-person their System Development Fee Study. (Presentation is attached.)

Mayor Hodges asked Mr. Parker when the System Development Fee (SDF) is paid by the developer. Mr. Parker replied that it is most common that the SDF is paid when the Certificate of Occupancy is issued. It could also be paid prior to construction or at the time of connection or Certificate of Occupancy. He advised that Council confirm that with our Town Attorney. Mayor Hodges also asked if the number (\$7,710.00) Mr. Parker is presenting to Council for SDF is the ceiling for the Hertford SDF. Mr. Parker replied that yes, it is the ceiling, as that number is up to what their study can justify if there is ever a legal challenge.

Finally, Mayor Hodges asked Mr. Parker if he knew what the SDF is for Perquimans County. Mr. Parker answered that the study did not include that, but he would get the information to the Mayor and Council.

Hertford resident Mr. Calvin Cotton asked if Mr. Parker was presenting what it would cost to build new water and wastewater facilities. Mayor Hodges explained that if SDF are not imposed on new developments, the current residents will bear 100% of the cost of expanding our capacity. He further explained that we don't want the SDF to be so high that it deters developers, but we also don't want the current residents carrying the costs via increased utility rates. Grant money can also help offset these costs.

The System Development Fee Public Hearing ended at 7:02 PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to approve the agenda with the following amendment, move item 6c) Vacant Building Ordinance from the Consent Agenda to 8a) Continued Business. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion, and it carried, 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of:

1. Minutes for August 12th, 2024 Regular Session and August 26th, 2024 Work Session.
2. Special Events and Street Closures: October 25, 2024, Trunk or Treat; December 6, 2024, Grand Illumination; and December 7, 2024, Christmas Parade.

The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Waters. Council unanimously passed the motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

CITIZENS CONCERNS

Mr. Calvin Cotton thanked Council for their action in adjusting the utility billing/payment schedule. He expressed concern over the new due date but will see how it goes for a few months once the new billing/payment schedule takes effect.

Ms. Sara Winslow stated that the new S-Bridge has been open for nearly two years. In 2017 or 2018 the citizens went to the Federal Historic Preservation, and the Town and some of the citizens signed off that there were requirements in a memorandum agreement that the DOT had to complete. One of those requirements was the landscaping – planting trees, shrubs, flowers – on both ends of the bridge. In the nearly two years since the bridge opened, that has not been done nor are the grassy areas being mowed, trimmed, and maintained by the DOT. Ms. Winslow asked Council for assistance in contacting DOT regarding this matter because DOT is not responding to the citizens.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

a) Ordinance FY25-2 Vacant Building Ordinance –

Manager Cole reminded Council that they received and discussed this proposed Vacant Building Ordinance at the August 12, 2024 Regular Session. The ordinance has been updated as per our Town Attorney's recommendation to include certain language to state: "... that if the Property Owner principal residence is not within Perquimans County, then a property management company, business or resident who regularly operates within the territorial limits of the Town of Hertford...; and meeting the requirements of subsection a) of this section."

A motion and a second were made Councilwoman Waters and Councilwoman Brothers to approve Ordinance FY25-2 Vacant Building Ordinance. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

The Town Clerk will post Ordinance FY25-2 in the Municipal Building, Perquimans County Courthouse, and Perquimans County Library.

NEW BUSINESS

a) System Development Fee –

Manager Cole stated that at a future meeting there will be an ordinance for Council to vote to adopt the SDF analysis done by Willdan. It will show that we have followed all the requirements. It has been posted on our website and no one filled out the survey, which was also on the website. We held our Public Hearing and there were no public comments. Council approved the process used and the recommendation of the study Willdan completed for the Town. Local government units are to publish the SDF in their annual budget, rate plan, or ordinance and complete an updated study every 5 years. Their study recommends an increase to our current SDF, and Council can decide if they

want to include a dollar figure in the ordinance or not. Council and Manager Cole discussed when increased SDF becomes effective and if those fees are retroactive to any recent developments/construction. Manager Cole will confirm information regarding the date the newly adopted SDF would take effect and if it is retroactive one year. Council will vote on this at a future meeting.

b) West Hertford Historic District –

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to support the creation of the West Hertford Historic District based on the study by Dan Pezzoni of Landmark Preservation Associates. A second was made by Councilwoman Brothers and the motion carried 5-0.

c) Surplus Inventory –

Manager Cole provided Council with a list of surplus items not being utilized by Public Works and can be sold on Govdeals. The Town previously offered the BLET program at the College of the Albemarle to take surplus law enforcement items they could use. They took what they could use and left the remaining items. The street sweeper is on that surplus list and Manager Cole advised Council that despite repairs, it is still not picking up leaves, and the repairs are exceeding the value. Director Forsythe confirmed this and said Public Works is utilizing the tow-behind vacuum/mulching machine for the heavy leaf and debris pick up starting in September.

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Brothers and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson to place the surplus items on Govdeals. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

d) Budget Amendments

FY24-44

Correct a conversion error in last year's budget per Auditor.

- 1) Main Street Part-Time 38-5610-412 (\$21,972.00)
- 2) Appropriation for FB 10-4999 (\$21,972.00)

- 3) Main Street Transfer to GF 38-5610-710 (\$20,653.00)
- 4) Planning Transfer from Main Street 10-4938 (\$20,653.00)

- 5) Transfer from GF 38-4910 (\$7,100.00)
- 6) Planning Transfer to Main Street 10-5610-738 (\$7,100.00)

Councilman Rouse motioned to approve Budget Amendment FY24-44. Councilwoman Brothers seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

FY25-7

Transfer funds within the department to cover the insurance of the new fire truck. The bill was more than the estimate.

- 1) Fire Supplies to Fire Insurance (\$2,678.29)

Councilwoman Waters motioned to approve Budget Amendment FY25-7. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

FY25-8

Transfer funds from the Powell Bill Revenue to the Powell Bill Expense line to cover the cost for Enviro-Tech to replace the existing curb inlet and storm drainpipe located at the intersection of Perry Street and Grubb Street.

- 1) Powell Bill 20-4280 (\$13,050.00)
- 2) Powell Bill 20-5740-521 (\$13,050.00)

Councilwoman Brothers motioned to approve Budget Amendment FY25-8. Councilwoman Waters seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

FY25-9

Transfer funds from the Powell Bill Revenue to the Powell Bill Expense line to cover the cost for asphalt and supplies to fix Dobb Street, 300 and 400 block of Market Street, and smaller repairs on Pennsylvania and Woodland Circle.

- 1) Powell Bill 20-4280 (\$2,800.00)
- 2) Powell Bill 20-5740-521 (\$2,800.00)

Councilman Rouse motioned to approve Budget Amendment FY25-9. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

MANAGER'S UPDATE

We are collecting bids on work, and we are required to receive at least three bids. Council already approved a bid for the water treatment plant. We only received one bid for wastewater so we will be putting that out for bid again. This grant money must be encumbered by the end of December. If again we don't get three bids, we can go to the DEQ Division of Water Infrastructure and request permission to approve what we do get.

Mayor Hodges asked Manager Cole about the DOT regarding bridge operations and the landscaping and maintenance agreement. Ms. Sara Winslow will provide the agreement given to the residents and Manager Cole will follow up.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilman Rouse mentioned that there is a steady stream of water leaking on Dobbs Street and Hyde Park and Edenton Road.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson thanked and commended Stacey Layden of TDA and all those involved with a successful Indian Summer Festival. The Friday night street dance was well-attended and there were many vendors and food trucks on Saturday. Unfortunately, the mild rain did deter some from attending.

Councilwoman Brothers reminded all that Wednesday, September 11, 2024, 5 PM, at the Perquimans County Recreation Center, is First Responders Appreciation Day/A Day of Remembrance. Toys for Tots is expanding to include Bertie County, Columbia, and Gates County. Applications are due by October 31, 2024.

Councilwoman Waters also stated that the Indian Summer Festival was a great event. People enjoyed the Street Dance Friday, lots of vendors and food trucks. She noted that we just couldn't control the weather.

Mayor Hodges also shared his gratitude and appreciation to everyone involved in the Indian Summer Festival, including TDA and Public Works. Last Thursday Mayor Hodges attended the Hertford Housing Authority meeting. He stated that Ms. Holley and the others are doing amazing work and commended their ongoing efforts.

There are some residents concerned that hydrants near them were not being flushed. Manager Cole stated that there is a schedule for flushing the hydrants and money in the budget to replace broken hydrants.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 14th 5 – 8 PM Seeds of Success will be hosting Movie in the Park, "Wakanda Forever", at Central Park

September 17th Movie on the Courthouse Lawn sponsored by Downtown Hertford **event may get postponed**

September 21st 9 AM Open Door Pantry Walk for Hunger, Registration 8 - 9 AM, walk begins at 9 AM

October 1st

National Night Out

Manager Cole also noted that the Perquimans County History Museum expanded their hours and is now open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 1 PM, or by appointment.

Mayor Hodges added that the Open Door Church is volunteering to do clean-up and maintenance at the tennis and basketball courts. Manager Cole discussed the County and State 25-year agreement on those courts and that they will be converting to the Town in June 2025. She also informed Council that there is a grant that we can apply for to improve that area and possibly Central Park; applications are due in March and it will be awarded in August.

CLOSED SESSION

- a. Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to go into Closed Session to approve previous Closed Session Minutes; and pursuant to **NCGS § 143-318.11 (a)(1)**; **NCGS § 143-318.11 (a)(3)**; and **NCGS § 143-318.11 (a)(6)**. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously and Council went into Closed Session at 8:07 PM.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Council returned to Open Session at 9:04 PM

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to hire Doris Walton as the Interim Town Manager effective November 1, 2024 until further notice, subject to the execution of the employment contract between Doris Walton and Council drafted by the Town Attorney. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 PM.