

Town of Hertford
Work Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, November 27, 2023 – 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, November 27, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Earnell Brown, Mayor
Jerry Mimplitsch

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem
Connie Brothers

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Sandra Anderson

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 Mayor Pro Tem Hodges to approve the agenda. Councilman Mimplitsch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 4-0.

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

- a) Recognition of Retiree – Judy Bateman, Utility Supervisor, was honored for her service to the Town of Hertford beginning April 1995. Ms. Bateman will be retiring at the end of the year. Mayor Brown expressed gratitude on behalf of the Council and Town for her dedicated service and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges shared a personal story relaying Ms. Bateman’s willingness to always assist and her vast knowledge in her supervisor position and of the Hertford residents. Ms. Bateman was presented with a retirement gift and a standing ovation from Council.

- b) Auditor's Presentation, Kari Dunlap of Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs.
(Presentation attached)

CONTINUED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Response to LGC re: Material Findings in Audit – Manager Cole explained that because we are on the UAL list, we are required to respond to the LGC regarding the material finding in the audit. We are given 60 days to respond, but because there will be a change in Council, she wanted to send it right away with the current Council members' signatures as Council signatures are required on the response. In addition, Manager Cole would like to prepare a letter to the LGC stating reasons why Hertford should be removed from the UAL list. She is asking that Council members sign that letter in support as Hertford has made great progress.

Councilman Mimplitsch made a motion approving Manager Cole to compose a letter to the LGC requesting that Hertford be removed from the UAL list. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion and it passed, 4-0.

- b) Authorization to use Powell Bill Funds – Manager Cole asked Council to approve the use of \$8,500 from the Powell Bill funds to survey the Meads Loop and Meads Circle property. Although the Town does not own that property, we have been maintaining it. The owner has agreed to transfer it to the Town at no cost. The survey is needed so our Attorney can draw up a deed of transfer/sale.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to approve the use of Powell Bill funds for the survey of Meads Loop and Meads Circle as requested. Councilwoman Brothers seconded and the motion passed, 4-0.

- c) Volunteer Firefighters' Call Response Bonus – Manager Cole had previously given Council the bonus schedule for the volunteer firefighters. This 2023 bonus schedule was based on the same per call bonus as 2022. The total bonus schedule was under the budgeted amount. Council discussed increasing the per call bonus.

Councilman Mimplitsch made a motion to increase the per call bonus and include the FICA calculation, with the total not to exceed the \$25K budgeted. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded the motion and it passed, 4-0.

- d) Authorization to close at 12 PM on 12/22 for Staff and Volunteer Firefighters Christmas Party - Manager Cole stated that traditionally there has been a holiday lunch for the Town of Hertford staff and volunteer firefighters (Council is also

invited) on the day before the holiday closure. It has been held at the PC Rec Center and the intent is to have it there again. She asked for approval to close all Town offices at 12:00 PM on December 22, 2023, for the Staff and Firefighters Christmas Party.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to authorize Manager Cole to close the offices at 12:00 PM on December 22, 2023, for the Staff and Firefighters Christmas Party. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion and it passed, 4-0.

Manager Cole added that Withers Ravenel hosts a lunch for their top three clients. They will be hosting a lunch on December 21, 2023, for the Town of Hertford staff, as the Town is one of their top three clients.

- e) Winter Festival Event – Manager Cole informed Council that Downton Hertford (formerly HHI) will be hosting a Winter Festival downtown on Saturday, February 17, 2024. The event, Hertford on Ice, will include ice skating, a snow maze, and snow related events and activities. A special events application will be submitted to the Council to approve, but no approval is required tonight. The event will be a fundraiser for Downtown Hertford. They will be looking for sponsors and there will be an admission to attend the event.

f) Manager's Update –

1. Public Works Director David Forsythe gave an update on the street paving and work in Hertford. Mr. Forsythe commended the Public Works staff for their superb work and dedication. In May when Mr. Forsythe began working for Hertford, there were 12-14 water leaks to be repaired, and all those have been fixed. He did comment on a 15-foot section of pipe on Dobbs Street that was corroded and had seven previous repairs to it. That section of pipe has been excavated and replaced. The repaving of streets around town has been ongoing and they have been moving through quite a bit of asphalt. The staff will be working on manhole sewer lines themselves instead of contracting that work. Mr. Forsythe noted that Jenny's Gut was cleared out again today and is being routinely cleared out. However, beavers have been causing backups with debris and a specialist has been assisting the Town with that. In some areas, rapid water flow is causing flooding and erosion. Public Works has identified five key areas that are susceptible to backup and sometimes flooding by stormwater. The Town is using barricades and rocks to slow and prevent road erosion for an interim fix and Mr. Forsythe hopes for a long-term fix through grants.

Mr. Forsythe spoke with the Railroad Master regarding the maintenance and clean up at that section of the line. The Railroad only had budget to

spray weeds twice a year. Mr. Forsythe and the Railroad Master came to an agreement that with advanced permission of the Railroad, the Public Works staff will be able to trim and maintain that property.

Mr. Forsythe and Manager Cole informed Council that tree trimming needs to be done near Hertford Grammar School, but the power will need to be shut off while it is being done. Public Works is coordinating the timing with the school and residents to cause the least impact.

2. Congressman Don Davis was in our area Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Perquimans County Deputies and EMS were invited to join him for a slice of pie.
3. The Christmas Parade is Saturday, December 2nd at 2 PM, lineup is 12 PM. Current Council and elected Council will ride in the parade and then be seated on the stage in front of the Courthouse. Parade participants are invited to do a 3 - 5 minute presentation/performance in front of Council as they pass the stage.
4. Manager Cole had the opportunity to drive around Elizabeth City and look at subdivisions and lot sizes. She saw various R8 and R10 lots at Stockbridge, some off River Road, and lots at Chesterfield subdivisions in Elizabeth City. There were various lots they viewed with homes configured on the lots in various ways, but no R6's. In Hertford, most of the lots at Woodland Circle are R8s or larger. R6s might be suited for the tiny house trend, but 119 R6 lots could be too densely populated in the Don Juan area for which the developer is seeking rezoning. She and Council discussed different residential zones in Hertford and how homes are configured on lots, lot sizes, setbacks, structures spanning two lots, and other factors. She noted that the Planning Board will establish requirements for subdivisions regarding green spaces, parks, sidewalks, etc.

COUNCIL'S REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilman Mimplitsch shared that he has observed and heard many comments about the accomplishments of Public Works and thanked David Forsythe for the work he has done as the Public Works Director. He expressed appreciation to the staff for their work during the audit. Councilman Mimplitsch supports the Hertford on Ice Winter Festival as it will attract people from areas to come to Hertford. He noted that everyone's hard work and innovative ideas are bringing more people to our Town.

Councilwoman Brothers thanked Manager Cole and her staff for their work in moving Hertford forward. She provided Thanksgiving dinners to some residents in Chowan and

Perquimans County and EMS. Toys for Tots will be at the Perquimans County Rec Center on December 18th for set up, and then parents coming in on the 19th. Volunteers are welcome. On December 16th, Councilwoman Brothers will be providing a Christmas for some children and unhoused families in the county. She thanked the community and God for allowing her to serve as a Councilwoman and their prayers for her family. She commended Mayor Brown on her tenure and work as Mayor. She thanked Councilman Mimplitsch for asking her to serve as his campaign manager four years ago.

Mayor Brown thanked the residents, Council, Town Clerk, Town Manager, and the entire Town staff for their support and the honor to serve the Town as the Mayor of Hertford. She thanked God for allowing her to be a servant to the Town. Unity and community were her focus, and Council, working as a team, did all they could do. She stated that it takes a village for Hertford to reach its full potential. At the next meeting, the new Mayor and Council members will be sworn in, so Mayor Brown wanted to take this final moment in Council Reports/Concerns to express her gratitude.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to adjourn, and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.