

Town of Hertford
Regular Meeting (County Courthouse/ Zoom)
Monday, January 10, 2022
6:00 p.m.

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Regular Meeting at the Perquimans County Courthouse (also by Zoom) on Monday, January 10, 2022 at 6:00pm.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem
Connie Brothers

Jerry Mimlitsch
Sandra Anderson

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Earnell Brown, Mayor

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Interim Town Manager
John Leidy, Attorney

A quorum was present

Mayor Pro Tem Ashley Hodges called the meeting to order and then recognized the Rev. Darwin Hedgepeth of First Baptist Missionary Church in Hertford to give the invocation. This was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

At the request of the Town Manager Item 6B -The Sale of the Brinn House was removed from the agenda. The Agenda was approved as amended on the motion of Councilman Mimlitsch, second of Councilwoman Brothers and the following unanimous voice vote:

Councilman Mimlitsch	aye
Councilwoman Anderson	aye
Councilwoman Brothers	aye
Mayor Pro Tem Hodges	aye

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilwoman Anderson and seconded by Councilman Mimlitsch to approve the Consent Agenda as written. The motion passed 4-0 with the following voice vote:

Councilman Mimlitsch	aye
Councilwoman Anderson	aye
Councilwoman Brothers	aye
Mayor Pro Tem Hodges	aye

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- Minutes for the Regular Meeting December 13,2021 & the Special Meeting December 21,2021
- The appointment to the Planning/Zoning Board of Adjustments of Sara Winslow, Andrew Almodova and Marvin Sutton
- The resolution in support of Funding to NCDOT for the Relocation and Preservation of the Historic S-Bridge Truss

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Marc Christian addressed the Council (in person) about his concern that the Town lacked sufficient funds to maintain a Police Department. He felt that there were not enough sheriff deputies and that the Town Council needed to figure out how to reinstate the Police Department.

Quentin Jackson addressed the Council (by Zoom) stating that he was wrongly being accused of withholding Town property and that was not the case. He said the Town gets cellphones for free and that he paid for the hotspot that he had even though he did not have to. He said his computer was on the wall in the Community Building and that the Town of Hertford never bought him a SurfacePro. With regard to the naming of the street Black Lives Matter, he said only one person expressed displeasure from a church and that person did not even live on the street. He asked to be added to the Sunshine List. He further stated that everybody else who retired got something, but him and Frank Norman.

HYDE PARK/BLACK LIVES MATTER WAY

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges asked Councilwoman Brothers to speak about the street naming in the absence of the Mayor. Councilwoman Brothers said that residents expressed concern about the cumbersome process of having to change their addresses with their banks and doctors and 911. First Baptist Missionary Church expressed concern about the 6 to 7 month process for the Church to change its name with the Baptist Convention with which it is affiliated. The residents felt that they all should have been notified before the street named was changed and that if it were going to be changed they would have preferred that it be named after John London a community activist and pastor who lived and pastored the church on that street. Mayor Pro Tem Ashley related his conversation with Mayor Brown that Council believed the residents had all been surveyed and were in support of the name change. Subsequently Mayor Brown asked Manager Pam Hurdle to send a letter to the eight residences on Hyde Park to determine their position. Four households said they did not approve of the name change and wanted it to remain as Hyde Park, one said they agreed with the change to Black Lives Matter and three did not respond. Although the street signs for Black Lives Way have been posted, the name change has not yet been changed with 911. A motion was made by Councilwoman Brothers and seconded by Councilman Mimlitsch that the name of the street be changed back from Black Lives Matter Way to Hyde Park. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously with the following voice vote:

Councilman Mimlitsch	aye
Councilwoman Anderson	aye
Councilwoman Brothers	aye
Mayor Pro Tem Hodges	aye

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION WITH RESIDENTS

In response to Council's desire to improve communication with the residents, Interim Manager Cole contacted the contractor who is responsible for mailing the Town's utility bills and determined the costs to include one 8 ½ x11 page insert with the utility bills would be \$113.58 for black and white and \$405.40 for color. Councilman Mimlitsch moved that the Manager be authorized as she, in her discretion, deemed beneficial to communicate with the residents to include a black and white insert in the monthly utility bills. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion. It passed unanimously with the following voice vote:

Councilman Mimplitsch aye
Councilwoman Anderson aye
Councilwoman Brothers aye
Mayor Pro Tem Hodges aye

PROTOCOL FOR CITIZENS' CONCERNS

Councilwoman Brothers moved that the Manager respond within 30 days to any citizen who expressed their concern about an issue during the Citizens Concerns segment of the Council meetings. Councilman Mimplitsch seconded the motion and it was approved with the following voice vote:

Councilman Mimplitsch aye
Councilwoman Anderson aye
Councilwoman Brothers aye
Mayor Pro Tem Hodges aye

DEDICATION OF TOWN BUILDINGS

Interim Manager Cole advised that the signs to be hung on the Community Building and former Police Department building had been received and sought input on how Council wanted to proceed with the event for the unveiling. The Council agreed that a weekend would be best to maximize attendance of the family members. It should be done as soon as possible, within the next two weeks and both dedications could be done on the same day.

COUNCIL'S RETREAT

The Retreat is scheduled for 1 ½ days the weekend of February 26-27, 2022 in the Conference Room at the Albemarle Commission. The facility is available to us at no costs. The facilitator's fee is \$3,350 which includes

- having discussion with the mayor and manager to determine the goals of the retreat
- prepare the agenda and materials for the retreat
- facilitate discussion on suggested topics of mission statement, vision statement, roles of council, manager, department heads and a 5-year plan.
- maintain notes of discussions during the retreat; and
- prepare and provide a report of discussion and decisions to the mayor & elected officials.

In addition the fee covers the facilitators travel costs.

Councilman Mimplitsch moved and Councilwoman Anderson seconded that the charge of \$3,350 for the retreat be approved. It passed unanimously with the following voice vote:

Councilman Mimplitsch aye
Councilwoman Anderson aye
Councilwoman Brothers aye
Mayor Pro Tem Hodges aye

HARBOR TOWN PROJECT

Interim Manager Cole updated Council on the Harbor Town Project. The legislature has appropriated a \$5 million grant to establish and operate a water transportation system to increase tourism for five harbor towns, specifically, Elizabeth City, Hertford, Edenton, Plymouth & Columbia. The coordinators spoke of wanting to start as soon as August 2022. The only two towns that would be ready by that time are Elizabeth City & Edenton. Hertford will be delayed but must assure that we are not left out.

HOST FOR TOWN E-MAIL SYSTEM

Interim Manager Cole advised that when the Town transferred the administration’s e-mail system from the previous provider to VC3 that the control of the e-mail hosting service was not included. It is advisable that all of the email services be housed with one company. It was moved and seconded by Councilman Mimplitsch and Councilwoman Brothers, respectively that the proposal for VC3 to host our e-mail system at the monthly costs of \$422.50 and the one time fee of \$576.00 be approved. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously with the following voice vote:

- Councilman Mimplitsch aye
- Councilwoman Anderson aye
- Councilwoman Brothers aye
- Mayor Pro Tem Hodges aye

205 HYDE PARK

Sheriff’s Department has asked Council to consider boarding up the residence at 205 Hyde Park because both of the owners have died and vandals are starting to break into and damage the building. Neither the Town nor the County Tax Office have a good address for any heirs. Attorney Leidy advised that the Council did have the authority to do this to abate a nuisance. He further advised that it would be best to do it on a case by case basis, not as a blanket motion. Councilman Mimplitsch made the motion to allow the Manager to proceed with boarding up 205 Hyde Park to abate a public nuisance. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the following voice vote:

- Councilman Mimplitsch aye
- Councilwoman Anderson aye
- Councilwoman Brothers aye
- Mayor Pro Tem Hodges aye

DEPUTY CLERK/MAIN STREET MANAGER

Interim Manager Cole informed Council that she has appointed herself as Deputy Clerk and the Main Street Manager.

TOWN CLERK ACCOUNTABILITY

Interim Manager Cole asked Council to revise the organizational makeup so that the Town Clerk would report to the Town Manager rather than directly to the Town Council. The reasons being that with the small staff for the Town administration cross training is important and the Clerk needs to be available to fill-in when needed. Also, it would be difficult for the Mayor and four Council members to supervise and evaluate the daily work of the Clerk and since the Clerk works for all of them it would be most efficient for their work to be funneled through the Town Manager who would then in consultation with the Council members be better able to prioritize it. This in no way changes Council’s participation in the selection of this employee. The motion was made and seconded that the Town Clerk would be under the Town Manager for organization and management, but still appointed by the Council. The motion passed unanimously with the following voice vote:

- Councilman Mimplitsch aye
- Councilwoman Anderson aye
- Councilwoman Brothers aye
- Mayor Pro Tem Hodges aye

WORK SESSIONS

Interim Manager Cole requested that the Council return to Work Sessions once a month in addition to the Regular sessions because of the amount of work that she foresaw Council having to undertake. She also requested that work sessions be the 4th Monday of each month in order to give staff sufficient time to research or implement Council's directives in time for the regular session on the 2nd Monday of each month. It was noted that there was an ordinance for meetings to be held on the 1st Monday and Council struck that ordinance when they changed to regular meetings on the 2nd Monday. When asked if an ordinance would be needed, to add the new work sessions, Attorney Leidy recommended that Council adopt a schedule of the work sessions because it gave Council more flexibility. Also Attorney Leidy indicated that in order to have a meeting the 4th Monday of this month, that Council could either have a special call meeting, or recess this meeting until the 4th Monday.

COUNCIL'S REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilwoman Anderson - Wanted the citizens to know that Council welcomes their ideas and feedback

Councilman Mimplitsch – Thanked Interim Manager Cole for her work

Councilwoman Brothers – Thanked Interim Manager Cole, thanked the citizens for attending and stated that we were moving forward, positively.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges – Reminded citizens that Councils contact information is available on the Town website. He spoke about the infrastructure issues and the problems on streets like Pennsylvania. He stated that last budget cycle, Council increased the streets budget by 161% and did not understand why they were not seeing results yet.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges read the announcements on the agenda and encouraged citizens to attend the Open House on January 18th to share their stories about the flooding issues they encountered during Hurricane Isabel and at other times. Councilman Mimplitsch asked everyone to keep Mayor Brown in their prayers.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Anderson and seconded by Councilwoman Brothers to recess this meeting until January 24, 2022 at 6pm at the Perquimans County Courthouse. The motion passed unanimously by the following voice vote:

Councilman Mimplitsch	aye
Councilwoman Anderson	aye
Councilwoman Brothers	aye
Mayor Pro Tem Hodges	aye

Meeting ended at 7:03p.m.