

Town of Hertford
Regular (Organizational) Session Meeting
Monday, December 8, 2025 – 6:00 PM
Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W Grubb Street

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Regular (Organizational) Session Meeting at the Horace Reid Community Center on Monday, December 8, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Ashley Hodges, Mayor
Keith Rouse
Sara Winslow

Sandra Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem
Connie Brothers

STAFF PRESENT

Doris Walton, Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
Johny Hallow III, Attorney

A quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Mayor Pro Tem Anderson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ORGANIZATION OF NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

- a) Administration of Oath to Newly Elected and Re-elected Members
Janice McKenzie-Cole swore in Councilman Evan Copeland and Councilwoman Connie Brothers.
- b) Seating of Newly Sworn in Members
Newly elected Councilman Copeland was seated next to Councilman Rouse.
- c) Election of Mayor Pro Tem
Councilwoman Winslow made a motion nominating Councilwoman Brothers as the new Mayor Pro Tem. Councilman Rouse seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.
- d) Administration of Oath to Mayor Pro Tem

Mayor Hodges administered the Oath of Mayor Pro Tem to Councilwoman Brothers.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Hodges made an amendment to the agenda, omitting item 6 as Mr. Downing could not be at the meeting tonight. Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve the amended agenda, and Councilman Copeland seconded his motion. The motion carried 5-0.

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING MEMBERS

Mayor Hodges recognized Mayor Pro Tem Anderson. He spoke of her efforts, contributions, and commitment to the Town as she served from December 2021-2025. Mayor Hodges presented her with a plaque recognizing her years of service on Hertford Town Council. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson said she was honored to serve the Town and sang "It's Hard to Say Goodbye to Yesterday." Mayor Pro Tem Brothers stated that it was a pleasure and honor to work together and wished Sandra blessings in the future. Councilman Rouse thanked Sandra for her work and all the assistance she provided him on Council. Councilwoman Winslow said that it was a pleasure getting to know Sandra and that she brought "a lot to the table" and made a difference for the Town.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Brothers motioned to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of:

1. Meeting minutes from November 10, 2025, and November 24, 2025.
2. Approval of 2026 Town Council Meeting Schedule

Councilman Rouse seconded the motion, and it carried, 5-0.

CITIZENS CONCERNS

- 1) Marc Christian stated that on June 9, 2025, he addressed Council about lowering the speed limit on Edenton Road Street after there was a recent fatality. He is extremely displeased that it hasn't been reduced yet. He is aware that it is a NCDOT street but has conflicting information regarding who has the authority to change that speed limit. Mr. Christian is concerned that the current speed limit may cause another fatality. He also wants a sidewalk built as a memorial to the young woman who was killed on Edenton Road Street.
- 2) Warren Williams addressed Council regarding the updated ordinance on livestock. He would like clarification on what defines livestock and what is the purpose of this update? He stated that some properties have space to accommodate livestock, but others do not have that capacity. Mr. Williams does

not believe this update is fair as there are residents that have invested large amounts of money to provide for their livestock. He asked if that ordinance can be revised.

- 3) Vera Riddick appeared before Council on behalf of her mother who owns some apartments on Cox Street. She stated that her mother is continuing to receive an electric bill for an apartment that was vacated. Ms. Riddick has been told that the charges received are for the base rate of being connected to utilities. She does not understand why a bill is being sent and they are being charged when no one is in that apartment and no lights have been turned on.
- 4) Janice Cole expressed appreciation on behalf of the Town and County Commissioners to the Public Works staff. She stated that last weekend was very busy with Grand Illumination, the Christmas Parade, and the Festival of Lights. There was a lot of preparation and lights to be hung for these events and the staff at PW got it done. She thanked Manager Walton for making sure that happened. They also hung lights on the S-Bridge truss, and it is beautiful. Mrs. Cole thanked outgoing Mayor Pro Tem Anderson for her service as a member of the Town Council.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Appointment of Finance Officer and Deputy Finance Officer**
A first and second motion were made by Councilwoman Winslow and Councilman Rouse to appoint Mayor Hodges as the Finance Officer and Mayor Pro Tem Brothers as the Deputy Finance Officer. The motion passed, 5-0.
- b) **Designation of check signatories**
Councilman Copeland motioned to approve Mayor Hodges and Mayor Pro Tem Brothers as designated check signatories. Councilman Rouse seconded his motion, and it carried unanimously, 5-0.
- c) **Board Appointments**
 - 1) Downtown Hertford (formerly HHI, Inc) – Two Appointments
Mayor Pro Tem Brothers motioned to approve Councilwoman Winslow and Councilman Rouse as appointees to Downtown Hertford. Councilman Copeland seconded and the motion carried, 5-0.
 - 2) Albemarle Rural Planning Organization (RPO) – One Appointment
A motion and a second were made by Mayor Pro Tem Brothers and Councilman Copeland appointing Councilwoman Winslow to the RPO.

3) Hazard Mitigation Plan Committee – One Appointment

A first and second motion were made by Councilwoman Winslow and Councilman Rouse to appoint Mayor Pro Tem Brothers to the Hazard Mitigation Plan Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

4) Harbor Town Project – One Appointment

Councilman Copeland and Mayor Pro Tem Brothers motioned and seconded to appoint Mayor Hodges as the Harbor Town Project appointee. The motion carried, 5-0.

5) NCEMPA (North Carolina Electric Municipal Power Agency) – One Appointment

Councilman Rouse volunteered to serve as the Town's appointee for the NCEMPA. Councilman Copeland motioned to approve his appointment. Councilwoman Winslow seconded his motion, and it passed 5-0.

6) Economic Development Committee – One Appointment

Mayor Hodges stated that there is only one Council appointee to the EDC as he also serves on that board and he is in the middle of his term. Mayor Pro Tem Brothers motioned to approve Councilman Copeland to serve as the appointee to EDC. Councilman Rouse seconded her motion, and Councilman Copeland was approved, 5-0.

d) **Kisha Darden - Condemnation Hearing**

Attorney Johny Hallow III read the script for the hearing procedure and advised all participants of their rights. The purpose of this quasi judicial hearing is for the Hertford Town Council to determine whether or not to uphold the Chief Building Inspector's order to demolish the dwelling located at 330 Dobbs Street. There will be no audience participation. Attorney Hallow asked the Mayor and Council members if they had any bias or conflict of interest or ownership interest regarding the property or any other situation that would prevent them from being impartial. All replied that they did not. He also asked if the Mayor or any Council members have received exparte communications or any other information regarding this matter. All replied that they did not. Perquimans County Building Inspector Virgil Parrish will present his report on the property at 330 Dobbs Street, Hertford, NC 27944. All parties will be able to cross-examine adverse witnesses and to offer evidence in support of their position and in rebuttal of their opponents. Because this is an appeal to the Building Inspector's orders, the appellant will have the burden of proof to be made in their case. The Town will testify first to provide an overview. Following the Town's overview and presentation of evidence, the appellant will have the opportunity to provide evidence. That evidence will be followed by the evidence of the opposing party, if necessary. Then the general public will have opportunity to provide evidence.

The parties have the opportunity to provide brief or vital evidence if necessary and upon conclusion of all evidence, the parties will have the opportunity to make brief arguments summarizing their positions. The hearing began with the swearing in of all people/witnesses expected to provide testimony.

Building Inspector Virgil Parrish was sworn in and presented his overview/report of the property at 330 Dobbs Street, Hertford, NC 27944. Manager Walton was sworn in and provided evidence to Council. Mayor Hodges and Council had questions for Inspector Parrish and Manager Walton.

The appellant, Kisha Darden, was not present. Attorney Hallow asked if any members of the public had evidence and testimony to present.

Tony Riddick, James Williams, Linay Felton, and Frank Norman were sworn in and spoke on behalf of Ms. Darden's property. Inspector Parrish spoke afterwards. Mayor Hodges asked questions. Public Works Director Chad White was sworn in to answer questions regarding Ms. Darden's written appeal statement. Director White's testimony and Manager Walton confirmed that contrary to Ms. Darden's written statement, there were no work tickets for the Town or PW that impeded work to be done at 330 Dobbs Street going all the way back to 2014. Utilities (water/sewer/electric) have not been hooked up to that property since 2006. Janice McKenzie Cole was sworn in. She recapped what had happened to the property as she was Town Manager when the initial hearing took place on January 22, 2024. She provided the timeline that was given to Ms. Darden to have her property worked on. Extra time was given to Ms. Darden, and still no work has been done, and no permits have been applied for. There was continued discussion/questions amongst witnesses for the appellate, Mr. Parrish, Ms. Cole, Mayor, and Council.

Manager Walton objected to further testimony of Frank Norman, citing that the testimony was not relevant to the condemnation hearing. The Board voted to uphold Manager Walton's objection, 4-1, with Councilman Copeland voting against.

Mr. Parrish and Manager Walton gave a final comment and statement.

Council voted against allowing the witnesses/non-appellants an opportunity to give an additional statement on behalf of Ms. Darden (the appellant), as no new information is being presented.

Council discussed the condemnation.

Councilwoman Winslow motioned to uphold the order of the Building Inspector and to incorporate those findings and facts of the Building Inspector into our order. Councilman Rouse seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

The Condemnation Hearing for Kisha Darden's property was closed at 8:14 PM.

MAYOR HODGES CALLED FOR A FIVE-MINUTE RECESS

e) Thomas Riddick - Condemnation Hearing

Attorney Johny Hallow III read the script for the hearing procedure and advised all participants of their rights. The purpose of this quasi judicial hearing is for the Hertford Town Council to determine whether or not to uphold the Chief Building Inspector's order to demolish the dwelling located at 318 Dobbs Street. There will be no audience participation. Attorney Hallow asked the Mayor and Council members if they had any bias or conflict of interest or ownership interest regarding the property or any other situation that would prevent you from being impartial? All replied that they did not. He also asked if the Mayor or any Council members have received exparte communications or any other information regarding this matter. All replied that they did not. All parties will be able to cross-examine adverse witnesses and to offer evidence in support of their position and in rebuttal of their opponents. Because this is an appeal to the Building Inspector's orders, the appellant will have the burden of proof to be made in their case. The Town will testify first to provide an overview. Following the Town's overview and presentation of evidence, the appellant will have the opportunity to provide evidence. That evidence will be followed by the evidence of the other party, if necessary. Then the general public will have opportunity to provide evidence. The parties have the opportunity to provide brief or vital evidence if necessary and upon conclusion of all evidence, the parties will have the opportunity to make brief arguments summarizing their positions. The hearing began with the swearing in of all people/witnesses expected to provide testimony.

Virgil Parrish and Janice Cole were sworn in.

Building Inspector Virgil Parrish presented his overview and report of the property at 318 Dobbs Street, Hertford, NC 27944. Manager Walton was sworn in and provided evidence to Council. Tony Riddick cross-examined Virgil Parrish. Council had questions for staff, including Manager Walton. Mayor Hodges confirmed that this property had the same timelines and extensions as 330 Dobbs Street and no utilities (water/sewer/electric) have been hooked up to that property since 2006.

Tony Riddick, the appellant, gave his testimony.

Manager Walton objected to the testimony of Tony Riddick, citing that the testimony was not relevant to the condemnation hearing. The Board voted

unanimously to uphold Manager Walton’s objection and limit Mr. Riddick’s testimony to 318 Dobbs Street.

James Williams spoke as a witness for Tony Riddick. Tony Riddick spoke again.

Janice McKenzie Cole had questions for Mr. Riddick. Manager Walton questioned Mr. Riddick asking what expectation of timeline and extensions he has, and Mr. Riddick replied that he would need an extension of 16 months to two years.

Mayor Hodges turned to Council for questions. Councilman Copeland, Councilwoman Winslow, Mayor Hodges, and Mayor Pro Tem Brothers had questions for Mr. Riddick.

Mr. Parrish and Ms. Cole spoke during final arguments

James Williams and Tony Riddick gave their closing statements.

Councilman Copeland had a question for Mr. Parrish regarding the Mr. Riddick’s testimony in closing statement. Councilman Copeland and Councilwoman Winslow commented.

Mayor Pro Tem Brothers motioned to uphold the order of the Building Inspector and to incorporate those findings and facts of the Building Inspector into our order. Councilman Rouse seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

Councilwoman Winslow motioned to approve Ordinance FY26-8. Councilman Copeland seconded and the motion carried, 5-0.

Councilwoman Winslow motioned to approve Ordinance FY26-9. It was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Brothers, and the motion carried, 5-0.

f) **Budget Amendment**
FY26-10

Increase Fund Balance	10-4999	\$47,000
Transfer to Fund	71-10-5820-771	\$47,000
Transfer from General Fund	71-4910-225	\$47,000
Decrease Bric Grant Revenue	71-4610-225	\$47,000

Cover the cost of Bric Grant funds that were never received since the Federal Government closed some grants.

Councilman Copeland motioned to approve Budget Amendment FY26-10. Mayor Pro Tem Brothers seconded the motion, and it carried, 5-0.

MANAGER'S UPDATE

Manager Walton reminded Council that the Christmas Staff Lunch is on December 23, 12:00 PM, at the 252 Grill. She asked them to confirm with Sarah Nixon. She commended Public Works Director Chad White and his staff for the beautiful lighting of the S-Bridge truss, the Municipal and Administrative buildings, and all their work at the Grand Illumination. Manager Walton thanked the wife of Public Works Technician Tony McLawhorn for helping with the lights at the Town Administration Building and making all the decorative red bows. Merry Christmas, everyone!

COUNCIL CONCERNS/REPORTS

Councilwoman Winslow praised Public Works for their great work in lighting up Downtown and the S-Bridge Truss. She also thanked Manager Walton.

Mayor Pro Tem Brothers thanked PW for the beautiful Christmas lights and councilmembers for entrusting her as Mayor Pro Tem. She wished all a Blessed Holiday and to be safe in this snowy weather.

Councilman Copeland thanked all for a warm welcome.

Councilman Rouse shared the other Councilmembers' praise of PW.

Mayor Hodges commented that the decorations look beautiful and expressed his appreciation to Mayor Pro Tem Brothers for taking on her new role. He commended all who run for public service and commit four years of their life. He also noted that as a Councilmember there can be very tough decisions to make, as Council did this evening.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Brothers stated that Toys for Tots will be gathering on December 17th at 8:00 AM at the Perquimans County Recreation Center to set up for distribution of toys later that day. All are welcome to volunteer.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Winslow and Mayor Pro Tem Brothers to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:46 PM.