

**Town of Hertford**  
Regular Session Meeting  
Monday, December 9, 2024 – 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 on Monday, December 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**

Doris Walton, Interim Town Manager  
Gina Durante, Town Clerk  
John Leidy, Attorney

A quorum was present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The invocation was given by Councilman Rouse, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to approve the agenda with the following amendments: 1) under New Business, remove 7d; and 2) under New Business 7e, add Budget Amendment FY25-22. Councilwoman Brothers seconded her motion, and it carried, 5-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of 1) November 12, 2024 Regular Session Minutes and November 25, 2024 Work Session Minutes; and 2) 2025 Council Meeting Schedule was made by Councilwoman Brothers. Councilwoman Waters seconded and the motion passed, 5-0.

**CITIZENS CONCERNS**

None

**CONTINUED BUSINESS**

a) Discussion of ABC Board Changes

Mayor Hodges gave the floor to Manager Walton. She reminded Council that the referendum passed for the sale of mixed drinks in Perquimans County. The Town should adopt a resolution to create the Town of Hertford-Perquimans County ABC Control Board. Manager Walton met with County Manager Heath and met with Mayor Hodges to discuss the merger and resolution set forth that Council was provided seven months ago. Manager Walton is asking Council for consensus to authorize her to meet with County Manager, Chair and Vice Chair of the County Commissioners, Mayor, and Mayor Pro Tem regarding a possible resolution to either amend or not for the ABC board. The meeting will tentatively take place in January and Manager Walton will bring information back to Council following that meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **a) Approval of Fire Bonuses**

Manager Walton explained that during the meetings for the FY24-25 Budget, it was decided not to include a line item for Fire Bonuses and to revisit that in December. We can match last year's fire bonus, and there will be a Budget Amendment in item 7e to transfer \$17,025 to cover their bonuses.

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve the Fire Bonuses as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0.

### **b) Upset Bid for Railroad Properties 2<sup>nd</sup> Round**

101, 103, and 105 Railroad properties were put up for Upset Bid. Bidding ended at 5 PM on December 3. Three bids were received to upset the initial bid of \$15,000, with the highest upsetting bid being \$18,000. We are required by statute to put it back out for the upset bid process. The upset bid process continues until the highest bid is not upset when the properties are put out again for the upset bid process.

A motion to move forward with the second round of the upset bid process for the Railroad properties was made by Councilwoman Brothers and Councilman Rouse seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

### **c) Upset Bid for Woodland Avenue Property 2<sup>nd</sup> Round**

One bid was received to upset the initial bid of \$12,613 for 305 and 307 Woodland Avenue. The upset bid received was \$14,000. We are required by statute to put this out for another round of the upset bid process. The upset bid process continues until the highest bid is not upset when the properties are put out again for the upset bid process.

A motion to move forward with the second round of the upset bid process for the Woodland Avenue property was made by Councilwoman Brothers and Councilwoman Waters seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0

**d) Accept Bid for WWTP/Lift Station Construction Company  
*Removed from Agenda***

**e) Budget Amendments**

**FY25-20** – Move funds from Fund Balance to the Fired Department Fund (Fund 39) for a one time fire bonus payout.

Fund Balance 10-4999	\$17,025.00
Transfer to Fire Fund 10-5400-739	\$17,025.00
Transfer from General Fund 39-4910	\$17,025.00
Fire Part Time 39-5400-412	\$17,025.00

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-20. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

**FY25-21** – Nexgrid dues were more than what we budgeted for. Transfer funds from Contingency to Dues to balance the department.

Decrease Electric Contingencies 52-5900-577	\$5,376.00
Increase Electric Dues 52-5900-534	\$5,376.00

Councilman Rouse made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-21. Councilwoman Brothers seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

**FY25-22** – Transfer funds to purchase windows for the new Public Utilities building.

Decrease Water Contingencies 51-582-577	\$4,666.00
Decrease Sewer Contingencies 51-5860-577	\$4,667.00
Decrease Sewer Contingencies 51-5870-577	\$4,667.00
Increase Sewer Capital Outlay 51-5870-561	\$14,000.00

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve Budget Amendment FY25-22. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

**f) Annual Retreat Planning**

Manager Walton and Council discussed the Annual Retreat. Council concurred that they want a retreat in early 2025. Mayor Hodges added that working on a multi-year plan is beneficial for the Town and Council in navigating the short term and how it impacts the future. Manager Walton asked Council to send her topics they would like to discuss and plan. She will send Council some proposed dates for the retreat and start preparing an agenda including items the Town staff is working on.

## **MANAGER'S UPDATE**

December 23rd is the annual Christmas lunch at the Perquimans County Rec Center at 12:00. The Town staff, Council, and the Hertford Fire Department are invited. The Town offices will close at noon on December 23<sup>rd</sup> and reopen Friday, December 27<sup>th</sup> at 8 AM.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS**

Councilwoman Waters commented that the parade was very nice and well-attended. The Grand Illumination was also very good. It was nice to see residents out enjoying both events. Councilwoman Waters then addressed the issue of code enforcement. She has been approached by residents (again) concerned that an auto mechanical repair business is being run out of someone's home and in their yard. Are they running businesses without a valid business license? Attorney Leidy explained it does take some time to investigate such a situation and to prove such an allegation. If they are violating Town ordinances, then it can be dealt with.

Councilwoman Brothers thanked everyone for their coverage of what's going on in Town. She was able to watch the parade from home as she was not feeling well enough to attend. She commented that the decorations were beautiful. Councilwoman Brothers asked when the Town will expand the holiday décor to include Edenton Road Street to the 17, Dobbs and King Streets to Church, and South Church to the 17? Manager Walton replied that she too would like to see the lights expanded. Funding is an issue, mainly the replacement bulbs. If this is something Council feels strongly about pursuing for next year, Manager Walton will look to see where we can find funding in the budget. Councilwoman Brothers expressed concern for the trash pile that seems to continuously be at the building at 400 West Grubb which houses two business. Manager Walton agreed that not only is the trash an eyesore, but it is also a hazard. She has reached out several times to the business owner, and he has not returned her calls. She will continue to pursue contact with him. Finally, Councilwoman Brothers thanked the community for their prayers for her and her mother as they have both been ill. She wished all a Merry Christmas.

Councilman Rouse agreed with Councilwoman Brothers' thoughts to extend the holiday decorations. He noted that he wants decorations on every street in Hertford. He then discussed his continuing efforts to develop a youth program and find a permanent location for it. Councilman Rouse said the youth program was a platform for his campaign and he is continuing to fight for such a program and building to house the youth program. He mentioned that he got a call from his friend who owns the "Psychedelic Shack." He said the structure is sound, conveniently located for students to walk to, and there are sentimental ties to that building. Councilman Rouse believes this building has the potential, after making improvements and sanitizing it, to be what the youth program needs. He believes it could be purchased for \$50,000. Councilman Rouse spoke to a representative from Don Davis's office, and they sent him links for

grants that could help in the establishment of a Hertford youth program. He stated that his passion going into 2025 will be to find funds for a building/renovations to be a homebase for the youth program and to properly name it to reflect our community and commitment to our youth.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson concurred with Councilman Rouse that the youth program needs a home base. She suggested that he visit the youth programs of other towns and take notes regarding what he likes and get some ideas for a program in Hertford. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson also noted that despite the extremely cold temperatures, the Grand Illumination was wonderful, as were the parades in Hertford and Winfall, both of which Council was included. She emphasized the Town's need for a quality sound system. She wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season and thanked Council, Manager Walton and the Town staff for the great job they are doing.

Mayor Hodges attended the quarterly board meeting for the Hertford Housing Authority on Thursday. He commended the board for the great job they are doing with the many challenges they face. As always, he assured the HHA Board that we are always here to help. The Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce went through a drastic transition about 18 months ago, and Mayor Hodges commented on the positive effect that has had, how much membership has grown, and all the positive impacts the Chamber of Commerce has had since that transition. He noted that the parades in Hertford and Winfall were awesome and thanked Winfall Mayor White for inviting our Council to participate in their parade and show the fellowship of elected officials in our County. Mayor Hodges thanked Public Works Superintendent Chad White and his wife for providing blankets in the cars and the banners for the parades. He thanked Public Works for their work preparing and cleaning up for the Grand Illumination and parade. It was very cold outside, and our staff made sure that downtown and the parade route were ready. Mayor Hodges recognized Downtown Hertford for the Grand Illumination events. The event was great even though the extremely cold weather caused the crowd to fall off. He acknowledged the need for a permanent solution to our sound system dilemma. He did thank Pastor Bullard and First Baptist for providing us with a sound system that night. He added that since the house has been demolished and removed next to Roadside Cemetery, we can now look in to putting up a marker for the cemetery. Mayor Hodges also noted that the Town needs to be more effective in enforcement of ordinance violations. This is the last meeting of 2024, and he thanked the entire staff and Manager Walton for their work and the continued improvement of the Town.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Toys for Tots	December 16 <sup>th</sup>	Set up at Perquimans County Rec Center
Toy for Tots	December 17 <sup>th</sup>	Toy pick up at Perquimans County Rec Center

Friday Night Stroll	December 13 <sup>th</sup>	Downtown Hertford, 5 – 8 PM
Breakfast with Santa	December 21 <sup>st</sup>	Carolina Moon Theater 8 AM & 10 AM Advance ticket purchases only available online

**CLOSED SESSION**

At 7:20 PM, Councilwoman Waters motioned to go into Closed Session to:

- a) Approve November 12, 2024 Closed Session Minutes; and
- b) Pursuant to §143-318.11 (a)(3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged.
- c) Pursuant to §143-318.11 (a)(6) to consider the qualifications competence, initial appointment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee.

Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion to enter Closed Session. The motion carried, 5-0.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

Council returned to Open Session at 7:54 PM.

Council wished all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion and a second were made by Councilwoman Brother and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 PM. The motion passed unanimously.