

Town of Hertford
Regular Session & Organizational Meeting (In Person/Facebook)
Monday, December 11, 2023 – 6:00PM
Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W Grubb Street

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Regular Session & Organizational Meeting at the Horace Reid Community Center (also by Facebook) on Monday, December 11, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Earnell Brown, Mayor
Jerry Mimlitsch
Connie Brothers

Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem
Sandra Anderson

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Town Manager
Doris Walton, Assistant to the Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
John Leidy, Attorney

A quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges to approve the agenda with the addition of Item m, Golden Leaf Flood Mitigation and Recovery Program Grant, under New Business. Councilman Mimlitsch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilman Mimlitsch made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the minutes from November 13, 2023, Regular Session and minutes from November 27, 2023, Work Session. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion and it passed, 5-0.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

None

CONTINUED BUSINESS

None

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges first recognized outgoing Councilman Mimlitsch, who did not run for re-election. He thanked Councilman Mimlitsch for his service and friendship. Councilwoman Anderson, Councilwoman Brothers, and Mayor Brown each thanked Councilman Mimlitsch for his service to Hertford and shared personal anecdotes. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges presented him with a gift and a plaque.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges then recognized outgoing Mayor Brown, who also did not run for re-election. He thanked Mayor Brown for her service and unwavering work ethic. Councilwoman Anderson, Councilwoman Brothers, and Councilman Mimlitsch each thanked Mayor Brown for her service to Hertford and shared personal anecdotes. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges presented Mayor Brown with a gift and a plaque.

RECESS

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to recess and Councilwoman Anderson seconded. The motion passed, 5-0, and Mayor Brown called for a recess at 6:43 PM.

Mayor Brown called the meeting back to order at 6:50 PM.

ORGANIZATION

- a) Administration of Oaths to Newly Elected Members
 1. Mayor Ashley Hodges – Town Manager Cole administered the Oath of Mayor to Ashley Hodges
 2. Councilman Keith Rouse – Town Manager Cole administered the Oath of Council to Keith Rouse
 3. Councilwoman Rhonda Waters – Town Manager Cole administered the Oath of Council to Rhonda Waters
- b) Seating of newly sworn in members – Council took their seats.
- c) Election of Mayor Pro Tem – Councilwoman Brothers motioned that Councilwoman Anderson become Mayor Pro Tempore. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.
- d) Administration of Oath to Mayor Pro Tempore – Mayor Hodges administered the Oath of Mayor Pro Tempore to Councilwoman Anderson.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Appointment of Finance Officer & Deputy Finance Officer** – Mayor Hodges stated that because we do not have a full-time finance officer on staff, a Finance Officer and Deputy Finance Officer are appointed from Council.

Councilwoman Brothers motioned to approve Mayor Pro Tem Anderson as Finance Officer and Mayor Hodges as Deputy Finance Officer. Her motion was seconded by Councilman Rouse, and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

- b) **Consolidation of Operating Bank Accounts**– Manager Cole explained that our new software for smaller municipalities recommends, as best practice, that we have all our operating funds in one bank. The Town uses First National Bank for payroll and holds three non-operating accounts there as well. The Town also has an operating account at PNC. After reviewing the process of consolidating our accounts with one financial institution, it was recommended that the Town move payroll over to PNC for the smoothest and most efficient transition.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion that the payroll account be moved from First National Bank to PNC Bank, so that all the Town's operating accounts are at the same bank. Councilwoman Brothers seconded the motion and it passed, 5-0.

- c) **Designation of check signatories** – Council discussed, and Councilwoman Brothers made a motion that the persons authorized to sign checks should be Mayor Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem Anderson, Town Manager Janice McKenzie Cole, and Executive Assistant Sarah Nixon. Councilman Rouse seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.
- d) **Designation of Financial Institution for non-operating accounts** – Manager Cole stated that the money market accounts the Town holds at FNB earn low interest. About a year ago, the Town invested money into the LGC and League of Municipalities approved Capital Management Trust. Mayor Hodges added that the Town has earned significant money (by investing with Capital Management Trust) without raising fees, it is federally backed, and open only to municipal governments.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson motioned that the remaining accounts at First National Bank be transferred to the Town's account at Capital Management Trust so that the Town can take advantage of the higher interest rate offered there. Councilwoman Waters seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

e) **Board Appointments** –

1. Downtown Hertford – Manager Cole explained that according to Downtown Hertford bylaws, the mayor is an ex officio member of the board and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson also serves on their board. Council will wait until the next fiscal year to reappoint those positions. No motion was made.
2. Albemarle Rural Planning Organization - Mayor Pro Tem Anderson (RTAC) serves on RPO. No motion was made, Mayor Pro Tem Anderson will continue serving.
3. Hazard Mitigation Plan Committee – Mayor Hodges serves on this board. No motion was made, Mayor Hodges will continue to serve.

4. Harbor Town Project - Mayor Hodges serves on this board. No motion was made, Mayor Hodges will continue to serve.
5. NCEMPA (NC Eastern Municipal Power Agency) – Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to appoint Mayor Hodges to the board and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson and Manager Cole will serve as alternates. Councilman Rouse seconded the motion and it passed, 5-0.
6. Economic Development Committee – Mayor Hodges serves on this board. No motion was made, Mayor Hodges will continue to serve.

- f) **Appointment to fill vacancy on Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments** – Manager Cole explained that Councilwoman Waters’s seat on the PZBOA is now vacant with her election to Council. Councilwoman Waters recommended Milton Long, who currently serves as an alternate on the PZBOA.

Councilwoman Waters motioned to appoint Milton Long to the PZBOA and Councilman Rouse seconded. The motion passed, 5-0.

- g) **Appointment to fill vacancy on ABC Board** – ABC Board member Kim Brinn has asked to be relieved of her responsibilities on the ABC Board, and Manager Cole is recommending Diane Stallings to replace her.

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve Diane Stallings on the ABC Board. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

- h) **Approval of the 2024 Work Session dates** – Manager Cole presented Council with the 2024 Work Session dates, most falling on the 4th Monday of every month.

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve the 2024 Work Session dates. The motion was seconded by Councilman Rouse, and it passed, 5-0.

- i) **Use of Powell Bill Funds** - Manager Cole requested \$5,000 of Powell Bill funds for the road work Public Works is doing near the Hyde Park entrance into the Cedarwood cemetery.

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to approve the use of \$5,000 in Powell Bill funds for additional work as requested by Manager Cole. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded the motion and it passed, 5-0.

- j) **Contract from League of Municipalities for Grant Support** - Manager Cole explained to Council that NC League of Municipalities is using remaining funds from the software program developed for small municipalities to allow funding for grant support. Manager Cole provided Council with an amendment to the

software services contract we have with them. The Town will be provided \$30,000 in services from Witt O'Brien's to identify grants, submit applications, and manage our grants.

Councilwoman Waters made a motion to approve the contract amendment accepting \$30,000 in services from Witt O'Brien's. The motion was seconded by Councilman Rouse, and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

k) Acceptance of the following:

1. ElectriCities \$10,000 Downtown Revitalization Grant – Manager Cole is seeking Council's approval to accept the \$10,000 grant for downtown revitalization that we were awarded by ElectriCities.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson made a motion to accept the \$10,000 grant from ElectriCities and Councilman Rouse seconded. The motion to accept passed, 5-0.

2. Television gifted to the Town by a county resident – Manager Cole is seeking approval to accept a working 47" television that was offered to the Town from a county resident. The television will be used in the breakroom or another location in the new Public Works Building.

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to accept the television. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 5-0.

l) Manager's Update

None

- m) Golden Leaf Flood Mitigation and Recovery Program Grant** – Golden Leaf has grant money for flood mitigation. SWCA is the company that worked for the Town on the Phase One and Phase Two studies at Jenny's Gut and worked on the Phase Three grant. Someone who worked for Withers Ravenel is now working with SWCA and that person is very familiar with our stormwater issues. SWCA reached out to us to see if they could be of service to apply for this grant. They are not charging us to write the grant as they are trying to build relations with the Town. The grant is due tomorrow at noon. The grant is \$1.65 million, and there is no match required. Councilwoman Brothers asked if this would solve the issue at Jenny's Gut. Manager Cole could not guarantee that, but added that it will certainly help as Jenny's Gut is the source of many stormwater problem locations in Hertford.

Councilman Rouse motioned to move forward with the Golden Leaf Flood Mitigation and Recovery Program Grant application. Councilwoman Waters seconded the motion and it passed, 5-0.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilman Rouse noted that Hertford has been quiet and peaceful and prays for that to continue as we enter the holiday season and into the new year. He has spoken to residents who share his excitement for the new Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson congratulated the new Council members and mayor in their roles. She is looking forward to serving as Mayor Pro Tem and excited about much more progress to come in Hertford.

Councilwoman Brothers congratulated Mayor Hodges, Councilman Rouse, and Councilwoman Waters. She thanked the residents who continue to come out and support Hertford and thanked Manager Cole for her work. She wished all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Councilwoman Waters acknowledged previous Council's achievements and the roles she and Councilman Rouse will now fill. She thanked the residents for their votes and confidence. She is ready to work hard and serve Hertford. Councilwoman Waters wished a Happy Holiday Season to all.

Mayor Hodges shared that the North Carolina Mayors Association had an initial info meeting and State Treasurer Dale Folwell was on the call. Mayor Hodges is looking forward to partnerships in new forums to advocate for Hertford. He thanked the public for their support, and he thanked the (Council) team. He is excited to get to work.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 13 & 14 Toys for Tots will be in Chowan County at the American Legion Fairgrounds

December 16 Seeds of Success will have an un-traditional holiday celebration. Saint Paul's at 6PM

December 16 Breakfast with Santa sponsored by Downtown Hertford (sold out)

December 17 The Albemarle Community Orchestra will have a free performance at the Carolina Moon Theater at 3 PM. Reserved seating is required; visit carolinamoontheater.org to reserve seats.

December 18 Toys for Tots. Volunteers needed to help set up toy distribution at the Perquimans County Rec Center, 9 AM until complete.

December 19 Toys for Tots. Parents are invited to pick up toys from 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM at the Perquimans County Rec Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Brothers moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Rouse seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.