

Town of Hertford
Regular Session Meeting (In Person/Zoom)
Monday, August 8, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.
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 (also by Zoom) on Monday, August 8, 2022, at 6:00 pm.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Earnell Brown	Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem (Zoom)
Jerry Mimlitsch	Sandra Anderson

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Connie Brothers

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Interim Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk
John Leidy, Attorney

A quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was led by Mayor Brown, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Brown asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilman Mimlitsch made a motion to approve the agenda and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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

CITIZENS CONCERNS

Brenda Hollowell-White expressed concerns about the mowing of the new grass areas developed by the construction of the S-Bridge and underground electricity. Mrs. White also discussed her concerns regarding the on-street parking on the east and west sides of North Church Street. There have been two accidents at a neighbor's residence and two at Mrs. White's residence due to limited visibility when vehicles are parked on the street. In addition, in the past some vehicles are crossing the bridge and gaining speed which can result in a loss of control as they enter Church Street. The increase in the

number of vacation rentals is causing more people to park on Church Street and there are also apartment units on the street. She voiced a concern for the handicapped resident in one of the apartment units needing a handicapped/priority parking space. Mrs. White has spoken to the sheriff's office and was told by an officer that there are no ordinances forbidding on-street parking in Hertford. Mrs. White has expressed her interest to Council to volunteer on the Planning and Zoning Committee or serve as a neighborhood representative in another capacity as she is very worried for the safety of herself and Church Street neighbors.

Tim Brinn expressed his appreciation to Council for giving concerned citizens a platform to speak. Mr. Brinn stopped by the Perquimans County Tax Office before the meeting to get an update on tax collections. There has been an increase in the number of past due taxes being paid and the tax office expects the trend to continue. But now Mr. Brinn is concerned about the non-tax properties and improving the appearance of those and the town as Hertford is hosting three events in September that will draw many people to our town: the Indian Summer Festival (9/9-10), Toast of the Perquimans (9/17), and Jollification (9/24). He also stated that Perquimans County is preparing for the property re-evaluation in 2024 and that process will begin in 2023. Code enforcement is important to encourage homeowners to improve and maintain their property to increase home values. There are vacant lots and houses in disrepair, and Hertford should make it clear that builders have opportunities here and our homes are ready to be refurbished.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Brown asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda accepting the 7/11/2022 Regular Session Minutes, the 7/25/2022 Work Session Minutes, and the reappointments of Calvin Johnson to the Hertford Housing Authority Board and Martina McClenney to the Recreation Advisory Board. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made a motion to approve the consent agenda and Councilman Mimlitsch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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

CONTINUED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Brown turned the floor over to Manager Cole for New Business

ARPA Grant Awards

The Town of Hertford will be receiving an ARPA Grant in the amount of \$14,923,000 for water and wastewater projects. We are still waiting on the official notification in the form of a letter of intent. Those monies will be used to improve our infrastructure.

DOT Powell Bill Funds

The town has an accumulated amount of \$127,438.50 in Powell Bill Funds. Last year we received \$59,139.19 that has not been used. There is \$68,299.31 left over from the previous year. Manager Cole has recommended using those funds to repave Meads Circle. The estimate for that project is \$126,900. There are no underground engineering problems on Meads Circle, so once it is repaved it will be fixed. Mayor Brown asked for a motion from Council to have Manager Cole proceed with the RFP to repave Mead Circle. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made the motion and Councilwoman Anderson seconded. It passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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

Budget Amendment and Use of ARP Funds

The second half of the ARP (American Rescue Plan) funds have been received. We have received two installments in the amount of \$336,703.85 each for a total of \$673,407.70. She asked Council to approve Budget Amendment FY23-1 to accept those funds. Another budget amendment will be required once Council determines what to do with those funds. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges suggested that it could be used for some of the capital line items that were not approved in the FY22-23 budget. Manager Cole will bring a list of those items to the Work Session on August 22nd but stated that there are guidelines as to what those funds can cover. Councilman Mimplitsch made a motion to approve the budget amendment and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded the motion. It passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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

Off Street Parking for Apartments and Airbnbs

There is new interest in 2nd floor apartments and Airbnbs on Church Street. There actually are zoning ordinances for off-street parking requirements for such businesses. A downtown building owner is interested in renovating their 2nd floor into apartments or Airbnbs. The area on Church Street before the bridge is R8 and downtown Church Street is C1 and both allow for apartments and Airbnbs. However, the ordinance requires an apartment to have two parking spaces and an Airbnb must have one. The amount of parking spaces available will determine how many apartments or Airbnbs can be established until other possibilities for parking are explored and identified.

Manager's Update

Manager Cole informed Council that the Town office has been working hard to get the audit completed on time and a lot of time and effort has been spent gathering all information to be audited. The auditors are doing their field visits this week remotely and we are hoping to complete this audit in minimum time.

A local government commission will be paying us a visit on Wednesday, August 10th. During the Summit, Manager Cole spoke with someone who asked if Hertford would be interested in participating in an energy efficiency audit program. Manager Cole agreed. All that is required from her is a year of our bills. She sees this as an important and worthwhile endeavor because with the money we are receiving from grants to improve our infrastructure, we will get insight into how much more efficient we will be when leaks and other issues are repaired. It also puts Council in a stronger position to determine if the previously approved rate increases should be implemented. Manager Cole will keep Council updated.

Main Street North Carolina has someone who will review our town ordinances. There have been many changes such as pop-up stores and people working from remote/mobile locations. Situations such as those, and others, were not considered or anticipated, so this will help us update our ordinances. Manager Cole requested this service as she feels it will be very beneficial, and it looks like they will start working with us in September.

Monday, August 15th, the Planning and Zoning Board will hold a public hearing regarding the Lansing building. There is interest by an individual to take over the lease and use the building for boat and RV storage. The building is already approved for boat storage but not RV storage. The County has already voiced concern that any storage use of the Lansing building be restricted to indoor.

Manager Cole noted that the desks in the Community Center used for town meetings have been varnished and sealed.

There has been maintenance work being done on the docks where boards have weakened. The docks at the Hertford Marina and Missing Mill Park have already been fixed and we are working on those behind Housing on Church Street.

There will be an H-CAT Housing Committee meeting on Thursday, August 11th, at 1PM. Manager Cole will provide an update to Council.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilwoman Anderson announced that this Saturday, August 13th, the SML Flea Market will be held in downtown. There are approximately 28 vendors signed up.

Councilman Mimplitsch asked that Councilwoman Brothers be in our prayers for a full recovery. This Friday, August 12th, is our last Friday Night Stroll of the summer. There will be a firetruck, popcorn, waterplay, art demonstrations and other activities. He encouraged all to attend this family friendly event. Councilman Mimplitsch noted that the Indian Summer Festival is still looking for classic cars, motorcycles, and tractors to be on display. Please go to the HHI website to register.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges thanked Public Works for all the noticeable paving/patching that has been happening around town, especially in the extreme heat we have been experiencing. He mentioned that the local newspaper covered two great Hertford events: the \$14 million dollar grant and the kids waterplay on July 30th. He discussed what a big impact that grant will have on those children at waterplay in the future as the infrastructure is improved for future generations of Hertford residents and the financial burden of that work will not be for them to bear.

Mayor Brown thanked the Hertford Fire Department for the water play on July 30th. She also thanked First National Bank for the \$1,700 donation to the Seeds of Success. The donation had one contingency and that is the staff would like the opportunity to volunteer at Seeds of Success. Mayor Brown also thanked Public Works for their work in patching and paving our roads and installing smart meters. The Hertford Fire Department is hosting a Back-to-School event on August 13th at 10AM. There will be games, giveaways, and food. Mayor Brown then read a statement (attached) that will be posted on the Mayor's Facebook page.

Attorney John Leidy informed Council that as of August 15th, 2022, North Carolina is ending its COVID State of Emergency. When that ends, Council members can no longer attend Council meetings remotely. The meetings can still be broadcast to citizens, but Council members are required to be present to hold a quorum and vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

August 10th, 25th and 26th Seeds of Success is open for activities
August 12th Friday Night Stroll and the street dance will be held 7:30-9:30PM
August 13th Hertford Fire Department is hosting a Back-to-School Event 10AM
August 13th and 27th SML Flea Market will be held 8-11AM
August 27th Seeds of Success is hosting a Back-to-School Party
September 9th & 10th Indian Summer Festival
September 24th Neighbors Meeting Neighbors, Rec Center 3-5
October 15th The Food Pantry is hosting a walk 9AM

A motion was made by to adjourn the meeting by Mayor Pro Tem Hodges and seconded by Councilman Mimplitsch. The motion passed 4-0 with the following roll call vote:

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 PM.

August 8, 2022

As a result of the wisdom, planning, finance and networking abilities of the Interim Town Manager, Town Council, various consultants, the county, community engagement, and participating citizens, Hertford was awarded \$14.9 million, specifically, to improve its water infrastructure deficiencies. We thank everyone who contributed to this award!

The Hertford 2022-2023 Strategic Plan was approved May 9th, 2022. The purpose of the plan is to keep the town focused on its values, goals objectives and priorities for the management, finance, economic development, social needs, beautification, and progress to enable the highest quality of living for all residents. The award of \$14.9 million will help accomplish the fifth strategic goal, "A well maintained infrastructure and best practice utilities operations." Thus, if knowledgeable enough to be approved funding that same expertise will wisely allocate the funds to accomplish this goal, to include awarding contracts to local businesses within existing statutes and ordinances.

It is expected that our residents and businesses would be interested in how ALL grant funds will be spent. Your comments and concerns have not fallen upon deaf ears, but considered requirements to be assessed against the Strategic action plan that includes priorities, target dates and a spending plan, which is basic project management. This methodology should ensure we expend funds in a wise manner.

In conclusion, there are four opportunities for ALL residents' participation moving forward:

1. Review the Hertford Strategic Plan and the Hertford FY 2022-2023 Budget. Both documents provide an insight to the town's direction and can be found on the Hertford Website.
2. Volunteer for Boards that address your interests and concerns to recommend and execute solutions.
3. Visit the grant websites to become knowledgeable of the funding and expenditures requirements.
4. Constructively participate in community engagement opportunities.

Thank you for assisting Hertford improve the quality of life for all residents.

Respectively,

Mayor Earnell Brown