

Town of Hertford
Work Session Meeting (In Person/Zoom)
Monday, August 22, 2022 – 6:00PM
Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W Grubb Street

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Work Session Meeting at the Horace Reid Community Center (also by Zoom) on Monday, August 22, 2022, at 6:00 PM.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Earnell Brown	Connie Brothers
Sandra Anderson	Jerry Mimlitsch
Ashley Hodges, Mayor Pro Tem	

STAFF PRESENT

Janice McKenzie Cole, Interim Town Manager
Gina Durante, Town Clerk

A quorum was present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was led by Mr. Marvin White followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Councilman Mimlitsch and seconded by Councilwoman Anderson. The motion passed (5-0) with the following vote:

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

CONSENT AGENDA

None

CONTINUED BUSINESS

Response to Audit Findings

Manager Cole informed Council that the FY2021 Audit listed six material findings and the Town is required to submit a written response to the Local Government Commission 60 days after the audit was presented to us by the CPA, June 23, 2022. Manager Cole prepared the response to the six findings. LGC agreed to review Manager Cole's draft

response and has indicated that it is acceptable to them. Manager Cole gave Council a copy of the draft response. A majority of the Governing Board, Town Manager and Finance Officer must sign the response for submission. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges commended Manager Cole on the thorough, well-written, accurate response and noted the procedures Manager Cole has put in place allow for transparency and a system of checks and balances.

Council approved Manager Cole's response to the audit. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges made the motion and Councilwoman Brothers seconded. The motion passed (5-0) with the following vote:

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

USDA SEARCH Funding

Manager Cole reported that Hertford is eligible to apply for USDA funding as a result of the SEARCH grant Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER) completed by Withers-Ravenel and approved by the USDA. Withers-Ravenel gathered information that was used to justify our grant applications for ARPA funds that we have been awarded. However, the ARPA award of \$14.9 million, did not cover everything in the PER. A new cemetery pump station and 6 generators (estimated at \$800,000) are not covered but needed. Funding from the USDA means the town would apply for a loan (at the poverty interest rate) and then the USDA would consider factors that could convert up to 75% of that loan into a grant. It appears that we would be eligible for that 75%. Council will need to decide if they want to apply for the USDA funding for the cemetery pump and generators and incur the debt of a \$200,000 loan, and/or possibly borrow more.

NEW BUSINESS

Gas Station Building at 203 North Church Street

The County Building Inspector gave notice of the immediate condemnation due to it being an imminent danger. The owner has responded and is in the process of bracing walls, shoring it up, and planning its future use.

Hertford Community Economic Recovery & Resiliency Initiative (CERRI)

Manager Cole gave Council the final product of Department of Commerce CERRI. It was developed with the H-CAT Committee over a period of approximately 5 months and included a survey of the town's businesses. Manager Cole is asking Council to review it and if it meets their approval, vote to approve it at the Regular Session on September 12th. There was discussion about defining Hertford as the Arts Capital of the Inner Banks and different ways to promote, display, and encourage art. Ideas included:

displays of different art media, murals, musical performances, and outdoor painting at the waterfront.

Update on Business Permit Payments

Town Clerk Durante provided Council with the breakdown of business permits payments. Approximately 90% of our current businesses have renewed their business permits and the Town Clerk is continuing to follow up with the remaining 10%.

Appointment to PZBOA

There is a vacancy for an alternate on the Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustment. More representation from West Hertford is needed. The applicant, Mr. Long, works part-time at the Hertford ABC store and he has indicated that he was on the Planning Board about 20-25 years ago. Mr. Long was recommended by Diane Stallings. Councilman Mimplitsch made a motion to approve Mr. Long's appointment as Alternative to PZBOA and Councilwoman Brothers seconded it. The motion passed (5-0) with the following vote:

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

Manager's Update

The work on the storm drains at Woodland Circle and Williams Drive is completed.

North Carolina Historic group is meeting with Manager Cole, Tim Brinn, and Jennifer Harris on September 13 at 3PM regarding West Hertford.

The Harbor Ferry group is meeting at the Perquimans County Library on September 27th at 2PM.

The Hometown Strong group, which is made up of leaders from North Carolina state agencies, will be meeting one-on-one with Hertford's rural residents about community needs on September 20th. Some of the leaders will be attending the meetings remotely.

The Department of Transportation has sent notice that the new S-Bridge will not be opening to vehicular traffic on August 27th as planned. Weather has delayed work on the bridge. However, there will be a ceremony at 11AM on Saturday, August 27th, and pedestrians and bikes will be permitted to cross the bridge until 2PM.

COUNCIL REPORTS/CONCERNS

Councilwoman Anderson announced that this Saturday, August 27th, will be the last Saturday Morning Live Flea Market of the summer. She thanked the vendors for their participation and all those who have attended the downtown flea market events.

Councilman Mimplitsch expressed his enthusiasm for the return of the Indian Summer Festival and noted that on Friday, September 9th, is the street dance. The downtown block will be closed for the event, September 9th and 10th. He thanked Manager Cole for addressing the issues Hertford has faced.

Mayor Pro Tem Hodges mentioned that Friday, August 19th, Manager Cole and he met with Sharon Smith of the Albemarle Commission to discuss the EDA Grant which supports the next phase of the waterfront, the developmental drawings for the retaining wall. Mayor Pro Tem Hodges suggested that (visual) info graphs of infrastructure projects for the town would be helpful in grasping the extent of what needs to be done and what could be accomplished with funds. He noted that the approach to the new S-Bridge has been left in poor conditions by DOT – there is a lot of overgrowth of foliage. He asked for clarification of who's responsible for the clean-up prior to Saturday's event. Manager Cole informed him that the DOT was to take care of that, but there is concern that the weather could prevent the cleanup of that overgrowth. Lastly, Mayor Pro Tem Hodges shared a conversation he recently had with a non-Hertford resident who came here from Alaska while assigned a tour of duty at the Coast Guard Station in Elizabeth City. They live just outside of city limits and chose Hertford for its schools. Initially they were displeased with living in this area due to a lack of activities. He then noted that he and other coast guard families recognize the increased activities in town and things to do compared to when they arrived 2-3 years ago. He also commented on the increase in shops and restaurants and specifically the SML Flea Market and Friday Night Strolls. All the work by Council and the community to organize these events are paying off and the progress in our town is recognized.

Councilwoman Brothers began by thanking those for their prayers during her absence and asking for their continued prayers. Community Pride cleanup has continued, and before-and-after pictures are on her Facebook page. Out-of-state residents have been contacted regarding the cleanup and maintenance of their properties and Councilwoman Brothers has found people to do such work in the absence of the owners. Owners of other properties in dire and distressed condition are being contacted. School is starting on August 29th, and residents along the main streets people will travel to the schools that are in horrible condition have been asked to help with those areas for the community. Councilwoman Brothers addressed West Hertford and revisiting/pursuing the process of designating it a Historical District. She noted that there are areas in critical need of cleanup and getting in touch with owners and residents to improve West Hertford. Manager Cole stated that there is a meeting with North Carolina Historic group on September 13th, 3-5PM, regarding the pursuit of West Hertford becoming a historic district.

Mayor Brown announced that Seeds of Success will be open Thursday, Friday, and Saturday hosting three events: waterplay, art with the Perquimans Art League, and a Back-to-School party. The Seeds of Success is also now partnering with 4H. A grant has been submitted by 4H that includes the Seeds of Success and a literacy and nutrition program for the kids. Seeds of Success will be updating their schedule to be

open on the days that school is closed so the kids have a place to go and things to do. Two new volunteers have also joined the Seeds of Success. Perquimans County Rec Center will be sponsoring movie night at Central Park on October 8, 6:30-8:30. Bring your chairs and blankets to enjoy a screening of Black Panther.

Manager Cole stated that when she came on as Town Manager eight months ago, her first priorities were getting the monies (finances, audit, and budgeting) in order and addressing the infrastructure issues. Now that those items are in place, moving forward she is addressing the housing issues and the overall appearance of Hertford.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

8/25 1-3PM	Seeds of Success Youth Program – Waterplay
8/26 1-3PM	Seeds of Success Youth Program – Perquimans Art League
8/27 8-11AM	Saturday Morning Live Flea Market
8/27 11AM – 2PM	New S-Bridge Opening Ceremony
8/27 1-3PM	Seeds of Success Youth Program – Back to School Party
9/9 & 9/10	Indian Summer Festival
9/17 6-10PM	Toast the Perquimans
9/24 3-5PM	Neighbors Meeting Neighbors
9/24	Jollification

Councilwoman Brothers made a motion to adjourn, and Mayor Pro Tem Hodges seconded. The motion passed unanimously with the following vote:

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01PM.