

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2012
7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

Governing Body Present:

Jeff Smart	Mayor
Abbie Covington	Council Member
Pat Preslar	Council Member
Johnathan Buie	Council Member
Dewey Brower	Council Member

Governing Body Absent:

Tony Clewis	Mayor Pro Tem
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Staff Present:

Marchell David	City Manager
Steve Futrell	City Attorney
Tammy Kirkley	City Clerk
Jill Dickens	Finance Officer
David Knight	Fire Chief
Amery Griffin	Police Captain
Gail Strickland	Zoning Officer
Robert Brown	WTP Superintendent

Others Present: Jerred Brown, Benny Leviner, Bill Horne, Barbara Cato, David and Kim Lindsey, Jimmy Stricklin, Sara Haywood Robbins, Robbie Wright Adcock, Carolyn Blue, Jim Covington, Joe and Carri Moser, Don Norton, Steven Graham, Ron Mayo, Meghan Meto, Kaitlyn Girard, David Richardson, Mac and Kathy Mehta

1. **Call to Order.** Mayor Smart called the meeting to order.
2. **Invocation.** Bishop Marvin Taylor offered the invocation.
3. **Adoption of Agenda.** The agenda was revised to add Item No. 11. Council Members Preslar and Covington motioned to accept the revised agenda as presented to include Item 11. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Adoption of Minutes.** The minutes to the August 14, 2012, Regular Monthly Meeting were adopted by council with a unanimous vote. Council Members Covington and Buie made the motions to accept the minutes as presented.

5. Comments from Attendees.

Ms. Carri Moser of Beeler Avenue in Briarwood presented council. She expressed neighborhood concerns and issues with the leash law. Ms. Moser reported that one particular residence has four bulldogs with dog houses in the backyard. She gave a report of an empty house where trash, debris and random pieces of furniture have been left out front for several months. Ms. Moser concluded with voicing complaints regarding the condition of the streets, the curbing, and the driveways within the neighborhood.

Mr. Mac Mehta a resident of the Briarwood neighborhood presented council. He complained about the kids in the neighborhood throwing rocks at the street lights and at the street signs. He reiterated that there is a real need for street repairs in this area.

Mrs. Kathy Mehta presented council and gave a reminder that the Briarwood residents pay taxes but do not receive adequate services. She inquired about the sticker program recently adopted for the pickup of county items, asking why residents have to pay for pickup. Mrs. Mehta complained about the teens racing in their vehicles on the neighborhood streets and recently hit a tree on Bel-Air Street. She noted that the previous city manager promised Briarwood sidewalks and better roads when they were annexed into the city limits and said nothing has been done.

Mr. Ron Mayo presented council to publicly thank them, the city employees, the citizens, and everyone at the meeting for their prayers and support in regards to his recent health issues.

Mr. Bill Horne presented council with his dismay with the way things are going with the police department; more specifically, the dismissal of Detective Veach and Chief Haywood. He felt there was a better way the matter could have been addressed. Mr. Horne stated that a void has been left in the police department and said some feel that the streets have been left unsafe with this situation. Mr. Horne continued to discuss his thoughts on the matter and said that that someone needs to step up and do the right thing with the situation. Mr. Horne thanked council for their time.

Ms. Carolyn Blue presented council in support of Chief John Haywood. She said she knows there are people present tonight that have done crimes and have already paid their time who now sit in the council chambers. Ms. Blue stated that she has been a local business owner for four years in Hamlet. She spoke briefly about people should be considered innocent until proven guilty. Her thoughts were the Chief's situation was handled incorrectly.

Mr. Jerrod Brown presented council and echoed the thoughts of the ones who spoke earlier on behalf of Chief Haywood. He challenged council to look at what can be done and further noted the city needs to allow things to grow and all need to work together.

Mr. Matthew Haywood, brother to John Haywood, presented council to simply request that his brother to be reinstated with the city.

No further comments were presented.

Mayor Smart then stated that there are certain issues the law doesn't require the city to discuss. Certain North Carolina General Statutes were noted concerning employers and employees. Mayor Smart stated out of respect for John Haywood, his family, and his future employment, he will not discuss the situation; however, said it is up to Mr. Haywood if he wants the information to be made public. The Mayor stated there are times when difficult decisions have to be made and this decision has been made.

Mayor Smart pointed out unfortunately; controversy brings out the biggest crowds to city council meetings. He reiterated that this has been a very difficult decision. Again, out of respect, the Mayor reported that council will not discuss the police chief's termination.

The mayor then welcomed everyone to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. Jesse McQueen approached the podium to introduce and recognize local Troop 527 of the Boy Scouts at Fellowship United Methodist Church who are working on their badges. Scout Master Troop 527 presented council and recognized the process by which council adheres to and thanked council for the opportunity to be in attendance.

New Business

6. **Appointment to the Hamlet Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.** Mr. Oz Queen's term on the Hamlet Housing Authority Board of Commissioners will expire this month and the Director, Faye Livingston has recommended the reappointment of Mr. Queen. Mayor Smart then appointed Mr. Oz Queen to serve another 5-year term to the board, which will expire September 2017. Staff will notice the applicable parties.
7. **Legal Aid Presentation.** Ms. Cynthia Carter with Legal Aid presented council to introduce some of the agency's attorneys who will provide information on the services that will be provided to Richmond County. Ms. Carter noted that they are asking for the board to support their efforts in getting the community more involved. Brochures for public posting were provided to the city clerk. Attorney David Richardson from the Pembroke Legal Aid Office introduced himself to council and then recognized new staff attorneys, Meghan Mellow and Katelyn Garrade. Both attorneys spoke for a moment to give an introduction of the services to be provided by Legal Aid within Richmond County. The attorneys with Legal Aid provide certain services to low income elderly citizens within low income communities.
8. **Mayor Proclamation Honoring John Coltrane.** Mayor Smart announced that September is an opportunity to support Hamlet's heritage in recognizing Hamlet native, John Coltrane during his birth month. The Mayor read aloud a proclamation whereby recognizing John Coltrane and proclaiming the month of September for the public to do the same. He also announced that new John Coltrane street banners have been erected downtown Hamlet.
9. **Approval of Tax Releases.** Motions of Council Members Buie and Brower to approve the Tax releases for September 2012 in the sum of \$432.41 as submitted by the tax collector were unanimously approved by council.

10. **Proclamation of Support for the Anniversary of 9/11 - the National Day of Service and Remembrance.** Mayor Smart read aloud a proclamation in remembrance of 9/11, after which, everyone in attendance was asked to stand and observe a moment of silence as a remembrance of this special time for America.
11. **First Quarter Budget Amendments.** General Fund Revenues: Total Increase \$55,300; Total Decrease \$55,300 – Net Decrease \$-0-. It was stated that the included Privilege License revenues will not be allocated for any type of expense and will be put to the side for now. Council Members Covington and Brower motioned to approve the budget amendments as presented and the motion carried.

Other Business

Gail Strickland announced that she has secured the required signatures on the deed release for the building on Hamlet Avenue that will be demolished. Demolition bid packets will be prepared in the near future.

Tammy Kirkley reminded the public that football and cheerleading registrations are currently underway. She reported the dates for regular registration and late registration. The clerk announced the costs for each sport per participant. Mrs. Kirkley provided the location for sports' registrations.

12. City Manager's Report

The manager recognized the new line items in the budget amendments as reflections of new sources of revenue from the police department, which staff had not been made aware of in the past. These revenues have been collected and deposited within the past few weeks and will be continuing line items for the department. The manager then addressed anyone who may be concerned about the continued coverage and public safety and coverage; she said that Captain Amery Griffin has been appointed as the new acting Police Chief. She confirmed that there will be no lapse of coverage and public safety will not be an issue as a result of the personnel issue at hand. Mrs. David confirmed that the line item for federal drug seizures within the amendments have been separated into two line items - one federal, and one state, to ensure proper accounting for same. Some internal controls or the mentioned miscellaneous revenue sources that were not brought to administration may be exceptions on the upcoming audit.

13. Council's Comments

Councilman Buie welcomed the Boy Scouts to the meeting tonight. He also wished everyone a good soccer season.

Councilman Preslar echoed the good start to this year's soccer season. He thanked Mrs. Strickland for her efforts in addressing the dilapidated buildings.

14. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Smart noted that the city will look into and work on some of the public service issues brought to light by several citizens tonight.

He reported that Hamlet is moving in the right direction and that unfortunately, distractions will take place from time to time; however, he reported that things are continuing to move forward.

At this time, **Hannah Haywood Richardson**, sister to John Haywood, rejoined the meeting and approached council. Speaking over the mayor, Ms. Richardson stated that she is not happy with the release of her brother's position with the city. Mayor Smart asked Ms. Richardson repeatedly to speak in a civil tone and he confirmed that the decision has been made. Before exiting the meeting, Ms. Richardson expressed her disappointment with the mayor, with council and the manager and took a quick moment to thank Councilman Buie for standing up for her brother, John Haywood.

15. **Closed Session.** At approximately 7:53 p.m., motions to go into Closed Session per NCGS § 143.318.11 (a) (5) were presented by Council Members Preslar and Covington. The motion passed with a 3-1 vote; Councilman Buie opposed the motion.
16. **Open Session.** At 9:32 pm, open session reconvened by motions of Council Members Preslar and Buie and the vote carried unanimously. Mayor Smart reported that a private contract was presented and council will process the request tomorrow by notifying the representative in this matter.
17. **Adjournment.** With no further business, Council Members Preslar and Covington motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 pm. The vote carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Tammy Kirkley, City Clerk