

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
HAMLET CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14 – 7:00 PM**

MINUTES

Governing Body Present:

Mayor	William Bayless
Mayor Pro Tem	Johnathan Buie
Council Member	Tony Clewis
Council Member	Jesse McQueen
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Pat Preslar

Staff Present:

Interim Manager/ City Clerk	Tammy Kirkley
City Attorney	TC Morphis
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
Interim Police Chief	Rodney Tucker
Fire Chief	David Knight
WTP Supt.	Robert Brown
IT Director	Zach Garner
Interim P&R Director	Jerry Lamont
Tax Collector	Gail Wise
Public Works Dir.	Billy Stubbs

Others Present: approximately 25 attendees. Media -2

1. Call to Order

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order.

2. Invocation

Councilman Clewis offered the invocation.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Councilman Buie and McQueen motioned to strike Item No. 8 on the agenda and to look at the matter during the November meeting. The vote passed 5-0.

4. Approval of Minutes

No Minutes to approve at this time.

5. Comments from Attendees

Thaddaus Mumford presented council and reported that he has a problem with the Interim Police Chief and Captain Scott Waters of the HPD. He requested all radio transmission from the police department from when the police arrived at his residence until the time they left on June 12 and 19. He complained that the arrival time at the house does not correspond with the reports; he said the times do not match. Mr. Mumford noted a lot of information for that time, the chief did not provide.

On June 12, 2014, at 12 pm, he called the Hamlet Police Department because his neighbor Mrs. Washington had assaulted him. Mr. Mumford further discussed the matter. The Mayor advised him to file a complaint with the city manager.

6. Recognition of Law Officers

Captain Scott Waters recognized Sergeant Josh Glenn with the Hamlet PD for recently receiving his Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate. He took a moment to pin Sergeant Glenn appropriately. Captain Waters reported that Mr. Glenn joined the Hamlet PD in 2004 and he noted a number of Glenn's credentials and volunteer services.

7. Settlement for Canine Officers

Council officially agreed to make settlement offers to two canine officers for comp-time not received in regards with their canine positions. Sergeant Josh Glenn's settlement offer is \$14,924.30 and former Officer Steven Williams' settlement offer is \$13,999.25. The Mayor reported that the matter was brought to council's attention several months ago and was a situation with comp-time. Mr. McQueen explained the canine policy wasn't amended or changed, and that this is a result of same. Mr. McQueen noted the settlements will put the city in good standing with both officers. Council Members McQueen and Buie motioned to approve the aforementioned settlement amounts to the officers. The vote passed 3-2. Council Members Preslar and Clewis were opposed to the motion.

Mr. Preslar said he is not in favor of giving the full amount as proposed in the motion and said that amount goes against the advice of the city attorney. He also noted no canine records were presented. Mr. Preslar said the officers didn't do what they were supposed to as did the city and he said both parties have responsibility in the matter. Mr. Preslar said he doesn't understand where the city is going to keep getting the money from to pay things like this. He also doesn't understand why the city didn't send the officers home to burn their comp-time. Mr. Clewis agreed with Mr. Preslar; he said it is a cloudy issue all the way around. Mr. Clewis also felt like council should have followed the attorney's advice when considering the amount to offer because there again, both parties had a responsibility in the matter.

Mr. McQueen went on record to say that he disagrees with Mr. Preslar and said the training records was not the question at-hand, it was the officers comp-time for taking care of the canines. McQueen also went on record as saying he will not make an offer to settle for less than what was due. Mr. McQueen said city staff came up with the number of hours owed per the payroll and comp-time sheets given to staff. Interim Manager, Tammy Kirkley clarified to council that the Police Chief, HR and herself reviewed the comp-time sheets and payroll records in determining the number of comp-time hours owed to the officers. She also reminded council that HR previously sent council the officers' itemized time with dates, which noted the hours taken within the questioned time period.

8. Amended Canine Policy

This item was tabled until the November Council Meeting.

9. Appointment of City Manager

Eddie Martin nominated and made a motion to appoint Marcus Abernethy as the Hamlet City Manager and for the appointment to become effective immediately. Councilman Buie made the second. The Mayor reported it was a unanimous choice by council to offer and appoint Mr. Abernethy. Mayor Bayless then called for a vote and the vote passed 5-0.

The Mayor introduced Marcus Abernethy to the public and Marcus took his place among staff.

10. Public Hearing - Myers Rezoning Request

The mayor opened the hearing for public comment. The request is for the placement of a mobile home off of Freeman Mill Road. The rezoning request will go from an R-20 to an RA-20. Property owner, Mr. Myers, noted that all hook-ups are in-place and he further explained the history of a mobile home being in the area prior to the zoning. Tony Clewis clarified the location. It was confirmed that the area will be subdivided. With no further questions, the public hearing was closed.

11. Vote to Rezone the Myers Property

Tony Clewis asked the difference between R-20 and RA-20. Kim Lindsey, member of the Hamlet Planning and Zoning Board, noted the differences and reported to council that the P&Z Board gave a favorable recommendation for this request. Motions were then made by Councilman Buie and Clewis to rezone the subject property from R-20 to an RA-20 zoning. The vote passed 5-0.

The attorney informed council as a technical procedure, a consistency statement needs to be adopted. Council Members Buie and McQueen motioned to adopt a consistency statement noting the rezoning is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan and zoning area.

Mr. Morphis also said council needs to adopt a statement of why council believes it's consistent with the use. He said the statement may be that the rezoning is reasonable and in the public's interest. Council Members Buie and McQueen amended the motion on the floor to adopt a consistency statement stating the rezoning is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan and to include a statement that the rezoning is reasonable and in the public's interest. The motion carried 5-0. Mr. McQueen thanked the attorney for catching the additional required statements.

12. Appointment to the Hamlet ABC Board

Councilman Martin, Preslar and Buie motioned to appoint Mrs. Dorothy Bynum to serve another term on the Hamlet ABC Board. The motion carried 5-0.

13. Appointment to the Hamlet Housing Board

Mayor Bayless reappointed Mr. Charles Bristow to serve another term on the Hamlet Housing Authority Board as recommended by the Director of the Board of Commissioners.

14. Approval of Tax Releases

Council Members Buie and Clewis motioned to approve the submitted tax releases per the county. The motion carried 5-0.

15. Consideration of a Use Agreement for the Railroad Model Club

The Railroad Model Club has a model train display that is being stored in the basement of the depot. The city has agreed to help the group with a storage issue and provide space. Councilman Clewis and Councilman Buie motioned to approve the Use Agreement. The Mayor confirmed once repairs are completed to the model, the train will be on public display at some location and that it could be a mobile display. The motion was unanimously approved by vote of 5-0.

16. Discussion to Change Hamlet's Fire District

The fire chief gave a brief explanation about the process for changing the fire districts in Richmond County. The requested area is a rural district off of Fox Road, which is located off of Hwy. 177 North. Hamlet currently covers this area; however, the residents have requested to have it changed to the Hoffman fire district for lower insurance ratings. The subject area is currently 7 road miles from the aforementioned road to the Hamlet Fire Station. The residents in this area are currently paying the

highest insurance premiums. The residents want to leave Hamlet's fire district to go to the Hoffman fire district for better insurance rates.

The chief reported this fire district generates about \$1,650 annually for Hamlet, which will be a loss on fire fees per structure. Chief Knight reported that the Chief's Association will meet on November 19 and this petition will be on the agenda. The vote must be a unanimous vote by the chiefs before it can go to the final step, which is to the Richmond County Board of Commissioners for a final approval. All will be notified of the final decision. Chief Knight reported that Hamlet would be the first responding department if Hoffman cannot make the call and he further explained. Mutual Aid was discussed as well.

Some of the residents will drop from a rating of 10 down to 6, which will save them money. The chief stated this will affect the EMS calls from that area as well. He then explained that he needs to know the board's wishes. Mr. Preslar doesn't see keeping a better insurance rating from the people. The fire chief explained that Hamlet has Mutual Aid also.

Mr. Preslar said he is for releasing this specific area from Hamlet in favor of the residents. The Chief's meeting is November 19. Mr. Clewis asked if we can talk to Hoffman to get an agreement with them on what we're losing. Council asked about the legalities of a fire department giving up revenue. Mr. Morphis will look into the matter and get back with council.

17. Mayoral Proclamation

A Mayoral Proclamation was then read aloud whereby recognizing local teen Miss Ashton Locklear for her outstanding gymnastics achievements and advancements.

18. Mayoral Proclamation

The Mayor read aloud a Proclamation observing Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

[A short recess was taken for a photo with the new city manager and council]

19. Departmental Reports

- **Jerry Lamont** gave a report on the closing of soccer season and noted that football registration ended on October 10 for late registration. Councilman Preslar and Mr. Lamont discussed a scheduling issue with the teams that came up at the end of the soccer season. Mr. Lamont reminded all that the programs are for the children. Mr. Lamont also gave his personal thoughts for the city requesting funds from the county if the new county recreational tax is approved during the upcoming election.
- **Tammy Kirkley** reported that Hamlet City Offices will be closed on Tuesday, November 11 in observance of Veteran's Day. Billy Stubbs confirmed that Tuesday's garbage pick-up will take place the following day- Wednesday.
- **Marcus Abernethy** took a moment to thank council and the city for the opportunity to serve as the city manager.

The Mayor reported the city will host a "Meet and Greet" for the new manager on Wednesday, October 29th at the Hamlet Depot from 5:30-7:00 pm and he invited the public.

Change of the November Regular Monthly Meeting. Due to the upcoming holiday, Councilman Buie and Clewis motioned to move the November 11 meeting to Monday, November 10 at the same time. The motion passed 5-0.

20. Motion to go into Closed Session

Around 8:35 pm, motions were made by Council Members Clewis and McQueen to go into closed session per NCGS Section 143.318.11 (a) (3) to preserve the attorney-client privilege and 143-318.11 (a) (5) to negotiate a real estate contract. The motion carried 5-0.

21. Open Session

At 9:18 pm, council went back into open session. The Mayor reported council gave the attorney instructions concerning a real estate issue. Council also added a personnel issue to closed session to discuss an issue with an employee.

22. Comments of Council

- **Jesse McQueen** thanked several employees for their hard work; he thanked Tammy for stepping in as Interim and for her professionalism during that time. He welcomed Marcus to the City of Hamlet and he thanked Mr. Morphis for his professionalism. Mr. McQueen also thanked all on the board for working together during the process of hiring the new city manager.
- **Tony Clewis** welcomed Marcus. He thanked staff at city hall and also Jerry Lamont for their work. Mr. Clewis reminded council that the Lumber River Council of Governments will have their Annual Dinner this Thursday in Lumberton. He said he has been working adamantly to try and get a left-turn traffic signal added at the Hwy 74 and Hwy 177 intersection.
- **Eddie Martin** personally congratulated and welcomed Marcus as the new city manager. He also reported that he attended the Hamlet ABC Board meeting today and a good financial report was given. Mr. Martin said he will try to assist with the left-turn signal issue mentioned.
- **Johnathan Buie** echoed the comments of the other board members. He too personally welcomed Mr. Abernethy. He thanked all of the interims that have been assisting with the vacant positions. Mr. Buie said new hires for vacant positions are on the way. He reported if there are any questions about the Seaboard Festival on Saturday, October 25 to call (910)557-5570 to reach a committee member.

23. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Bayless reported that council is aware of the issues with the sound system in the chambers. Zach Garner is currently obtaining quotes for a new system, and said council will have to work on finding the funds. He reported that the Richmond County Agriculture Fair enjoyed another successful year. The Mayor thanked Mrs. Kirkley for her assistance and he welcomed Marcus to Hamlet. Mayor Bayless asked Billy Stubbs if he could work on changing the garbage pickup schedule due to the complaints concerning the garbage trucks being out and mixed in with the morning school traffic.

Marcus stated in reviewing the city's well put together website, he wanted to see if council was interested in including a Welcome Message from the board. He said if interested, he will prepare a message to present to council for review.

24. Adjournment of Meeting

Council Members Clewis and Buie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 pm. The vote passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Tammy Kirkley, Clerk for City of Hamlet

