

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORK SESSION #1
HAMLET CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2014 – 5:00 PM**

MINUTES

Governing Body Present:

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

Staff Present:

City Clerk	Tammy Kirkley
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
Police Chief	Amery Griffin
Fire Chief	David Knight
WTP Supt.	Robert Brown
WWTP Supt.	E.G. Dunn
Zoning	Gail Strickland
Public Works	Billy Stubbs
Museum Manager	Miranda Chavis
Human Resources	Edna Cumberland
Public Works Dir.	Billy Stubbs

Others Present:

Amanda Moss-RCDJ, Jeff Smart, Kevin Spradlin-media, Dewey Brower

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- 1. Call to Order.** Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order.
 - 2. Invocation.** Councilman Tony Clewis offered the invocation.
 - 3. Adoption of Agenda.** Councilman McQueen and Buie motioned to adopt the agenda and the motion passed unanimously with a 5-0 vote.
 - 4.** Jeff Smart with Marks Creek Industrial Park LLC (MCIP) presented council. He said he is one of eight on the Board of Directors. He gave a history of the incorporation saying it was formed by a group of approximately 100 men back in the 1970's. The group's idea was to purchase land around town with the intent to entice future industry to come into the city. Mr. Smart reported the group has approximately 64.99 acres located behind DaVita Dialysis off of Hwy. 177 S. Mr. Smart said the property is land locked; however, there is access via the drive at DaVita Dialysis. He reported that Marks Creek Industrial Park would like to donate the land to the City of Hamlet and

ask if any future funds are realized from this property for the City to reinvest the funds into Hamlet's downtown business district. He stated the group would rather give the property to the city and the city help Hamlet, industry wise, rather than to donate the land to someone else. Mr. Smart reiterated the Marks Creek group is requesting that the funds be invested in the designated downtown district; Mr. Smart and council discussed the location of the downtown district. Mr. Smart stated that the downtown district was defined by the Small Town Main Street group several years back and noted that the city has a map of the area.

It was noted that Solar Farms would be a good use for the property. The subject property is located in Hamlet's ETJ area. Mr. Smart said the group is not aware of any water, lakes or hazardous materials located on the property. This land has been included as a Duke Power Readiness Site. Mr. Smart also reported that he doesn't know of any maintenance or upkeep to the property and said the group knows of no liabilities, back liens or taxes connected to the property. Councilman Preslar stated that he thinks this is a reasonable request. The Mayor said it was a good deal and said he has no reservations, as long as the city may spend the funds to help Hamlet.

Councilman Eddie Martin motioned to accept the land offer from the MCIP under the conditions presented and Councilman Pat Preslar made the second. The vote passed 5-0.

5. Budget Deliberations

Police Department

Chief Griffin provided an update on the vehicle inventory. Zach Garner stated that the requested software is to help protect the police data and the quote of \$5,000 is reasonable. Chief Griffin is in the process of getting a quote for refurbished computers for information. A server and desktop computers were requested in the HPD. The possibility of the police department working off of the same server as the water department and administration was briefly discussed. Mr. Garner confirmed, for safety purposes that is best to have two separate servers, with the police department being on a server by itself.

Fingerprinting Machine. Amery Griffin stated the city did receive a grant for \$11,200 and the total cost for the machine is approximately \$14,000. Pat Preslar suggested for the police department to tweak the fingerprinting fees in order to be more in-line with other agencies. Mr. McQueen suggested having applicants pay at city hall or the water department to help with accountability purposes. Council agreed to have the water department collect all funds received for fingerprinting, wreck reports, etc. Council talked about leaving in the fingerprinting live scan machine and to cut the budget down to two vehicles. The Police Chief and Mr. Garner were asked to look into the prices for cutting the number of computers. As information, Zach Garner informed council that currently, every computer and the server is less powerful than the average cell phone. The Chief informed council all of their current equipment has been donated by other agencies.

Councilman McQueen said he would like to see some officers go mobile. He would like to see the officers out more; he suggested maybe they could go to a local restaurant and do their reports just to have a presence in the public.

Museum & Depots

Council talked about making a commitment to the Opera House project. It was said that the city's commitment will help get grants and will help when applying for funds from outside agencies.

Mr. Buie suggested before committing tax payers' money, we could match others' dollars. Miranda Chavis said a commitment from the city will provide a tool to help leverage funds. After discussing the matter further, Miss Chavis was asked to attend the next city council meeting to talk about the matter to the public.

Mr. McQueen suggested finding a way to do something with the land the city just accepted from MCIP and to put those funds towards the renovation of the Opera House. Mr. Martin pointed out the Opera House is a vital facet to the City of Hamlet. Miranda Chavis welcomed ideas for funding and said she would like to get a concrete plan for moving forward with the project. She agreed that earmarking the funds from the sale of the Marks Creep Industrial Park property is a good idea. Mr. Buie suggested holding a community event to get citizens support and interest, and from that, build a team to work on the project. Mr. Martin and Mr. Buie agreed the first step is to form a committee. Council discussed a \$50,000 commitment from the city to be used as seed money; council asked Miss Chavis to get a new committee formed that would include a city representative. Applicants for the new board will be voted on by council during the June council meeting. The new board will work on a Mission Statement, the Bylaws, and ideas for how the project may be financed.

Mr. Martin and Mr. Buie motioned to commit \$50,000 to the Opera House Project to be used as start-up money. Mr. Clewis made the second. All were in favor.

Pat Preslar motioned to form a 5-member committee of city volunteers that will include a representative from council to serve and who will be a voting member on the committee. All applicants will go before city council for approval. Miranda Chavis noted that she will not have a vote on this committee. Mr. Buie made the second to the motion. All were in favor.

Fire Department

Council reviewed last year and this year's requests of the HFD.

This year's requests:

SCBA bottles \$9,600 - necessity.

Two gun-risers- \$11,000.

T-5 metal and paint \$6,500- no labor costs. The Department of Prisons will do the painting.

The city just paid off a lease payment of \$29,150 annually for the ambulance.

The 1972 truck is in the shop and is inoperable. Mr. McQueen stated the city needs to be proactive in looking towards the future and said council needs to make commitments for essentials and for equipment for the employees. Pat Preslar suggested looking at a lease purchase for a new/used fire truck. Council continued to discuss the requested fire truck. Chief Knight noted that the department is not opposed to looking at a good used truck. He said most fire departments use a fire truck for ten years. Mr. McQueen stated he was in favor of replacing Tanker 3 and for the fire chief to go ahead and begin looking for a fire truck. Pat Preslar suggested looking at a new truck if applicable. Mr. Martin was in favor of either a new or used truck because of the need.

Streets & Highways

A new knuckle-boom truck has been requested. A lease payment is included in the first draft budget under capital outlay. Billy Stubbs explained the issues with the boom truck and the expenses incurred; he stated it's getting to the point where the truck is worn out. Mr. Preslar inquired if the city we could wait one more year on this purchase.

Mr. Stubbs explained that his department will do what they have to do but reiterated the amount of funds spent thus far on repairs for the vehicle. Council discussed keeping the current truck and rotating it out with a new one when purchased. Billy Stubbs also talked about the personnel needs at the time the city started back picking up county items. Council discussed the consideration of using the current knuckle-boom truck for another year.

Horticulture

A storage POD at \$7,000 has been requested to secure the lawn equipment. The item was left in the budget for now.

Recreation

\$25,000 was requested to upgrade the current gym and to address the repairs to the wall area. Council asked staff to have Mitch Bowman prioritize the \$25,000 request and to get a quote to repair the wall area. Pat Preslar pointed out the parking issues. Staff will get an estimate on repairing the wall area by the parking lot at Memorial Park and to get an estimate for a scoreboard and to look for sponsors for a new scoreboard.

Council talked about the need for another vehicle in Parks and Recreation. It was reported that Jerry Lamont's truck is in the worst mechanical condition of the entire city fleet. Billy Stubbs informed council that his department has talked with the NC Forestry Service about purchasing a few vehicles that the Forestry Service will be selling. He will report back to council.

The requested F-150 was removed from the P&R budget. Council agreed to provide a vehicle to the department but said it may be a transfer vehicle from within the current fleet.

Waste Water Treatment Plant

New vehicle request - \$23,000

The WWTP is using a 1990 truck. Council agreed to consider one of the forestry trucks in this department. It was noted that all of the forestry service trucks are four wheel drive vehicles.

Water Treatment Plant

Robert Brown stated that council could remove the raw water pump. The SCADA is a must-have. Camera system-\$12,000 was discussed. Mr. Brown reported on issues with trespassers at the water lake. Mr. Martin suggested erecting a small building at the lake, have a vehicle and a four-wheeler there with officers manning the area. He suggested use of force; setting up a command post and hire a part-time officer to go to the location at random times to enforce the law. Mr. Martin recommended for now, to put a random car at the area and move around in different areas. Council asked the Police Chief and Robert Brown to get together and try to come up with a plan.

Waste Collections

Request – Kohler generator \$63,000. The Wooten Company has applied for a grant that will help with the cost of the generator. Tammy Kirkley will contact the firm to find out about an announcement timeline for the grant.

Council was in favor of the aerators.

Trucks – 1 WWTP
1 Meter reader

Consider two of the forestry trucks.

Downtown Capital Grant

\$10,000-capital grant to fund the New Business Initiative Grant and FACAD Grant. Miranda Chavis talked with Deborah Hardison at RCC who will work with the new businesses. Council discussed the possibility of providing low interest micro loans.

Jesse McQueen suggested for council to decide if they want to maintain a fund balance at the current percentage or purchase the needed equipment to operate the city. Jill Dickens said if the fund balance is dropped too much within one year, it could drastically affect the bond rating and would probably warrant a letter from the Local Government Commission. Pat Preslar suggested looking at multi-year projects and said it is more advantageous to make lease purchases.

The finance officer confirmed the city has taken money out of fund balance during 2012 and 2013. It was confirmed that an 8% General Fund Balance is required.

Medical Insurance. Council and staff agreed to stay with the Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Mr. McQueen said he would like to see council do a 4% raise for employees and noted the percentage difference. He said council needs to make the city employees and equipment number one. The finance officer noted the difference in the raise percentage would be about \$30,000. Mr. McQueen stood firm on the proposed raise. Tony Clewis pointed out the benefits paid for by the city need to be considered when looking at raises.

Fire Department

Two new positions requested- FF/EMT. The chief reported that the department advertised and could not find personnel for the position and it was removed from the previous budget. Council agreed to put the position back in the budget.

Maintenance

Assistant Maintenance Position requested – This position is to help with Doc Sylvain. Council did not feel the position could be currently justified. Mr. Sylvain explained safety wise; this is a need, which is why he is bringing it to council's attention.

Pat Preslar advised Mr. Sylvain to use extra caution for now until such a time that a position may be considered. Council suggested for Doc to request help from employees at public works when needed.

At this time, Mr. McQueen asked all council members to consider cutting their salary in half for the good of the city. Mr. Preslar suggested allowing Mr. McQueen to do so.

Professional – Non Departmental Services

Council briefly discussed purchasing new laptops for council. The group talked about the current issues with opening emails with the Ipads. Zach Garner with the city will collect council's Ipads and address the issues.

Public Buildings

Remove the additional salary as discussed. The increase for the supplies & materials includes a number of areas. Council requested to put lights on the flagpoles.

Police- K-9 Officers

Mr. McQueen asked if the canine officers are being given extra compensation or time for handling the dogs. Chief Griffin reported that the city manager said the officers agreed to take the dogs and said under the circumstances and that this is part of their duties. Mr. McQueen asked the chief to look into to the matter to make sure if what we are doing is legal. He said if we need to do something for the officers we need to do so, and if we don't, he doesn't have a problem with it.

Mr. McQueen then asked if there is a 2.5% increase for certificates or degrees. He said it was his understanding the increase was for 4 year degrees. The police chief confirmed when someone hires on with a 4-year degree they are compensated for it initially.

Council agreed to consider one police vehicle within this budget. Request was reduced for the server and computers- \$15,000. Council agreed to purchase the live-scan.

Fire Department- part-time salaries and volunteer salaries. The fire chief confirmed that the on-call fee went from \$12-\$16 to get in-line with Rockingham. Council agreed at an amount of \$150,000 for a used fire truck and agreed to a lease purchase.

Streets and Highways. Parking lot the knuckle-boom truck.

Sr. Center. Grants –the director is working on becoming certified.

Recreation. Capital outlay – prioritize the 25,000. Transfer a truck.

Horticulture. Johnathan Buie will see what kind of price he can get for a POD or similar type storage unit. Gail Strickland presented council with zoning concerns with having permanent PODs.

Non Departmental- Contributions to Other Agencies

Discovery Kids – 3 more years.

Humane Society

Crime Stoppers

Powell Bill – Funds may be the same this year.

Water Fund Revenues – Based on actuals.

Workman’s Comp and Property & Liability - small decrease.

Water Administration – two new computers requested.

Water Treatment Plant- maintenance & repair of equipment. Raw water pump and cameras on hold for a year.

Water Distribution System – Maintenance of Mains. Ernie Billingsley is doing a good job. Capital outlay requested is one truck; the city may look at a forestry service truck.

Waste Water Treatment Plant – One vehicle requested. Council agreed if new, no extended cab is needed. The crusher run requested for driveway was removed from budget. The generators remained in the budget.

Council was asked to go back and review the General Fund side of the budget to see where cuts may be made. The finance officer will update the figures in the draft budget as currently directed and send to council next week.

Employee Survey. Council reviewed the results of the employee’s surveys concerning prioritizing the city’s needs for the upcoming budget.

- 6. Inquiry for Sale of Property.** Mrs. Kirkley reported that Mr. Amran Hussein approached the city with an inquiry to purchase the small strip of roadside land located behind his convenience store on Hwy. 177 North heading towards Dobbins Heights. Mr. Hussein stated that he would like to construct a drive-thru for the kitchen area. Council discussed the matter and agreed the city is not interested in selling this small area of land.

Other

Mayor Bayless took a moment to read aloud a letter addressed to the city from Doctor Dale McInnis with Richmond Community College.

Marks Creek Industrial Park Property. Council discussed that the property may have to be rezoned before selling.

- 7. Schedule the Budget Work Session #2.** It was agreed upon by council to schedule Budget Work Session for #2 for Tuesday May 13 at 4:30 pm at Hamlet City Hall.

- 8. Recess of Meeting.** At 9:18 pm, motions to recess the meeting until May 13 at 4:30 pm were made by Council Members Preslar and Buie. All in favor 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,


Tammy Kirkley, Clerk for the City of Hamlet

