

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
HAMLET CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, June 10, 2014 – 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
Interim Police Chief	Rodney Tucker
Fire Chief	David Knight
WTP Supt.	Robert Brown
Zoning	Gail Strickland
Public Works	Billy Stubbs
Human Resources	Edna Cumberland
Public Works Dir.	Billy Stubbs
Information Tech.	Zach Garner

**Others Present:** Approximately 45 attendees. Media- Pee Dee Post and Richmond Co. Daily Journal

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- 1. Call to Order.** Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order.
- 2. Invocation.** Tony Clewis offered the invocation.
- 3. Adoption of Agenda.** Council Members Preslar and Clewis motioned to adopt the agenda. All were in favor.
- 4. Adoption of Minutes.** The May 13, 2014 Regular Monthly Meeting minutes were adopted as presented by Council Members Buie and Clewis. The vote passed 5.0.

**5. Comments from Attendees.**

Michael McGuinness of Bladen County, attorney for Mr. John Haywood presented council. He stated that he met with the city's attorney prior to tonight's meeting and noted he represents law enforcement and will be here for some time to come as representing Mr. Haywood. Mr. McGuinness stated Mr. Haywood gave the community 20 years of service. He said he witnessed good government in action during the last Budget Work Session in Hamlet. Mr. McGuinness said he will be looking into all relevant facts and circumstances regarding what happened with John Haywood over the next several weeks.

He hopes the city will permit him to come back sometime to meet with Mr. Morphis and council under the circumstances all deem appropriate to talk about the matter in a fair way. He would like to see if they can resolve the problem and come to a conclusion for the community. Attorney McGuinness stated he will follow the required rules and said he hopes council will let him come back and do so in a fair rational way. Mayor Bayless stated the city will work with Mr. McGuinness through Mr. Morphis and he thanked him.

**6. Introduction of New Police Officers.** Interim Police Chief Tucker took a moment to introduce two new Hamlet law officers to the citizens and to council. Officer Hooks and Officer Daniels were recognized.

**7. Public Hearing #1 – FY 2014/15 Proposed Budget.** The Mayor then read aloud notable items that are included within the draft budget and reported that the budget balances at \$8,169,660.

He then opened the Public Hearing and the floor for public comments. Mr. Buie pointed out the city will get back roughly \$11,000 for the Livescan for the Police Department. He gave an explanation of the system. The Mayor called for public comments and there were none. The floor to the Budget Hearing was then closed.

**8. Adoption of FY 2014/15 Budget Ordinance.** Council Members Buie and McQueen motioned to adopt the FY 2014/15 Budget Ordinance as presented. Councilman Preslar made note of the fund balance appropriations and confirmed that we may be looking at 33-34% fund balance after this year. Mr. Preslar stated the city may lose business license revenues and some sales tax revenues this year. He reiterated the increase in health insurance premiums and said the city still pays 100% of the insurance costs for the employees and said that we were able to give a 2% pay increase across the board. The Mayor stated that he has noticed a number of cities that are having issues with fund balance and said next year everyone is going to have to tighten up.

Mr. Cooper noted some facts about the percentage of the fund balance and the Mayor said we will be looking at around 33% or so and confirmed that 8% is mandatory. Mr. McQueen said most of the things voted on such as a new fire truck was due to having to consider the estimated age of the fire department's fleet is about 32 years and the mileage is up in the 100's of thousands. Mr. McQueen talked about the needed Livescan at the police department and said some items were mandatory, such as the air packs. He said with our fund balance at 33-34%, the future is freighting, and agreed that some things will have to be looked at next year. He encouraged more citizens take an interest in what's going on and be active in the budget process. Mr. McQueen said at some point we will have to create more income or cut services. He thinks the budget process showed that council can work together. Mayor Bayless added that in order to keep the insurance rating at a certain rate, we have to keep our equipment up-to-date.

Mayor Bayless took a vote on the FY 2014/15 Budget Ordinance and the vote passed unanimously 5-0.

**9. Public Hearing #2- Amended Mobile Home Ordinance.** The city found that some changes need to be made to the mobile home ordinance.

Mr. Morphis referenced a court of appeals case that says that you cannot have age based regulations. Mr. Morphis stated that area has been addressed in the amended ordinance and that some aesthetic regulations have been added in the ordinance that would be most appropriate to Hamlet. It was stated that Hamlet's ordinance predated the court of appeals case.

Mr. Martin stated his concern with older mobile homes the section that requires a continuous permanent mason foundation. He is concerned of the hardship it will put on people with older mobile homes. Mr. Morphis explained this section of the ordinance and he stated that this does not apply to existing mobile homes; however, this is for a replacement homes. Mr. Martin gave his thoughts about being in-line with the county's requirements. Mr. Clewis agreed with Mr. Martin somewhat, but said he has seen foundations that were less desired and he likes the idea with a masonry requirement. Mr. McQueen said you can put the stipulations out there to help regulate the older mobile homes. Mr. Preslar feels council should be talking about finding ways to put in mobile homes in the city; he said he is for the people who are living here and he said he is for setting standards. The Mayor invited comments from the public and none were presented. The floor for public comments was then closed.

**10. Adoption of Amended Mobile Home Ordinance.** Council Members McQueen and Preslar motioned to adopt the mobile home ordinance as written and all were in favor. The vote passed 5-0.

**11. Public Hearing Date for a Solar Farm Ordinance.** Council set the date for the Public Hearing in reference to the Solar Farm Ordinance as being Tuesday, July 8 at 7:00 pm at Hamlet City Hall by motions of Council Members Preslar and Clewis. The vote passed 5-0.

**12. Approval of Tax Releases.** The releases are per the county in the amount of \$763.36. Council members Buie and Clewis motioned to approve the releases as submitted. All were in favor 5-0.

**13. Adoption of Resolution 2014-08.** Resolution 2014-08 is one requesting to rename the Veteran Affairs Clinic in Hamlet. The Mayor read aloud the resolution wherein recognizing Mr. Ed O'Neal's efforts in getting a VA Clinic to come to Richmond County. Council Members Martin and Buie motioned in favor of the resolution to rename the facility after Mr. Ed O'Neal. The vote passed in favor 5-0. Mayor Bayless said a copy of the resolution will be forwarded to the congressman's office and to the family.

**14. Appointments to the Opera House Committee.** It has been suggested for the board to start with a steering committee. Council has been asked to make three appointments with one being a council representative. Miranda Chavis has recommended two members- Nancy Averiette and Linda Bayless. Council Members Martin and McQueen motioned to appoint the mayor to serve on the committee and Mayor Bayless accepted the position and the motion was included to appoint the two earlier mentioned members as well. All were in favor with a vote of 5-0.

**15. Appointments to the Depot Board.** Council appointed Denise McGhee and Sherry Boyette to the Depot Board as recommend by the Depot Board. The motions were presented by Council Members Preslar and Clewis and all were in favor 5-0.

**16. Adoption of Year-End Budget Amendments.** Council discussed the presented budget amendments. The amount does include funds for the Forestry Service trucks. Council Members Clewis and Preslar motioned to adopt the presented budget amendments. The finance officer explained the City Hold Harmless items. The repairs for the knuckleboom truck are included. If repairs are needed at the WWTP, it will come out of next year's budget. The vote passed unanimously 5-0.

**17. Departmental Reports.**

*Interim Police Chief Rodney Tucker* stated that the transition as Interim has been smooth thus far. He announced that the police department has two openings and they are currently talking to two individuals and going through the process.

*Public Works Director Billy Stubbs* reported that the knuckleboom truck is up and running.

*EG Dunn* gave a report on the situation with the 30 year old clarifier being down at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He reported that a company is coming in tomorrow to look at the clarifier to determine what is needed. Mr. Dunn explained that he was in a workman's comp injury while working on the clarifier recently and said he is doing better. He reported the flows are currently good and confirmed the numbers are normally lower during the summer. It was noted that Ernie Billingsley has done a great job with keeping the flows down since he has taken over collections department.

*Tammy Kirkley* reported that city offices will be closed in observance of Independence Day on Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>. The closing should not affect the garbage collection schedule. She announced that Park & Recreation Soccer registration will begin on Monday, June 16 and said the registration fee is \$30 per child during regular registration. Soccer registration applications may be found on the city's website at [www.hamletnc.us](http://www.hamletnc.us) and at Hamlet City Hall. Mrs. Kirkley ended with thanking all of staff and council for their time and effort put into the budget process this year, saying it was a long season.

The Mayor boosted the Fourth of July Fun Day activities scheduled on Main Street for Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>. He also invited the public to participate with the Clean-up Day scheduled on June 28, 2014 at 8:00 am on Main Street to help prepare the city for the fourth of July activities. A "Stay Back from the Tracks" coloring contest is being held by the Hamlet Visitor's Center and Museums. All kids are encouraged to participate in the contest and forms may be picked up at the Hamlet Visitor's Center – open for 30 days. The Mayor also announced that the city is having a Golf Tournament as a fundraiser on Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> to fund a railroad themed playground to be situated near the Depot Park. He gave the details for the tournament and sponsorship. All of the event information is available on the city's website.

Tammy Kirkley added that Zach Garner with the city has created a new website for the city and a preview of the site is planned for July.

**18. Motion to go into Closed Session per NCGS Section 143-318.11 (a) (3) to discuss matters within the attorney-client privilege regarding the SBI Investigations and 143.318.11 (a) (6) to discuss personnel dealing with the Acting City Manager and Police Chief.** At 8:01 pm, Council Members McQueen and Buie made the motions. All were in favor.

*Open Session began at 8:35 pm.* Mayor Bayless reported that council discussed the SBI investigation with the attorney during the closed session. Council has asked the attorney to make contacts with the Attorney General's Office and the State of North Carolina to bring this investigation to a conclusion in order to move forward.

The Mayor stated that presently Mrs. Kirkley is serving as the Interim City Manager and Rodney Tucker is serving as the Interim Police Chief. Council wanted to make remuneration in their pay for the time these interims are acting. Johnathan Buie recommended a 15% increase monthly based off of their salary and to back date it to when they started the positions. Eddie Martin seconded the motion. The vote passed in favor 5-0.

**19. Comments of Council.**

**Pat Preslar** thanked staff for getting the budget together. He said a lot of hard work went into the budget and that it was a tough budget year. Mr. Preslar wished all a happy holiday.

**Jesse McQueen** asked the Police Chief to check on an inquiry that he received about speeding on Main Street and to use his best judgment. He will be out of town during the Cleanup Day, Saturday 28 and he will donate snacks for the event. Mr. McQueen also thanked staff for hard work on the budget.

**Tony Clewis** thanked staff and council for their work on the budget. He agreed it was a tough year and noted things will get tougher. He said the "T" (taxes) word has been mentioned and said he didn't want that to happen because he is a taxpayer too but said something has to be done to come up with revenue. Mr. Clewis thanked all for coming out.

**Eddie Martin** thanked Tammy Kirkley and the rest of staff for their work.

**Johnathan Buie** thanked the police chief for stepping in and noted that it means a lot. He thanked staff for their hard work on the budget. Mr. Buie also gave his appreciation for council working together on the budget. He said he knows there are some things that we need and they don't want to go to the "T" word. Mr. Buie invited all to Hamlet's Fourth of July activities.

**20. Mayor's Comments.**

Mayor Bayless thanked the city employees for their hard work and understanding. He said he knows there is infrastructure that needs to be addressed as well. He thanked all of staff efforts and what they've done to get the budget together, and he thanked the citizens for their understanding. The Mayor concluded with wishing everyone a good upcoming holiday.

**21. Motion to Adjourn.** At approximately 8:45 pm, Council Members McQueen and Buie motioned to adjourn. All were in favor, 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Tammy Kirkley, City Clerk

