

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
HAMLET CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2015– 7:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

***Governing Body Present:***

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

***Staff Present:***

City Manager	Marcus Abernethy
City Clerk	Tammy Kirkley
City Attorney	TC Morphis
Police Chief	Scott Waters
Fire Chief	David Knight
WTP Supt.	Robert Brown
Zoning	Gail Strickland
Public Works	Billy Stubbs
Museum Manager	Chuck McShane
Public Works Dir.	Billy Stubbs
IT Director	Zach Garner
P&R Director	Maurice McLaurin

***Others Present:*** Approximately 19 attendees. Media

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**1. Call to Order.**

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order.

**2. Invocation.**

Reverend John Jackson of New Hope Baptist Church in Hamlet offered the invocation.

**3. Adoption of Agenda.**

Councilman Buie and Clewis motioned to approve the agenda and all were in favor.

**4. Approval of Minutes.**

Councilman Buie motioned to approve the following minutes:

March 6 & 7, 2015 Budget Planning Retreat Minutes, and the March 10, 2015 Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes & Closed Session Minutes. Councilman Preslar asked if council could table this motion for a few moments because as he was still reviewing a portion of the minutes. Councilman Buie rescinded his motion on the floor.

**5. Comments from Attendees.**

**Jimmy Stricklin** of the Boyd Lake Community presented council to first thank the firemen for cleaning the trucks. He then requested permission to approach council to provide them with photos of a house located at 253 Boyd Lake Road, as well as, issues at the mobile home park, Hamlet Lake Court that were taken today. The owners of the home deceased many years ago and no taxes have been paid. He stated the home is surrounded by trash and garbage and the condition of the mobile homes at Hamlet Lake Court are outdated, abandoned and deplorable. Mr. Stricklin stated in his opinion, nothing in this area is up to code.

Gail Strickland replied to both the home and the mobile home park saying that she received a report from the inspector today; she said the lists of the violations are numerous. A certified letter went out today to the property owner and that there are no heirs to contact and no one to fine. Hamlet Lake Court was given 30 days to submit an action plan in how the matter will be addressed. Mr. Buie asked if the city can take any action to board the doors and windows at the 253 residence. Mrs. Strickland gave information on liability and abatement. Mrs. Strickland stated there is a process that must be followed.

Mr. Morphis suggested the process may take two months to address the matter with abatement and Mrs. Strickland felt 3-4 months would be more likely. Mr. Morphis will look at the ordinance to see if the trash may be picked up by the city. Mr. McQueen asked if the requirements for taking down mobile homes are the same for houses and noted mobile homes may be hauled off. Mr. Morphis replied it depends upon the process used. Mrs. Strickland confirmed that Hamlet does not differentiate between houses and mobile homes. Mr. Morphis talked about minimum housing standards. The attorney will talk with staff about what may be done in the matter; Mr. Morphis also talked about the possibility of a public nuisance and an abatement process.

Mrs. Strickland reiterated that a hearing date has been set and a request has been submitted for a timeline of events in this matter. Mr. Buie noted it will be good if the city could board up the open areas. Mr. Preslar confirmed the city budgets \$20,000 for demolition projects; he stated he doesn't like spending tax payer's money to do this but he understands something must be done.

**Adoption of Minutes Revisited.**

Council Members Buie and Preslar motioned to approve the March 6 & 7, 2015, Planning Retreat Minutes. All were in favor. Council Members McQueen and Martin motioned to approve the March 10, 2015, Regular and Closed Session Minutes. All were in favor. Mr. Buie gave a reminder that he was excused during a portion of the March 10<sup>th</sup> closed session.

**6. Recognition of Personnel.**

The manager introduced Ms. Nikki Sewell, the new Senior Center Director. Ms. Sewell presented council and introduced herself as well. She stated that she looks forward to utilizing the center for the seniors' help and happiness. Ms. Sewell added that she plans to have the center qualified as a Center of Excellence again.

**7. Presentation by Twilla Allen with the Lumber River Council of Governments.**

Ms. Allen reported that Hamlet is within her district to serve with the Council of Governments. She announced several upcoming activities for the seniors in the community: Alive Inside on

May 5<sup>th</sup> at the Cole Auditorium; a Fraud Workshop to talk to the seniors about security issues will be presented in the month of June at the Cole Auditorium. These events are open and free to the public. Ms. Allen left brochures on the events with city staff.

### **Old Business**

#### **8. Public Hearing #1 - Permanent Road Closing.**

A petition has been submitted to close the portion of Skyland Drive located between Hylan Avenue and Rollins Avenue. Mayor Bayless gave a brief comment explaining the request. He then opened the floor to the public hearing and welcomed comments on the street closing. Councilman Preslar confirmed that the road or alleyway has never been open to or accessed by the public. No other comments were presented and the public hearing was closed.

#### **9. Consideration of Order to Close a Portion of Skyland Drive.**

Mayor Bayless called for a vote on the Order to close the noted portion of Skyland Drive. Council Members Martin and Preslar motioned to approve the order. The vote passed 5-0.

#### **10. Discussion of Purchasing Policy.**

Mr. Abernethy stated that he has been researching Mr. Martin's request made in a previous meeting for the city to make more purchases locally. The manager located Hamlet's purchasing policy that was last updated in 1994. He said staff has raised concerns about the matter and would like further discussion because they make attempts to find the best price, quality and timeliness of products. He asked for direction in how to proceed. Mr. Martin said council is not saying to purchase all products; he said items under \$30,000. Mr. Martin said if staff can't get the items needed locally to go elsewhere, and if there is a time issue or an emergency issue to purchase elsewhere. Mr. Preslar suggested a slide scale and gave examples. Mr. Martin stated staff should not have to take bids on small items. Mr. Preslar noted that time, gas, wear & tear on vehicles etc. needs to be considered. Mr. McQueen agreed with Mr. Martin's comments on the daily purchases. Emergency purchases and major items are not included in what council is talking about in the direction to purchase locally. Mr. Buie said he would rather spend money with our businesses when applicable. The majority of council ended with saying to make sure to buy some locally.

Billy Stubbs stated he does try to buy local when he can and gave examples of attempts to purchase from Owens Auto Parts in Hamlet. The manager confirmed the city will be contacting Hamlet businesses more in the future. Mr. Buie suggested coming up with a list of commonly used items and provide to local businesses so they may stock the items; he said it will take working together. Attendee Bernice Owens argued against the purchases made with her business to the contrary to what Mr. Stubbs reported earlier. Billy Stubbs replied to Ms. Owens statement by welcoming council to visit the city's finance officer to view the receipts as proof of his statement concerning the purchases made with Ms. Owens' business. Mr. McQueen felt they are looking at two separate issues and suggested to discuss the matter further at the next Budget Work Session. Council Members Buie and Martin motioned to table the item until the next Budget Work Session. The vote passed 5-0.

### **New Business**

#### **11. Public Hearing #2 - Text Amendments to Hamlet's Zoning Ordinance.**

Gail Strickland explained the amendments that need to be considered are per the NC General Statutes. She reported Attorney Al Benshoff prepared the submitted Bylaws. Mrs. Strickland

also explained Article XIII to be considered. Mr. Morphis explained that the changes were updated during the last legislative session and he noted the process for special uses.

Mayor Bayless explained the need for Public Hearing #2 and then opened the floor to the public hearing. This change came about during the text amendment for Knitrite at which time it was discovered that the updates submitted tonight need to be made to the ordinance. The Mayor commented on the changes for Article XII and Article XIII. No public comments were presented, and the Public Hearing was closed.

**12. Consideration of Text Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.**

Article XII Bylaws for the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustments and Consistency Statement. Councilman Preslar and Clewis motioned to approve the text amendments. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

**13. Adoption of Council's Consistency Statement to Article XII.**

Councilman Martin and Buie motioned to approve council's consistency statement to Article XII. All were in favor 5-0.

**14. Consideration of Text Amendments to Hamlet's Zoning Ordinance- Article XIII for the Amendment Procedure and the Consistency Statement.**

The Mayor welcomed comments to the floor concerning the amendments and none were given and the floor was closed. Councilman Clewis and Buie motioned to approve the amendments. The vote passed 5-0.

**15. Adoption of Council's Consistency Statement to Article XIII.**

Council Members Clewis and Buie motioned to approve council's consistency statement to Article XIII. All were in favor 5-0.

**16. Consideration of Tax Releases.**

Councilman Buie and Clewis motioned to accept the tax releases as presented. The vote passed 5-0.

**17. Adoption of Resolution No.2015-05- Support to Global Packaging.**

Mayor Bayless read aloud the resolution in support of Global Packaging. Council Members Buie and Martin motioned to adopt Resolution 2015-05 and all were in favor 5-0.

**18. Mayoral Proclamation for Sexual Assault Awareness Month.**

The Mayor read aloud the proclamation in support of Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

**19. Non-Discussion Item.**

It was reported that the City of Hamlet will host a July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks show with the fireworks being shot from the Hamlet Fairgrounds.

**Other Business**

*Departmental Reports -*

Jesse McQueen said he is glad the police department purchased the body cameras. Chief Waters stated that the units are self-contained and each sergeant has a camera. He also said the department is using the cameras; however, they have not yet had the opportunity to train with

the units. The police department will be working with Richmond Community College for the training. The units were \$295 each, which includes rechargeable batteries. Mr. McQueen stated council is trying to make sure the police department has what they need to move forward. Chief Waters said HPD has applied for a grant that will provide 25 cameras. Mr. Clewis reported that there was a break-in at his shop on Main Street recently and the police apprehended the suspect on the property. He said the officers and the canine did a good job.

**Maurice McLaurin** reported basketball season ended this past Friday and said baseball registrations will conclude this Friday. He said they've had some issues with taking away the entry fees and he noted the problems that have come about with it. Mr. McLaurin stated staff has some concerns about the removal of the entry fees and noted some challenges that may arise, such as having too many people in the gym for safety reasons. Mr. McLaurin and Mr. McQueen discussed scheduling events and the participants on travel teams. Councilman McQueen then asked the manager to find out who owns the land where the gym is located and said he would like to look at the city doing some things on this area long term. It was confirmed that Richmond County Schools owns the field located on Park Street and that they lease said property to the city. Mr. Preslar said he is concerned about the liability of incidents if we are renting out the park on Park Street; he also asked council to review the study performed within the Park & Recreation grant study before any planning is done.

Mr. McQueen recognized Gail Wise for her hard work in collecting the city's taxes.

**Tammy Kirkley** took a moment to thank Gail Wise for her organizational efforts and help provided in connection to the Skyland Drive road closing approved earlier tonight.

## **20. City Manager's Report.**

Staff met with Duke Energy recently concerning some needed work on Main Street and Raleigh Street. Directional boring is needed in order to remove old wiring, and for safety purposes the roads will have to be closed and the city will make sure to notice the public. The road closing will be on Main Street between Raleigh Street and the Depot and will be closed for 2-3 days. Councilman McQueen asked if this may be done on the weekends because of the hardship it will create for the downtown businesses. Mr. Abernethy will submit the city's request to have the work performed during the weekend. Mr. Buie asked the manager to notify Hamlet's emergency personnel first.

The manager announced that the Senior Games will take place April 25-27 and he mentioned several events that will be a part of the Senior Games.

Mr. Abernethy thanked council for their input with the purchasing policy. Mr. Preslar inquired about the press box being on school property and the manager will check into the matter.

## **21. Motion to go into Closed Session.**

At 8:34 p.m., Council Members Buie and Clewis motioned to go into closed session per NCGS § 143.318.11 (a) (3) (5) for the purposes of attorney-client privilege and economic development. The vote passed 5-0.

At 9:22 pm, open session reconvened by motions of Council Members Clewis and Buie. The vote passed in favor 5-0.

Mayor Bayless reported that updates were given in closed session and that no votes were made.

**22. Comments of Council.**

**Pat Preslar** noted the hard work by staff; he said the city is tentatively looking at balancing a budget with over \$800,000 from fund balance. Mr. Preslar noted things are getting tighter and this is a significant amount of money. Mr. Preslar welcomed citizen input in helping to continue to provide the services that are currently provided.

**Tony Clewis** thanked all staff for their work on the budget process.

**Eddie Martin** said the Hamlet Women’s Club has asked about taking on a beautification project. They would like to work on the park area located off of Main Street and Bauersfeld Street if the city will maintain the area. The manager said he talked with Ms. Ritter about the Women’s Club purchasing and planting flowers also, he said the organization will have the city’s help with the project as it is the city’s coverage area. Mr. Martin then reported that the ABC Store manager asked if the city will trim the shrubbery at the store. The manager stated if it is feasible we can do it; however, suggested checking to see if this is a project the Hamlet Rotary Club may be interested in addressing.

**Johnathan Buie** noted as a Hamlet history fact that that the Nursing Building in Hamlet is now 100 years of age.

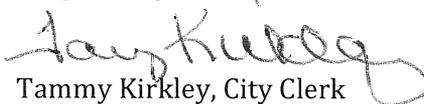
**23. Mayor’s Comments.**

Mayor Bayless announced that the “Friends of the Library” will host the Annual Used Book Sale at the Hamlet Library on April 24 & 25. He reported that the next Budget Work Session will be held on Thursday, April 30, at 5:30 p.m. at Hamlet City Hall. The Mayor concluded with thanking city staff for their work on a recent water break.

**24. Adjournment of Meeting.**

Council Members Buie and Clewis motioned to adjourn the meeting. The vote passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Tammy Kirkley, City Clerk

