

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2016
7:00 PM**

MINUTES

Governing Body Present:

Bill Bayless	Mayor
Johnathan Buie	Mayor Pro-Tem
Eddie Martin	Council Member
David Lindsey	Council Member
Wendy Massagee	Council Member
Jesse McQueen	Council Member

Staff Present:

Marcus Abernethy	City Manager
TC Morphis	City Attorney
Tammy Kirkley	City Clerk
Jill Dickens	Finance Officer
Billy Stubbs	Public Works
Gerald Adams	IT Director
Gail Strickland	Zoning
Nikki Sewell	Sr. Center Director

Others Present: Media; Thirteen Attendees

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- 1. Call to Order.** Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order.
 - 2. Invocation.** Mr. Steve Mills presented the invocation.
 - 3. Adoption of Agenda.** Council Members Buie and Massagee motioned to approve the presented Agenda. The motion carried 4-0.

4. **Adoption of Minutes.** The July 12, 2016 Regular and Closed Session minutes were approved unanimously.
5. **Comments from Attendees.** None were presented.
6. Hamlet Senior Center Director, Nikki Sewell presented the SCOPE certification status for the Hamlet Center. She explained the certification process that included on-site audits. Mayor Bayless commended Ms. Sewell for completing the process for the center's certification within a year.
7. **Public Hearing #1 - Moore Rezoning.** Mayor Bayless provided explanation of the rezoning request and opened the floor to the public hearing; no one presented.
8. **Consideration of Moore Rezoning Request and Consistency Statement of Council.** Council Members Buie, Massagee and McQueen motioned in favor of the Moore rezoning request and the Consistency Statement. The vote passed 5-0.
9. **Public Hearing #2 - Caulder Rezoning Request.** Mayor Bayless explained the request is to rezone the Caulder property located on Vance Street from a B1- to B2 Business. The Planning Board gave a favorable recommendation. It was noted all surrounding properties have been zoned to B-2. The Mayor opened the public hearing and no comments were made and the hearing was closed.
10. **Consideration of the Caulder Rezoning Request and Consistency Statement of Council.** Council Members McQueen and Massagee motioned to approve both the rezoning request and consistency statement of council. A vote passed 5-0. Mr. McQueen inquired about the possibility of spot-zoning in along the subject area and the city attorney provided information concerning a comp zoning plan that would need to be in place and further explained.
11. **Annual Tax Statement.** 2015 Annual Tax Settlement with a collection rate of 94.5% at 1.752104.94 was submitted to council for approval.

Council Members Buie and Martin moved to approve the submitted tax settlement. The vote passed 5-0.

12.Consideration of Tax Releases. Council Members Buie and Lindsey motioned to approve the submitted tax releases and the vote passed 5-0. Council Member Buie inquired about the property on Monroe Avenue and Gail Strickland provided explanation.

13.City Council Proclamation for Day of Remembrance for Imperial Foods Fire. Mayor Bayless read the proclamation, which calls for Saturday, September 3, 2016, as a Day of Remembrance in Hamlet. It was reported that a special memorial ceremony will be held by the city on Thursday, September 1, 2016, at 10:00 am at the Cole Auditorium.

14.Mayoral Proclamation for Chiari Malformation Awareness Month. The proclamation was read aloud proclaiming the month of September as Chiari Malformation Awareness Month.

15.Manager's Report.

The manager reported the recent Family Fun Day at the library was a success. He reiterated the city will hold a ceremony remembering the Imperial Foods Fire victims and survivors on Thursday, September 1. City Offices will be closed in observance of Labor Day on Monday, September 5; there will be no changes in the garbage collection schedule.

Mayor Bayless recognized Twilla Allen with the Lumber River C.O.G. Ms. Allen offered congratulations to the Hamlet Senior Center on obtaining the certification as a Center of Excellence.

16.Comments of Council.

David Lindsey noted the onset of the A&P building demolition.

Jesse McQueen apologized for missing the last two council meetings. He said council did approve a 1.5% raise for employees during a budget meeting held in May but then they took that particular increase away

during the June meeting. He said a significant number of employees will not be eligible for the merit raise or actually get a raise this year because their hire date is in the month of June. Mr. McQueen stated he was in favor of giving the 1.5% employee wage increase. Mr. Abernethy explained the merit increases will come around during employees' last personnel action and confirmed previously it would have been at the hire date anniversary.

Mr. McQueen asked that the city inform the employees about this ahead of time in order to have a good understanding. Concerning council's pay increase, Mr. McQueen said it has been about 20 years since their last raise and council's increase went from \$2,400 to \$4,000 annually. Ms. Massagee explained the pay was taken and equated into today's dollars so it is essentially the same. Mr. McQueen revisited the votes taken regarding council's pay during the May Budget Meeting, which he was not in favor of and which resulted in a tie-vote where the mayor had to break the tie and voted against it. He explained the matter was again brought up during the June meeting and it passed 4-1. Mr. McQueen said he was against the matter because the increase was to be effective immediately and it would have been better had it started in 2017.

Other matters, Mr. McQueen asked about the police department's efforts regarding the continued graffiti on the street near the church on McDonald Avenue; he suggested the city be proactive in a cleanup. Also, he said there is an office building on Raleigh Street, where a cake shop was once located, that is unsecure; he asked if the city can locate the owner and have the building secured. Mr. McQueen then said he has a problem with some of the happenings on Hamlet Avenue in connection to the rental of the Ballroom. He said various problems are being drawn from this area and asked what the city may do to address the issues legally to make sure ordinances are not being circumvented. The Mayor noted he has received complaints the building is being overloaded at times. The number of people allowed in a building may be enforced. Mr. McQueen said the city needs to be proactive in that area. The manager reported attempts made to address

the situation. Council asked the manger to contact the owner of the Ballroom by tomorrow afternoon about the matter.

Mr. Martin agreed with Mr. McQueen's comments regarding the employees' raise; he said he too was in favor of the raise and agreed that council should have approved it. Mr. Martin briefly addressed pay raises for council and said he did not run for, or is in-office for the pay. Mr. Martin explained he voted in favor of council's pay increase because a few people who serve on the board have to take time away from their jobs to take care of city business.

Ms. Massagee stated the position is very time consuming and said council was thinking of the current and future board members. Ms. Massagee again noted the increase was set at today's cost. She encouraged others to get involved during the election process.

Mr. Buie respects council's comments and likes that all can be transparent. He noted the 1.5% increase for employees was frozen, not taken away; he said council takes care of employees, as an example, he noted eligible retired employees' health care is paid for by the city. Mr. Buie stated the active employees' health care benefits are fully covered by the city. He noted council will continue to keep the city in operation and again noted council's plans for an increase to city employees. The police department's uniforms were briefly discussed.

17. Mayor Comments.

Mayor Bayless said he understands the position of others on the board regarding council's pay increase. He said he simply enjoys his job and thanked the public for being elected. Mayor Bayless then thanked all who take the time to attend the meetings and he extended his appreciation to council for their services.

18. Motion to go into Closed Session.

At 7:46 pm, motions were made by Council Members Buie and McQueen to go into Closed Session per NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3), (5), (7) for attorney-

client privilege; discussion of acquisition of real property; personnel matters; and to plan, conduct or hear reports concerning investigations of alleged criminal misconduct. The vote passed 4-0.

Open Session started at 9:03 pm.

Council Members Buie and McQueen motioned to go back into Open Session, the vote passed 5-0. Mayor Bayless reported no action was taken while in Closed Session.

19.Adjournment.

At 9:04 pm, Council Members Buie and McQueen motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Tammy Kirkley, City Clerk

