

Tuesday, December 9, 2008 Monthly Meeting

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL MONTHLY MEETING  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2008  
7:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

***Governing Body Present:*** Mayor Jeff Smart, Council Members: Bill Bayless, Pat Preslar, Abbie Covington, Tony Clewis

***Absent:*** Councilman Jesse McQueen

***Staff Present:*** Marchell David, City Manager; Tammy Kirkley, City Clerk; Steve Futrell, City Attorney; Mike Deese, Finance Officer; Robert Brown, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent; David Knight, Fire Chief; John Haywood, Police Chief

***Others Present:*** Chris Clark, Rusty and Harry Williamson, Willie Baldwin, and Peggy McKoy

1. **Call to Order.** Mayor Jeff Smart called the meeting to order.
2. **Invocation.** Councilman Tony Clewis offered the invocation.
3. **Approval of Agenda.** The presented agenda was unanimously approved by motions of Council Members Preslar and Covington and all were in favor.
4. **Approval of Minutes.** Councilman Clewis and Bayless motioned to approve the regular and executive session minutes from the November 11, 2008 meeting. The vote passed unanimously.
5. **Comments from Attendees.** No one presented council.
6. **Amendment to Street Closing Order.** Mayor Smart reported that the presented amendment to the October 14<sup>th</sup> 2008 Street Closing Order will add a map depicting the portion Champlain Street at the end of Wilson Avenue that was closed by the approval of council. The motion to adopt the amendment was presented by Council Members Bayless and Covington. All were in favor.
7. **Amendment to the City's Personnel Policy.** Mayor Smart stated that the amendment to the personnel policy will make a change to the days given for the Christmas holiday depending upon which day the holiday falls. Councilman Preslar and Councilwoman Covington motioned to adopt the amendment to the personnel policy as presented, and the vote passed unanimously. (The adopted amendment to the personnel policy is included in the minutes as Attachment A.)

8. **Appointment to the Richmond County Economic Development Team.** Mayor Smart reported that council will need to make the annual appointment to the Richmond County Economic Development Team and stated that Councilwoman Covington has served in this capacity for the past year. Council then nominated Mrs. Covington to serve on this board for the upcoming year and Mrs. Covington agreed to do so. With no other nominations being made, Councilman Preslar and Bayless motioned to appoint Abbie Covington to serve on the Richmond County Economic Development Team for the 2009 year and the motion was unanimously adopted. Council took a moment to thank Councilwoman Covington for her willingness to continue to serve on the board.
9. **Appointment to the Hamlet Planning & Zoning Board.** Mayor Smart stated that Mrs. Amy Quinn has served one 5-year term on the Hamlet Planning and Zoning Board and her term will expire on December 13, 2008. He explained that council will need to make an appointment and stated that Mrs. Guinn has expressed an interest in serving another term and that the city has one other applicant requesting to serve on the board. Gail Strickland informed council of Amy Guinn's positive attendance and input in reference to the board's meetings. Council Members Bayless and Covington motioned to appoint Amy Guinn to serve another 5-year term to the Hamlet Planning and Zoning Board. All were in favor of the motions.
10. **Approval of Tax Releases/Refunds.** The tax releases as submitted by Tax Collector Gail Wise were discussed. Council expressed their concerns with approving the release per Richmond County for the building and lot located on Hamlet Avenue owned by Ralph and Virginia Davis. Mrs. David offered explanations for the release and council instructed the manager to check with the county for clarification and noted their concerns about tax releases on abandon properties and there being no incentive to clean up subject properties. The manager reported that council may choose to approve the submitted tax release for Mr. Bledsoe, and table the Davis release at this time. Councilman Preslar motioned for council to hold the Davis release open and approve the Bledsoe tax release as submitted. Councilwoman Covington made a second to the motion on the floor and the vote passed unanimously.
11. **Departmental Reports.** Chief David Knight expressed his appreciation to city staff and council for their assistance with the recent National Guard Ceremony. The chief reported that the Hamlet Rescue Squad will be assisting two families of the Guard for Christmas. He announced that their Annual Children's Christmas Party will be held on December 22 at the Fire Department beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Police Chief John Haywood reminded everyone that the Christmas parade will take place on Thursday, December 11, at 3:30 p.m. and noted the times that the streets will close for the event. He wished everyone a safe and happy Christmas season.

Gail Strickland reported that one of the structures on the "dirty thirty" list that was located behind Hardee's on Charlotte Street has been demolished. Councilman Clewis reported that the structure on Hwy. 177 and Airport Road has been removed and that it

looks good. Council discussed other abandoned structures that could potentially be added to the list of properties that need to be demolished.

City Clerk Tammy Kirkley invited city residents who are interested and willing to serve on city volunteer boards to stop by Hamlet City Hall and fill out an application. She reported the need to have more applications for the appointments. Mayor Smart reminded council that the city still needs to appoint a Hamlet representative to serve on the Richmond County Hospice Board and asked for them to be considering a representative.

**12. City Manager's Report.**

Marchell David reported that a previously agreed upon Easement Agreement with Progress Energy was signed last Thursday and that the city will receive a \$64,000 payment for same. She explained that the agreement is simply for access to the utility lines. The manager also reported that Hamlet now has a new Daily Journal representative for city coverage and that they hope to find out soon which representative it will be. She announced that city offices will be closed on Wednesday through Thursday, December 24-26 for Christmas, and will be closed again on Thursday, January 1, for New Year's Day. Mrs. David announced the change in the garbage pick-up schedule for the holidays and confirmed that the dates will be forwarded to the journal for publication. Mrs. David concluded with wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**13. Council's Comments.**

Bill Bayless stated his appreciation to the specially formed Christmas Decorating Committee along with the businesses and city staff for their hard work with the special events taking place the first two weekends of December in the downtown areas.

Tony Clewis took a moment to thank David Knight for his hard work in connection to the National Guard Ceremony and also reminded city staff about the Employee Christmas Luncheon to be held this Friday beginning at 12:00 noon.

Pat Preslar stated that he would like for council to think about obtaining a street sweeper or an additional leaf machine. He would like staff and council to investigate other options, such as a vacuum and be prepared to discuss it during the 2009 Planning Session. Mayor Smart suggested looking into the feasibility of hiring someone manually to clean the streets and to put a plan together for council to consider. Council briefly talked about various drains being clogged with leaves and debris.

Bill Bayless inquired about the trash route for the parade and asked if Public Works will do a garbage pick up the next morning.

**14. Mayor's Comments.**

The mayor took a moment to remind the public that the next Small Town Main Street Community Meeting will take place on Tuesday, December 16, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. He noted the need for more involvement from the public and encouraged the employees to try and attend the monthly meetings as well.

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Mayor Smart announced that the next Golden Leaf Foundation meeting will be held at the Cole on Wednesday, December 17, at 3:00 p.m. and that Hamlet representation is needed. He mentioned the fact that the Richmond Raider football team is going to the State Championship and that this Friday is "Raider Pride Day". He encouraged all citizens to show support by wearing green and gold that day. The mayor then reported that the city will have a retirement party for Sue Tunstall tomorrow at city hall and invited council and employees to come out and wish her well.

Councilman Clewis commended the individuals and businesses that helped with the special Christmas activities this past weekend and stated that they are doing a great job. He encouraged the public to come out this weekend for the continued Christmas events going on downtown Hamlet.

The mayor concluded with wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

15. **Adjournment.** At approximately 7:35 p.m., Councilman Bayless and Clewis motioned to adjourn the meeting and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Kirkley, City Clerk