

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2009
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

Governing Body Present: Mayor Jeff Smart; Mayor Pro-Tem/Councilman Bill Bayless;
Council Members: Pat Preslar, Abbie Covington, Jesse McQueen and Tony Clewis

Staff Present: Steve Futrell, Marchell David, Tammy Kirkley, Mike Deese, Susan Sellers,
David Knight, John Haywood, Greg Henson, Gail Strickland, Robert Brown

Others Present: Pastor Duane Quick; Olivia Webb- Richmond County Daily Journal

1. **Call to Order.** Mayor Smart called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.
2. **Invocation.** Pastor Duane Quick of Outreach for Jesus offered the invocation.
3. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes.** A motion to adopt the revised agenda to add Items 9-13 was made by Councilman Bayless and McQueen. The vote passed unanimously. Council Members Clewis and Covington approved the February 10th minutes. All were in favor.
4. **Comments from Attendees.** No one presented council.
5. **Public Hearing.** The mayor explained that Wayne and Melanie Goodwin's are requesting that their property at 401 Champlain Street be rezoned from General Business-2 to Residential-6. He stated that several years ago the property was rezoned from R-6 to B-2 to allow for Goodwin's Law Offices and the Goodwin's now work State appointed jobs and are not practicing law. The property is for sale and the interested parties want it for residential use. Mayor Smart opened the public hearing for comments on the rezoning request and no one came forward. The hearing was then closed.
6. **Consideration to Approve Goodwin Rezoning Request.** Mayor Smart confirmed that the Hamlet Planning and Zoning Board gave a favorable recommendation to approve the rezoning request during the February 23 meeting. Councilman Clewis and Bayless motioned to grant the request and all were in favor.
7. **Discussion of Fire Tax District.** Chief Knight said that about four years a request was presented for a portion, if not all, of Fox Road to be released from the Hamlet Fire District and to be included on the North Side Fire District. The request has fallen by the way side. The chief stated that this is a financial issue in that the residents who live in that area will receive a lower insurance premium for being in a closer fire district. He reported that there are about 12 homes in this area and that this will be a financial loss to the city, but will help the residents.

Chief Knight stated that the residents qualify for an insurance adjustment if they are within five miles of the fire district and added that Hamlet is about ten miles from them. Chief Knight stated that if this issue is approved then there is a possibility that others will want to move. The Hoffman Fire District will see a difference as well.

The chief stated that Mr. Lavell Anderson owns a mobile home park in the area with about one dozen mobile homes he has to pay for and Mr. Anderson feels safer with having a department closer to the mobile home area. The fire rate is .10 cents per \$100 that is added to the tax bill. Council discussed the insurance and tax issues.

Council and the fire chief continued to discuss the matter with the chief explaining how the other fire districts could be affected in setting precedence. The manager stated that there is a long process and the county has not taken any action on the matter and added that the matter must go before the Fire Chief's Association to be voted on. Council and staff discussed mutual aid's role in this situation. Mayor Smart noted that it's something council needs to be aware of and informed the chief to do what he thinks is best on voting. Councilman Preslar asked the chief to keep the citizens in mind when voting.

8. Setting of Public Hearing for Ordinance. Mayor Smart stated that council will need to set a public hearing to consider the Ordinance to Establish Article 5 of Chapter 5 of the Hamlet Code Relating to Nonresidential Buildings or Structures. Mayor Smart stated that council agreed during the Planning Session to include this matter on the March agenda. Councilman Preslar talked about what the code says about residential and boarding up the windows. Mrs. Strickland confirmed that she plans to get with the code officer and work on residential issues as well. Councilman Preslar noted that he doesn't see a difference with holding residential different from nonresidential.

Councilman Preslar and Bayless motioned to set the public hearing to consider the ordinance for Tuesday, April 14 at 7:00 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Preslar left the meeting.

9. Resolution for the Hamlet Water Lake Dam Repairs. Council Members Covington and Bayless motioned to approve the Resolution by Governing Body in connection with the Water Lake Dam Repairs and the motion passed unanimously.

10. Resolution for Drinking Water Distribution. Council unanimously adopted a Resolution to Construct a Drinking Water Distribution System Project described as SCADA for operation of a water system by motions of Council Members Covington and Bayless. Council discussed water system improvements.

11. Bid Award for the 2008 Sewer System Rehab – Phase 1 – Cleaning & TVing: Mayor Smart reported that the bid for the 2008 Sewer System Rehab project took place on March 4, 2009 at Hamlet City Hall and the low bidder was KRG Utility Contractor in Lenoir, Inc. NC. The Wooten Company recommended awarding the project to the low bidder.

Councilwoman Covington and Clewis motioned to award the bid to KRG Utility Contractor Inc. and all were in favor.

Councilman Preslar joined the meeting.

12. Gold Leaf Foundation Selection Committee. Mayor Smart reported the City of Hamlet will get two out of nineteen votes for the \$2,000,000 Golden Leaf Foundation Grant in Richmond County and stated that Hamlet will need to make two appointments to serve on the committee. Councilman Bayless motioned that the city manager and mayor be appointed as Hamlet's Representatives on the Golden Leaf Foundation Selection Committee. Mr. Preslar seconded the motion and all were in favor. The mayor noted that he will keep the departments abreast of what's been going on.

Councilman Bayless left the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

13. Departmental Reports.

The mayor thanked Chief Knight and the Hamlet Rescue Squad for everything they did during the Planning Session.

Chief Haywood referenced his report from the planning retreat concerning the hiring of officers within the COPS grant and stated that the grant is for as many officers as requested and they will pay the officer's salary and benefits for three years. He stated that the city will have to pick up one budget cycle and the grant program three 3 years. Chief Haywood confirmed that they will rotate officers out. He reported that the police department could use at least two more officers on night shift; he would like to add one to each shift to accommodate for different situations. Chief Haywood reported that his department will be working on other grants as well. Councilman McQueen inquired about the \$24,600 grant from the Reinvestment Stimulus Funds and the chief stated that he has not been informed of the stipulations yet.

Greg Henson reported that a demo of a street sweeper has been scheduled for Friday, March 13 at 9:00 a.m. and invited the mayor and council to come out and view the demo. Mr. Henson reported that he received a quote of \$136,131.25, which is a \$57,000 savings. He added that the demo for Hamlet will only be the second demo for this piece of equipment.

Susan Sellers gave information on an upcoming first time Genealogy class and a Caregivers class. She stated she would like to get started on a new monthly event at the center entitled "Coffee with the Mayor". Mrs. Sellers concluded with reported that the center was able to offer free tax preparation for twenty five older adults via certified volunteers within the state.

Gail Strickland reported that the city is ready to move forward with the demolition at 515 Spring Street. Councilman Preslar and staff discussed the service of notice in reference to the code issue problem on Lackey Street.

Councilwoman Covington inquired about state vehicle taxes and Mike Deese stated that they run about a month behind and that these taxes are collected by the county. He reported that sales taxes are paid monthly, but they run about two months behind; the city has collected December's taxes in February and should get January's sometime in March. Mrs. Covington stated her concerns with the State's deficient.

14. Manager's Report.

Mrs. David reported that over the next few weeks she and her staff will be working on putting together and submitting grants to fund some of the projects mentioned tonight. She also reported that Ralph Yates submitted a quote for Garcia to clean the walking trail as requested during the planning meeting. The manager reminded council that the first Budget Work Session will be held on Friday, April 24, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at Hamlet City Hall.

15. Comments of Council.

Councilwoman Covington thanked staff for their time and efforts for bringing them back up to speed for the past year.

Councilman Preslar thanked the chief and his crew for everything during the Planning Session. He said he was pleased with the departmental reports and presentations.

16. Mayor Comments.

The mayor discussed the two scenarios that were given last month in reference to the engineering phase for the repairs at the water lake dam – the two engineering scenarios that were given last month. He stated that this matter will not be able to be left off of the table asked staff to keep council up to date with the matter. The manager confirmed that it is a situation that we will have to wait on for the moment and that she will let council know after she speaks with the engineer about the urgency of the matter.

The mayor reported that council made the recent decision to remove the trees in the Downtown Business District. He stated that he signed the petition because he is a business owner in that area. Mayor Smart referenced a recently published article in the paper said he doesn't agree with the writer bringing up a former council member while he was on his death bed and he pointed out that it is classless to do this in a editorial. Mayor Smart reported that the trees are gone and the city is considering putting planters in place of them with the Small Town Main Street Program. The next Small Town Main Street meeting will be held on March 17, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. The mayor ended with stating that we will continue to move on for the betterment of the city.

17. Adjournment of Meeting. Councilman Preslar, McQueen and Clewis motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m. and the vote passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Kirkley, City Clerk