

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORK SESSION  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, MARCH 02, 2018  
8:30 AM**

**MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

City Manager	Jonathan Blanton
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
City Clerk	Gail Strickland

**Others Present:**

Department Heads attended as presentations were scheduled. Others present were Sheri Parks with Hamlet Housing, Sheriff James Clemmons, Chuck Craven with The Richmond Observer, and Christine Carroll with the Richmond County Daily Journal. Bishop Harrington entered the meeting at 11:17 am and Renee Cerzybowski joined the meeting at 11:30 am. Stephen Teachout and Victoria Heinz with Tsunami Cameras attended for the Police Department Presentation.

- **Call to Order**

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order.

- **Adoption of Agenda**

Council Members Johnathan Buie and David Lindsey motioned to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried.

- **Motion to go into Closed Session**

Council Members Johnathan Buie and Wendy Massagee motioned to go into closed session pursuant to N.C. G. S. 143-318.11 to discuss a personnel matter. The vote was 3-2 with Council Members Jesse McQueen and Eddie Martin voting against the closed session. Mr. McQueen stated the Department Heads are scheduled for presentations and the Attorney is not present. Mr. Blanton advised the Attorney would be available for a conference call. At 8:33 am Council went into closed session.

The Regular Budget Meeting resumed at 9:09 am. No action was taken in Closed Session. Council Member Massagee left the Budget Work Session.

### **Comments of Council for Request for 2018-19 Projects.**

The meeting began with the Mayor asking Council if they had any projects to discuss. Council Member Lindsey mentioned increasing the budget for some items such as demolition costs. No other projects were discussed at this time.

#### **Administration/Code Enforcement/Miscellaneous**

- Small car for City Hall - \$21,000.00. The Manager explained the van would transition to the Senior Center. Council Member Lindsey inquired on the need for the car. The Manager explained a vehicle is needed for code enforcement and daily bank trips. The Mayor suggested they transition a car from the Police Department to City Hall and purchase the Police Department a new car. Council Members Buie and Martin expressed the need for a decent car at City Hall.
- Demolition Costs – currently \$25,000.00 (2 structures), requesting \$35,000.00 (3 structures). Council discussed increasing more than the requested \$35,000.00 and discussed training value has to be present for the Fire Department to receive permits to burn. The Mayor asked if revenue projections were available. The Manager stated he was following the pattern as the previous year by presenting capital outlay requests at the first meeting and then bringing the revenues. He said revenues are difficult to predict at this point; sales tax is always 2 months behind. He will have projections at the next meeting. Council Member Lindsey asked if there was any money carried over as before for additional purchases. Mr. Blanton named many of the purchases this year and suggested the purchase of large items be on hold at this point. Council Member McQueen suggested putting \$50,000 in the budget to start and then re-evaluate.
- New entrance signs - \$15,000.00 (3). Steve with TRG signs provided the Manager with 2 sign drawings made of aluminum with vinyl lettering. Council voiced concern on vinyl lettering and did not think it would last very long. Council Member Buie likes the County brick signs. Mr. Blanton's research on the signs in Laurinburg found they were from a company in North or South Dakota with a cost of \$50,000.00 for one sign. Council discussed moving forward with 1 large sign, not vinyl. Council Member Lindsey stated there may be an issue with placement, the City will need to get NCDOT approval. Council Member Martin suggested updating the existing signs. Issues with the bricks on the current signs were discussed. Council decided to budget \$15,000.00 at this point.

#### **Parks and Recreation/Senior Center/Depot**

- South Hamlet Basketball Court – Repaving \$60,000.00. The Manager spoke with Hudson Paving and researched Dobbins Heights recently installed courts and found roughly \$60,000.00 would be needed. He also advised Council had questioned the MacFarland property and advised the City does own the property. Council Member Buie expressed concern of having to purchase new poles and suggested the City could fix one as a court and pave the remaining. Mr. Blanton has a concern of removing trees that serve as a buffer on the MacFarland property. The Mayor informed Council there is a small property that does not belong to the City. Mr. Blanton advised it is the Blue property. Council Member Martin suggested repairing the existing court and continue parking on the paved portion. Council agreed to tentatively budget for \$60,000.00 and discuss the specifics later. The Manager advised Council the Department Heads were told they did not have to attend for the smaller items.
- Touch Screen Computer for the Senior Center: \$4,500.00; \$1,200 starting the second year. The Manager explained as participants enter the Senior Center they will sign in on the computer and the information will go directly to the State. The Mayor informed Council the system will help the Senior Center get money from the State. It is required for the Center of Excellence.

- **Movie Projector for Movies in the Park.** The Manager explained Mrs. Thornsbury wanted to use some of the monies raised from the Ghost Tours for a projector to have movies in the park. She wanted to get Council's approval. Mr. Blanton said this is only a transfer of money; it will not cost the City. The Manager asked if she could proceed now. It was consensus of Council to go ahead.
- **Farmer's Market.** The Manager informed Council that given a lack of interest from vendors and participants, the Farmer's Market will be once a month on Thursday. He has received concerns from citizens. The Mayor mentioned towards the end there were no vendors or participants. Council Member Martin said he went several times, but no one was in attendance. They had few vegetables and more crafts than anything. Council Member Lindsey stated they need to use local farmers. Mr. Martin felt Thursday afternoon is a bad time. The Manager explained The Extension Office does not allow the City of Hamlet to have theirs the same time as Rockingham.

### **Fire Department**

- **Used pick-up Truck - \$14,000.00.** Chief White entered the meeting at 9:37 am. He stated the City bought an Explorer for him and the Rescue Squad has purchased 2 pick-up trucks. He has 1 shift that does not have a City vehicle at the station for use. He is looking at a used Forestry Truck to purchase. The price includes the truck and updating it, a complete job. Mr. McQueen complimented the Fire Department for their work. The Chief expressed pride in the Department.
- **Air Packs (4) - \$28,000.00.** Mr. White stated they are purchasing 4 air packs at a time. Some of the existing air packs are outdated and have safety concerns. There are new standards in place at this time. He showed a new harness with safety alarms that work automatically. They still have some in use with the manual alerts. Council Member Lindsey inquired if there was grant money available. The Chief said no grant money is available for full time departments. The Chief explained the air packs are on the truck and everyone uses them. There can be 20-25 people on a major fire and everyone rotates in. Council Member McQueen suggested increasing the quantity to 6 due to the manual safety on the old air packs. Council Member Buie mentioned the Fire Department was not requesting expensive items this year so it may be a good time to purchase at least 6 of the air packs. It was consensus of Council to budget for 6 at \$42,000.00. Mr. McQueen asked the Chief who was doing fire inspections. The Chief responded he is currently but 3 people have taken the class and will be taking the test.

A break was taken at 9:46. The meeting resumed at 9:58 am.

Billy Stubbs and Ernie Billingsley joined the meeting at 9:58 am.

### **Public Works presented by Billy Stubbs**

- **Water Department: Electric Chain Hoist - \$8,428.00.** The City Manager explained the only request from Mr. Brown at the Water Plant is an electric chain hoist. The existing one is worn out and needs replacing. It is a safety concern.
- **Water Crew: Truck Replacement - \$26,100.00.** Public Works is requesting a 4x4 F250 to replace the 2004 that is having engine issues. Mr. Stubbs estimated \$5,000.00 - \$6,000.00 has been spent in repairs this past year. If the new truck is purchased, they plan to trade out the beds, surplus 1 and sell it at auction to recoup some of the money spent for the new vehicle.
- **Limb Crew: Truck Replacement - \$33,568.00.** Mr. Stubbs is requesting a new F450 needed to pull the trailer to County. It will replace #26 with numerous problems and should put the leaf and limb department in good shape. Mr. Billingsley suggested keeping the old truck to use for

mowing with the bobcat. It would only be used in the summer months. The Public Works Director felt that it could be used a few times a month.

- **Garbage Cans.** Mr. Stubbs informed Council they would need to increase the garbage can order this year. All the cans were ordered previously at one time and now they are all showing wear and damage. The City has been re-ordering some cans the past 5-6 years but they have not replaced all the damaged ones. He also noted he orders enough pins each year to repair 100-200 cans. Purchasing cans from another municipality was discussed.
- **Trackhoe.** The Public Works Director advised Council that the City would need to consider purchasing a small trackhoe in the near future. He said there were areas in town and in East Rockingham that they cannot get a backhoe in to do the needed work. The backhoe currently used is 20 plus years old and the parts are obsolete. An estimated cost of a gently used trackhoe would be \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00.
- **Sweeper.** Mr. Stubbs discussed the need for a sweeper in the near future. He feels they will be able to find a demo. Council Member McQueen suggested contracting the service out. He said there are places that do it and thought the City should look into it. The Public Works Director gave a quote of \$180,000.00 - \$200,000.00 for a turn-key sweeper. A demo would cost \$150,000.00 - \$160,000.00. Mr. Stubbs said the sweeper not only helps with appearance but with the storm drains. When the sweeper is not used, the drains become clogged. It is a huge issue.
- **Mary Love Cemetery Outsourcing: \$40,000.00 - \$50,000.00.** Mr. Stubbs stated the cemetery is too much for 1 employee to cut the grass and remove the pine straw. Employee safety is a great concern. Now we spend \$40,000.00 for 1 employee, not including gas, equipment, etc. He has to pull employees from other departments to assist and maintain the cemetery. The Manager stated informal prices of \$40,000.00 - \$50,000.00 have been obtained for the upkeep. The quotes include cutting as needed to maintain. Mr. Blanton will put the Cemetery Upkeep and Maintenance out for a formal bid. Council Member McQueen inquired on the current costs for man power, equipment and maintenance of equipment. Mr. Stubbs estimates \$49,000.00 for 1 employee, equipment and maintenance of equipment. Mr. McQueen asked Staff to have the costs previously spent on manpower, equipment and upkeep of equipment along with the bids to outsource at the next Budget Meeting. Mr. Stubbs estimates \$49,000.00 annually for 1 employee, equipment and upkeep of equipment. This does not include additional employees assisting which would increase the cost to \$55,000.00. Council Member Lindsey stated the City should not have any 1 employee working alone at any time. The Mayor also stated if the cemetery is outsourced, the City needs to do away with the position, not transfer somewhere else.
- **Water and Sewer Rates.**
  1. Water Rate is currently \$21.00, recommend \$23.00 (State Median \$22.38)
  2. Sewer Rate is currently \$16.00, recommend \$19.00 (State Median \$27.00)Mr. Blanton stated the water and sewer rates have not been adjusted since April 2008. The City has major costs coming up and the Enterprise Fund is falling behind. The Mayor informed Council if we fail to maintain the recommended rates, we will not be eligible for grants. Mr. Blanton responded he has had discussions with John Grey with the Wooten Company. There are grants for water and sewer issues but due to the City's rates, a grant would not be considered. There is no guarantee the City would get a grant, but they would not be considered with current rates. The Mayor stated no one wants to pay more but the maintenance of the infrastructure is increasing. Council Member McQueen said one issue is that the water and sewer is based off of a minimum and some household do not use the minimums. He asked if the minimum could be adjusted and suggested Staff look into the matter. Council Member Lindsey stated the City has

to look at what the State looks for in grant funding and make sure any changes would comply with the State requirements. Mr. McQueen said the Enterprise Fund has gone down but some items were shifted to the Enterprise Fund from the General Fund. The Manager added that monies for emergency repairs such as Lillians Lane have had a significant impact. Mr. McQueen asked for the State's minimum usage for the required minimum rates. Ms. Dickens informed Council the State's median is based on the 2500 gallons and Richmond County is 2000 gallons. Mr. Stubbs said the City needs to look at tap fees charged by the City. Mr. Billingsley gave the current prices of \$525.00 - \$550.00 for water taps and \$500.00 for sewer. He suggested a flat fee of \$1,000.00 regardless of depth. The current prices barely cover the costs of materials and does not pay for manpower. Council Member Lindsey inquired on grants for the belt press. The Manager is doubtful with current sewer rates but he will check on. He feels an increase from \$16.00 to the State's median of \$27.00 is too much of an increase. Council Member McQueen stated the City needs to look at federally elected officials for monies that will be available. The Mayor suggested local officials as well. The Manager reported the Governor has monies for rural counties he is investigating.

- **Belt Press.** Mr. Stubbs informed Council staff is obtaining quotes for a belt press. The City will have to haul cakes that come off to Anson County once a week. Currently, the City has one employee whose job is to drive the truck for land application. The Public Works Director stated Rockingham purchased belt presses that are too small. Buying them may be an option for Hamlet. If we do purchase, we have to build a building and purchase a dump truck. The belt press will increase the life of the truck. The belt press will increase capacity and hopefully attract industry. Council Member McQueen suggested Council consider it even if they have to use the fund balance.
- **Force Main Walls Trailer Park.** Mr. Stubbs explained a portion of the line is through the swamp. The City of Hamlet does not have the equipment to make the numerous repairs; a Contactor has to be used. The Public Works Director provided 2 options for Council to consider. Option 1 is to replace a portion of the line each year at a cost of \$97,500.00 for 1,000 feet. Once the line is replaced in the swamp area, the City can make the repairs. He stated the State will issue fines if leaks are found. Option 2 is to send the waste to Rockingham. This would decrease the intake at the WWTP by 200,000 gallons. The Mayor commented the City has to pay an access fee. Mr. Stubbs thinks Rockingham would entertain the idea. Mr. Billingsley reported when the City sent sewer to Rockingham in the past, everything ran fine. He felt the access fee was too much. Mr. McQueen said the difference this time it that Rockingham would be receiving the sewer daily and make money for treating it. If sent to Rockingham, the City would not have to treat it, but would receive revenues from customers. Sending it to Rockingham would be at a non-residential rate. Mr. Billingsley confirmed there are no problems with the line to Rockingham and the pumping station at Wall's Trailer Park is practically brand new. The City Manager said the City would get prices on a belt press and explore the option of sending to Rockingham. Mr. Stubbs expressed his appreciation to Mr. Billingsley for his assistance since Benny Billingsley's retirement.

A break was taken at 10:48 am for the Police Department to set up their presentations. Detective Richard Jordan, Detective Chris Lampley, Sergeant Britton Emert, Officer Chad Haywood, Captain Marc Terry and Chief Scott Waters joined the meeting,

The meeting resumed at 10:59 am.

#### **Police Department.**

- **2018 F-150 4x4 Truck for Detective Division (1) - \$34,367.** Police Chief Scott Waters stated the truck would be for the Detective Division to haul evidence and stolen property. His Department received 2 Explorers last year and thinks a truck would be more practical for hauling evidence from crime scenes and stolen properties.
- **2018 Police Ford Explorer Patrol Division (1) - \$40,776.** Chief Waters is also requesting an Explorer for the Patrol Division. He advised his department will need 3 viper mobile systems and 2 in-car cameras if the 3 requested vehicles are purchased. An Explorer would provide more room for the officer and escorts to the Domestic Violence Shelter when carrying luggage. A 4x4 vehicle would help in inclement weather.
- **2018 AWD Dodge Charger (1) - \$36,517.** The estimates includes the car and equipment.
- **Governor's Highway Safety Grant.** Applications have been submitted and they are waiting to hear if they will get the 2 positions back.
- **M4 Assault Rifles (7) - \$4,550.00.** The Chief is requesting the assault rifles. The Department has 5 AR-15 rifles. They are continuing to upgrade the shotguns. He explained they must have security mounts in the vehicles for each rifle. The cost does not meet the Capital Outlay requirements.
- **Hamlet Firing Range/Police Hut Upkeep - \$5,000.00.** The request is for maintenance of both buildings, painting, targets, treating fire ants, and wiring as needed. Also needed are minor repairs to the restrooms, lights, hot water heater, and maintenance of the HVAC system. The Mayor asked if the other agencies that utilize the range make donations for the upkeep. The Chief advised the college donated a building and he could ask other agencies to help so upgrades could be made. Council Member Buie informed Council the JROTC program with the Richmond County Schools has inquired if they could use the range. They would use pellet rifles. The Chief replied they would be welcome. The Mayor inquired what assistance the State had given. Chief Waters stated they helped with donations for cables and poles. He also informed Council that the Police Department would like to name the Police Hut in Memory of Chief J. B. Fallow who died in the line of duty. The suggested name is the Chief J. B. Fallow Training Facility. The consensus of Council was to proceed with naming the facility in memory of Chief Fallow.
- **Animal control Officer - \$48,409.67.** The Chief gave the number of animal calls for 2015 as 287, 2016 had 447 calls and 2017 had 460 calls. He would like a trained officer to capture the animals, handle the complaints, educate the citizens on the Ordinances and update the Ordinances as needed. The estimated salary includes all benefits. Council Member McQueen asked if this could be a part-time person, maybe a retired law enforcement person. The Chief responded he was open to ideas. Council Member Buie inquired if the City gives citations for animal cruelty. Chief Waters said the City handles all animal calls. Chief Martin added that when he was Police Chief, a part-time position did not work for animal control. He feels it should be a full time set position.
- **Tsunami 360 Cameras - \$24,000.00.** Chief Waters discussed the Tsunami 360 cameras saying they have an annual lease with a 3 year minimum and unlimited warranty. The Chief showed a video on the Tsunami 360 Camera Company. The cameras record with super high definition on 360 degrees and acts as a deterrent. A second video of the Tsunami 360 Camera utilized at major events was shown. The Police Chief stated the cameras will be utilized to monitor community events and high crime areas in the City. Mr. Stephen Teachout demonstrated the Tsunami. It has 4 cameras that record north, south, east and west. The cameras do not need a network. Those permitted can dial in and see a live view. It is a lease system replaced every 4 years. Mr. Buie inquired on the best height for mounting the cameras. Mr. Teachout said the lower the better. The camera can see up to one mile but mounted 10 – 12 feet is best for facial recognition. The City Manager inquired on other municipalities that use the system. The

company owner gave the cities of Kinston, Goldsboro, Laurinburg, Raleigh, Wilmington, and others that have them in place today. The Manager also inquired what deters someone from unplugging them. It was explained the systems are typically hard wired; they have never had a system vandalized. The Mayor asked what was included in the \$24,000.00. Mr. Teachout explained the cost is for 4 units annually with a 3 year lease minimum. Council Member Martin stated he is in favor of the equipment since we are aware it exists. Council Member McQueen inquired on the number of people that could view the cameras. The response was unlimited users and it can be streamed on the website for public view. Mr. Martin inquired on damage to the unit. Mr. Teachout said the equipment has insurance but the City would pay the deductible. Mr. Martin confirmed the lease agreement is for 4 units, 2 stationary and 2 fixed. The company will train Staff how to install and move the equipment.

- **Drug/Gang Officer - \$48,409.67.** Chief Waters introduced Patrol Officer Chad Haywood who provided 4 tri-fold boards relating to gang issues and a video showing gang activity in Hamlet. He asked Council to consider a Drug Officer citing evidence of gang activity. He stated 6 years ago, no known gangs existed but that has since changed. Richmond County has been identified as a county that has up to 25 gangs. There are 87 validated gang members in Hamlet. He provided the names of the gangs and provided information on the graffiti used by the gangs. He thanked Sheriff Clemmons for attending and gave information on the Gang Task Force. He provided crimes related to gang activity for 2015-2018. Council Member McQueen questioned the 11 deaths. The Patrolman explained the number is not just murders but any death that was related to drug use or gangs. Mr. McQueen asked for the number of murders and Officer Haywood responded he would provide at a later time. He gave information on drugs and drug busts. He stated resources are needed to continue the investigations. The presentation provided statistics for drug use, arrests, youth involvement in gangs and initiations. Also given were ways to make a difference with a Crime and Drug Committee, technology, and a Gang and Drug Investigator. The Salary for the gang officer would be \$48,409.67 which includes all benefits and salary. Patrolman Haywood asked Council to consider the Gang/Drug Officer. The Department has looked into a part-time position, but do not feel part-time would work. Mayor Bayless asked Sheriff Clemmons if he wanted to speak. The Sheriff stated dealing with gang activity is a full time job and must be given the attention it needs. He said Richmond County will continue to bring resources to Hamlet but they are not here to stay. The Mayor and Council Member McQueen commended the police agencies for working together. The Sheriff noted the problems are in the school system. If not combatted, they will escalate. He thanked Council for their contributions. The Police Chief stated the Gang and Drug Officer would help solve crimes and would also generate monies for the City from the drug arrests. The Officer's hours would be flexible for the officer. They will work as needed when the drug activity is taking place. Mayor Bayless said Council will see what they can do. Council Member McQueen asked the media to hold off on the 11 deaths until clarification is received. Council Member Buie stated the Police Department received \$16,000.00 from drug related crimes last year.

**Council Comments Regarding Police Department Requests.**

City Manager Jonathan Blanton asked Council to discuss the items they wanted to fund for the Police Department. The Manager does not recommend purchasing the vehicles, stating the Police Department received several vehicles last year. Mayor Bayless suggested taking a vehicle from the Police Department for City Hall and purchasing 1 vehicle for the police department. Council Member Buie said a new vehicle is needed for City Hall. Council agreed to consider the vehicle for City Hall. The Mayor suggested Council approve the 2018 AWD Dodge Charger, noting the cars wear out. Council was in agreement. Council felt the officers need to be armed with the assault rifles. Council

Approved March 13, 2018

Member McQueen wants to know if other agencies are using shot guns or rifles. Council approved the monies for the upkeep of the firing range and police hut. Consensus of Council was to fund the Drug and Gang Officer position but not the Animal Control Officer at this time. They also agreed to proceed with the purchase of the cameras.

**Next Budget Work Session.** Council set the next Budget Work Session for April 10<sup>th</sup> from 3pm – 5pm.

With motions of Council Members McQueen and Buie, the meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail M. Strickland  
City Clerk