

June 12, 2018 Minutes Regular Meeting

201 West Main Street  
Post Office Box 1229  
Hamlet, North Carolina 28345



Phone (910) 582-2651  
Fax (910) 582-5815  
www.hamletnc.us

---

CITY OF HAMLET REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2018, 2018 - 7:00 PM  
MINUTES

**Governing Body Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

City Manager	Jonathan Blanton
City Attorney	TC Morphis
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
IT	Zach Garner
Public Works Director	Billy Stubbs
Asst. Fire Chief	Richard Lassiter
Fireman	Stewart Niemyer
Fireman	Franklin McKay

**Others Present:** Bishop Thomas Lee McDonald, Willie Baldwin, Christie McDonald, Robbie Taylor, Robbie Taylor III, Bernice Owens, Amy Guinn, Christine Carroll with RC Daily Journal, Linda Bayless, Brett Hanna, Don Norton, Bill Matheson, Yan Solihin, Luis Polo, B. F. Darnell, Robin Hewitt, Kay Cavendish, Tim Nevinger, Javier Lame Gorbe, Gerald Pakota and Bobbie Williams

1. Call to Order.

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order. He announced Council Member Lindsey would not be in attendance and Council Member Buie would be participating in the meeting via phone.

2. Invocation

Bishop Thomas Lee McDonald of Last Days Deliverance Apostolic Faith Church offered the Invocation.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Council Members McQueen and Martin motioned to adopt the agenda. The vote was 4-0.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

Motions to approve the May 8, 2018 Regular and Closed Session Meeting Minutes were made by Council Members Martin and McQueen. The vote was 4-0.

5. **Comments from Attendees**

Mr. Robbie Taylor approached the podium. He said several months ago, he had a medical emergency. When EMS arrived, they were transporting him and he felt that he was dying. Franklin McKay provided medicine and two days later Mr. Taylor woke up. He wanted EMS and the City to know how much he appreciates them. Mr. Taylor called Franklin McKay and Stewart Niemyer to the podium to thank them personally. Robbie Taylor, III also expressed his gratitude to the EMS, stating they did not think his father would make it, but his family was given more time with him.

Mr. Willie Baldwin offered concerns regarding the basketball courts in South Hamlet. Council Member McQueen stated funds are in the Budget and the work is to be completed after July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Baldwin asked if there was anything the citizens could do to help. Council Member Martin said not at this time. The City Manager stated the entire court will be resurfaced. Mr. Baldwin asked if the City planned to purchase benches for the park. When told benches are not in the budget at this time, he asked if he could get people to donate benches. Council stated it would be fine.

Mrs. Amy Guinn with the Hamlet Business Development Association gave an update on the recent Talent Search providing the names of the winners and thanking the City staff, volunteers and participants. The purpose of the Talent Search was to provide a scholarship for a business student. She reported the scholarship was fully funded and they hope to have the event again next Spring.

6. **Old Business**

**Discussion of Cameras for Police Department.**

Jonathan Blanton explained last month Council agreed to add \$24,000.00 to the budget for security cameras for the Police Department. Mr. Van Billingsley has provided a similar product. The Manager asked Council to give permission for he and the Police Chief to move forward with determining the best cameras to purchase or lease. Council Member Martin stated he had no problem with the Manager's request. The Mayor said no vote was needed. It was consensus of Council that Mr. Blanton and Chief Waters proceed.

7. **Appointment to ABC Board – Council Representative.**

Council Member Martin made a motion to re-appoint Mrs. Massagee as the Council's Representative to the ABC Board. The second was given by Council Member McQueen. All approved with a 4-0 vote.

**New Business**

8. **Public Hearing #1. Fiscal Year 2018-19 Budget.**

Mayor Bayless opened the floor to the Public Hearing for the 2018-19 Fiscal Year Budget. The City Manager stated last month he presented the Budget Message and Budget and he is looking for a motion from Council to adopt. The Mayor asked for other comments from Council or citizens. When no other comments presented, the Mayor closed the floor to the Public Hearing.

9. **Adoption of the FY2018-19 Budget Ordinance No. 2018-02.**

Council Member Martin motioned to adopt the proposed Budget Ordinance as presented and Council Member McQueen provided the second. The Mayor welcomed comments. None were given. A vote was taken and passed with a 3-1 vote. Council Member Massagee voted against the Budget.

10. **Public Hearing #2. Greentegrity Land Investment, LLC.**

The Mayor opened the Hearing and noted the location of the land is across from the old Coca Cola Plant. He stated the matter is a 2-fold issue. The issue tonight is for rezoning only. The request for usage as a Solar Farm will be determined at the next month's meeting. He asked Gail Strickland to provide uses for Light Industry properties. She stated I-1 zoning allows for manufacturing, industry and also solar farms. Mayor Bayless asked for additional comments. None were given and the Hearing was closed.

**11. Consistency Statement and Decision of Greentegrity Land Investment LLC Rezoning Request.**

Attorney TC Morphis informed Council per North Carolina General Statutes, the Consistency Statement must be prepared prior to Council's decision on the rezoning. The Mayor read the General Statute that requires the Consistency Statement. Council Member McQueen made the motion that the rezoning was consistent with the City's Zoning Ordinance. Council Member Buie offered the second and the vote was 4-0.

Mr. McQueen motioned to approve the rezoning based on the Planning Board's recommendation. The second was offered by Mr. Buie and the motion passed 4-0. Council Member McQueen expressed appreciation to the City Attorney for his assistance in keeping Council informed on changes and he recognized the Planning Board for their work.

**12. Public Hearing #3. Amendment to Subdivision Ordinance – Streets in ETJ Subdivision.**

The Mayor opened the Public Hearing and gave a review of the proposed amendments. He asked for comments. No one presented. Attorney Morphis explained the updates make the Ordinance consistent with state regulations. Council Member Massagee remarked several builders had expressed concern over the issue. No further comments were made and the Hearing was closed.

**13. Consistency Statement and Decision Amendment to Subdivision Ordinance – Streets in ETJ Subdivision**

Council Member McQueen made the motion that the amendments were consistent with the City's Zoning Ordinance. The second was provided by Council Member Martin and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

Mr. McQueen motioned to approve the amendments and the second was offered by Mr. Buie and the motion passed 4-0.

**14. Adoption of Resolution 2018-02 Fee Schedule FY2018-19.**

Mayor Bayless reported Council needed to adopt the Resolution for changes to the Fee Schedule for FY2018-19. Council Member Massagee questioned the \$25.00 fee for water that was cut on after 4:30 pm. Jill Dickens informed Council it should be after 4 pm, not 4:30. Billy Stubbs explained when a water customer comes in after 4 pm it often creates the City paying overtime to the meter readers. Mrs. Massagee stated the Water Department is open until 5 pm and people come in to do business.

The Mayor stated the City will no longer cut water off on Fridays or days when the Water Department will not be open the next day.

The Manager added Council had discussed adding high user rates, but no consensus was given by Council. As it stands, the rates do not have a break for water consumption over 50,000 gallons. Council Member McQueen asked for the number of water customers that use over 50,00 gallons. Mr. Blanton stated the total number of residential and business customers is 400. He reported he had rates from similar municipalities if Council wanted to consider any changes. Mr. McQueen motioned to adopt the Resolution as presented. Council Member Buie provided the second stating the last rate increase was 10 years ago. He said the increase is necessary to make repairs and provide quality water. A 4-0 vote was received.

**15. Adoption of Resolution 2018-03 Surplus Items.**

Mayor Bayless announced Council needed to adopt a Resolution for Surplus Items. Council Members Buie and Martin provided the motion and second to adopt the Resolution and a vote of 4-0 was received. The Manager reported some of the items were for transfer to EMS, some would be advertised and sold but some had no value and would be disposed of.

**16. Approval of Tax Releases.**

Council Members Buie and McQueen made the motion and second to approve the Tax Releases. A 4-0 vote was received.

**17. Approval of Audit Contract.**

Council Members McQueen and Martin made the motion and second to approve the Audit Contract with Anderson Smith Wike PLLC. Mr. McQueen stated the firm always does a great job. A vote of 4-0 was received.

**18. Budget Amendments – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter FY 2017-18.**

The Mayor explained the City's Budget process. To balance the Budget, you often have to add money from the Reserve Fund, not expecting to spend it unless you have an emergency. He said the Budget is a document that is adjusted throughout the year. Some departments spend less than budgeted and some more. Council Member Buie noted the Budget Amendments show an increase in fuel and stated all City vehicles should be turned off when not in use. Mayor Bayless also reported chemicals at the Water Plant and Waste Water Treatment Plant have increased; the City has no control over them. Council Members Buie and McQueen made the motion and second to approve the Budget Amendments. The vote was 4-0.

Other Business

**19. City Manager Report.**

The City Manager reported the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration is set with lots of food and double fireworks. City Offices will be closed that day. He confirmed with Billy Stubbs that Wednesday garbage will be collected on Thursday. Mr. Blanton announced the demolition of 302 W Hamlet was complete. He also thanked the ones that spoke at Comments from Attendees.

**20. Comments of Council.**

Council Member McQueen commented on the Budget, stating every municipality has seen criticism of their budgets and fee schedules. He shared historical data on the City's Budget. In 2013-14, the City appropriated \$372,655.00 from the Fund Balance to balance the Budget. That year the City used only \$20,888.00, leaving the Fund Balance at 35.9%. For year 2014-15, Council appropriated \$821,720.00 but at the end of the year did not use any of the Fund Balance, instead put back \$189,066.00, making the Fund Balance \$41.4%. In FY 15-16, \$610,110.00 was appropriated and \$220,733.00 was put back, raising the percentage to 42.3%. In 2016-17, Council decided to purchase much needed equipment for the City, appropriating \$612,210.00, but only used \$52,208.00, dropping the Fund Balance to 40.6%. The State mandates an 8% balance in the Fund Balance and the City is well above that in both the General Fund and Enterprise Fund. Mr. McQueen said he has heard the infrastructure is in dire need of repairs. Council has focused on obtaining needed vehicles and pay increases comparable to other agencies to retain City employees. He emphasized the reason the City is able to put money back into the Fund Balance is the hard work of its employees', giving an example of Billy Stubbs and Bryan Carter traveling to Ohio to purchase equipment, saving the City tremendously. Mr. McQueen reported Council will not know if they will put back money back into the Fund Balance until January. He also noted some people think the taxes fund the Budget. The City Manager replied taxes are only a small portion of the General Fund. Discussing infrastructure, Council Member McQueen said he has learned you don't tear up streets to put in new lines; you repair them as they come. He also reported the 40-year Bond to pay for the Sewer Plant will be paid in 2020. This will provide an opportunity to upgrade the Water Plant and Wastewater Treatment Plant. He said Council has discussed the need for several years and feels they are moving forward. Mr. McQueen thanked City Manager Jonathan Blanton and Staff for the Budget

Presentation, noting \$300,000.00 was cut when Council had to prioritize the requests. He ended his comments by saying he is proud of the Budget.

Council Member Massagee stated she had a chance to witness the Hamlet Police Officers in action the past week and was impressed in how they handled the situation. She said they handled the person with dignity and respect.

Council Member Buie stated the Budget is in much better shape than past years. He is glad Council is taking care of the basketball courts in South Hamlet. He also noted Hamlet has grown with new businesses and feels the improvement to City Departments will bring in industry. He expressed appreciation for the support from the citizens and appreciates the complaints that bring attention to areas we need to make better.

21. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Bayless thanked the employees for all they do to operate the City and keep the Budget down. Mr. Bayless said the City is trying to improve quality of life issues by remedying the basketball courts in South Hamlet. He thanked the HBDA for attending the meeting and provided information on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

22. Motion to go into Closed Session per NCGS§ 143-318.11 (a) (3) (5) for contract discussion and attorney-client privilege.

At 7:55 pm, Council Members Buie and McQueen made the motion and second to go into Closed Session per NCGS§ 143-318.11 (a) (3) (5) for contract discussion and attorney-client privilege. A vote of 4-0 was received.

At 8:15 pm Council Members McQueen and Buie made a motion and second to return to open session. A vote of 4-0 was given. No action was taken in Closed Session. Council Member Buie left the meeting. The Mayor and 3 Council Members left the Council Chambers to view cameras from Electronic Services Company for comparison with the Tsunami Council for the Police Department.

23. Motion to adjourn.

At 8:55 pm, Council returned from viewing the cameras.

At 8:55 pm, Council Member McQueen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The second was given by Council Member Martin. A vote of 3-0 was received. The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail M. Strickland  
City Clerk

