

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2018  
7:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

City Manager	Jonathan Blanton
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
City Attorney	TC Morphis
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
IT	Zach Garner
Public Works Director	Billy Stubbs
Police	Marc Terry

**Others Present:** Linda Bayless, Pastor Deb Wilkins, Julie Venable, Nic Wilkes, Gerald Pakota III, Jasmine Hager with the RC Daily Journal and Amy Guinn with the Richmond Observer

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order.

**2. Invocation**

Pastor Deb Wilkins of First United Methodist Church of Hamlet offered the Prayer.

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

Mayor Bill Bayless announced Council Member McQueen had requested Item 7, Discussion of Remote Access to Council Meetings, be tabled until he could attend. Council Member Buie asked to amend the Agenda to include a discussion of Employee Christmas Bonuses and Tsunami Camera Access. The City Manager requested an addition to the Agenda to discuss an Excavator for Public Works. Mr. Buie offered a motion to adopt the Agenda with the Amendments. Council Member Martin provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the October 9, 2018 Regular Monthly Meeting and Closed Session Minutes were approved by motions of Council Members Buie and Martin. The motion carried 4-0.

**5. Comments from Attendees.** No one presented to address Council.

**Old Business**

**6. Discussion of Authorization to Approve Alcohol Use for Rotunda Rentals**

The City Manager presented an update to the Rotunda Rental Agreement Policy adopted by Council a year ago to align the Rental Ordinance with the City's Charter. At the October 2018 Council Meeting, Council discussed transitioning the authority of alcohol and wine usage to the City Manager rather than Council due to the 45-day timeframe required. The Mayor inquired if only non-fortified wine and malt beverages could be served and the Manager confirmed. Council Member Buie stated it is in the best interest of Council to allow the Manager to make the decision. Council Member Lindsey inquired if there was a fall back if the Manager was not available. City Attorney TC Morphis responded in the absence of the Manager the decision would be made by whoever is delegated to handle the Manager's duties in his absence. The Manager stated there is a 10-day requirement for submission and he did not feel that would be an issue. Mr. Lindsey was not in opposition of the policy but thought Council should designate the person to make the decision in the Manager's absence. Council Member Massagee suggested the City Clerk. Mr. Buie made the motion to approve the policy giving the City Manager authority of alcohol and wine usage at the Rotunda and the City Clerk as the person to make the decision in the Manager's absence. Council Member Martin provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**7. Discussion of Policy Setting Guidelines for Council Members' Meeting Attendance**

This item was tabled by Council.

**New Business**

**8. Ordinance to Demolish 405 Cheraw Rd.**

Mayor Bayless provided the location of the property and asked Gail Strickland for comments. She advised the property burned more than a year ago and the property owner has made no effort to remove the hazard. The demolition will greatly improve the area and assist with the sale of several houses in the neighborhood. The Mayor reported at this time money is not available in the budget to cover the demolition. Mrs. Strickland confirmed and stated once bids are obtained, Staff will submit a Budget Amendment for Council's consideration. Council Member Buie motioned to adopt the Ordinance. Council Member Martin provided the second. Mr. Lindsey stated there are several burned houses that need to be removed and asked Staff to prepare a list for the Budget Meeting. Council voted 4-0 to adopt the Ordinance to Demolish.

**8A. Discussion of Employee Bonuses**

Council Member Buie stated Council has not done anything pay wise for employees. He met with Finance Officer Jill Dickens and determined a \$250.00 bonus for full time employees and \$100.00 bonus for part-time employees would cost approximately \$24,000.00. Mr. Buie said this would demonstrate appreciation to employees since the City was unable to give raises this year. He made a motion to give a \$250.00 bonus for full time employees and \$100.00 bonus for part-time employees. Council Member Lindsey inquired on the date for the Budget Meeting. The Mayor stated in January. Mr. Lindsey stated he did not know the City's financial status. He also said Council is also considering the purchase of a piece of machinery for Public Works and there are more houses that need to be demolished. Council Member Martin asked the City Manager if the City could afford the bonuses. Mr. Blanton replied the only way to gauge is to review the past 2 years practices where bonuses were given and in a \$8.4 million budget, \$25,000.00 would not put the City over the tipping point. He also stated the preliminary audit figures show the City finances better than anticipated. Mr. Martin provided the second to the motion. The vote was 3-1 with Mr. Lindsey voting in opposition. Mr. Blanton inquired when Council wanted the employees to receive the bonus and it was determined anytime was fine.

**8B. Discussion of Tsunami Cameras**

Council Member Buie advised the City Manager's report several weeks ago included a request of footage from the Tsunami Cameras. He contacted the City Manager to get more information. Mr. Buie has safety concerns in sharing the information. He also stated when the cameras were first purchased Council had access to see how the cameras would work. He feels the footage should not be shared and passwords should be changed so Council and the Manager do not have access. Council Member Lindsey stated he made the request to make a quick 30 second clip on the Seaboard Festival. Mayor Bayless asked Mr. Morphis if the Tsunami Cameras would fall in the same category as Body Cams. Mr. Morphis replied he would need to research the General Statutes on the matter. The City Manager provided the Attorney with the Statute. Council Member Martin stated the cameras were for police use and should not be available. Mr. Buie said Council's access was for evaluation purposes only and they should no longer have access. He inquired on the gigabytes allowed each month and stated if the City goes over the limit, they have to pay extra. Mr. Lindsey informed Council he would drop his request. Council Member Buie expressed a need to change the passwords. No motion was taken and Mr. Morphis will check on the Statute. Mayor Bayless stated they could add camera access authorization to the camera policy. Council Member Lindsey said the passwords should be changed frequently.

**8C. Discussion of Excavator for Public Works**

The Mayor advised Public Works has obtained the price for a small excavator. Public Works Director Billy Stubbs reported the excavator is needed for sewer right of ways. He said the City is currently using a 25-year-old Bob Cat in East Rockingham but they cannot get in the areas to put the water lines in behind the houses. The added water lines would increase pressure for the water customers. Mr. Stubbs said the City recently paid a contractor \$13,000.00 for sewer repairs because they did not have the equipment to make the repairs. Mayor Bayless said the houses in E. Rockingham were built back to back and the water lines run between the backs of the houses. Mr. Stubbs also mentioned one line is in a creek and has broken 3 times the last 6 months. He also noted using the current equipment during the rainy season increases the chance of losing it. Council Member Buie noted the machine is a 360 degree turn and will lessen the chance of damage to property. Mr. Buie asked for the price. Mr. Stubbs replied \$41,400.00. He advised it is on the State Contract and the normal price is \$52,000.00. Council Member Martin made the motion to purchase the excavator and Council Member Buie gave the second. The vote was 3-1 with Council Member Lindsey voting against.

**9. Mayoral Proclamation National Hospice Palliative Care Month**

Mayor Bayless read the Proclamation announcing November as National Hospice and Palliative Care Month and announced the attendance of Ms. Julie Woody with Hospice.

**10. Approval of Tax Releases**

Council Members Buie and Lindsey motioned to approve the Tax Releases presented. The vote was 4-0.

**Other Business**

**11. City Manager's Report**

Mr. Blanton reported basketball registration is underway and provided the dates and costs for regular and late registration. He also announced the garbage schedule for the week of

Thanksgiving; Thursday's garbage will be collected on Wednesday. Also announced was the City's Tree Lighting on Monday, November 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm. and the Christmas Parade on December 6<sup>th</sup> with City Hall closing at 3 pm. City Hall will also close on December 7<sup>th</sup> from 11:45 am – 2 pm for the Employee Christmas Luncheon. Christmas Festivities on Main Street will be held December 8<sup>th</sup> and Festivities on Hamlet Avenue will be December 14<sup>th</sup>. Council Member Lindsey inquired on the change in dates and the Mayor responded it was a failure to communicate.

## **12. Comments of Council**

Council Member Lindsey stated he voted against several items because he felt they needed to carry to the mid- year financial budget meeting. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Mr. Lindsey questioned the lot in South Hamlet that is not owned by the City where a fence was installed. The City Manager reported a gate was installed in the event there is a problem in the future. The owners are deceased; there are numerous heirs and the will has not been probated. Attorney Morphis added that for the City to purchase they would need all heirs to agree. Mr. Blanton advised the City tried to purchase several years ago but the owner was not interested in selling. Since that time the owner has died.

Council Member Martin wished all a Happy Thanksgiving.

Council Member Massagee inquired if the City has a process for groups asking for money that Council addresses at budget time. The Manager asked if she was referring to Place of Grace and Mrs. Massagee stated she was talking about the donations made during the past 2 months from requests heard during Comments from Attendees. She said if the City has a process, the process should have been followed. Council Member Lindsey added the Seaboard Festival Banner was a good thing but it should have said "Welcome to Hamlet" and could have been used for other events. Council Member Buie did not agree. The Mayor added the donations were for civic organizations. Mrs. Massagee replied she was asking for clarification.

Mrs. Massagee asked the City Manager for the number of grants he has applied for this year. Mr. Blanton responded he could get the number but advised the availability of grants is few for municipalities. He does regularly research grants and reaches out to contacts to gauge the City's chance of receiving the funds. Council Member Massagee replied she has been following grants from the North Carolina League of Municipalities and the cities they have given to. The Manager explained fund balances and median household incomes are taken into consideration when grants are awarded.

In response to the donation requests, the Manager said he receives numerous requests for City donations and his response is the request must go through the process in place by Council for any deviation. Mrs. Massagee stated if Council has the process, they should follow it.

Mayor Bayless advised Council that questions to the City Manager should be asked during the Manager's Comment Section of the Meeting.

## **13. Mayor's Comments**

Mayor Bayless asked the citizens to remember the veterans and also reported the Seaboard Festival was a good event with very little problems. He congratulated the Manager on his recent marriage.

Council Member Buie gave his comments after the Mayor. He thanked Mrs. Woody for attending and expressed his appreciation to Hospice. He also thanked Chuck Cobb and Diane Mabe for the great job with the Seaboard Festival. He said he is looking forward to the Christmas Parade and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

**14. Motion to Adjourn**

At 7:46 pm, Council Members Buie and Lindsey provided the motion and second to adjourn. The vote was 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail M. Strickland  
City Clerk