

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2019  
5:30 PM  
MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Council Member	Johnathan Buie (via phone)
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Wendy Massagee
Council Member	Jesse McQueen
Council Member	Maurice L. Stuart, II

**Staff Present:**

City Manager	Jonathan Blanton
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
Public Works Director	Billy Stubbs
Human Resource Dir.	Edna Miles
Public Buildings	Doc Sylvain

**Others Present:** Angeline David, Jasmine Hager & Pastor Eddie McLean

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm. The Mayor requested the Fireworks Discussion and Water Rates Discussion listed on the Agenda be moved to the Regular Meeting. Council Member McQueen motioned to approve the Agenda with the changes and Council Member Martin provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

**2. Overview by the City Manager of Draft 1 of the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year Budget**

City Manager Jonathan Blanton reviewed the \$8.6 million draft budget for Council's consideration. The General Fund Budget is \$5,540,276.00 and Enterprise Fund \$2,823,000.00. He advised an Economist at the Lumber River Council of Governments has predicted the economy will continue to grow this year.

**Review of Departments**

**Governing Bodies**

The increase noted for Governing Bodies is to cover the Municipal Election.

**Administration**

The Administration Department has a decrease due to the restructuring of employees. The Mayor inquired on insurance rates and the Manager responded the quote is a 3% increase but he is comfortable that it will be lower. Council Member Stuart asked what positions are part time and the Manager answered the IT position and receptionist in Administration.

**Depot Museum Complex**

The Budget for the Museum Complex was increased mainly for utilities.

**Finance**

Mr. Blanton reported the Finance Department had no major changes; the salaries and benefits reductions are due to restructuring of employees and salaries taken from General Fund and moved to the Enterprise Fund. Finance Officer Jill Dickens' salary was moved.

**Public Buildings**

The City Manager reported the part-time salary in Public Buildings is for the part-time custodian. It was also verified that City Hall, the Police Department and the Library are in the Public Buildings Budget; other Buildings have separate budgets.

**Police Department**

Mr. Blanton has met with Chief McMasters. The Chief has ideas he would like to implement but they will assess them before requesting funding in the Budget. They have included a Capital Outlay for 2 new vehicles at a cost of \$75,000.00 in the budget. The type of vehicle has not been determined. The Manager informed Council that Chief McMasters has advised the Canine Unit is of no value to the City and the program has been discontinued. The line item for canine supplies will revert to zero. Council Members McQueen, Massagee and Buie asked for clarification that the City had a dog that was not trained and should not have been trained. Mr. Blanton verified the Chief's investigation of the canine revealed the dog should not have been used due to its chronic health issues, lack of responses to commands and its temperament. Staff plans to ask Council to surplus the dog at the May meeting. Council Member Martin asked how much it cost the City. A reply of \$1600.00 to purchase the dog was given by the Manager. Concerns of having a dog that was not trained was expressed by Mr. McQueen.

Mayor Bayless inquired on the increase of maintenance and repairs of vehicles to which Mr. Blanton responded the vehicles are costly to maintain. Finance Officer Jill Dickens added the City will now have an \$11,000.00 upkeep each year for the computers they received from the County. The Mayor suggested putting the annual computer upkeep in a separate line item. The City Manager explained in March the maintenance and repair of equipment was already over budget \$2000.00 so they were projecting \$20,000.00 before the computers.

The Mayor asked if all 4 of the Tsunami Cameras were in place and Mr. Blanton verified, stating the \$24,000.00 is a 3-year lease for 4 cameras.

**Fire Department**

The Fire Department has one Capital Outlay Item for 4 additional air packs at a cost of \$28,000.00. Council Member McQueen asked if the Rescue Squad had received their money that was mistakenly deposited in the City's account and the Manager replied it had been taken care of.

**Streets & Highways**

Mayor Bayless inquired if the new signs were in the Budget. Mr. Blanton confirmed. Council Member McQueen asked if the signs were single or double sided suggesting the one placed near Convenience Corner would be best double sided. The Manager said they have 6-8 months to work on the project and he will check on, but money has to be allocated now as Capital Outlay. The other Capital Outlay item for Streets &

Highways is a limb trailer at a cost of \$16,250.00. The budget for Christmas Decorations was increased from \$2500.00 to \$2750.00.

**Sanitation**

The Sanitation Department has requested a new garbage truck at a cost of \$155,00.00. Public Works Director Billy Stubbs advised he thinks the quote will come in lower. Also noted was garbage can replacements was increased to purchase 250 cans at a cost of \$17,000.00. The previous years' budget should have listed \$9000.00 for garbage cans.

**Senior Center**

The repaving of the Senior Center parking lot at a cost of \$25,000.00 is in the upcoming budget as Capital Outlay. Mayor Bayless inquired on the increase in Maintenance & Repair of Buildings and Grounds from \$2000.00 to \$9000.00. Doc Sylvain, Building Maintenance Supervisor, explained they have included funding for a new HVAC unit. The Mayor asked about the increase in supplies and Ms. Dickens advised the figure includes a kiosk for the Senior Center. Mr. Blanton further explained it was discussed last year. The kiosk will take care of reports and will populate, a requirement for the Center of Excellence.

**Recreation**

The Recreation Department has one Capital Outlay item, a truck for the Director at a cost of \$20,000.00. The Manager provided an update on South Hamlet Park. The new picnic tables are in and the project should be completed before summer.

**Horticulture**

Horticulture has no major changes.

**Civic Contributions**

The City Manager reported the City has received requests from 2 new agencies, the Hamlet Soup Kitchen and Backpack Pals. After discussing the various organizations, Council decided to make contributions to the 5 existing organizations and 2 new organizations and then review next year. Mr. Buie suggested rotating the organizations that receive donations. It was also decided to include the \$100.00 donation to the Martin Luther King Day Celebration. The total allotted for the 2019-20 Budget is \$8100.00.

**Powell Bill Fund**

Mr. Blanton stated the Powell Bill money comes from the State for road paving and patching, but the City never has enough money to tackle the problems. It has gradually been going down. Council Member McQueen noted a \$5,000.00 decrease in the Powell Bill Allocation. Ms. Dickens advised the funds have decreased over the years.

**Enterprise Funds**

The City Manager advised the Enterprise Revenues have increased with the changes in the water rates last year. He called attention to the decrease in Water Fund Expenditures noting the Sewer Plant Bond Payment decreased significantly and will be paid in 2020.

**Water Administration**

Mayor Bayless questioned the increase in salaries and Mr. Blanton explained the Finance Officer's Salary was moved from General Fund to Enterprise. Ms. Dickens added the part-time position that became full time is also included in the figure.

**Water Treatment**

The Mayor noted lab services have increased. The City Manager advised the current year cost is already at \$9,000.00. He also reported the Chlorine Scale at a cost of \$11,000.00 is the Capital Outlay item.

**Water Distribution**

The Budget includes two Capital Outlay Items, a truck for a meter reader at a cost of \$23,000.00 and an Automatic Chlorine Machine for \$6200.00.

**Wastewater Treatment Plant**

The Manager advised the Flow Testers are listed as Capital Outlay for \$12,000.00 and a Land Application Truck for \$130,000.00. An increase in chemicals was also included in the Budget. Mayor Bayless asked if the Sewer Study has been received. Mr. Blanton advised he spoke with the Wooten Company today but has not received it.

**Waste Collection System**

Mr. Blanton stated the Sewer Cameras have been included as a Capital Outlay Item for \$9500.00. Mr. Bayless suggested increasing the Line Item for Raising Manholes with the increase in I&I the City has experienced lately.

**Fund Balance Discussion**

Council Member McQueen asked for the Fund Balance Appropriation. The City Manager gave a rough estimate of \$767,00.00 for the General Fund but stated the City will not come close to using that amount. He knows the insurance will decrease and there will be other changes before the final draft. Mr. McQueen agreed that over the years the City has not used the amount of the Fund Balance budgeted. Council Member Stuart asked if the cameras for the Waste Collection Department would help prevent issues such as the Charlotte St. sewer line collapse. Mr. Stubbs confirmed saying the cameras would allow them to see in the lines and take preventative measures that would save the City money.

**Employee Raises**

Council Member Martin inquired on an increase in pay for City employees. The City Manager explained the Budget includes a 3% increase for employees. No raise was given last year.

**Concluding Remarks**

Mr. Blanton stated with the current economy he thinks now is the time to make some of the purchases. He also reported the Budget will have small tweeks that he will advise Council of, but he does not anticipate needing another Budget Meeting unless Council desires one. No meeting was scheduled.

Council Member McQueen thanked Staff and Council for the Budget preparation and stated the City is spending money on items that have been put off for several years.

Council Member Stuart commended Staff for their work on the Budget.

**Adjournment**

AT 6:25 pm, Council Members McQueen and Stuart provided the motion and second to adjourn. The vote was 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail M. Strickland  
City Clerk

