

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2020  
7:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Due to Governor Cooper's Order in regards to the Coronavirus, the meeting attendance was limited.  
Additional seating was provided in the foyer.**

**Governing Body Present:**

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Mayor Pro Tem	Jesse McQueen
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Maurice Stuart
Council Member	Abbie Covington

**Staff Present:**

City Manager	Matthew Christian
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
Attorney	Brady Herman
Finance Director	Jill Dickens
IT	Zach Garner
Public Works	Billy Stubbs

**Others Present:** Gavin Stone, Will Toler, Jerry Gattis, Brad Harris, James Vance, Alan Yost, Johnathan Buie, Kimberly Lindsey and Alan Cagle

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**2. Invocation**

A Moment of Silence was observed.

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

Council Member Covington motioned to adopt the Agenda with the addition of Item 22 A, Closed Session per NC General Statute §143-318.11 (a)(3) for Attorney – Client privilege. Council Member McQueen provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the August 11, 2020 Regular and Closed Session Meetings were approved by motions of Council Members Covington and Stuart. The vote was 4-0.

**5. Comments from Attendees**

No one presented to address Council.

**New Business**

**6. Public Hearing #1 – Rezoning Parcel on Vance St.**

The Mayor reported David and Kim Lindsey filed a rezoning petition for their parcel on Vance St. One portion of the parcel is currently zoned B-2 (General Business) and the remaining portion O-I (Office Institutional). The request is to rezone the O-I portion to B-2. The Planning Board met on August 17, 2020 and offers a favorable recommendation for the rezoning. Mayor Bayless opened the Public Hearing. Mrs. Lindsey came forward to answer any questions. None were received. The Public Hearing was closed.

**7. Consistency Statement & Decision of Rezoning Parcel on Vance St.**

Council Member Martin motioned the rezoning was consistent with the City's Zoning Ordinance. Council Member Stuart provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

Council Member Covington motioned to rezone the property. Council Member McQueen provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**8. Public Hearing #2 – Rezoning 707 Spring St.**

Mayor Bayless stated Jerry and Gwen Gattis with Air Specialties, Inc. have filed a rezoning petition for 707 Spring St. The request is to rezone the parcel from Residential 6 (R-6) to General Business (B-2). The abutting property was rezoned to B-2 August 2019. The Planning Board met on August 17, 2020 and offers a favorable recommendation for the rezoning. The Mayor opened the Public Hearing. No comments were made. The Public Hearing was closed.

**9. Consistency Statement & Decision of Rezoning 707 Spring St.**

Council Member Covington motioned the rezoning was consistent with the City's Zoning Ordinance. Council Member McQueen provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

Council Member McQueen motioned to rezone the property. Council Member Covington provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**10. Public Hearing #3 – Rezoning on Hwy 177 South.**

The Mayor advised Pioneer 5, LLC has filed a rezoning petition for a 7.24-acre tract located on Hwy 177 South. The parcel is in the City's Extra-territorial Zoning Jurisdiction. The request is to rezone the parcel from Neighborhood Business (B-3) to Residential – 8 (R-8). The surrounding property is where the Dollar General was recently built. The Planning Board met on August 17, 2020 and offers a favorable recommendation for the rezoning. Mayor Bayless opened the Public Hearing. No comments were received. The Public Hearing was closed.

**11. Consistency Statement & Decision of Rezoning 707 Spring St.**

Council Member Covington motioned the rezoning was consistent with the City's Zoning Ordinance. Council Member Martin provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

Council Member McQueen motioned to rezone the property. Council Member Covington inquired if the rezoning would restrict business development and Mayor Bayless confirmed. Council Member Stuart provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**12. Approval of LKC Engineering, PLLC Letter Agreement**

Mayor Bayless advised Council awarded the RFQ to LLC Engineering last month for services at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Council has a Letter Agreement to consider and vote on. Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Agreement. Council Member Martin offered the second. The vote was 4-0.

**13. Presentation by Air Production & Services, Inc.**

Mr. Johnathan Buie and Mr. Brad Harris with Air Production & Services and Mr. James Vance and Mr. Alan Yost with Olympus made a presentation of devices used to fight the Coronavirus. The companies had on display a free-standing touchless temperature checker, a UV locker used to sanitize products and a larger floor unit used to sanitize rooms.

**14. Appointments to Planning & Zoning Board**

Mayor Bayless advised Mrs. Debora Steagall's term on the Planning Board expires in October. She has requested re-appointment to serve another term. Mr. Gerard Morrison was appointed in July to fill a vacancy on the Board that expires in September. Staff is requesting that Council re-appoint both Mrs. Steagall and Mr. Morrison to 3-year terms. Council Member McQueen motioned to re-appoint both. The second was offered by Council Member Martin. The vote was 4-0.

**15. Appointment to Hamlet ABC Board**

The Mayor stated Ms. Dorothy Bynum's term with the ABC Board expires in October. She has indicated to the ABC Board that she would like to be re-appointed. Staff has also received an application from Mrs. Wendy Massagee. Chairman Jerry Thomas was advised of Mrs. Massagee's application. The ABC Board has recommended the re-appointment of Ms. Bynum. Council Member McQueen motioned to appoint Ms. Bynum to the ABC Board. Council Member Martin offered the second. The vote was 4-0.

**16. Approval of Tax Releases**

Council Member Stuart motioned to approve the Tax Releases. Council Member Martin offered the second. The vote was 4-0.

**17. Citizen Participation Plan for Community Development Block Grant**

City Manager Matt Christian discussed the Citizen Participation Plan is required for the Community Development Block Grant process. It outlines the structure for the City to receive citizen feedback and requirements for the City to respond to concerns. Following Council's consideration and a subsequent public hearing, he will apply for the Coronavirus Funds to be used to assist citizens behind on house payments and utilities. The Grant opened September 1<sup>st</sup> and is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Council Member Covington inquired on the amount of funds the City received from Richmond County. The Manager explained this is a separate fund. In regards to Mrs. Covington's inquiry on the Cares Relief Funds, the City will receive an allotment of \$158,345.00. Council Member Covington asked if the total received by the County's was \$1.8 million and Mr. Christian confirmed and reported the City's request to the County was \$940,000.00. Mrs. Covington motioned to approve the Citizen Participation Plan and Council Member Martin gave the second. The vote was 4-0.

**18. Public Hearing #4 - Community Development Block Grant Application**

City Manager Matt Christian advised, as part of the CDBG Application process, the City is required to have an initial public hearing for citizen comments. The Public Hearing was advertised in the newspaper last week. There will be a second public hearing requirement upon completion of the application so citizens can review the application and ask questions. Mayor Bayless opened the floor to the Public Hearing and asked for comments. None were given. The Public Hearing was closed.

**19. Mayoral Proclamation – Constitution Week**

Mayor Bayless read the Proclamation announcing the week of September 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> as Constitution Week.

**Other Business**

**20. City Manager's Report**

The City Manager first reported items of old business. At the August 2020 Council Meeting, the Board approved the EMS contract. The intent was to keep the existing agreement and only modify the timing & schedule of payments. The draft included in the packet omitted a July 2018 addendum where Council agreed to pay 50% of the ambulance fuel cost. The contract was corrected prior to executing the document. No further action is required, but he wanted to make Council aware of the matter. Also discussed was the City's request of \$940,000.00 from Richmond County for COVID Relief Funds. The County has allocated \$158,345.00 of the \$1.8 million to Hamlet. Council Member Martin asked if the County explained how they arrived at the money to be distributed to the cities. The City Manager answered it was his understanding that each community that applied will receive \$25,000.00 and the remaining portion of the 25% for municipalities will be allocated on ad valorem tax basis. Council Member Covington added the County's actions are a complete disregard to the towns. The City of Hamlet has a huge responsibility to citizens in our corporate limits and has one of the largest response areas for Fire and Rescue. Mrs. Covington stated she did not see the logic from the Legislators allowing the County to disperse funds desperately needed by the cities. Council Member Stuart asked what the County was doing with the remaining funds. The Manager responded they have a plan in place, but he does not know the specifics; all monies must be spent by December 31, 2020. Council Member McQueen inquired if each County could decide how to distribute the monies to the cities and the Manager confirmed. Mr. McQueen stated Hamlet's paramedics are back-ups to First Health and may be in any area of the County.

For new business, the City Manager encouraged everyone to respond to the US Census, explaining the information is used for the City's eligibility for grants and federal funding. In response to Governor's Cooper change to Phase 2.5 for re-opening, the City's buildings remain closed, but Staff continues to seek ways to address the public efficiently. Also announced was the Seaboard Festival has been cancelled, but they are moving forward with a virtual 5k race.

Mr. Christian reported, in an effort to support local businesses, the City is hosting a Food Truck Event at the Visitors Center on September 18<sup>th</sup> for lunch and supper. Mr. Kendale Robinson, who recently purchased 111 Raleigh St., will participate in the event along with another food truck.

The Manager expressed his condolences to the Melanie Wade Goodwin family saying although he did not know her personally, he knows she made a huge impact on Hamlet and Richmond County.

**21. Comments of Council**

Council Member Covington mentioned the food trucks encourage people to come downtown but not to gather. She also reported she has received positive comments regarding the Police Department from citizens that had ongoing problems. She was told the Chief and officers took personal interest in solving the issues. Mrs. Covington encouraged everyone to read the article on the Police Department's initiative to curb youth crime by working with children at a young age. She ended her comments by saying the City employees are doing a phenomenal job. Mayor Bayless asked citizens to call the Police Department when they see something suspicious.

Council Member Stuart thanked the employees, especially those at the Water Department for being professional. He commended the Police Department on their Pledge for Success and offered prayers to the Goodwin family. To the citizens, he encouraged them to respond to the Census, register to vote, wear a mask and stay home, if possible.

Council Member Martin expressed his appreciation to the City employees.

Council Member McQueen offered condolences to Wayne Goodwin and his children. He asked the City Manager to contact the State to see if their right of ways could be cut, especially the medians between Hamlet and Rockingham. He recalled the anniversary of the Imperial Foods Fire and offered prayers to all involved and mentioned that September 11<sup>th</sup> is upcoming. He added it would be great to go back to a time when the police, nationwide, were respected. He asked the citizens to pray for our communities and our police; the police keep us from falling into chaos.

**22. Mayor's Comments**

Mayor Bayless also commented we should pray for the police and expressed his condolences to the Goodwin family. He encouraged all to complete the Census and have everyone counted; if not, the City loses money. At the present time, only 50% of Hamlet residents have responded. He informed everyone that if they do not respond, a Census Taker will come to your house, but they will have identification. The Mayor said to remember the food truck events and expressed appreciation to the employees.

**22A. Motion to go into Closed Session per NC General Statute §143-318.11 (3) Attorney – Client privilege.**

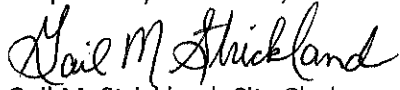
Mayor Bayless asked for a motion to go into Closed Session. At 7:47 pm, Council Member McQueen provided the motion and stated the Statute. Council Member Stuart provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

At 7:52 pm, Council Members McQueen and Stuart made the motion and second to return to Open Session. The vote was 4-0.

**23. Motion to**

At 7:53 pm, Council Members McQueen and Stuart provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk

