

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM**

**201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2019**

**7:00 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      |
| City Attorney         | TC Morphis           |
| Finance Officer       | Jill Dickens         |
| Human Resources Dir.  | Edna Miles           |
| IT                    | Zach Garner          |
| Public Works Director | Billy Stubbs         |
| Police Chief          | Tommy McMasters, Jr. |
| Police Patrolman      | Jatique' Barnes      |
| Police Detective      | Randy Dover          |
| Building Maintenance  | Doc Sylvain          |
| Fire Chief            | Calvin White         |
| Museum Manager        | Jennifer Seaman      |
| Fireman               | Chuck Heaton         |
| Fireman               | Daniel Asbill        |
| Fireman               | Gary Chavis          |
| Fireman               | Justin Pruitt        |

**Others Present:** James T. Brown, Angeline Kendall David, Pastor Eddie McLean, Rev. Charles Woody, Bobby Brown, Vicky Brown, Kay B. Tyson, Tommy McMasters, Sr., Veronica McMasters, Linda Bayless, Jimmie Spencer, Micheal Willman, Lewis Fulman, Jo Ann Martin, Johnnie Butterfield, Bernice Owens, Thomas Wooten, Jordyn Willman, Amy Guinn, Tim Nevinger, Kay Cavendish, Kelly Bryant, Robert Singletary, Jr. Chuck Cobb, Sandra Dickens, Sheriff James Clemmons, Jasmine Hager and others that did not sign in.

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Invocation**

Pastor David Amon of Fellowship United Methodist Church offered the prayer.

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

Council Member McQueen offered a motion to adopt the Agenda, adding Item 7A, Discussion of Water Rates. Council Member Buie provided the second. The vote was 5-0. Mayor Bayless announced Council Member Buie was out of town on business and participating via phone.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the March 8, 2019 Budget Work Session and Closed Session Minutes and March 12, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes were approved by motions of Council Members Buie and Martin. The motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

**5. Comments from Attendees.**

Mr. Micheal Willman who lives at 402 Locust St. spoke to Council stating he was served notice that he cannot park his tractor trailer at his residence. He quoted the City's Ordinance that allows tractor trailers to travel on City streets to and from a destination and stated his house was his destination. The City Manager replied the Ordinance is not specifically clear on the term destination and any changes would require amendments to the Ordinance based on the City Attorney's recommendation and Council's consideration. Council Member McQueen stated he did not recall any issues in the past with drivers parking their vehicles in their yards. Council Member Buie remarked that one owner had to put poles up to keep the oversized trucks from coming in their yard. Mr. Blanton advised the City has received numerous complaints recently. Mr. Willman stated he has lived on Locust St. for 8 years and the parking has never been an issue before. Mayor Bayless said the problem is the City Streets are not built to NCDOT standards. Mr. Buie added another issue is the number of trucks in one neighborhood.

Mr. Louis Forman addressed Council. He stated he drives a truck and parks it off the road at his residence, 402 Walnut. He believes the issue came from one person that moved in 5 months ago. Mr. Forman continued saying Ms. Jo Ann Martin has lived in the neighborhood since 2000 and Mr. Wellman has been a truck driver for 26 years. If Mr. Wellman is not allowed to park his truck at the Locust St. residence, Ms. Martin will have to get up at 2 am, along with her 10-year old step daughter, to take Mr. Wellman to the location where his truck is parked.

Council Member McQueen inquired if there is damage to the roads. He also stated a tractor trailer can create problems cranking at 2 am. Mr. Blanton answered Staff has been at the location several times with complaints of noise and trucks on the roads in the neighborhood. Mr. McQueen stated Council was not prepared to make an Ordinance change. He suggested Council allow the drivers to continue with their parking until the next meeting allowing Council and Staff time to investigate all the issues. Mayor Bayless added any changes would be for everyone. Council Member Martin agreed the City needed to make a fair assessment of the situation and have the City Attorney and Manager bring the matter back to Council.

Ms. Kelly Bryant at 305 Maple St. discussed the truck parking issue with Council. Her son drives for the Swift Company that requires him to have his truck under supervision at all times so he has to park it at their residence. Mr. Blanton advised the City will take her comments into consideration.

Ms. Jo Ann Martin suggested the noise may be coming from 4-wheelers and automobiles with loud mufflers rather than the trucks. The City Manager asked her to contact the Police Department with the issues and the Mayor said the Police Chief would look into it. Council Member Buie added other complaints are beautification issues. He said one property has 2 trucks parked in the front yard. He said Council needs to look at the matter closely; it is not just about noise and road damage.

Mr. Thomas Wooten who lives at 109 Airport St. in Dobbins Heights and Council Member Angeline David with the Town of Dobbins Heights addressed a water and sewer hook-up

complaint with Council. Mr. Wooten recently wanted to hook to the City of Hamlet sewer and found the City fees went from \$500.00 to \$1000.00. He said the City of Hamlet never advised the Town of Dobbins Heights of the increase. Mr. Wooten said the \$1000.00 is only to give a plumber permission to hook to the existing tap and then the home owner has to pay the plumber to hook to his house. He was told Dobbins Heights received grant funds that paid for the lines and the City would get the water and sewer money each month. The City Manager answered the new rates were effective July 1, 2018 and letters were sent out prior. Council Members asked for the specifics of the grant. When it could not be determined, Council Member Stuart suggested the grant information should be obtained. Ms. David stated they will research the grant and bring the information to the City. Mayor Bayless said the City Manager could make the decision, but Mr. Blanton replied he was not comfortable with waiving fees. He will research the information provided on the grant. Council Member McQueen explained if Mr. Wooten needed the services now, he would have to pay. If it was later determined the fee should be waived, it would be refunded.

#### **New Business**

6. **Oath of Office for Chief of Police**

City Clerk Gail Strickland administered the Oath to Chief of Police Tommy McMasters.

7. **Discussion of Fireworks**

Mayor Bayless requested Council make an official decision on the fireworks. Council Member Buie stated he originally was in favor of promoting the County's activities but now, after hearing from the citizens, he motioned to continue with the Fourth of July celebrations in Hamlet. Council Member Martin provided the second. Council Member Massagee asked if the previous discussion to stop Hamlet's fireworks was forever or just 1 year. Mr. Blanton explained, roughly 6 months ago, the County Manager asked the City to forego their fireworks but he did not understand it to be continual. Mr. Martin replied he had asked for their plans. He wants assurance the activities will proceed and if not, there should be a penalty. He continued by saying no one has spoken with the Race Track personnel. Ellerbe recanted on their decision and will have their normal activities. Most of the people he has spoken with in Hamlet want the Town to continue with the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks. Council Member McQueen suggested the City have theirs on July 5<sup>th</sup> to support the new owners of the Speedway. Mr. Martin was not in agreement. Council Member Stuart added that many citizens sit on their porches to watch. He is all for a County partnership but he is in favor of Hamlet keeping their fireworks in 2019. Mayor Bayless added it is a tradition that he enjoys. Mr. Buie stated, without plans, he cannot support the County's request. The motion to continue the Fourth of July Fireworks in Hamlet was approved by a vote of 3-2 with Council Members Massagee and McQueen opposing.

7A. **Discussion of Water Rates**

Mr. Blanton discussed water and sewer rates and expenses. He provided a chart that showed the operating expenses at the Water Treatment Plant were running in a deficit until the rates were increased. The City has solved the problem of the deficit for now. The operating expenses for July 2017 – March 2018 were \$1.8 million and revenues \$1.7 million. For the same months in 2018-19, the operating expenses remained the same and the revenues increased to \$2.2 million. Mr. Blanton indicated the expenses would increase for the next 4 months. He called attention to the sewer issue on Charlotte St., stating the cost of the repair may be as much as \$200,000.00. The Manager asked for comments or questions from Council regarding the numbers or changes in utility billing for next year. The Mayor added many of the lines are concrete and the funds need to be in place to cover the expenses when they collapse. Council Member McQueen asked where the City stood prior. Mr. Blanton responded the City had a \$200,000.00 deficit before

and he thought the City would break even or to the better for the year. Mayor Bayless added the major breaks require contractors to make the repairs due to the depth of the pipe. He thanked the citizens for their cooperation with the Charlotte Street and Hwy. 177 closure for the sewer repair. The City Manager asked for clarification if Council wanted to make any water or sewer rate changes for the next fiscal year. Mayor Bayless responded the City has less than 1 year of data and should stay at the same rates. Council gave consensus to keep the 2019-20 rates the same as 2018-19.

**8. Appointment to ABC Board**

The Mayor announced the ABC Board has submitted an application to fill a recent vacancy by Ms. Shannon Bowers. Council Member McQueen provided the motion to appoint Mr. Steve Mercer to fill the vacancy. The second was provided by Council Member Martin. The vote was 5-0.

**9. Depot Board Appointments**

The Hamlet Depot Board submitted 2 names for appointment to their Board. Council Members Buie and Martin provided the motion and second to appoint Steve & Jeanne Newton to the Depot Board. The vote was 5-0.

**10. Council Appointment – Alternate to Lumber River COG**

Mayor Bayless explained previous Council Member David Lindsey served as the Alternate City Representative to the Lumber River Council of Governments. With his recent resignation, the COG has requested the City fill the vacancy. Council Member McQueen nominated Council Member Stuart to fill the vacancy with Council Member Martin offering the second. The vote was 5-0. The Mayor announced he was recently elected Chair of the Transportation Coordination Committee with the COG.

**11. Proclamation – National Child Abuse Prevention Month**

Mayor Bayless read the Proclamation for National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

**12. Mayoral Proclamation in Remembrance of Mr. Ella Louise Sledge Morrison**

Prior to the Mayor reading the Proclamation honoring the life of Mrs. Ella Louise Sledge Morrison, Council Member Stuart provided remarks on the honoree. Council Member Buie suggested City Council recognize someone at each meeting for the services they provide to the community.

**13. Approval of Tax Releases**

Council Members Martin and Stuart provided the motion and second to approve the Tax Releases. The Vote was 5-0.

**Other Business**

**14. City Manager's Report**

The City Manager congratulated employees Edna Miles and Jill Dickens for receiving their MBAs from the University of Pembroke in December. He thanked them for what they do for the City of Hamlet. He also thanked the citizens for their understanding of the closing of Charlotte Street and Hwy 177 for sewer repairs. Mr. Blanton stated they hope to have the street open by Friday. He also announced Mr. Scott Altman with Griffin Associates donated a 2012 Leaf all-electric car to the City and thanked the company for their business in Hamlet.

**15. Comments of Council**

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Council Member Martin thanked Mr. Altman for the donation of the car and congratulated the Chief of Police saying Hamlet is fortunate to have him.

Council Member McQueen thanked Griffin for the donation and thanked the employees for their work on the budget. Mr. McQueen requested Council conduct an evaluation on the City Manager at the next meeting to discuss in Closed Session. He also congratulated Chief McMasters saying his qualifications exceed anything you would think you could get for a City our size.

Council Member Massagee expressed appreciation to Griffin Associates and congratulated the new Chief.

Council Member Stuart voiced his gratitude to Griffin Associates and Mr. Scott Altman for the electric car donation and thanked Chief McMasters for the things he has put in place as Chief.

Council Member Buie stated he is appreciative of Griffin's donation and happy with the Chief's plans and presentations he has seen. He also expressed his appreciation to Council and Staff for their work on the Budget.

Council Member Stuart inquired if there were any open positions on the City's Boards. Mr. Blanton replied the Depot Board may need more volunteers but the other Boards are full at this time. Mayor Bayless added the Senior Center Board would love to have senior citizens to serve on their Board. They meet every other month at 2 pm.

16. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Bayless also thanked Scott Altman and offered congratulations to Chief McMasters saying the Police and Fire Departments are the most visible departments in the City. He thanked the Utilities Department for the work on Hwy. 177 and Charlotte St. noting they are working hard to get the issue resolved. Appreciation was also given to the Beautification Committee for planting trees on Raleigh Street. Mr. Bayless added the Library Board does excellent work.

Council Member Buie reminded citizens to place leaves on the owner's side of the property to keep debris from clogging the drains and creating floods.

17. Motion to Adjourn

At 8:35 pm, Council Members Buie and McQueen provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gail M. Strickland  
City Clerk

