

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2022
7:00 PM
MINUTES**

Governing Body Present:

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

Staff Present:

City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Manager	Matthew Christian
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
IT	Zach Garner

Others Present: Thomas Luckey, Theron Harrington, Marquitta Harrington, Margaret Williams, Howard Wallace and Gavin Stone

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. Council Member Sellers provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

4. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the January 25, 2022 Special Meeting and Closed Session were approved by motions of Council Members Stuart and Covington. The vote was 5-0.

5. Comments from Attendees

No one presented to address Council.

New Business

6. Public Hearing – Harrington Rezoning: 2 acres on Gin Mill Road

Mayor Bayless opened the floor to the Public Hearing for the rezoning. Mr. Theron Harrington spoke with Council. He explained he currently has a carpet cleaning business and plans to open a welding shop at the location, if rezoned. With no further comments or questions, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

7. Consistency Statement & Decision of Rezoning Hamlet Mobile Home Park, LLC.

Council Member Covington motioned the rezoning was consistent with the Zoning Ordinance. Council Member Stuart provided the second. The vote was 5-0. Council Member McQueen provided the motion to rezone the parcel. Council Member Sellers offered the second. The vote was 5-0.

8. Consideration of Memo of Understanding - Amvets

The City Manager discussed the Memo, stating it establishes the basic terms for long term use of the property by the Amvets. He explained the agreement is not a lease; but establishes terms for the Amvets to determine if the building can be a permanent post for them. Mr. Christian advised all the articles have been reviewed by the Amvets Commander Ed O'Neal. Council Member Martin expressed concern of Article #3 that stated the City could terminate the lease for no reason. Attorney Morphis explained the Memo was written so the Amvets can start using the facility without a lease. If they determine they want to use it, a lease can be written. The Memo of Understanding allows them the time to explore if they want to invest in the building; if they want the burden of ownership. The Memo also addresses the liability issue for the City. He added, should the Amvets decide they want to purchase the building, he and the City Manager will research the best way to do so. The Manager asked the Attorney for clarification that Council, not the Manager, would have to make the decision to terminate the agreement. Mr. Morphis confirmed. After the discussion, Council Member Sellers motioned to approve the Memo of Understanding. Council Member Covington provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

9. Approval of Tax Releases

Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Tax Releases. The second was provided by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 5-0.

Other Business

10. City Manager's Report

City Manager Matthew Christian mentioned the recent rise in the number of Covid cases in the community and staff. He stated he appreciated citizens' patience as employees work to get caught up on the services. Mr. Christian reported the sewer line on Bridges St. is near completion and they hope to have the road open next week.

11. Comments of Council

Council Member Sellers thanked the attendees that came to the Meeting. He also thanked Council and the City employees for their hard work. He urged citizens of Hamlet to attend meetings with any of their concerns.

Council Member Stuart, in celebration of Black History Month, read an article. He offered his thanks to his constituents for allowing him to serve and thanked his colleagues for working with him. Mayor Bayless added he signed a Martin Luther King Proclamation last month.

Council Member Covington reported the City has experienced an unusual year already with the amount of snow and ice. She advised several departments have worked with skeleton crews due to sickness and quarantine, but she has received several positive comments from residents on the promptness of employees removing debris and assistance cutting limbs.

12. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Bayless advised Council needs to revisit the issue of picking up furniture and other items. Council Member Sellers agreed and added concern of large piles of limbs and leaves. The Mayor explained the leaves and limbs are carried to the City's landfill at no cost to the City. Each load of furniture and other large items costs the City an estimated \$200.00 per load. The City Manager stated he had a conversation with Public Works Director Billy Stubbs of the City's need to have a policy in place to provide a safe, efficient service. Council Member McQueen, noting most of the issues come from landlords, inquired of the City Attorney if the City has rules in place, can it attach civil fines and not allow water services until the fines are paid. Mr. Morphis replied he will investigate and get back with Staff and Council. Mr. McQueen asked the Attorney to check on fines for a person that brings materials into the City and dumps them. Council Member Covington inquired of the procedure when an issue is seen actively taking place. Mr. Christian explained when the City is notified of a situation, the Public Works Director will hand deliver a letter to the person, notifying them what they are doing is outside of the City's scope of services and provide them with the services the City does offer.

The Mayor thanked the City employees for working through the challenges of Covid, noting the streets are being well maintained.

13. Motion to go into Closed Session per NC General Statute §143-318-11(a)(3) (6) Attorney-Client Privilege and Personnel.

Mayor Bayless asked for a motion to go into Closed Session per NC General Statute §143-318.11 (a)(3) (6) Attorney – Client Privilege and Personnel. At 7:32 pm, Council Member Sellers offered the motion. Council Member Covington provided the second. The vote was 5-0.

Return to Open Session

At 8:25 pm. Council Members Covington and Sellers motioned to return to Open Session. The vote was 5-0.

14. Motion to Adjourn

At 8:25 pm, Council Members Stuart and Covington provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk

