

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022  
6:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Abbie Covington
Council Member	Maurice Stuart
Council Member	Oscar Sellers

**Staff Present:**

City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Manager	Matthew Christian
City Clerk	Gail Strickland

**Others Present:** Stephanie VanHassel, Cheryl Andrews, Jarrett Branham, Jerry Andrews, Ray Mills, Jonathan Davis, Amy Graham, Lisa Moorehead, Nate Peterkin, Kijeong Kim, Howard Wallace, Tim Murchison, Margaret Williams, Jo Wallace, Amy Guinn, and Charlie Melvin

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**2. Invocation**

Pastor Steve Crews of Hamlet Church of God of Prophecy offered the invocation.

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

Council Member Sellers motioned to adopt the Agenda. Council Member Covington provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the August 30, 2022 Work Session were approved by motions of Council Members Sellers and Stuart. The vote was 4-0.

**5. Comments from Attendees**

James Baldwin discussed concerns of the neighborhoods of Washington Court Apartments and South Hamlet Park. The City Manager advised he and the Police Chief have met to discuss the issues and are considering all options. He offered to meet with Mr. Baldwin to discuss further. Mayor Bayless asked for the citizens' assistance to watch for problems and notify the police. Council Member Covington reported the South Hamlet Park has been rebuilt 2 times. She previously asked for a meeting with the residents to discuss possible solutions, but no one was interested. She asked Mr. Baldwin to assist with meetings with the residents. Council Member Stuart stated it is everyone's problem. He will meet with the Parks and Recreation Director to see what can be done, but the assistance of the community is needed. Council Member Martin suggested installing cameras in the park areas. Council Member Sellers recommended developing programs to get the youth off the streets.

**New Business**

**6. Quasi-Judicial Hearing – Hamlet Health Holdings Special Use**

Mayor Bayless reported Branham Group, Inc. has submitted a Special Use Application on behalf of Hamlet Health Holdings to construct a solar array on 0.45 acres of their 5-acre tract located at 632 Freeman Mill Rd. The business operates as Hamlet House, an assisted living facility. The Mayor opened the Public Hearing. Jarrett Branham was sworn in and provided information. He advised the solar array will be co-located with Hamlet House, on the back of the property and will not be visible. The required vegetative buffer and setbacks will be in place. Council Member Covington asked if the use would be for private consumption for Hamlet House. Mr. Branham confirmed. With no further comments or questions, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Council considered and voted on the required FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The application is complete; and if the development is completed as proposed in the application, it will comply with all applicable conditions, standards and regulations set forth in the Ordinance. Council Member Covington motioned to approve. The second was offered by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 4-0.
2. The use will not materially endanger the public health or safety if located where proposed and developed according to the plans submitted. Council Member Stuart motioned to approve. The second was offered by Council Member Covington. The vote was 4-0.
3. The use will not substantially injure the value of adjacent or abutting properties. Council Member Stuart motioned to approve. The second was offered by Council Member Covington. The vote was 4-0.
4. The location and character of the use, if developed according to the plans as submitted and approved, will be in harmony with the area in which it is to be located and in the general conformity with the plan of development for the City of Hamlet and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. Council Member Covington motioned to approve. The second was offered by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 4-0.

Mayor Bayless inquired on the proposed setbacks. Mr. Branham provided setbacks of approximately 30 ft. on 1 side, 90 ft. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> side and 110 ft. in the rear.

Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Special Use Application. The second was provided by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 4-0.

**7. Public Hearing – Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) Hearing for Sandhills Regional Hospital for Geriatric Psychiatry**

Mayor Bayless called Mr. Nate Peterkin, President of Sandhills Regional Hospital for Geriatric Psychiatry to the podium. Mr. Peterkin thanked Council for their assistance with the Public Hearing. He introduced Lisa Morehead, an in-house attorney for the Hospital of Geriatric Psychiatry, to provide information on the Hearing. Ms. Morehead provided her background information and advised the Hearing and Resolution are IRS requirements. Mayor Bayless stated the financing for Sandhills Regional Hospital for Geriatric Psychiatry will not incur any costs to the City of Hamlet. Ms. Morehead responded the City of Hamlet would not incur any financial or managerial responsibilities. Attorney Morphis added the IRS regulations require the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) Hearing. Council can approve or not approve the Resolution. There is no obligation to the City. Ms. Morehead stated approving the Resolution is a critical part of the process of moving forward for the hospital. Council Member Sellers

inquired if there was no financial obligation, did that include the police department. The City Attorney responded there are 2 issues: one is the impact of man hours to the police department. This was addressed with FirstHealth, and they will be providing a grant of \$500,000.00 to offset the future costs. This is not related to the bond issuance; it is for the operation of the hospital. Saying there is no obligation to the City, is saying the City is not responsible for the bonds. Mr. Sellers asked for the impact on the County. Council Member Covington explained the issuance of the bonds had no effect on Hamlet or the County. Council Member Martin added the hearing was a formality required by the IRS for the hospital. With no further comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

**8. Consideration of Resolution 2022-09 – Bond Obligations for Sandhills Regional Hospital for Geriatric Psychiatry**

The Mayor asked for a motion on the Resolution. Council Member Stuart motioned to approve the Resolution. The second was given by Council Member Martin. The vote was 4-0.

**9. Consideration of Contract for Planning Services – CodeWright Planners, LLC**

Mayor Bayless stated at the August Meeting, Council selected CodeWright Planners, LLC and WithersRavenel to assist the City with planning and developmental services. Council Member Covington motioned to approve the contract for CodeWright Planners. The second was provided by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 4-0.

**10. Consideration of Contract for Planning Services – WithersRavenel**

The Mayor announced the contract is for planning and developmental services with WithersRavenel. He inquired if their services would be as needed. The City Manager answered both WithersRavenel and CodeWright would be as needed; these are master service agreements. Council Member Covington motioned to approve the contract. The second was provided by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 4-0.

**11. Consideration of Resolution 2022-10 – Application for Grant Fund Hamlet City Lake Park Trail**

City Manager Matt Christian commented this Resolution and the ones following are requirements to apply for various grant funding. This Resolution is for various items at the Hamlet City Lake Trail which are elements of a Master Plan that was completed in 2019. The City is requesting some Federal Funding and State Funding to complete some of the elements, primarily the walking track that would complete the loop around the walking trail. Other minor elements are addressing the pier and some way to complete the loop. Mayor Bayless inquired if the work would be done by the City. Mr. Christian responded not necessarily. The Grant Application would procure funds to complete the project. It would be determined by a cost-based analysis prior to doing the work. Council Member Stuart motioned to approve the Resolution. The second was provided by Council Member Covington. The vote was 4-0.

**12. Consideration of Resolution for Water System Improvements**

City Manager Matt Christian explained the City is applying for a grant to improve water and wastewater infrastructure. Applications were submitted previously and points were deducted for some items. The application has been updated and will be resubmitted. Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Resolution. The second was provided by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 4-0.

**13. Consideration of Resolution for Stormwater System Study**

City Manager Matt Christian advised the study would be for existing stormwater infrastructure. We currently do not have any stormwater fees or revenues that cover stormwater; it is managed as part of our street networks which, as it ages, has become a problem with increased intensity of storms. This

grant would provide funds to study and assess the existing stormwater system and infrastructure and propose capital projects for future improvements to the system. Council Member Covington motioned to approve the Resolution. The second was provided by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 4-0.

**14. Consideration of Resolution for Water System Capital Improvement Project Update**

Council Member Sellers motioned to approve the Resolution. The second was provided by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 4-0. Council Member Covington inquired if LKC Engineering prepared the grant application. The Manager confirmed. Mrs. Covington asked if they prepared the application that was returned with several needed changes. Mr. Christian responded LKC did prepare the application on the City's behalf and the items that were not awarded points have been addressed, some in the Resolutions approved by Council at this meeting. Mayor Bayless inquired on the progress of the sewer plant. Mr. Christian advised design was at 80 - 90%. They hope to have completed design drawings soon.

**15. Approval of Tax Releases**

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

**16. Appointments to Hamlet ABC Board**

The Mayor provided 3 names for consideration: Jerry Thomas and Billy Wise are currently serving, and Wendy Massagee has submitted an application. Council Member Martin motioned to appoint Jerry Thomas and Billy Wise. Council Member Sellers motioned to appoint Wendy Massagee. The second to Council Member Martin's motion was given by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 3-1 with Council Member Sellers voting in opposition.

**17. Appointment to Hamlet Depot Museum Board**

Council Member Covington motioned to appoint Tyree Massagee. The second was given by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 4-0.

**18. Proclamation – Constitution Week**

Mayor Bayless read the Proclamation.

**Other Business**

**19. City Manager's Reports**

City Manager Matthew Christian provided information on current and upcoming events: football and cheerleading registration is on-going; Yoga by the Tracks will be September 22<sup>nd</sup>; Food Truck Friday will be September 23<sup>rd</sup> and also a Ribbon Cutting for a new Seaboard Festival Banner; and the Box Car Concert Series will be September 25<sup>th</sup> with the Jonathan Robinson Band. The Manager announced all vendor spots are taken for the Seaboard Festival that will be on October 29<sup>th</sup> and registration is now available for the Christmas Parade of Lights; the cost of a commercial float is \$475. Other entries can register as well. He reported the City Water Department will soon be taking on-line payments for water accounts and taxes.

**20. Comments of Council**

Council Member Martin expressed his concern of keeping Memorial Park in good shape with City recreational sports that will be played on the field. The American Legion hopes to get a state tournament next year and have other events that will require the field to be maintained properly.

Council Member Sellers thanked the attendees for their interest and invited others with concerns to call the Council Members.

Council Member Stuart reported the purpose of Council is to hear the concerns of the residents. He wants to meet with the residents of South Hamlet and those around the Washington Court Apartments. Mr. Stuart said the residents have to speak up to assist in the issues. He offered his appreciation for the work on the on-line utility payments and grant applications.

Council Member Covington announced the fair will be in October. She also expressed concern of the bad press the City has received on the recent shootings. She stated they were isolated incidents, and the police are working to resolve them. She added the problem is the people that see the activity won't talk, which hinders the police investigation. Mrs. Covington said the behavior of a few is not indicative of the behavior of the majority of others and the violence is created by people from out of town. The City Manager reported Chief Brown has warrants for suspects in the most recent shooting and has seized some vehicles. Council Member Covington encouraged the citizens to meet with Council Member Stuart and said Council will work with them anyway they can

**21. Mayor's Comments**

Mayor Bayless commended the police department. He said the Chief has the right people in the right places. He thanked the City employees for all they do and encouraged the residents to offer appreciation to them. The Mayor acknowledged the volunteers that serve on the City's committees. He announced the fair will be in mid-October, but the specific dates have not been determined. Mr. Bayless advised Council Member McQueen was out of town and could not attend the meeting.

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

At 6:53 pm, Mayor Bayless asked for a motion to go into Closed Session and stated the Statutes. Council Member Covington provided the motion. The second was given by Council Member Sellers. The vote was 4-0.

**Return to Open Session**

At 7:32 pm, Council Member Sellers provided the motion to Return to Open Session. The second was given by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 4-0.

Mayor Bayless reported no action was taken in Closed Session.

**23. Motion to Adjourn**

At 7:33 pm, Council Members Sellers and Covington provided the motion and second to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk

