

HAMLET CITY COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2017 - 3:00 PM

MINUTES

Governing Body Present:

Bill Bayless	Mayor
Johnathan Buie	Mayor Pro-Tem
Jesse McQueen	Council Member
Eddie Martin	Council Member
David Lindsey	Council Member
Wendy Massagee	Council Member

Staff Present:

Jonathan Blanton	City Manager
Tammy Kirkley	City Clerk
Jill Dickens	Finance Officer
Billy Stubbs	Public Works
Doc Sylvain	B&M

Others Present: Media

Call to Order

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order.

Discussion of the Draft 2017/18 FY Budget

The city manager provided an overview of the draft budget.

Medical insurance premiums are expected to increase by 3%, resulting in a \$174 per employee for the upcoming year with a total of \$17,463. Council discussed employees' raises. Mr. Lindsey questioned the why the raise was included in the draft budget. Mr. Buie pointed out no one said anything against it during the last meeting and Mr. McQueen explained it's been practice to include an increase in the draft budget to have something to work with. Mr. Buie reiterated no one gave the manager a reply when he asked about including a raise in the budget and said he felt it needed to be included as a draft.

Other Discussion Items

Mr. Lindsey requested to discuss several items as follows:

Beautification Efforts- the need to clean-up the entrance signs along the highways. He explained his reasoning for sprucing-up city areas to help with economic growth. He suggested to pick a couple of projects and work on it along the way. Mr. Lindsey also questioned what council's plans were with the newly discussed park, saying he simply wants to show progress. The civic signs were discussed. Mr. Buie said to go to the civic organizations and have them pay for new ones. Mrs. Massagee suggested to put out a call for designs. Mr. Lindsey noted the foundation for the signs are 50 plus years old; he suggested for example, the foundation could be a simple brick style with "Welcome to Hamlet" and TRG Signs has talked to him about a post-system. Several surrounding agencies' entrance signs were referenced. It was suggested if this becomes a project of council, to plant maintenance-free flowers, if any.

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Mr. Lindsey suggested allowing the manager to request a quote and perhaps work on one sign per year, if necessary, and to first tackle the sign on Highway 74.

New Lindsey Park. Mr. McQueen said considering the upkeep and the cost of the required fence, he was not in favor of the park. A few members agreed it was a good gesture however, said it may be a costly long-term issue. The Mayor said he has received negative feedback on it. Mr. McQueen motioned to not move forward with the walking trail park. Mr. Martin said no one has mentioned they were in favor of the matter to him, and therefore, made a second to the motion. Council recused Council Member Lindsey. The vote was 2-2, with Mrs. Massagee and Mr. Buie not in favor. Mayor Bayless broke the tie with a favorable vote. The motion carried.

AC Unit for Gymnasium. Three smaller units will be needed instead of one large unit and the cost will remain the same. The manager confirmed council's approval to install three units with the same tonnage at the same price - \$40,000. Council expressed no opposition.

Request for Donations. Mr. Blanton stated three formal requests have been submitted for donations and asked how council wants to proceed. He reminded the group a new process for receiving donations was put in-place last budget year. Requests now have to be submitted in writing each year, council agreed the city shouldn't reach out to other agencies in the matter. Mr. Lindsey asked if the city can ask the Women's Club to deed a piece of property considering the city keeps it up anyway. Mr. Martin agreed to check with the Women's Club. Council agreed to go with the three agencies that have requested.

Hamlet Library. The agreement between the city and the Library System initiated in 2000 was referenced. The city takes care of the lawn and the maintenance at the Hamlet Library; the city also pays more into the system than any other agency. Mr. McQueen said it's not fair to the citizens of Hamlet to pay more than any other agency. The manager will set up a meeting with Library System Director Jesse Gibson. Mr. McQueen and the Mayor stated they will join the said meeting.

Depot Board. It was stated the Museum Director needs to know the boundaries of her responsibilities to the Depot Board. The said board wants to move the gift shop back to the original area. The finance officer noted if Mrs. Thornsbury is involved in collecting funds in any way, it has to go through the city. Mr. Buie asked what the subject board has done for the city. The manager and council discussed the requests made on both sides. Council discussed the placement of the gift shop and agreed to leave in the \$2,000 in the budget for the Depot Board.

Johnathan Buie left meeting at 3:53 pm.

Contributions to HBDA. Council discussed how and where to put the funds. The July 4th and the Downtown Christmas events were discussed. Mr. Lindsey noted someone on the city's side needs to be involved. Mrs. Thornsbury has stated she will handle the July 4th event. Council has not issued funds for the Farmer's Market currently; the Seaboard Festival Committee has given \$1,500 towards the project. Council agreed to turn both aforementioned events over to the Museum Director. More lighting is needed on Hamlet Avenue during the Christmas event.

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Water Deposits. Ms. Dickens explained the request to increase the water deposits to \$75 for inside and outside tenants. Council agreed to the deposit increase.

A brief break was taken at 4:05 pm.

Rice Street Waterline Issue. Mr. Stubbs reported a line has collapsed on/near Scott Altman's property on Austin and Walnut Streets. As information, he informed council a portion of the line may need to be replaced, which will require a budget amendment.

Closed Session began at 4:15 pm Council Members McQueen and Martin motioned to go into closed session per NCGS§ 143.318.11 (a)(3)(5) for attorney-client privilege and contractual issues. The motion carried.

Open Session reconvened around 4:46 pm. The manager reported his communication with John Jackson of FirstHealth, who told him they could give Hamlet an in-kind quote on their insurance coverage. It was the consensus of council to allow the manager to get a quote from Mr. Jackson. Council and staff briefly discussed the potential options for FirstHealth and the mental health unit at the Hamlet hospital. Mr. Blanton reported Sandhills Medical Center paid slightly over \$3,000 annually for utilities. Past discussions of meetings with FirstHealth where Mr. McQueen and Mr. Lindsey attended were noted. FirstHealth has said they will do something for Hamlet.

Capital Outlay: Council agreed all is favorable at this time.

The Mayor confirmed the city will hold off on the Rescue Squad issue until the amended agreement has been prepared. Mr. Morphis stated the proposed agreement will be ready for council to approve by the end of the year.

Adjournment. At 4:53 pm, Council Members McQueen and Lindsey motioned to close the Budget Work Session at 4:53 pm and said the Regular Monthly Meeting will start at 7:00 pm tonight. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Kirkley, CMC
Hamlet City Clerk