

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2017 - 7:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Jonathan Blanton	City Manager
TC Morphis	Attorney
Tammy Kirkley	City Clerk
Jill Dickens	Finance Officer
Calvin White	Fire Chief
Billy Stubbs	Public Works
Gerald Adams	IT Director
Gail Strickland	Zoning Coordinator
Jennifer Turner	Tax Collector
Randy Dover	Hamlet Police Department

**Others Present:**                      Approximately 12 attendees

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**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order.

**2. Invocation**

Reverend Dave Amon of Fellowship Methodist Church offered the invocation. A moment of silence was given on behalf of the passing of Bert Unger.

**3. Adoption of Agenda.**

Mr. Blanton asked council to consider adding Item 7A to the agenda for the Jacksonville discussion. Mr. Martin suggested to remove Item 11 on the agenda "Discussion of Christmas Vacation for Employees"; he stated there is no need for a change to the policy. The holiday schedule was drafted in 2015- wherein giving employees three days for Christmas. Mr. Martin motioned to remove Item 11 from the agenda and Mr. Buie made the second. Mrs. Massagee explained the holiday issue was misconstrued; she said the idea was to rotate and split the days off so as not to be closed three days. Mr. McQueen suggested the matter should be discussed during the midyear session. The vote passed 4-1. Mr. Lindsey was opposed.

Mr. Lindsey then requested to add Closed Session to the agenda. He said the manager knows of the matter but didn't know about the request to add to the agenda. Mr. Lindsey and Mrs. Massagee motioned to add Closed Session to the agenda, the vote failed 3-2. Council members Buie, Martin and McQueen were opposed. Motions were made by Council Members McQueen and Buie to add the requested Jacksonville item to the agenda and were all in favor. Council Members Buie and Martin motioned to adopt the agenda with the approved changes. The motion carried.

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

Minutes from the September 12<sup>th</sup> Open and Closed Sessions were unanimously approved by motions of Council Members Buie and Martin.

**5. Comments from Attendees.** None were presented.

**Old Business:**

- 6. Discussion of Ordinance 2017-06 Alcohol Consumption on City Owned Property.** Mr. Morphis discussed the revised ordinance sent to council concerning the consumption of alcohol on city owned properties. After discussing concerns of council, Subsection 3 of the Ordinance was removed and council agreed the applications in this matter will need to be submitted to council 45 days prior to the event with all renters being required to carry insurance. Council Member Buie approved the Ordinance "as-is" with removing Section 3 and adding the 45-day notice requirement, which will go before council for approval. Council Member Martin made the second. The motion carried.

**New Business:**

**Quasi-Judicial Hearing – David and Kim Lindsey Special Use**

- 7.** Council Member Lindsey was recused from the Special Use Hearing by motions of Council Members Buie and McQueen. The motion carried.

**-Opening of the Public Hearing:** Mayor Bayless opened the hearing.

**-Swearing in of Witnesses:** David and Kim Lindsey, and Gail Strickland were sworn in by the clerk.

**-Applicant's Presentation:** Kim Lindsey presented council and presented answers to questions 1-5 of the permit application.

**-Input from Members of the Public:** None were presented.

**-Final Presentations by Parties:** None were presented.

**-Final Arguments by Parties:**

Mr. Buie asked about traffic from the train tracks and Kim Lindsey replied, Phase 2 of the project includes barbed-wire fencing around the entire property. Mr. Martin inquired if the streets will need to be closed during events, noting that the VA Center and Graves Garage may not want the street closed. Mrs. Lindsey replied the venue will have late afternoon events and they wish to do nothing to displease the area. Mr. Buie inquired about traffic flow from Oliver's Produce and up that specific street. Mrs. Lindsey noted with events such as the Seaboard Festival, the same thing will be done with parking that is normally done during the Seaboard Festival. Mrs. Lindsey stated the Seaboard Festival parking is a free for all and this is not a day to consider closing the street.

**-Final Presentations and Arguments by Parties:** There were no final presentations or arguments given.

**-Close Public Hearing:** The public hearing was closed at 7:24 pm.

**-Findings of Fact by Board:** Mr. McQueen stated this is a generous move and he would like to tie one stipulation to it contingent upon the land being donated to the nonprofit. David Lindsey stated the land will be donated after this request is approved. Mr. Morphis confirmed a stipulation may be placed on the approval. It was stated the approval of this special use permit is contingent upon the land being donated to Seaboard Festival Committee Inc.

**-Final Decision:** Council Members McQueen and Buie motioned to approve the request. The motion carried. The Lindsey's were thanked for their efforts.

Council Member Lindsey returned to his seat with council.

#### **Discussion of the Jacksonville Train Car**

Hamlet Depot Board Member Representative, Bill Mathison presented council to discuss the donation of the "Jacksonville" a historic train car. Mr. Mathison provided background information regarding: the history of the car, Hamlet's ties to the car, the current owner and the purchase or donation, the current condition and renovations needed, and, the Hamlet Depot Board's communication with the Spencer Museum. The Jacksonville is currently located in Indiana. Mr. Mathison stated there is a tentative agreement to acquire the car and the logistics are being worked out. The subject car needs a home and the Depot Board is requesting the city to allow the car to be situated behind the Visitor's Center where it will be renovated and will remain.

Mathison explained initially the car will be owned by Steve Smith, who is familiar with and agrees the Hamlet site should be the home. The Jacksonville will be a stationary unit behind the Visitor's Center. Mr. Martin asked if there will be any cost to the city; Mr. Mathis replied the Depot Board is looking to cover all costs and they hope to obtain grants. Steve Smith will leave the car to the Hamlet Depot Board in his will; council discussed the potential issues. It was stated the car needs to be donated to the Hamlet Depot Board in order to obtain grants. Mr. Martin suggested a contract stating Mr. Smith will leave the car to the Depot Board. Mr. Morphis discussed certain terms to be included within the contract. Council discussed the logistics of transporting the Jacksonville to Hamlet. Mr. Lindsey wants would like to see more help from Spencer.

Mayor Bayless welcomed a motion of council on the matter. Mr. Buie asked what is located underground at the site and Mr. Mathis talked about fiber optic and sewer lines. The car will be placed behind the Visitor's Center. Mr. Buie motioned to approve the location and to put a contract in-place to make sure the property is open to public; Mr. Martin made the second. Final placement will be subject to an agreement with the owner. The motion passed 4-1, with Mr. Lindsey opposing.

**Discussion of Engine Compression Brakes.** Council discussed the potential need for an ordinance banning compression brakes along Highways 177 South & 74 East. Other cities that have adopted this type of ordinance except in emergency cases were discussed. The manager and city attorney will work together on a draft ordinance and will bring back to council during the November council meeting. The ordinance is about regulating the noise in the city. Council Member Buie stated council recently lowered the speed limit along a certain portion of Highway 177 South to 45 mph; he recommended the 35-mph area coming in to the city be pushed back to the church along 177 and further explained. Mr. Buie asked staff to check with NCDOT about the matter. The manager will check and report back to council.

**Discussion of Funding Remaining Balance of South Hamlet Playground Equipment.** Mr. Blanton reported the playground equipment is expected to cost \$22,000 and the budget was set at \$15,000, thus leaving a shortfall. A budget amendment will be needed to cover the project costs. The project will need to be paid upon receipt. Council Member Martin stated the city has set aside \$15,000 for new city entrance signs; he motioned to take the funds for the entrance signs and put towards the playground project. He suggested the city work towards purchasing the entrance signs next year. Council Member Martin motioned to move funds from streets and highways- for the entrance signs over to the park project. The recommendation was made to go ahead and order a few park benches recently requested. Council Member Lindsey noted the city made about \$65,000 on the sale of surplus equipment.

Council Member Martin motioned to take the subject \$15,000 to put towards playground equipment and worry with the signs later. Council Member McQueen seconded the motion and gave an explanation for his vote; he suggested the new signs could be revisited during the mid-year budget discussions in January. The motion is to include the benches- \$400 each for two.

The manager stated if there aren't enough funds for the project to include the benches, the matter will have to be revisited again next month. All were in favor.

**Discussion of the Hamlet Christmas Parade.** Council Member McQueen stated the parade has been hosted over the years by the Hamlet Rotary Club, the HBDA and the Friends of Hamlet with Kim Lindsey overseeing the details. To his knowledge, the city has not hosted the parade in the past. Mr. McQueen said Mrs. Lindsey has informed the city she is no longer interested in being over the parade. In moving forward and for the security of the parade, Mr. McQueen would like to see the city put on the parade and Council Member Massagee agreed. Council Member Lindsey stated about twelve floats have already been sold and the funds will be turned over to the city by Lindsey's. Mr. Lindsey stated the committee will help put on the parade this year to help make for a smooth transition; however, agreed the city needs to be the backbone.

Mayor Bayless talked about forming a committee to work on the event. Mrs. Massagee stated the city has a Downtown Coordinator who should be marketing and working on the events; she stated the coordinator should be over the parade, just as the Hamlet Old Fashioned Christmas, the Fourth of July celebrations and everything that goes on downtown. Mr. Lindsey stated several people have already committed to help this year. Mr. Buie agreed Hamlet's Downtown Coordinator should work with the committee mentioned by Mr. Lindsey. Mr. McQueen stated the event is scheduled to take place in six weeks and asked Mr. Lindsey if he and his group will agree to be over the parade this year and allow the city get set-up to take it on next year. Mr. Lindsey said part of the problem is there is no brick and mortar building to collect the entry funds.

Mr. Lindsey talked about the initial setup for this year and asked that the manager be involved in the first two meetings, and then allow Mrs. Thornsbury, the Hamlet Downtown Coordinator, to take over. He confirmed twelve entries have currently committed and five have paid. The Mayor recommended to get to work on the matter this week and have the funds transferred over to the city, which was the consensus of council.

**Appointment to the ABC Board.** The manager read aloud the agenda notes concerning the appointment. Council Members McQueen and Martin motioned to reappoint Dot Bynum to the ABC Board for another term.

**Appointment to Hamlet Housing Authority (HHA) Board of Commissioners.** Mr. Oz Queen was reappointed to serve a 5-year term to the HHA Board of Commissioners with motions of Council Members Martin and Buie. The motion carried.

**Consideration of Resolution 2017-08 -Surplus of Equipment.** The manager explained the city has completed two successful stages of online auction sales thus far and the attached list will be sold online as well. The list of surplus items is attached to the Resolution. Council Members Buie and Lindsey motioned to adopt the Resolution to surplus the property. The motion carried.

**Approval of Tax Releases.** The list of tax releases was approved as submitted by motions of Council Members Buie and McQueen. The motion carried.

**Mayoral Proclamation Honoring Veterans Day.** The Mayor read aloud the proclamation observing Veteran's Day in the month of November.

#### Other Business

**City Manger's Report.** Mr. Blanton reported the upcoming events in Hamlet:

- Richmond County Agriculture Fair is now underway
- Annual Seaboard Festival October 28<sup>th</sup>
- Ghost Tour next week at the Hamlet Depot Museum
- Upcoming employee retirements- Benny Billingsley and Marlene Swanson
- Veteran's Day November 10<sup>th</sup>. All city offices will be closed in observance of Veteran's Day and there will be no change in the garbage collection schedule.
- FirstHealth in Hamlet will be closing in November

Mr. Blanton gave appreciation for the Depot Board presentation. He informed council the November agenda will include a necessary budget amendment in streets for \$56,000 for the water line issue at Lillian's Lane.

#### **Comments of Council.**

**-David Lindsey-** the Hamlet Hospital closing will hurt the city as it has been open since 1920. Terrell Martin Crime Stoppers – look at increasing the reward. Depot issue – train display stored in the basement of the Depot, we need to get it out of that space. It was supposed to be removed last June and the city needs movement from the owners. The manager reported it is Ms. Janet Packard's train. She spoke with curator and the curator has some interest in some of the trains and others have indicated an interest. The manager said he will reiterate the orders to get rid of the train.

The Mayor said during the times when a holiday falls on a payday and the banks are closed, city staff needs to make sure employees are paid early. The manager replied it is normally our practice to do so and the oversight was on our end.

-**Jesse McQueen** hopes FirstHealth in Hamlet will push forward to get someone in the building as it is a big tax loss as mentioned earlier. Hamlet Visitor's Center and Depot – he would like to revisit opening the Depot on Mondays and to possibly look at starting at the first of the year. Mr. McQueen took a moment to talk about various statements of anonymous sources and other council members; he said a number of the things in the newspaper articles were not factual in nature and he briefly explained.

-**Johnathan Buie** said he was voted in office for this community, which is how he makes his votes. Regarding the comments on social media and in the public about South Hamlet Park, he is not up for reelection, and he voted for the park because it is for the kids. If anyone has comments to make to him, please do not put it on social media, leave their contact information with the city and he will call them personally. He said twice his name has been dropped for comments concerning the Lindsey's with a grant issue, and an inference with the city. He said he has not made one comment and he talked about the journal. Mr. Buie also addressed a few other comments circulating.

Mr. Buie pointed out no candidate running for office has the right to email the Hamlet City Manager telling him what city employees should do; he said this is not right. City employees may use their city right and vote the way they wish; however, not on city time.

Mr. Buie offered best wishes to Benny Billingsley and Marlene Swanson on their upcoming retirements and future endeavors.

**Mayor's Comments.**

Mayor Bayless pointed out being on council is a tough job and said decisions are not made behind closed doors. He invited the public to visit the Fair this week and the Seaboard Festival at the end of the month. The Mayor stated former Council Member Bert Unger Hamlet passed away this week and said he will truly be missed.

**Motion to Adjourn.** At 8:28 pm motions by Council Members Buie and McQueen were made to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Kirkley, City Clerk