

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2020  
7:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Mayor Pro Tem	Jesse McQueen
Council Member	Maurice Stuart
Council Member	Terry Moore
Council Member	Oscar Sellers

**Staff Present:**

City Manager	Jonathan Blanton
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
City Attorney	TC Morphis
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
IT	Zach Garner
Public Works Director	Billy Stubbs
Police	Sgt. Amanda Reagan

**Others Present:** Linda Bayless, Bishop Thomas McDonald, Gavin Stone, JP Haines, DR Coleman, Don Norton, Kay Cavendish, Tim Nevinger, Sam Ballard, Jr., Carol Hoag, Kelly Parker, Crystal Long, Sheri Parks, Misty Gibson, Gerard Morrison, Gavin Stone, Kesha Ingram and Anna McNair

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Invocation**

Bishop Thomas McDonald of Last Days Deliverance Apostolic Faith Church offered the Prayer.

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

Councilman McQueen motioned to adopt the Agenda and Councilman Moore provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the December 10, 2019 Regular Meeting were approved by motions of Council Members McQueen and Moore. The vote was 4-0.

**5. Comments from Attendees**

Mr. Sam Ballard with the Depot Board addressed Council. He stated Gene Ross approached him concerning the sale of his railroad cooker. The Depot Board has met and determined they have a place to put it. Mayor Bayless asked if he knew the cost and Mr. Ballard indicated he did not. Mr. Bayless inquired on the intended location of the cooker. He was told the Tornado Building. Councilman Sellers asked who would move it. Mr. Ballard responded Mr. Ross plans to put new tires on it but he was not sure who would move it; the City would need to negotiate with Gene. Mr. Sellers felt this would be a

wonderful addition and expressed his desire for it to stay in Hamlet. Mr. Ballard reported Atlanta offered Mr. Ross \$10,000.00 for the cooker. Councilman Sellers asked if Mr. Ballard knew the sale price. Mr. Ballard did not. Councilman Sellers inquired if he was asking Council to make an offer to purchase the cooker and Sam confirmed. City Attorney TC Morphis advised Council should discuss prices in closed session so the seller does not know their intent. The City Manager stated he is authorized to spend up to \$25,000.00 so he can negotiate a fair market price. He feels this will be a wonderful asset to the City made by a Hamlet native. It was consensus of Council to allow the Manager to negotiate with Mr. Ross for the purchase of the railroad cooker.

Mr. Gerard Morrison, from 519 Historic Charlotte St., spoke with Council. He suggested, with Black History Month approaching and the number of African Americans that worked with the railroad, the City place a plaque in their honor as a healing mechanism. Mr. Morrison expressed concern for speeding in the 400 and 500 block of Charlotte St. He stated he had witnessed cops, City trucks pulling trailers and School Administrative employees speeding on the street. He asked the City to consider installing speed bumps, mechanisms that would put safety first. Also discussed with Council was establishing historic areas for African American communities to preserve history and instill pride. He named numerous African Americans that have made a significant impact on the community and country and suggested a tangible source of recognition such as a Wall of Fame. The City Manager responded the City's Insurance Carrier discourages the placement of speed bumps, but he will have the speed machine placed in the area and send a Memo to the Police Chief and Department Heads.

#### **New Business**

##### **6. Public Hearing No. 1. Rezoning of 304 Henderson Street.**

Mayor Bayless announced The Church of the Holy Spirit has filed a Rezoning Request for their property located at 304 Henderson St. Current Zoning is (B-2) General Business. The request is to rezone to Residential 6. The Church wishes to sell the property and feels they would have a better opportunity to sell it as a residential dwelling. The Planning Board met on December 16, 2019 and offers a favorable recommendation for the rezoning. The Mayor opened the floor to the Public Hearing. No one approached to speak. The Public Hearing was closed.

##### **7. Consistency Statement and Decision of 304 Henderson St. Rezoning.**

Councilman Moore motioned the rezoning would be consistent with the City of Hamlet Zoning Ordinance. Councilman Stuart offered the second. The vote was 4-0. Councilman McQueen motioned to approve the rezoning. The second was given by Councilman Moore. The vote was 4-0.

##### **8. Demolition of 720 Washington St. Ordinance 2020-01**

Mayor Bayless stated Staff is requesting Council issue an Ordinance to Demolish property located at 720 Washington Ave., across from Monroe Avenue School. A recent inspection showed the property has numerous violations that constitutes a hazard. Fines have ceased due to exceeding the tax value of the property. Staff wishes to move forward with the removal of the structure, following the requirements set forth in the NC General Statutes, and asks Council to issue the Ordinance to Demolish. Councilman McQueen motioned to adopt the Ordinance to Demolish. Councilman Stuart offered the second. The vote was 4-0.

##### **9. Martin Luther King, Jr. Proclamation**

Mayor Bayless read the Proclamation and encouraged the citizens to remember the reason for the day.

**10. Approval of Tax Releases**

Councilman Moore motioned to approve the Tax Releases. Councilman McQueen provided the second. The vote was 4-0.

**11. Mayoral Appointment to Hamlet Housing Authority**

Mayor Bayless announced the City has only received one application for the Board. A member of the Board has resigned and the Director has requested the applicant be appointed to fill the term. The Mayor appointed Mr. Scott Waters to the Board.

**12. Budget Amendments**

The City Manager explained the Budget Amendments are money that has not been expended shifting between line items, routine bookkeeping. Councilman McQueen motioned to approve the Budget Amendments. Councilman Moore offered the second. The vote was 4-0.

**Other Business**

**13. City Manager's Report.**

Mr. Blanton offered thanks to the City of Bessemer City, its City Manager and its Council for the donation of spare Dodge Charger equipment parts. The City no longer had a use for them and after he spoke with the City Manager, they were able to get the donations which will be used for the Police Department. The parts were retrieved last week. He also expressed appreciation to the Cole Foundation and the Community Foundation of Richmond County. During their last end of the year quarter, they awarded \$15,000.00 to the City to restore the caboose at City Lake. He has been in negotiations with Babco Contractors in Asheboro. They will be moving forward with sandblasting the caboose, painting and restoring it, making it a showpiece. Also announced was City offices will be closed January 20<sup>th</sup> for Martin Luther King Day and encouraged everyone to celebrate accordingly. There will be no delay in residential garbage. In regards to the WWTP, the City will move forward this week with requesting quotes for the Sewer Plant. The request will be on the website and sent out to Contractors. This will ensure our plant is able to go from 1 million per day treatment capacity to 2 million capacity. It will require extensive upgrades. He has been working with USDA and several engineering firms. They are confident we have an all-inclusive request that will bring much needed updates to the plant. This will lift the plant from the current moratorium and expand the treatment capacity. It will be advertised in the next few days and quotes taken through mid-February, then come back to Council to evaluate them and move forward in the process. Ideally, he is hoping for a target date of October 2020 to submit to USDA to be among the first in the application period and the most competitive.

**14. Comments of Council.**

Councilman Sellers provided information on a building located on Hamlet Avenue below the railroad tracks, saying it was a building John Coltrane lived in. He suggested the City possibly get grants to restore the building and make it a place for visitors to come. The City Manager stated that is something they could discuss. He advised the building is owned by Dr. Fred McQueen and it is the current place for the NAACP. Mr. Sellers said it was be a place to have a plaque and honor the musician.

Councilman Stuart thanked Sam Ballard for bringing the sale of the railroad cooker to Council's attention. He expressed gratitude to Gerard Morrison for the recognitions, particularly with Black History month coming up. Mr. Stuart thanked all that attended and encouraged others to attend the Council Meetings, get involved and voice your concerns. Mr. Stuart voiced his appreciation for the

opportunity to sit on Council. He thanked the City for the Proclamation and acknowledging the MLK events that are coming up. He announced the MLK Day parade is Saturday at uptown Rockingham and the MLK Luncheon is Monday at Sidney Grove in Ellerbe. He ended his comments by saying he is excited to represent the citizens of Hamlet.

Councilman Moore expressed appreciation to Gerard Morrison for speaking with Council. He stated he knew many of the people Mr. Morrison mentioned and he knew Mr. Doctor well. Mr. Moore stated it is important to remember the people that came before us. He reported previous Hamlet Police Officer, Michael Sale, was attacked in Maxton recently. He is now recovering and he asked the citizens to remember him and his family. It is a reminder of the circumstances our public servants work in.

Councilman McQueen thanked the City Manager for his work on the Sewer Plant. He advised, until recently, the City had issues with the amount they could dump; no matter what was done to the plant, it would not change the capacity. Now, with the changes and the loan paid, the City will be able to upgrade and advertise for industry. Mr. McQueen welcomed new business owners, Crystal Long and Kelly Parker and thanked them for opening their business, Carolina Realty, in Hamlet. The owners stated how pleased they were with Hamlet and the welcome they have received from the people. The Councilman commended Gerard Morrison on his tenacity to keep coming back to bring information to Council.

**15. Mayors Comments.**

Mayor Bayless said he was always glad to have Gerard Morrison in attendance and thanked Carolina Realty for coming to our town. He advised several things were discussed at the Budget meeting earlier. The City has been paying the sewer plant loan for 40 years and have lost industry due to the 1-million-gallon restriction. He is excited they will be able to expand the plant. He expressed his appreciation to Jonathan Blanton and thanked Council for their support. He commented the City Lake Project has made a positive change in the area. He thanked City Staff and all the workers for all they do. He wished everyone a wonderful MLK Jr. Day and asked that people remember what the day is for.

**16. Motion to Adjourn.**

At 7 :39 pm, Council Members Moore and McQueen provided the motion and second to adjourn. The vote was 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk

