

Special Called Meeting January 16, 2018 7:00 PM

Mayor Reid called the meeting to order. Commissioners present were Mayor Pro Tem Archie Aples, and Sid Eley. Commissioners Frank Norman and Quentin Jackson entered the meeting at 7:08 PM. Others present were Town Manager, Brandon Shoaf, Town Clerk Cindy Sharber, Sara Winslow, Lillian Holman, Peter Williams, Chicago Eure, Leary Winslow, Ed Lane, Pam Hurdle, Murielle Harmon, H. B. and Kay Matthews.

Mayor Reid led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Sid Eley and seconded by Archie Aples, and passed 3-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

Mayor Reid said Frank Norman would be late because of his job.

Brandon Shoaf presented a memo for Ipad's, the 1st option had 32 Gig, with a 9.7" screen - upfront cost of \$1,749.95 for 5, yearly service contract of \$2,399.40. 2nd option is Ipad Pro with 256 Gig with a 10.5" screen – upfront cost of \$4,649.95 for 5, yearly service cost of \$2,399.40. He said the outside purchase of the Ipads will be more expensive than advertised because they must be unlocked for Verizon to be able to activate them on the Federal Contract. He said the Federal Contract we get is a true unlimited data plan with no loss of speed after a certain amount of data is used in a billing cycle.

Archie Aples felt they needed the Ipad's because the current Ipad's don't have internet access. He said when he attends meetings other city and town representatives have Ipad's and he is having to write on paper. He said it wasn't like they couldn't afford to purchase the Ipad's. he said if the citizens don't want them to spend the money they will stay stuck in the 70's. He said he may not need the 256 Gig.

Sid Eley asked if the 1st option would give Archie what he would need.

Frank Norman apologized for being late that he came straight from work. He felt they needed the internet on the Ipads because he said he does more than just read emails on his device and he preferred to not send letters from the town on his personal devices. He said the Ipad he currently has is not capable to use most recent Microsoft Office upgrade. He said he personally campaigned to get outside the box on the Federal and State level.

Quentin Jackson apologized for being late he had been out with the fire department at the Wash House where someone's clothes caught fire in a dryer and he was trying get help to replace the clothing. Quentin said he and Frank were elected for a 4 year term and he believes they would need the Ipad Pro with the 256 Gig for downloading minutes. He said currently his emails are setup to go to his phone.

Sid Eley said he is probably the worst when it comes to the internet that he was still a paper guy. He felt if they wanted new Ipad's they needed to be added into the budget during that process. He agreed to buying the Ipad's as each council member felt they needed.

Sid Eley asked if they had to buy them all at the same time.

Brandon shared that the town stuff is stored on the cloud on the town's server.

Mayor Reid asked Brandon if he had requested a quote for the 64 Gig. He said he did not.

Mayor Reid said his original Ipad does all he needs.

Motion by Quentin Jackson and seconded by Archie Aples to approve 4-1 to purchase Ipad's for the 5 council members and the amount of Gig would be at each council members discretion.

Mayor Reid voted against the motion.

Archie Aples said he wasn't trying to take away the deposit but trying to come up with a way to make it easier for customers to pay deposit such as breaking the deposit down in 3 installments. He felt if they broke the deposits down then the customer wouldn't be eligible to get their deposit back.

Sid Eley said he believed that the deposit would have to be refunded.

Frank Norman wanted to stress that when refunded the customer doesn't receive cash but gets a credit on their bill.

Murielle Harmon felt they couldn't entertain lowering the deposit with losing \$27,000 last year.

Cindy Sharber suggested that the customers struggle with paying their bills now she didn't feel they would be able to pay the bill with the deposit or a know is added to them. She said the town currently offers customers the option to pay toward their deposit and connection fee but added services would not be connected until the total amount was received. She said she has current customers that come in each week to pay on their bill just because it is easier for them to pay that way and they say they are less likely to spend it elsewhere if they bring it here first. When asked about equal pay from Murielle Harmon she explained that customers could sign up once a year in the spring for that program but added that it was not for everyone because the amount would be higher in mild weather months and the customer would still have to pay the equal pay amount. She said that customers that heated with gas or oil don't see the advantage because they are paying a higher amount in the winter and having to pay for fuel.

Leary Winslow said he moved back here after college to get away from the big city life. He said Hertford citizens are double taxed and have sewer bills if they move in the county they don't pay for sewer or city tax. He said it is probably cheaper to live in Albemarle Plantation than in Hertford. He understood them wanting to give businesses incentives to come to Hertford but they couldn't go in the hole with taxpayers money. He said he knew of landlords that will negotiate their security deposits for rent to help tenants get moved in.

Quentin asked about how many new customers last year. Cindy Sharber estimated around 100. He suggested raising taxes because poor people don't pay taxes.

Sid Eley said that the electric, water and sewer fund are enterprise funds and they have nothing to do with taxes. General fund money which is the fund the taxes are in can't be used to supplement them funds.

Sara Winslow said that if they wanted to have people in attendance to meetings like this, then it shouldn't have been a special called meeting that no one knew about.

Leary Winslow suggested that they see what neighboring towns do.

Mayor Reid said if we could get 100 new residence in Hertford that would help to spread the debt of the water and sewer expansion which he felt would solve some of the problems.

Murielle Harmon mentioned two large projects that are coming to Hertford one being the state of the art new library. She said the existing library is the most used library in our area. She also mentioned the 59 million dollar bridge. She felt they need to focus on the positive demographics.

Lillian Holman said the Senior Center is used by 100 plus people a day.

Frank Norman said every individual who can't pay their bill is not a mismanager of money. He said he doesn't care what others do, they didn't come to copy other communities. He said he wanted to be a trend setter.

Sid Eley feels they are selling themselves short by comparing with what other towns are doing.

Chicago Eure suggested that they educate those that need help by teaching them to weatherize their own homes and check toilets for leakage. He felt they needed to educated first.

Quentin Jackson thank the citizens for coming out. He said they would like to explore every avenue they can.

Mayor Reid adjourned the meeting.

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