

Minutes Work Session March 4, 2019 at 7:30PM

Mayor Reid called the meeting to order. Commissioners present Sid Eley, Frank Norman and Gracie Felton. Quentin Jackson was absent. Others present were Town Manager, Pam Hurdle, Police Chief, Dennis Brown, Martha Borders, Edgar Salvo, Susan Cox, Anne and Greg Benton, Diane Stallings, Larry Hinqst, Kathleen McConaghy, Shirley Ashworth, Ashley Hodges, Reta Blair, Murielle Harmon, Kay Matthews, Kim Brinn, Sara Winslow and Patricia Minnefield.

Mayor Reid called the meeting to order.

Sid Eley had the prayer.

Mayor Reid led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Fire Chief Drew Woodard presented the fire department grant application in the amount of \$46,500.00 for the following items: lights, scene lights 1 for \$2,400.00, turnout gear dryer 1 for \$7,300.00, hose 8 for total of \$2,500.00, hose 8 for a total of \$2,500.00, nozzle, fog, 4 for a total of \$3,100.00, SCBSA face mask 7 for a total of \$7,000.00, turnout gear, boots 12 for a total of \$4,200.00, turnout gear, coats 6 for a total of \$6,750.00, turnout gear, hood 40 for a total of \$4,000.00 and turnout gear, pants 6 for a total of \$6,750.00. If awarded the grant the match would be \$23,250.00.

HHI submitted a letter requesting approval from the Town Council to host Hertford's Annual "Toast the Perquimans – A Craft Beer & Wine Tasting" on Saturday, September 21, 2019. The event hours would be from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM. In order to provide adequate time for volunteers to set up and take down the tents, tables, etc. we are requesting the entire space be closed from 12 midnight on Friday through 12 midnight on Saturday. Susan Cox was in attendance representing HHI if they had any questions.

Continued Business

There was none.

New Business

Mayor Reid, Sid Eley and Gracie Felton had none. Quentin Jackson was absent.

Frank Norman read an apology letter

Frank Norman requested Mrs. Hurdle to ask Utility Director, Cindy Sharber to present a department presentation at the March regular meeting.

Frank Norman had previously mentioned the police chief having a contract and he informed Chief Brown he would like him to be available at the March regular meeting to discuss that further.

Frank Norman said the town had lights belonging to the town that were dismantled, and he would like that investigated more to see if they could find out who dismantled the lights.

Frank Norman said he and Ashley Hodges had been working on the website and he planned to have a complete report at the regular council meeting.

Pam Hurdle presented council with information at the LED light bid process and procedure. She said that information about the bid should be formal bid instead of informal bid because of the amount of money. She said the next steps would be advertising in a local newspaper, noting they will be sealed bid, time of bid opening, and criteria bidder should include.

Frank Norman said that Mayor Reid, Former Mayor Pro, Archie Aples and Former Town Manager, Brandon Shoaf met with Tony Riddick with Greener by LED and made an agreement to purchase lights from him but now they are requesting to bid the whole project. He wanted to know what happen with that agreement.

Pam Hurdle said according to the minutes Tony Riddick made a presentation in October of 2017, but no agreement ever came before the board. She said some members of council and staff had a verbal agreement with Mr. Riddick and they purchased 25 lights.

Frank Norman said he would check his notes because he remembered they agreeing to purchase some lights to try and possibly purchasing more.

Pam Hurdle said the plan is to purchase 400 lights.

Frank Norman wanted an investigation into the vandalism of the other lights since he believes that was someone in public works before we purchase 400 lights. He said he believed they now have 4 lights that had been damaged, and they can't keep having that happen.

Mayor Reid told Mr. Riddick they would handle him at the regular meeting. Mayor Reid asked Mr. Norman if he knows who may know have damaged the lights?

Frank Norman said someone at public works know who damaged the lights because they had to get in the building to be able to destroy the lights. He felt they needed an investigation and report of damage to town property or they would be negligent of the town. He said the lights aren't the only property the town has that has been destroyed by town employees.

Mayor Reid said they have a new public works director who can't be responsible for what has happened in the past. He will be responsible for property now but not from the past.

Frank Norman said he asked for this investigation before Mr. Benton was hired but evidently, they didn't take him seriously. If they let this type of behavior continues then council would be responsible for mishandling town funds.

Gracie Felton said regardless of who is here now if lights were destroyed, they should have an investigation.

Mayor Reid said Mr. Riddick had lights out back in the parking lot that are no longer there, and he said are we supposed to ask the current public work director where are those lights are now? Gracie Felton said no but she felt they needed an investigation. She asked Greg Benton if they purchased 400 lights would he be responsible? Greg Benton said he would be responsible, and he would have to find out who does wrong. Greg Benton said that all 25 lights they purchased from Mr. Riddick are accounted for, so he wasn't sure what lights they are talking about. Pam Hurdle said they are referring to some that were purchased before the 25. Sid Eley asked Mr. Benton if all 25 lights had been installed? Mr. Benton said about 4 or 5 have been installed they still have about 20 to installed. He said he knows where everyone has been installed and where the remaining inventory is located. Pam Hurdle to Mr. Norman the lights he was talking about they would have and go and investigate or talk to former employees because most are no longer employed with the town.

Greg Benton told Mayor Reid the previous lights purchased before the 25 lights are installed on the porch at the public works building.

Tony Riddick said the lights up under the porch were never supposed to have been up under the porch. The reason they are up under the porch is the original 8 lights they purchased mysteriously disappeared. He and Mayor Pro Tem at that time were riding around town looking for the lights. They called the former Town Manager, Brandon who said the lights were on poles at the utility department they couldn't find them but the next day 2 lights showed up on the front porch of public works and 5 lights are still missing. The light in the back of the Municipal building was removed because Brandon claimed someone with HHI requested the light be removed because it was too bright but when they ask the HHI representative they claimed they never made the request. He said they were trying to discount the quality of the light because they were brighter than any other lights in town. He said 5 lights are still missing and the town doesn't know where the lights are, and someone does need to be responsible.

Chief Brown said he and Pam just talked and they will start an investigation.

Mayor Reid said Sid Eley has been asked to be recommended to the Harbor Town project update/appointment of Representative

Pam Hurdle said she and the Mayor attended a meeting about the new ferry system that's coming, and they are looking to form an advisory board which will help when they are attempting to get future funding. She and the Mayor had another coming up with the same cities involved but didn't say how many members would be on the advisory board so at this point they don't know if they would need 1 or 2 members.

Frank Norman suggested that they table this item until they know how many members they need to appoint.

Pam Hurdle said they need a purchasing policy and had previously presented council with a copy of the proposed policy. She said this will assist the finance department with guidelines for purchasing and using credit cards.

Sid Eley said he review the proposed policy and he thought it would be a great help. Pam said we are currently doing a lot of the procedures listed but the town just doesn't have a policy in place. Frank Norman said they do have an ordinance that states the town manager can steal. Pam said it's not uncommon to have that type of ordinance and it wouldn't hurt her feelings if they done away with the ordinance.

Pam Hurdle said the Social Media Policy would be for the website and if they choose to use Facebook, they would probably have to present another policy. She said Chief Brown sent her some samples and they critiqued it to the town.

Pam Hurdle said she had contacted East Carolina for an intern to assist with planning. She said they are projected to work 300 hours at about 20 hours per week and she had requested a local person in case they decided to pay them. She said you don't have to pay an intern but if you chose to pay the going rate is about \$9 - \$10 per hour. She said the person lives in Elizabeth City but travels to East Carolina University for school and working 20 hours a week doing basic planning which would like zoning and code enforcement under her leadership and Pam would continue to sign any zoning permits issued.

Frank Norman asked was there a reason she chose East Carolina instead of Elizabeth City State. Pam said Elizabeth City State didn't have a direct planner curriculum.

Budget Amendment #2 she said may just turn into budget fund action and the next budget amendment may come next month.

Pam Hurdle said council needed to appoint a primary and secondary person to the Albemarle Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan Committee. Frank Norman asked was this a new committee or an ongoing. Pam said this was an ongoing committee but wasn't sure who was on the committee. Frank Norman asked if the committee members are just council members? Pam Hurdle said she thought it was a member of council and the town manager.

Pam Hurdle said the council had asked her to poll other cities and towns about how or if they are passing on the NCEMPA rate increase. If they pass it to the citizens with a bill of \$500 the additional cost would be \$5 - \$9. If they absorbed the increase it would be about \$5,500 each month the town would have to absorb. Next year they are already projected a 3% increase.

Frank Norman said he hadn't had chance to look at what she presented and asked did what she presented include how they compared with other cities and towns? Pam Hurdle said she did not at this time but would have that Monday. Sid Eley said if he was reading what she presented said it would cost to individual at \$.55 increase per month. Pam said no it would be about a \$6 increase per month based off the \$500 bill she presented to them.

Pam Hurdle said she made some pre reservations and wanted to make sure everybody was on the same page regarding the retreat. She said if they use a facilitator presented to her by a council member it would cost \$1,400 just for them but she is checking into using some freebies and could possibly cost \$500. She said she didn't factor in travel and said they could hold this in Perquimans County using free facilities, but she had booked rooms at the beach but was within the time frame to cancel if needed. She asked for direction and who could be in attendance?

Sid Eley said he hated spending that much money taking this retreat out of the county when then could use the library for free and be able to go home at night. He said the last retreat was held on Friday, Friday night and Saturday morning. He said they had sandwiches from Subway twice. He felt if they had an unlimited budget he could see holding out of county. He said he wasn't sure about council Felton being able to take 2 days off. He felt a room in the library would be sufficient.

Frank Norman didn't think the library would be a good location. He said he was sensitive to our new councilwoman and asked how far would it be to travel to Camp Cale? Pam said Camp Cale is in New Hope.

Pam Hurdle said this is something they are already doing in departments they don't have enough staff. She said the electric department only has 1 person and when they need help, they call on a well-known license electrician and a former employee who works with the City of Elizabeth City as a lineman. She said this will be very important for public works to be allowed to have these contracts with individuals and companies. She said these would basically be a mutual aid agreement. Hourly wage of \$50 per hour but if on standby they would only get paid if they had to come in to work.

Sid Eley asked if we had a major outage if we would still be contacting ElectriCities for help as we had done in the past? Pam said we would.

Greg Benton said this would allow them to have three people in the electric department but only pay for one. This would help if the one employee is out due to sickness or vacation or if we had a major problem and needed additional manpower. He said the second part would be companies he calls his go to company that they use if they run into a job that is too big for them to handle. He said what they would like to do is put out advertisement for all local contractors/companies, so he is not singling out any companies. He said he would like to put them under a twelve-month contract, and it would lock their rates for twelve months. He said this wouldn't include jobs that would have to be bid. He like to get proposals and pick the best proposal and enter into a contract with them for twelve months.

Pam Hurdle said this ordinance is in place and is starting to be a problem especially since they are getting ready to get into grass cutting season. She said the town has about 20 properties that the town cuts and all those properties are at the abatement fee maximum. She said currently the first cut is the cost of the cut, second cut is the cost of the cut and \$150, third is cost of cut and \$250, all other cuts are cost of the cut and \$500. She said they are putting liens

on properties and will never get the money. She said every ten years those fees get written off. She said they don't want to get in the grass cutting business but that is what they are in. She is proposing after the third cut to max out the cost plus \$250.

Frank Norman said this was a decision made by former council and we are charging some of the people more than the property is worth. He said he thought \$250 was a little too high but he understood why it needed to be that high. He would try to encourage council Monday to vote in favor of the managers recommendation.

Pam Hurdle said in the past week she had spoken to three contractors who are interested in purchases property in town to fix up houses to rent them out or sell. She also spoke to someone today who was interested in a vacant commercial building they are interested in investing and she gave them the owners number.

Frank Norman asked for an update on Mediacom. Pam Hurdle said she had mentioned the old credit union building. She said they said that was too large which she didn't understand since they wanted to bring their complete operation here. She said they are looking for something much smaller. Frank asked was it a cost situation or did they not want a building that size. Pam said she had tried to get them to come downtown but they wanted to stay on 17 but she would contact them to find out what is the hold up.

Pam Hurdle said the fire department had asked to use a vehicle for training that had been surplused previously. She said she didn't see any issues with that, but it would be up to council.

Sid Eley asked what department had this vehicle been used and if it was operable at all? He was told this vehicle had been used in public works and not operable. Greg Benton said it would only bring scrap price.

Mayor Reid asked if anyone knew why fire whistle at the department is the only whistle that blows?

Greg Benton said they use to have whistles all around town but one by one they began to fail so the only operating whistle is at the department. He said they are obsolete, and we got that whistle from Newland.

Frank Norman asked if that whistle was obsolete. Greg Benton said yes.

Mayor Reid said the reason he was asking was a tornado that did damage in another state and the people said they didn't get notice. Greg Benton said he wasn't sure if the citizens here would know what it meant if it rang continuously, they may think it was malfunctioning.