



# Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 5:15 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

**Present:** Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor  
Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem  
Ernest C. Bobbitt)  
Sandra W. Bryant)  
Suetta S. Scarbrough)  
Wayne Smith)

## Council Members

Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney  
Traci Storey, City Clerk  
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director  
Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager  
Bobby Martin, Police Chief  
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director  
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director  
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief  
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

**Absent:** Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer.

## Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie asked Council members if there were any additions, corrections or any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening.

There being no conflicts, a motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to amend the agenda by removing Item 10 – Departmental Reports.

## Special Recognitions

### **Retirement of K-9 Storm**

Police Chief Martin stated K-9 Storm has faithfully served the City for eight and one-half (8-1/2) years and they were looking to retire him due to age. It is customary for retired service animals to be given to their handlers and we have done this in the past.

He said it is appropriate for Council to declare K-9 Storm surplus prior to awarding him to his handler, Captain Jamie Hardy. To accomplish this, the following resolution has been drafted for Council's consideration.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 2020.08

#### **K-9 RETIREMENT RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, K-9 Storm is owned by the City of Roanoke Rapids; and

**WHEREAS**, K-9 Storm has faithfully served the City for eight- and one-half years, and has recently been retired; and

**WHEREAS**, retired canines cannot be adopted to private citizens because of their specialized training for police situations; and

**WHEREAS**, Captain Jamie L. Hardy, K-9 Storm's handler, wishes to keep him; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and City Council, by this resolution, wish to express its great appreciation to K-9 Storm for his service, loyalty, and dedication to the City of Roanoke Rapids;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Roanoke Rapids City Council in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 160A-266 declares K-9 Storm to be surplus property upon retirement from service and authorizes his assigned handler, Captain Jamie L. Hardy, to take ownership of K-9 Storm upon his execution of a hold harmless agreement to provide proper care for the dog for the remainder of the life of the animal and a \$1 adoption fee. By executing that agreement, Captain Jamie L. Hardy will assume all liability and responsibility for the dog.

**ADOPTED** this 18<sup>th</sup> Day of August, 2020

ATTEST:

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Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2020.08 declaring K-9 Storm as surplus property and awarding him to Captain Jamie Hardy.

Mayor Doughtie thanked Captain Hardy for what he has done with K-9 Storm and what he has offered to the department.

### **Approval of City Council Minutes**

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to approve the August 4, 2020 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes as drafted.

### **Committee Reappointments**

#### **Beautification Committee**

City Clerk Storey stated the term for Annette Stallings on the Beautification Committee expired August 9, 2020. Ms. Stallings has expressed interest in continuing to serve on this committee.

Ms. Stallings has served the maximum number of two consecutive terms allowed by the City policy, but City Council has the authority to waive this section of the policy.

A ballot vote was taken earlier and Ms. Stalling received a unanimous vote. She requested City Council make a motion to waive the City policy and reappoint Annette Stallings to the Beautification Committee.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to waive the City policy and reappoint Annette Stallings to the Beautification Committee.

#### **Recreation Advisory Committee**

City Clerk Storey stated the terms for Ed Liverman, Traig Neal and Joey Elias on the Recreation Advisory Committee will expire September 9, 2020. She contacted each of them and they are willing to serve another term.

Mr. Liverman has served the maximum number of two consecutive terms allowed by the City policy, but City Council has the authority to waive this section of the policy.

City Council took a ballot vote earlier and all three candidates received a unanimous vote. She requested City Council make a motion to waive the City policy for Mr. Liverman and reappoint Ed Liverman, Traig Neal and Joey Elias to the Recreation Advisory Committee.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to waive the City policy for Mr. Liverman and reappoint Ed Liverman, Traig Neal and Joey Elias to the Recreation Advisory Committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked how did the City make committee openings public and let citizens know to come in and apply. City Clerk Storey replied she advertises on the City Page and City's website. Occasionally she will have someone call to inquire about how to serve on one of the committees and she lets them know what vacancies they have. She noted that there are currently three vacancies on the Beautification Committee and a couple on the Planning Board for ETJ members that need to be filled. She said she had someone call today who was interested in serving on the Recreation Advisory Committee, but there were no vacancies at this time. She will take their application and hold it so when there is a vacancy she can contact them.

Mayor Doughtie asked if she was familiar with the ETJ limits or would they need to contact someone in the Planning Department. She replied she would refer them to Planning & Development Director Lasky.

City Clerk Storey also reported she would have reappointments next meeting for the Senior Center Advisory Committee and she received a recommendation for the Roanoke Canal Commission today.

## Public Hearing

### **CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Program**

Mayor Doughtie declared the public hearing open and called upon Planning & Development Director Lasky.

Planning & Development Director Lasky stated this was the second of two required public hearings prior to making an application to the State for Community Development Block Grant funds which is under the NC Neighborhood Revitalization program. The maximum grant award is \$750,000. She presented the following report and gave an overview of the program.

#### MEMORANDUM

To: Joseph Scherer, City Manager

From: Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director

Re: **Public Hearing to Receive Public Comment and Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing Submission of an Application for the 2020 Community Development Block Grant - NC Neighborhood Revitalization Program**

Date: August 6, 2020

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**Program Background**

The primary purpose of the NC Neighborhood Revitalization Program is to provide grants to local governments to develop viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate-income. Eligible housing activities for this grant include single family and multi-family, rehabilitation, acquisition, demolition, clearance, relocation, substantial rehabilitation, replacement housing and emergency repairs. Eligible special projects can include public facilities such as transitional housing, senior centers, neighborhood recreation areas, and parks. The NC Neighborhood Revitalization application deadline is August 31, 2020. NC Neighborhood Revitalization will award grants up to \$750,000 and it does not have a matching fund requirement.

The CDBG program requires that the applicant conduct two (2) public hearings to receive comment regarding the proposed application. The first public hearing was conducted on August 4, 2020 and some public comments were received. This will be the second public hearing to receive comments from citizens relative to the intention of the city to apply for funding. As required, notice of this public hearing was published on August 8, 2020 in the Roanoke Rapids Daily Herald.

**Proposed Application**

The City intends to submit an application for a grant of \$750,000 (maximum award amount) in CDBG NC Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds to undertake housing improvements to substandard housing conditions scattered throughout the City Limits and provide public facility improvements at recreation areas. The following is a tentative list of proposed activities and an estimated budget.

1. Rehabilitation	\$575,000
2. Public Facilities	\$100,000
3. Administration, Planning	<u>\$ 75,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>

She said they were looking at ways to promote long-term sustainability in many of the project areas. Approximately \$575,000 would be devoted towards housing improvements. They anticipate seven to eight and possibly up to ten homes, depending on the level/amount of work costs associated to be completed. Statewide the average costs is \$60,000 per home to make the improvements needed.

Planning & Development Director Lasky stated they would be proposing \$100,000 to public facilities and city-owned public buildings. Right now the grant window has been modified from last year's application to prioritize COVID-19 projects. If there are activities they can do to make the buildings or facilities safer to promote social distancing, they can do that. One of the major things they will take from last year's application is the consideration of a multi-use path leading from the Hodgestown area to Chaloner Park. Right now people have to walk or bike on US Hwy. 158. Also, the construction of a bath house/changing facility outside the floodplain. Currently, the Chaloner Recreation Center is the only bathroom facility at that park. Since it is in a

floodway, if the building becomes substantially damaged by any future flooding, it cannot be rebuilt. The bath house would help with the long term sustainability of that park by providing a facility people can change clothes and wash their hands.

She said anytime you have grant funds of this nature, it is required to have an administrator to help oversee the spending. This includes the bid processes for hiring contractors, legal work and lead based paint abatement. The \$75,000 is the 10% they are required to do in order to solicit a qualified CDBG consultant for the project administration and planning.

She said unlike other grants before where they have done a certain block/area, this grant is intended to serve all households within city limits so it benefits the entire community. It has to be for owner-occupied homes in order to qualify. They have to be of low to moderate income. The expected goals of the program would be to improve the quality of life for homeowner households across the city. It helps by making those substantial rehabilitations to homes. It is also an approach to economic development and improves property values because it helps promote that long-term sustainability.

Planning & Development Director Lasky stated when talking about the costs to rehabilitating some of these homes, 70% of the city's total housing stock was built prior to 1980. The city has a very aged residential community here; there has not been a lot of significant development in the last 30 years. She added 13% of all the houses in Roanoke Rapids were built prior to 1939. Many of these homeowners that live in these older homes over time have deteriorating pipes with plumbing, mechanical/electrical units, roofs, etc. This really does help these homeowners to improve their home and many are on fixed incomes that qualify for the low to moderate income survey. It is a great program and the application is due to the State on August 31, 2020.

She said they were still accepting applications from resident property owners and will continue to take them through the middle of next week. They will continue to take some to keep on reserve in case any other needs come up or other funding becomes available.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked how do they let the public know they have these dollars available and how they can apply. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied they have used the City's website, they have run the required notices in the newspaper and word of mouth. They have reached out to those homeowners identified through code enforcement where they have noticed certain deficiencies in homes. It is not difficult to come up with a list of potential homeowners and as mentioned earlier, this is a benefit because it applies to the entire city limits and not just one area.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked if the “Turtle House” on Hamilton Street was locally owned because it is a historical home and it is falling in. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied she would not know unless she researched it. Councilwoman Bryant stated the owner has to live in the house. Planning & Development Director Lasky said that was correct. The homeowner has to actually live in the home; it cannot be a rental house. She said the question has also come up about demolition. They could if there was a redevelopment plan associated with it that has to be completed within 36 months of the grant award. Reconstruction plans would have to be immediately available. Unfortunately, they can’t use the funds to eliminate certain things, but they can improve upon and make changes that help reduce and eliminate blight conditions. She said after they have done these programs in the past, the auditor will come and they go together to talk to the residents of these homes and ask if they were pleased with the work that was done. She stated you can see the joy on their faces to have working plumbing and air-conditioners that had been in disrepair for a long time.

Councilwoman Bryant asked if she understood correctly that the City would be responsible for finding the contractors to do the work. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied the qualified grant administrator will help her advertise and solicit contractors to bid on the houses that are set for improvement. They will have a tab sheet and rank them and bring it to City Council at a future meeting for them to award the project to. Typically, their recommendation is the most qualified and the lowest cost. It is an open and fair process that follows the federal guidelines for spending the housing redevelopment funds.

Councilwoman Bryant asked if they were 0% interest loans for the homeowners. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied that was correct. Depending on the amount of money spent, the longest length of time for it to remain in the homeowner’s name is eight years and that is if they spend \$70,000 on a house. It is a grant, but it is a forgivable loan until that time has expired. The homeowner will never have to pay anything unless they turn around and try to sell the property. It is a grant, but the homeowner has to maintain ownership and there are conditions that will be applied to the deed for a certain duration based on a scale of how much money is spent on it. She added there were no City funds involved in this directly, it is all federal funds so the City would not be responsible for any repayment.

Mayor Doughtie stated if the City goes through the process correctly, there is no way the City would have to pay any of this money back. Planning & Development Director Lasky said the City will not own any of these properties. The funds are coming from the federal government to the State and then the City applies to the State Department of Commerce for these funds. There is a strict monitoring process with monthly

reports to the State, annual reports and quarterly expenditures. The City will make a payment and the State will reimburse the City in a very short turnaround time.

Councilman Smith asked if there was a maximum for a homeowner. She replied \$70,000 is the maximum and that repayment period is eight years.

Mayor Doughtie asked if anyone from the audience wished to speak on the matter.

Kenneth Hicks, 509 Hinson Street, asked how long had this grant been available. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied just a couple of weeks. Mr. Hicks clarified his question to ask how many years had this type of grant been available. She replied CDBG has different programs and it is a different program every year. This is the second year they have had this particular housing program that the City was eligible to apply for.

With no further questions or comments, Mayor Doughtie closed the public hearing.

### **New Business**

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported there were two items associated with the CDBG application. She stated a motion would be required for each one.

#### **Consideration of Adopting a Resolution Authorizing Submission of an Application for a CDBG NC Neighborhood Revitalization Funding Program**

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2020.09**

#### **RESOLUTION FOR THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDING FOR THE FY20 CDBG NC NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROJECT**

**WHEREAS**, the Roanoke Rapids' Council has previously indicated its desire to assist in community development efforts for housing within the City; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has held two public hearings concerning the proposed application for Community Development Block Grant funding to benefit housing for low-to moderate- income persons; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City Council wishes the City to pursue a formal application for Community Development Block Grant funding to benefit the sustainability and redevelopment of the city's residential neighborhoods; and the City wishes to seek all possible sources of housing and community development assistance.

**WHEREAS**, the City Council certifies it will meet all federal regulatory and statutory requirements of the State of North Carolina Community Development Block Grant Program,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the City of Roanoke Rapids: that the Mayor is authorized to submit a formal application to the North Carolina Department of Commerce for approval of a Community Development Block Grant to benefit low- to moderate-income persons, and (2) that the City Manager is authorized to satisfy the administrative requirements to implement the grant when approved.

Adopted this the 18<sup>th</sup> day of August 2020 in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

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Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adopted Resolution No. 2020.09 authorizing submission of an application to the NC Department of Commerce for a Community Development Block Grant NC Neighborhood Revitalization funding program.

**Consideration of Adopting a Citizen Participation Plan for CDBG Fund for the FY20 CDBG NC Neighborhood Revitalization Project**

Planning & Development Director Lasky said a Citizen Participation Plan is always required when spending federal funds. The scope of the plan is to try to discuss how citizens will be involved or how the program will be implemented and assessed. It explains that citizens can contact the NC Department of Commerce if they feel their issue has not been resolved by City staff. There is technical assistance allowed and all public information will be advertised as required. The public file will be available for inspection in the Planning & Development Department. All advertisements will include information for anyone with ADA needs or non-English speaking individuals to have the opportunity to request interpreters if they wish to address City Council.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan for the City of Roanoke Rapids for Community Development Block Grant funding for FY20 CDBG NC Neighborhood Revitalization Project.

## Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge presented the July 2020 Financial Report. She reported the General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$48,774. General Fund year to date expenditures totaled \$860,002. After the month of July, 8.34% of the budget year has been completed. As a result, Year-To-Date Expenditures exceeded Revenues by (\$811,228).

She said the trend continues in July with expenditures well exceeding revenues at the beginning of the fiscal year. July is historically the City's lowest revenue month, but a month with high expenditure requirements. The City typically begins to receive material revenue allotments beginning in September with Ad Valorem, Sales & Use, and Utility Franchise Tax revenues.

Finance Director Etheridge said Year-End Close continues as Finance staff prepares for the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 audit. The auditors will be on site beginning August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

She reported the Powell Bill Certified Expenditures report was completed and submitted to the NC Department of Transportation during the month of July. This ensures fiscal compliance for both program regulations and funding requirements. Other financial regulatory reporting for the City's Cash and Investments as well as financial institution and banking reports were also submitted to the Local Government Commission during July, as required.

Councilman Smith stated the last report showed they were about \$900,000 in the hole and asked Finance Director Etheridge if she could give them an idea of where they were at now and if any sales tax money had come in. She replied they were closer to seeing how they were going to end the year before the auditors come. It was hard to say because they were still accruing revenue that is due to them but it is regulatory revenue that is behind due to COVID-19. They are doing much better than the original June numbers they received, but it is very difficult to say how they would look tonight.

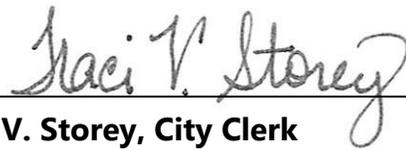
Councilman Smith asked if she was anticipating the City would have a shortfall for last year. She stated it was difficult to say because she was waiting to hear from the State as well as the auditor about accruals for motor vehicle taxes, for example. They have only received eleven payments so since they do not have some of the answers it was hard to say until she hears back from the auditor.

Councilman Smith stated the auditor's report normally does not come in to City Council until November or December. He asked if it would be that long before they find out about last year. She replied no, they would report the numbers as soon as they know what they will be. They are still waiting to hear about revenues; they are coming in late due to the pandemic.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated they know this year's collection is offset by the expenditures versus receipts and asked in comparison to the same time period last year, how does that look. He asked if the receipts were lower than last year. She replied the receipts that were completed, a lot were coming in close to budget. Her report with prior year to date percentages show the revenues were at the same percentage level at the same time last year.

<b>Adjournment</b>
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There being no further business, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.



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Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

**Approved by Council Action on: September 1, 2020**