



# Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

**Present:** Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor  
Sandra W. Bryant, Mayor Pro Tem

Andy Jackson)  
Curtis Strickland)  
Rex Stainback)  
W. Keith Bell)

## **Council Members**

Kelly Traynham, City Manager  
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney  
Traci Storey, City Clerk  
Harold Phillips, Interim Police Chief  
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director  
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief  
Kelly Daughtry, Parks & Recreation Director  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director

**Absent:** Carmen Johnson, Finance Director  
Kristyn Anderson, Planning & Development Director

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and provided an invocation.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## **Adoption of Business Agenda**

Mayor Doughtie stated the agenda needs to be amended to add an item under New Business as 8 d). He asked Council members if there were any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening.

There being no conflicts, motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Bell, and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda with the amendment to consider a budget amendment under New Business 8 d).

## Special Recognitions

### **Police Department – Retirement of former Chief Guyant**

Interim Police Chief Harold Phillips stated tonight they would like to present retired Police Chief Shane Guyant with his service weapon and badge. Police Chief Guyant retired December 1, 2024 after serving the City of Roanoke Rapids for 1-1/2 years and over 30 years in law enforcement. He requested that his service side arm and badge be given to Shane Guyant in accordance with NCGS 17F-20.

Motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant and unanimously carried to award Shane Guyant his service side arm and badge for and in consideration of the sum of \$1.00 received from him and upon his securing a permit as required by NCGS 14-402. (40 cal. Smith & Wesson M&P HDR6998).

Interim Chief Phillips paid the \$1.00 for Chief Guyant to City Clerk Storey and she will turn it over to Finance Director Johnson tomorrow.

Interim Chief Phillips presented former Chief Guyant a shadow box (with the help of his wife) with all of his patches and badges from all the departments he had served in 31 plus years. Former Chief Guyant named the departments he had worked for starting with Edgecombe County Sheriff's Office as a Detention Officer then worked his way up to a Lieutenant in CID and Narcotics. In 2005 he began work at the Department of Insurance until 2018. He started as a Special Agent and worked his way up to District Supervisor, Assistant Director and finally Director of the agency. He then went to the Halifax County Sheriff's Office in 2018 where he was a Lieutenant over Professional Standards and then he came to the City of Roanoke Rapids as Police Chief.

Former Chief Guyant said it had been an honor to be the Police Chief and thanked them for giving him the opportunity. He had a great team and hopes he made them proud. He stated he was fortunate to leave behind three great leaders – Interim Chief Phillips, Captain Jeff Badgett and Captain Gorton Williams.

Mayor Doughtie called upon NC Representative Michael Wray to make a presentation.

Representative Wray said former Chief Guyant had been a friend for years. He thanked his sister, Cheryl Edwards. She has been his research assistant since his legislative assistant left. With the Governor transitioning and people leaving, they have been trying hard to get this award. The best part of his job is constituent services. A lot of people ridicule him, but he was not there for the glory, he was there to make a difference. Today, his sister went to Raleigh to get this award in order to

present tonight. At the end of the day, if you don't have the good Lord and you don't have your family, you don't have anything.

Representative Wray stated it was an honor and privilege on behalf of Governor Roy Cooper to present Dr. Christopher Shane Guyant with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine for his years of service and hard work.

Representative Wray said he was proud of former Chief Guyant and wished him the best of luck and thanked him for being in this community. He has trained some good individuals and given some good people opportunities, and there is a future for a lot of opportunities to grow the city and the department. He said former Chief Guyant did get those trucks moved from parking lots at Premier Boulevard. He knows he had to reach out to not just the owners but the people that were managing that property. He commended him for his leadership.

Former Chief Guyant thanked Representative Wray and his sister who have done so much for Halifax County and Roanoke Rapids. Ever since he had known him, if he said he was going to do something, he got it done. He has been a very good asset to the City and he thanked him for his leadership as well. He said the Order of the Long Leaf Pine award means a lot to him because as a former state employee he has seen many people receive this award. It says they've done things the right way and he has told them he has always tried to do things the right way.

### **Public Comment (Unscheduled)**

#### **Gerry McDaniel**

Mr. McDaniel thanked the Mayor because he has glossophobia and he has helped him with that quite a bit. Sometimes he gets carried away and it turns into a touch of Tourette's. He has learned to be brief, be sincere and be seated. He did not know Mr. Wray was going to be here, but he echoes everything he says about Shane Guyant. The rest of it was BS. He wants to know why the Mayor told him that City Council does not care to know about coal ash in Northampton County's Roanoke River. He asked if he had any sense of duty to the people of this city.

Mayor Doughtie interrupted Mr. McDaniel to say this was not a conversation, it was for him to say what he wanted to say in three minutes. He has about 2-1/2 minutes left.

Mr. McDaniel said he thinks the Mayor lied to him because coal ash in the river could negatively affect the canal walk watch he got for a steal. Mayor Pro Tem's husband is a realtor and possibly involved in the sale of an old sewing factory on the river to a

clown from out of town who claims to steal coal ash polluted river water. Sport over there called during the meeting to cancel the meeting when Phil Hux made a deal in here pro quo that he wouldn't read a letter to Vista Green one night in front of y'all if he gave me a meeting. Well, he met me and threatened him with the capital police because he asked for a soil sample out of the river. He stalled him for eight months because he wrote the paper mill HB 467 which is a get a jail free card for the paper mill. Halifax County has ruined Northampton County's river. As far as Vernon Bryant letting the County Commissioners and Ms. Bryant being the Mayor Pro Tem that's too much juice under one roof for him.

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

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, seconded by Councilman Jackson, and unanimously carried to approve the November 6, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting minutes as drafted.

### **Committee Appointments**

#### **Library Advisory Committee**

City Clerk Storey stated Melissa Dixon has submitted a volunteer application for the Library Advisory Committee. Ms. Dixon is eligible and there is currently a vacancy on the committee with a term that expires in May 2027. She reported City Council took a ballot vote earlier and Ms. Dixon received a unanimous vote to be appointed.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, seconded by Councilman Jackson, and unanimously carried to appoint Melissa Dixon to the Library Advisory Committee.

### **New Business**

#### **Presentation of Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Audit Report**

Mr. Gregory Redman, CPA presented and summarized the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 audit report. (On file in Clerk's Office). He highlighted the following:

- Independent Auditor's Report
  - Summarizes his responsibilities, City's responsibilities and summarizes the report.
  - Unmodified Opinion - No significant deficiencies, no departures from generally accepted accounting principles that need to be reported.
- General Fund Balance Sheet
  - Cash in Bank as of June 30, 2024 was \$12,375,750 (Unrestricted)
  - Restricted (Police funds) was \$249,045.

- Unassigned Fund Balance
  - Unassigned fund balance - \$11.8M which is approximately 67% of the City's annual General Fund Expenditures. The State requires a minimum of 25%. Other cities similar in size to Roanoke Rapids have an average of 47%. He noted in 2021, the City was at 26%; it increased to 39%, then 50% and now 67%. The City is in a good financial position.
- Revenues and Expenditures
  - General Fund Total Revenues - \$21.4M (18.7M last year)
  - General Fund Total Expenditures - \$18.2M (same as last year)
  - Revenue over expenditures - \$2.8M (net income). This includes the \$2M sale of the Theatre at the end of the year. Without that it still was a \$800,000 increase.
  - Grant Revenues –\$420,000 in CDBG and Downtown Revitalization funds.
- Budget and Actual
  - Revenues and Expenditure compared with the budget. He noted if there were any negative numbers it would mean they overspent in the budget, and it would be a violation of state statutes. There are no negative numbers, which means the finance department kept expenses in line with the budget and budget amendments are being approved by City Council.
- Changes in Long-term Liabilities
  - Direct borrowings – Beginning Balance \$1M with a balance of \$742,000 at the end of the year.
  - Tax increment special revenue bonds – Started at \$7.6M; end of the year \$6.8M.
  - Total Pension (LEO) – Ending balance \$1.5M and Net Pension (LGERS) - Ending balance \$5.5M. These monies are already set aside with the State; the City sends these payments monthly.
  - Total OPEB liability (Projection of healthcare for retirees) – Ending balance is \$6.4M.
- Total Revenues
  - Total Property Tax Collection - \$8.7M
  - Total Revenues - \$21M
- Analysis of Current Tax Levy
  - The City had a 99.21% property tax collection rate. Very good percentage.
- Schedule of Expenditures of Federal and State Funds
  - Federal - \$508,638 – US Dept. Health & Human Services, CDBG, US Dept. of Justice
  - State - \$612,493 – Powell Bill, State Directed Grant, Aid to Public Libraries Grant & Senior Center General Purpose Grant

Mr. Redman stated overall there was an increase in fund balance, a healthy fund balance of 67%; the City should be commended for that. They do not have any additional recommendations. They did quite a bit of work this year because the City has a new software conversion. They do not have any issues with the conversion or the internal controls of the Finance Department. They did not have any material findings.

He added they have to do separate work on the grants to make sure they are complying with the compliance requirements from the agency providing the money. There were no issues or significant deficiencies to report.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, seconded by Councilman Bell, and unanimously carried to accept the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 audit report as submitted.

City Manager Traynham thanked Mr. Redman and his staff for remaining committed to working with the City of Roanoke Rapids. There are many communities across the state that struggle to find an auditor and they have not completed audits because of this. His firm has served the City for many years and served them well.

**Consideration of Budget Ordinance No. 2024.38 NCRPA New Initiatives Grant**

In Finance Director Johnson’s absence, City Manager Traynham reported the Parks & Recreation Department received a \$1,000 grant to purchase materials to begin offering wood carving classes, meetings and programs. She presented the following budget ordinance for their consideration:

**Ordinance No. 2024.38  
CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS  
BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS:**

**SECTION 1.** The following additional amounts are hereby appropriated for the operation of City Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025, according to the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES**

Fund Balance – P&R – NCRPA New Initiatives Grant	
<b>Project Revenues – NCRPA New Initiatives Grant</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
<b>FUND PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>

**SECTION 2.** The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:







the RC2 Grant to develop a strategic plan.

**Consideration of Budget Ordinance No. 2024.40 – Additional Christmas Bonus**

City Manager Traynham said this afternoon she was approached by members of City Council about increasing a benefit for the City employees. In order for that to happen a budget ordinance has been prepared, Ordinance No. 2024.40, for their consideration. She explained the Mayor and City Council came together this afternoon and sought to increase the City employees’ Christmas bonus. The City budgets for \$250 and she was asked about increasing the amount by \$100 for each eligible employee. The \$250 bonus is currently in transaction with the bank so there will be a new transaction for \$100 by the end of next week.

Mayor Pro Tem Bryant asked about part-time employees. City Manager Traynham replied permanent part-time employees do receive the Christmas bonus.

City Manager Traynham said they can utilize some of the FY 2024 revenue surplus funds. She presented the following ordinance for their consideration:

**Ordinance No. 2024.40  
CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS  
BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS:**

**SECTION 1.** The following additional amounts are hereby appropriated for the operation of City Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, according to the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES**

Fund Balance – To Fund Salaries & Benefits	
<b>Project Revenues – To Fund Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 17,610</b>
<b>(Offset with FY24 revenue surplus to fund balance)</b>	
<b>FUND PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 17,610</b>

**SECTION 2.** The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES**

Funding to General Fund – Salaries & Benefits for City Employees	
<b>Project Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 17,610</b>
<b>FUND PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 17,610</b>

**SECTION 3.** This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

---

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2024.40 to increase the Christmas bonus to \$350.

### City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham thanked City Council on behalf of the employees for their consideration to increase the Christmas bonus.

She reported staff has been diligently preparing for the following holiday events coming up this weekend.

- **Christmas on the Avenue** – Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 6-9 p.m. at Centennial Park. There will be also be events at the Chamber of Commerce and 1026 Roanoke Avenue. There will be a hayride that will transport people back and forth. Activities include the tree lighting, food trucks, face painting, etc.
- **Christmas at the Canal** – Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. at the Canal Museum. Light refreshments, crafts, pictures with the Grinch will be available and Wacky Wally will be there with balloon animals.
- **Christmas Parade** – Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 p.m. on Roanoke Avenue.

City Manager Traynham stated Fire Chief Patrick has been informed that the second fire truck is ready for inspection. This month a few of the truck committee members will travel to Florida to inspect the truck. They look forward to receiving the truck into NC at the upfit vendor sometime in early 2025.

City Manager Traynham also announced the BARC Employee Christmas Luncheon and Annual Service Awards will be held on Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. in the Kirkwood Adams Community Center.

### Other Business/Closed Session

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Bell and unanimously carried to go into closed session to discuss a Personnel Matter as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6).

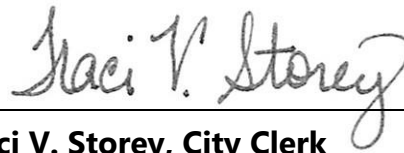
*Minute Book Pages 21865 - 21873 contain Minutes and General Account of a Closed Session which have been sealed until such time as public inspection of those minutes would not frustrate the purpose of the Closed Session.*

**Adjournment**

City Council reconvened in open session.

Motion was made by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant and unanimously carried to grant a 5% raise to City Manager Traynham.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Stainback and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

**Approved by Council Action on: January 7, 2025**