



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 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
Carmen Johnson, Finance Director
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director
Harold Phillips, Interim Police Chief
Kristyn Anderson, Planning & Development Director
Kelly Daughtry, Parks & Recreation Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Doughtie provided an invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie 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 Bell, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda as presented.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Mr. Jerry McDaniel

Mr. McDaniel stated what they have here is a failure to communicate. He said to Mayor Doughtie, “the Lord created a monster like me to expose a monster like you.” He thinks he is unfit to be mayor and asked him to resign immediately. Anyone else up there who can’t spell coal ash, should do the same thing.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, seconded by Councilman Jackson, and unanimously carried to approve the January 21, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting minutes as drafted.

New Business

Consideration of Asphalt Overlay Contractor Bid Award for FY2024-2025 Project

Public Works Director Chalker reported they received solicited bids on January 30, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the first floor conference room at City Hall. The following three qualified bids were received by: Rightmyer Machine Rentals, Inc., Fred Smith Company, and S.T. Wooten Company. He referred to the bid tabulation sheet enclosed in their packets. (Bid tabulation sheet is on file in the Clerk’s Office). He noted staff recommends the lowest responsive bid by Rightmyer Machine Rentals, Inc.

Mayor Pro Tem Bryant questioned if the contractors were all bidding on the same thing since there was such a wide disparity in price. Public Works Director Chalker replied yes, they all received the same bid package.

Public Works Director Chalker read the bids.

- Rightmyer Machine Rentals, Inc. - \$385,190.00
- Fred Smith Company - \$750,750.00
- S.T. Wooten Company - \$538,475.00

Councilman Bell asked the difference in a double seal and single seal on the asphalt. Public Works Director Chalker replied he was not sure if he knew the technical difference but assumed they would seal it twice.

Mayor Doughtie questioned the significant difference in the amount of tonnage between Rightmyer Machine Rentals, Inc. at 2963 and Fred Smith Company at 3755;

S.T. Wooten Company was like Rightmyer at 2975. Public Works Director Chalker replied it was an estimate based on how they calculated the asphalt.

Mayor Doughtie asked if the low bid fit in with what the City had budgeted. Public Works Director Chalker replied it did not; it is higher. He said they have \$280,000 budgeted. They have the raw information in the bid sheet as to how much they bid on each street so staff will have to pick \$280,000 worth of street surfacing. He stated this was a typical thing they do each time they received these bids.

Councilman Bell asked what were the key priorities on the check list to help determine which ones they would pick. Public Works Director Chalker said there was a lot that goes into that determination. The worst streets in the worst shape are going to be kept at the top of the list. Some streets are not far from getting below the asphalt and the cracks are really wide. Especially after the latest weather events they've had, they can feel it in the ride on street as soon as the snow melts; it will be bumpy. Councilman Bell asked if erosion was greatest factor in causing the damage. Public Works Director Chalker replied yes, that was part of it. Water intrusion into the base of the asphalt is a big deal. He also noted there were a few streets that have never been resurfaced; it has the original asphalt in places such as cul de sacs.

Motion was made by Councilman Strickland, seconded by Councilman Bell, and unanimously carried to award a contract to the lowest responsive bidder and direct the City Manager to execute a contract with Rightmyer Machine Rentals, Inc. for the FY 2024-2025 asphalt paving project.

Consideration of Options to Address Crossing Guards at Roanoke Rapids Graded School District Schools

City Attorney Davis reminded City Council that back in September there were some public concerns about school crossing guards and whether the current system was the best possible system for making sure the children crossing public streets were kept as safe as they could be. He stated when dealing with two public boards, it makes it difficult to have these discussions. He, City Manager Traynham and Captain Baggett met with the school back before the end of the calendar year. They discussed some different options. As they are getting into the latter half of the fiscal year and the first part of the calendar year, they will soon be looking at budgets for the City relatively soon. He wanted to bring this issue back to City Council's attention for some direction and discuss a proposal that he has before they take it back to the school district to begin negotiations. Even if City Council agrees with some or all he has to say, he was not asking for them to make a motion to approve a contract they have not seen because he hasn't drafted it yet. He and staff are looking for some guidance from City Council as far as moving forward.

He said the last time they talked about this in September, the RRGSD had made a proposal; he did not believe the RRGSD Board had passed it at that point. Their proposal was that the RRGSD would hire a third-party contractor to provide crossing guard services and wanted the City to cover some portion of that. City Council rejected that proposal. The current system involves four schools where there are normally off-duty police officers providing those crossing guard services. They ask off-duty officers to voluntarily sign up for this duty. He stated that it may have been a good system 10-15 years ago, but in the modern workplace this type of duty is not as attractive as it once was due to officers wanting to spend time with family or doing other things. When the school year began there were issues as far as coverage. As he stated back in September, the City has no duty to provide these services to the school. That doesn't mean they should not consider trying to help another public board within the city or that they shouldn't have concerns for the children crossing the streets and the families driving through those areas. They have a police department in this city and one of their functions is public safety. While they have no liability for anything that would occur there if there were no crossing guards, he believes it is a public safety concern and is something City Council should consider.

Attorney Davis said there is a substantial part of the city where city residents who pay city taxes do not get the benefit of city schools because of the way the jurisdictional lines are drawn. That could possibly be a concern for City Council and the citizens of Roanoke Rapids.

He said last year former City Police Chief Guyant brought to City Council's attention the ability under the NC general statutes to designate traffic control officers. Under that statute, traffic control officers are not law enforcement officers. They are non-law enforcement officers who are designated under the statute and get powers to control traffic. As employees of a jurisdiction, they could be given uniforms or vehicles with wraps to give them some kind of appearance of authority to the public. The public would be required to obey their traffic directions and if they didn't, they could be subject to arrest or citation for breaking the law.

Attorney Davis proposed City Council consider creating two new City positions in the upcoming budget. The positions would be part-time traffic control officers. They would be designated under the NC statute and would not be law enforcement officers. They would not comply with law enforcement retirement and other associated requirements. They would help bolster the current system of off-duty law enforcement officers to make sure there is coverage of those intersections. They could try it out on a trial basis for a year through a negotiated agreement with the RRGSD.

He said the RRGSD has liability concerns with hiring their own crossing guards. In

his opinion, when an off-duty law enforcement officer is working as a crossing guard and if an incident occurs, at that point the officer becomes an officer of the City of Roanoke Rapids. If that officer is injured, it is the City's workman's compensation claim, despite that he is off duty. If that officer acts outside his authority and does something that makes him liable under the show of authority with their badge, that is still the City's liability. If they create traffic control officers, they are City employees and on duty with the City, he did not believe the City would be taking on any more liability. In fact, because these would be part-time employees and things like workman's compensation are based on wages, if they are not compensated as much, the liability would not be as much. Rather than the school having to hire these individuals, this may quiet their liability concerns. In exchange for that, he suggests the City ask the RRGSD to fund the full costs of those positions. The City would not have a change in liability and the RRGSD would have coverage. The City would not have to budget funds to pay for the school's crossing guards. The RRGSD would continue to pay the off-duty officers and the costs for these new crossing guards which would bolster the current system. This could be a compromise that would be fair to both sides and it communicates to the public that the City understands the concerns. Regardless of what they have to do and can do, the City is trying to work towards some solution that everybody can live with.

Attorney Davis said he would like to know their thoughts and if they wanted him and the City Manager to start negotiating something, he would reach out to the RRGSD and their attorney. He stated drafts would likely go back and forth, and before anything was agreed upon, it would have to go to both public boards and both boards would have to pass it. He said at this point they were not binding themselves to anything.

Councilman Stainback asked if Captain Baggett had a recommendation after meeting with the RRGSD board. Attorney Davis replied he believed Captain Baggett was on board with this idea.

Councilman Stainback asked if they were looking at traffic control officers at Manning and Chaloner, and a police officer at Belmont. Attorney Davis said that is what they were thinking. In discussions with the school system, everyone agrees that every school is important, but the needs of Belmont are the most acute for him. Belmont is a school where the youngest children go and its location coming from one side is from a more rural area with very few stoplights or stop signs to slow traffic down on that road. As they negotiate, the priority different crossings are given is something the RRGSD needs to have input in. He suggested a tier or priority system could be included in the agreement. He would also like to include a good system for communication between the RRGSD and the City. Many people assume that everyone

knows what the school schedule is and pays attention to it. That is not necessarily the case when you do not have school-aged children. There should be a designated individual with the RRGSD and the City that coordinates with each other to make sure they are on the same schedule such as for early releases.

Councilman Stainback asked if the two crossing guards would be allowed to park police cars at the schools with blue lights running. Attorney Davis replied yes, he believed they could figure that out. He said they could possibly use some of the older police vehicles as a show of authority. The public is required to obey them in directing traffic just as they do a law enforcement officer.

Mayor Pro Tem Bryant asked if the off-duty officers now were being paid by the RRGSD. Attorney Davis replied yes, they have a line in their budget for this. That is why if this protection is being provided specifically to the schools and essentially these traffic control officer positions were being created for their benefit, he thinks the RRGSD would need to pay for that. The City is helping them come to a solution and they are helping the City come to a solution for the public as well. Both entities need to work towards a solution. The nature of the City's ability to have a police department and the Police Chief's ability to designate traffic control officers under the NC general statute, the City needs to take the first step.

Mayor Doughtie asked if the traffic control officers would be under the City's liability insurance even though they are part-time. Attorney Davis replied yes. He restated that even those officers working now in that capacity are off duty, the second something happens, his position is at that point they become the City's issue. He does not believe the City is getting any new liability by doing this and it helps solve that problem. Mayor Doughtie said even though these traffic control officers are under the City's policy, the RRGSD would pay. Attorney Davis stated that is what he would suggest, but all of this is subject to drafting an agreement. He was sure the RRGSD would have some input in these pieces too.

Motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to enter negotiations with the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District regarding the creation of City traffic control officers to serve as crossing guards at RRGSD schools.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham reminded City Council about the upcoming Strategic Planning & Economic Development Workshop with Hayes Group Consulting which is

funded by the RC2 Grant award. It is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19th at the Chaloner Recreation Center, tentatively from 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

She reported the Fire Department will participate in their annual live burn training exercises this month at their training ground on Hinson Street beginning next week. Three members of the Fire Department will travel to Florida Wednesday through Friday this week to conduct the final inspection of the fire engine. This truck was funded using funds that were offset from the American Rescue Plan. It was the first truck ordered but the second one to arrive. Once the inspection is completed, the truck will be sent to Rocky Mount for equipment upfit before arriving in Roanoke Rapids. She said they may have noticed an ambulance at the fire station. The Fire Department is conducting Emergency Vehicle Driving (EVD) training this month as part of an EMT certification program offered by Halifax Community College. They are also gearing up for the annual Veteran's Breakfast to be held in May.

City Manager Traynham said the Parks & Recreation Department held a basketball game for members of the Adult Day Care group that visit the TJ Davis Recreation Center on a weekly basis. It was a memorable experience for all those involved. Staff went out of their way to make it special for these participants. They are discussing additional options for special needs programming. She announced the following February events:

- Valentine's Cupid Hoop Shoot at TJ Davis on February 12th
- Wood Carving Classes at the Senior Center will begin February 20th
- Ping Pong Tournament at TJ Davis on February 21st

She reported the new Toyota dealership located outside the city limits on Premier Blvd. but in the City's zoning jurisdiction, received its Certificate of Occupancy. A pre-application meeting has been requested with the Development Review Committee to review a proposed 7-Eleven store at the site that was formerly Carolina BBQ (intersection of Old Farm Road and Julian Allsbrook Hwy).

City Manager Traynham said the MAPS Group who were contracted to work on the Employee Position Classification and Compensation Study is in the middle of their assessment. They have received all the surveys, and the next step is to conduct the desk audit interviews with representative employees in each position classification. Interviews will begin the week of February 12th. The City anticipates receiving the recommended pay plan with proposed implementation cost estimates in March. A presentation will be made to City Council during a regular meeting likely in April.

She announced the fiscal year 2026 budget planning is officially underway. During

the month of February, departments will be preparing their budget requests including all departmental and capital expenditures to be submitted to the City Manager and Finance Director by Monday, March 3rd. They will schedule City Council Work Sessions in April and will have a proposed budget calendar for them at the next meeting outlining the budget procedures up to adoption on June 17, 2025.

City Manager Traynham stated Public Works staff are recovering from January's winter storms. They had some new employees that this was their first snow experience with cleaning and treating roadways. She said the Public Works Department did an outstanding job in getting the streets cleared during those events and making operations for City facilities, schools and community destinations safe for travel. Loose leaf collection continues through February; alleyways are usually the last to be collected.

She reported the Police Department recently hired three new employees. Two cadets will attend BLET at Nash Community College starting this month and Officer Stephenson who was certified is now in field training. The department is looking forward to welcoming new Police Chief Lawrence Wiggins. He will begin his full-time employment on March 10th due to his relocation from South Carolina.

Other Business/Closed Session

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Jackson, and unanimously carried to go into Closed Session to discuss a legal matter with the City Attorney as allowed by NCGS143-318.11 (a)(3).

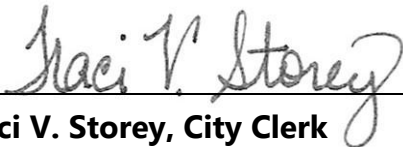
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Minute Book Pages 21898 - 21905 contain Minutes and General Account of a Closed Session which have been sealed until such time as public inspection of those minutes would not frustrate the purpose of the Closed Session.

Open Session/Adjournment

City Council returned to open session. No action was taken.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: February 18, 2025