



# Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 5:15 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

**Present:** Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor  
Ernest C. Bobbitt)  
Suetta S. Scarbrough)  
Wayne Smith)

**Council Members**

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager  
Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney  
Traci Storey, City Clerk  
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director  
Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager  
Bobby Martin, Interim Police Chief  
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director  
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director  
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

**Absent:** Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem  
Carol H. Cowen, Council Member  
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief

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

**Adoption of Business Agenda**

Mayor Doughtie asked Council members about any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening.

There being no conflicts, a motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for March 19, 2019 as presented.

**Public Comment (Unscheduled)**

**Mary Duncan**

Ms. Duncan on behalf of the Roanoke Valley Girls' Softball League thanked the City and the Halifax County Tourism Development Authority for the construction of the brick and mortar concession stand at Chockoyotte Park. Although they were hoping it was going to be open last year, things happen, but they are ready to open it for the 2019 season. She invited everyone to the grand opening of the concession stand which will be April 15<sup>th</sup>. They do not have a set time yet but she will notify the City Clerk when they have the first game scheduled. They are excited about the concession stand. Wendy Robinson is the concessions manager and she is quite conscientious over the products and the prices. They try to be reasonable and offer a variety of items. Some people like Pepsi and some people prefer Coke. They will do their best to take the needs and the demands of their youth at the park. They have coolers from both agencies. They have also applied with Environmental Health and will have the necessary permits for the ballpark food such as hot dogs and nachos.

She said last Fall she came before Council about a new field at Chockoyotte between the pavilion and Field 1. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon was very helpful and laid it out and showed it would have to be a really small field and would not be as feasible as what they wanted so the plans were tabled. Now they understand there is the possibility of land acquisition at Ledgerwood which would eliminate the soccer fields at Chockoyotte and move them to Ledgerwood allowing them more fields at Chockoyotte. They would have rigid fences out back rather than the wind fences. She stated everything happens for a reason. She said when things happen and the City is able to enlarge Ledgerwood, they would be back and request permission again to work with the Halifax Tourism Authority, Economic Development and the Roanoke Rapids Parks & Recreation to apply for grants in order to build fields out there. Once they can get the park up and running, they will be able to host tournaments. That is their ultimate goal, to be able to compete with some of the other areas and have tournaments in town.

Ms. Duncan stated the batting cages are in progress so they were excited over that. They held registration and evaluations at the first of the month. The coach's meeting is set for the latter part of the week and they will announce teams by Monday. She thanked Council for supporting the Roanoke Valley Girls' Softball League and hopes to see them at the park on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the March 5, 2019 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as written.

## New Business

### **Resolution Adopting the 2019 Local Government Agencies General Records Retention & Disposition Schedule**

City Clerk Storey stated the local retention and disposition schedules are a tool for the employees of local governments across the state to use when managing the records in their offices. It lists records commonly found in local governmental offices, and gives an assessment of their value by indicating when, and if, those records should be destroyed. These schedules are an agreement between local government offices and the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, and as the inventory and schedule that the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources is directed by G.S. §121-5 (c) and G.S. §132-8 to provide.

She said the 2019 Local Government Agencies General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule, which is available for review in the Clerk's Office, must be approved by City Council before employees are permitted to destroy records according to the schedule. The following resolution adopting the 2019 Local Government Agencies General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule has been provided to Council for consideration:

### **RESOLUTION NO.: 2019.01 Resolution Adopting the 2019 Local Government Agencies General Records Retention & Disposition Schedule**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Roanoke Rapids City Council hereby adopts the 2019 Local Government Agencies General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule, as drafted by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources in accordance with the provisions of Chapters 121 and 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes, dated March 1, 2019, a copy of which is on file in the Office of the City Clerk.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this schedule is to remain in effect from the date of approval until it is reviewed and updated.

**ADOPTED** this 19<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2019.

ATTEST:

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Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

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Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2019.01 adopting the 2019 Local Government Agencies General Records Retention & Disposition Schedule.

### City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer stated as they work on next years' budget, he anticipates the upcoming 2019-2020 budget year will continue to be one of relatively flat revenue growth and a continuing need to control expenses to the utmost extent possible. He knows of or anticipates expense increases in some of their obligations, such as pension contributions, health insurance and loan debt service, which will impact the budget preparation as well.

He said they are not planning on recommending any increase in the City's property tax rate, nor are they planning to utilize any undesignated funds to balance the budget. Major capital purchases will probably be very limited in next year's budget. They are planning to maintain employee monetary and health benefits to the fullest extent possible. As most services offered by the City are labor intensive and demands for our services do not typically fluctuate in response to economic cycles, we are not planning any employee layoffs as well. With the exception of expenses beyond their control, we anticipate departmental operating budgets to either remain at or below current levels.

He stated the City has been the recipient of some increased commercial development this past year, but they are being prudent by not preparing a budget dependent on a large increase of ad valorem revenue from this development. Retail sales amounts have also increased in the past year but again not enough for them to plan for a large jump in revenue.

City Manager Scherer said as they work through the budget preparation and City Council's review process, they will look hard at making the existing programs more efficient. In addition, the City's budget process is structured to allocate their limited financial resources rationally and avoid hasty decisions that could have a major negative impact in future years. He presented the following proposed budget calendar for their review and comment:

- April 5<sup>th</sup> Departmental Drafts due to Finance Director
- Week of April 15<sup>th</sup> Draft Reviews
- NLT April 30<sup>th</sup> Provide draft budget to City Council for review
- May 7<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. Budget Work Session with City Council
  - Police, Fire & Planning Departments

- May 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:15 p.m. Budget Work Session with City Council
  - Public Works, Parks & Rec, Administration (*General, Human Resources & Main Street*)
- Week of May 13<sup>th</sup> Additional Department Work Session (*if needed*)
- May 21<sup>st</sup> Presentation of recommended Budget & Budget Message to City Council
- June 4<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing on Budget at City Council Meeting
- June 18<sup>th</sup> 2019-2020 Budget Ordinance Presented to City Council for final review and adoption

### **Finance Director's Report**

Finance Director Etheridge gave the following financial report for the month ending February 28, 2019. She said during the month, the Finance Department issued 84 purchase orders, wrote 81 payroll checks, processed 326 direct deposit vouchers and 268 accounts payable checks.

She reported the operating statement for the month of February shows the General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$12,209,433. The percentage of actual monies collected of adopted budgeted figures total 66.9%. Year to date expenditures totaled \$11,607,716. The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures total 63.6%. After the month of February, 66.72% of the budget year has been completed. As a result, year to date revenues exceeded expenditures by \$601,716.87. She said the last material allotment of Ad Valorem Tax Revenue has been recognized this reporting month, in February, for January collections. After this time period, we must review and watch our expenditures very closely in order to end the year with a favorable revenue to expenditure variance; therefore, not incurring a loss on operations at June 30.

Finance Director Etheridge noted the City still has debt service requirements upcoming for the Series 2017A and 2017B loan repayments. We all have to be mindful with day-to-day expenditures going into 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to remain favorable to budget as we end the fiscal year. This is the time of fiscal year where we need to decrease our spending levels.

Mayor Doughtie asked if she had seen the interest rates go up where the City has their money. Finance Director Etheridge replied it has gone up slightly but not materially. He said it has in right many places. She said it was because of the type of fund the City has it in. He asked if they had any options. She said they could look into that.

Councilman Smith asked when would the next Sales & Use Tax money come in. Finance Director Etheridge said it comes in monthly around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. City Manager Scherer reminded him that it is two months behind so mid-April they will receive February's Sales & Use Tax.

Mayor Doughtie stated the \$600,000 looks real good and asked how the City was doing. She replied this report looks very good but they ebb and flow again based on the general and administrative requirements. In May, they are required to pay another quarterly loan payment for the Theatre. They also have several interlocal agreements that are due in addition to the regular overhead and operational expenses.

Mayor Doughtie asked if they are starting to get anything on health insurance yet; he knows it changes a lot. City Manager Scherer said they received some preliminary information of a slight increase, but nothing major. Councilman Smith asked if that increase was for family coverage or for the employees. City Manager Scherer replied they were just anticipating the employees, but it is all preliminary.

Mayor Doughtie asked if the \$600,000 was relative to where they were last year at this time. Finance Director Etheridge said they were right on track as of the same time last year with the year-to-date spending. The month-to-date was slightly higher last year, but they have also had a few installment finance payments and other things that were made within this month that brings down the period to date balance.

## Departmental Reports

### Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Kearney presented the February report. During the month they did not have any new hires or take any applications. There are several openings due to retirements. All advertisements were done in house because the City tries to promote from within if there are people available to fill those positions. At the next Council meeting when they have the Special Recognitions, they will see all the people promoted within the departments due to those retirements. They had a retirement in the Fire Department and in Public Works which has a trickle down affect. Once they promote, then they end up with positions open to the public.

She said she has been working on the Open Enrollment spreadsheets for the health insurance as well as the vehicle and property insurance and should be getting some information from vendors on those rates for next year.

She announced the BARC Fish Fry fundraiser they have for the scholarship program will be Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at ProBuild.

Human Resources Manager Kearney thanked the family of former Mayor Lloyd Andrews, who passed away, for asking people to make donations to BARC in lieu of flowers. She said that was very nice because the donations go back to the City employees.

Councilman Smith asked if the City was down any Police Officers. She replied two, but one is getting ready to graduate. Interim Police Chief Martin will discuss that in his report. She noted that they filled the open position they had on the P.A.C.E Team so that is full and all in house positions have been filled.

Councilman Smith asked if the only position left was the Code Enforcement Officer. Human Resources Manager Kearney replied that have interviewed for that position and she believes he is working a notice so they cannot make that public yet.

### **Police**

Interim Police Chief Martin presented the department's February report. They have filled the P.A.C.E Team with Officers Joe DeSare and Brandon Council. Officer Council was the most recent promotion/lateral transfer to that position. That team is now complete and they should have them up and running in the next three weeks. They have new officers that will be coming out of training and will be right at full staff other than two positions which they are trying to fill now. He does have a pool of candidates that have submitted applications that he will be pulling from to fill those two positions.

He reported the department has addressed at least 1,900 calls in the month of February and have also picked up foot patrols in various locations such as the parks. The work done at Emry Park has helped them tremendously where now officers can see if people are there doing things they are not supposed to be doing.

Councilman Smith stated he had seen a lot of the officers out on the street and it looks good to see them stopping people and doing the work they are doing. He appreciates what they are doing.

Interim Police Chief Martin updated Council on Animal Control Officer Wilson. He said he came back to work today. In his opinion, Officer Wilson has a long way to go for recovery. He has a doctor's appointment on Friday and they will decide then whether he will have surgery for the infection of his appendix. They will know more after that.

He reported the department has also addressed a lot of the panhandlers. They are getting ready for summer time and around I-95 they have picked up a lot of traffic

where they have panhandlers. Officers are using either G.S. 20-125 for solicitation or the City's Ordinance to their advantage in dealing with the panhandlers. They try to be patient with them and give them a warning, but if they have to go back and do anything repetitive that is when they will cite them and go from there.

### **Planning & Development**

Planning & Development Director Lasky presented the report for February. She said throughout the month of February the department saw an increase in construction value with the permitting of several different projects such as the McDonald's on Julian Allsbrook Hwy. and the Dollar General store which was subject to an appeal last month. They have been getting some inquiries about the reconstruction or improvement of existing businesses which is a positive sign. This time of year and especially with the rain, it has been a little slow at the construction sites themselves. They are also reviewing plans for a mini-storage business.

She said they were in the final stages of hiring another Building Inspector and the department was looking forward to bringing on another inspector to help Brian Duhadaway with plan reviews and the inspection workload.

On Thursday night the Planning Board will meet and the public hearing subject to that meeting will come before City Council in April. It is a Conditional Use request which is a quasi-judicial hearing so if they hear anything about a dart room on 310 Roanoke Avenue, remember to keep any conversations brief and to disclose any information they may receive at the public hearing.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked if the new owners of the old bowling alley property plan to refurbish it as a bowling alley. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied she understands that to be the initial intent but there is some due diligence that needs to take place first. They have pulled a building permit for some of the interior remodel and some of the common spaces but she did not have any detail on the actual bowling alley equipment. Right now they are mainly working in the common areas and offices.

Mayor Doughtie asked if she knew any time frame on the Fowler property on Tenth Street. She replied she had not heard anything from Ms. Fowler recently but she does know she is continuing to move forward. She was not sure if the property has been sold at this point between Ms. Fowler and Halifax County. Ms. Fowler has indicated she intends to move forward immediately with the resurfacing of the specific area especially next to DrugCo with the water and fencing. Attorney Chichester added Ms. Fowler is moving forward with it but there is a surveying problem that have to be corrected.



Planning & Development Director said they signed off on one survey for it but during the legal review there were some technical issues. A lot of that comes down to the fact the property has been subdivided so many times over the course of 50 years.

Councilman Smith thanked Planning & Development Director and staff and Public Works for doing such a good job with moving cars out of town and to keep it going.

### **Parks & Recreation**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon presented the February report. He reported the department has removed 50 trees from Emry Park and it has really opened it up around the picnic shelter and playground. The next step will be to increase lighting and they will be working with Public Works for that. They also vinyl sided the concession stand and the picnic shelter.

He announced the Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans Memorial at Veterans Park will be completed by the end of the month. The covered batting cages at Ledgerwood have been delivered and the site prep work has begun, but he did not have a completion date. He stated the City's parks and athletic fields are in full operations now that Spring is here and all youth sports have begun.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported the wet weather has delayed the progress at the Chaloner Recreation Center. The project continues to make slow progress. Per discussions with Mr. Rightmyer and the City's engineer, they are looking at May 1<sup>st</sup> at the earliest to begin the construction phase. So the original date of opening on May 31<sup>st</sup> will now have to be pushed back due to the weather conditions they've had. He was working to have an estimated completion date for Council and will bring that back to them.

He said the Roanoke Canal Half Marathon scheduled for March 30<sup>th</sup> is going well; everything is in place. They were looking forward to the race and it is always a special event for the City.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon added he has been working with Jay Carlisle on the Iraq Afghanistan memorial to be placed in Veterans Park. Mr. Carlisle has talked with Ms. Toni Outland (who spear-headed the project) and she would like to put some type of unveiling together. She is working with him and Mr. Carlisle on that and once a date has been set he will let Council know.

### **Public Works**

Public Works Director Chalker gave the report for the month of February. He reported the department is up to 414, 55-gallon bags in their Clean Up campaign. He said they

were transitioning from leaf season to grass cutting season. They were giving citizens a little grace period right now before sending letters out due to some do not want to cut their grass right away in the spring time; they want it to get a little established. This was a good time to caution the public to keep the grass cut in their yard and they would not hear from them.

He announced they have two projects going on at Public Works. They have built a new building to put the street sweeper in to protect it from the elements. And they have added on the rear of the Training Center which will give them an extra bathroom, an office and more storage.

He reported CSX is working on the railroad tracks at Public Works on Hinson Street. Several of the pipes were compromised during the flood of 2012 and they are removing the old pipes and putting new pipes in. The public may see lots of trucks and excavators, but it is not a City project; they are just using Public Works land and driveway for access.

Councilman Smith suggested other Council members should go see the new dump truck and new building at Public Works.

Mayor Doughtie asked when the new pothole machine would be in full swing. Public Works Director replied the pothole machine which they call the DuraPatch machine had to briefly go back to the dealership where they bought the dump truck from because the air-conditioner did not work. It was brand new and still under warranty. It was an electrical issue so it was important that it go back. It is due to leave out tomorrow morning to go to Dunn to get a load of emulsion, the black stuff they spray first. He has already made a list of places he would like to patch first. The department has made a few patches with it but there is a bit of a learning curve to make it smooth.

He also informed Council that they have a new dump truck in, but they did not put in the Rhino liner which is the bed liner material they put on the bottom of bed to protect it from salt. The other one was supposed to be delivered Friday, but it did not have the liner either so they kept it in order to spray it on there and then they will swap them out.

### **Fire**

Fire Chief Patrick was absent, no report was given.

### **Main Street**

Main Street Director Caudle presented her monthly report. She reported the two Historic Tax Credit workshops held the end of February were well attended. They had realtors, property owners, investors and contractors attend. They were able to spend time explaining the importance of the tax credits and how it can apply to individual

projects. They received a lot of great feedback so they are working to develop additional programming to support what those attendees would like. One would be more of a Q&A session with a CPA related to the federal and state historic tax credit program. A lot of the questions they received during the workshops were really tax related and that is on an individual basis whether its business or personal income tax projects. Bringing a CPA or IRS representative in would be beneficial. They are working with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to develop that programming. Also, they received a lot of questions about window replacements for historic properties. Everything from a boarded up or broken window and how to restore it in a cost effective manner without destroying the integrity of the historic property. Plus there were a lot of energy efficiency questions related to old, historic windows. There is an industry leader out of the Triad that is doing these types of workshops across the state with SHPO so they are working with them to schedule that as well. Main Street will continue this programming; it is free to stakeholders or anybody in the region is welcome to attend.

She updated Council on the success of the Shamrock Supper Stroll held this past Saturday. They had a sellout crowd and with the three different start times it did not seem too congested. The attendees and businesses were very pleased with the event. It was a first time supper stroll and through the feedback they received they plan to schedule another one in June and do this 3-4 times a year. She noted it was a good way for Main Street to raise funds, but these types of events get people into the businesses which is one of the organization's main goals to get feet on the street in the district. Two of the five businesses reported Saturday was the best sales day they have had since they opened last Fall and that includes the Christmas shopping season.

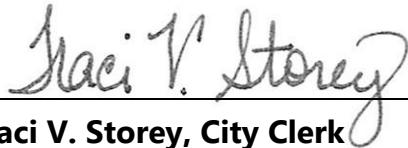
Main Street Director Caudle announced as of this afternoon there is a lease signed for 1025 Roanoke Avenue, formally the old uniform shop. She will meet with them on Thursday to start the permit process so she will wait until then or in next month's report to let them know who it is. She said it was a quality tenant and will be a great addition uptown.

Councilman Smith asked if she knew what had happened to the car dealership on Becker Drive. She replied that the business was closing and believed it is for sale, but did not know that with 100% certainty.

Mayor Doughtie asked if she knew about the one on Tenth Street that was going to be a car lot and then had a sold sign on it. She believed it was a car lot and it recently sold in the last six months, but she did not think they have identified what it would be.

**Other Business/Council Comments**

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

  
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**Traci V. Storey, City Clerk**

**Approved by Council Action on: April 2, 2019**