



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, November 19, 2019 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)
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, Police Chief
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

Absent: John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director

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 Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for November 19, 2019 as presented.

Special Recognitions

Mayor Doughtie read the following memorial resolution for Drewery Beale from the NC League of Municipalities:

*Resolution
of the
North Carolina League of Municipalities*

WHEREAS, the North Carolina League of Municipalities notes with sadness the death of Drewery Beale who faithfully served the City of Roanoke Rapids for 50 Years; and

WHEREAS, Drewery Beale made significant contributions to the City of Roanoke Rapids and its residents and contributed to the advancement of excellence in municipal government;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the membership of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, expresses their sorrow at the passing of Drewery Beale, former Mayor, City Council Member, Police Chief of the City of Roanoke Rapids, who made lasting contributions to municipal government and whose member we are proud to honor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be made a part of the permanent records of the North Carolina League of Municipalities and that copies be forwarded to the family of Drewery Beale and to the City of Roanoke Rapids.

/s/William Pitt, President

/s/Paul A Meyer, Executive Director

Mayor Doughtie read the following memorial resolution for Lloyd Andrews from the NC League of Municipalities and presented to his daughter, Susan Doughtie and her husband Mike:

*Resolution
of the
North Carolina League of Municipalities*

WHEREAS, the North Carolina League of Municipalities notes with sadness the death of Lloyd Andrews who faithfully served the City of Roanoke Rapids for 30 Years; and

WHEREAS, Lloyd Andrews made significant contributions to the City of Roanoke Rapids and its residents and contributed to the advancement of excellence in municipal government;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the membership of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, expresses their sorrow at the passing of Lloyd Andrews, former Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, City Council Member of the City of Roanoke Rapids, who made lasting contributions to municipal government and whose member we are proud to honor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be made a part of the permanent records of the North Carolina League of Municipalities and that copies be forwarded to the family of Lloyd Andrews and to the City of Roanoke Rapids.

/s/William Pitt, President

/s/Paul A Meyer, Executive Director

Mayor Doughtie read the following memorial resolution for Carol H. Cowen from the NC League of Municipalities and presented to her daughter, Eva Cowen with her son Skip and family friend Carol Dean:

*Resolution
of the
North Carolina League of Municipalities*

WHEREAS, the North Carolina League of Municipalities notes with sadness the death of Carol H. Cowen who faithfully served the City of Roanoke Rapids for 7 Years and 5 Months; and

WHEREAS, Carol H. Cowen made significant contributions to the City of Roanoke Rapids and its residents and contributed to the advancement of excellence in municipal government;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the membership of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, expresses their sorrow at the passing of Carol H. Cowen, former City Council Member of the City of Roanoke Rapids, who made lasting contributions to municipal government and whose member we are proud to honor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be made a part of the permanent records of the North Carolina League of Municipalities and that copies be forwarded to the family of Carol H. Cowen and to the City of Roanoke Rapids.

/s/William Pitt, President

/s/Paul A Meyer, Executive Director

Unscheduled Comment

Jeff Watson (Roanoke Valley United Way)

Mr. Watson stated he was speaking tonight not for the Library but for his role with the Roanoke Valley United Way. He has been on the United Way Board for six years and for the past three years he has been elected by his peers as President of the board. This morning he had the opportunity to speak to the City's supervisors and announced they were in the midst of a campaign among the City's employees to raise funds for the United Way. The Roanoke Valley United Way has one annual campaign

a year. They are a volunteer board and they have one part-time administrator that assists the board to carry out their mission. The volunteers are responsible for assessing community needs and determining how dollars are distributed. Agencies have to meet United Way standards and they try to minimize duplication of services. The funds this year will be going to seven different organizations. Those organizations include: American Red Cross, Boys & Girls Club, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts Council, Helpful Hearts and Hands, Northampton Home Delivered Meals and Roanoke Valley Adult Day Center. They represent both Halifax and Northampton Counties. Their campaign goal this year is to raise \$90,000. They serve a diverse group of agencies that range from working with the youth in the area to senior citizens. Any contribution made to the United Way is tax-deductible and would appreciate their support. He was not here to ask for public funding, but was asking for private funding. They are having a fund drive with the City employees through payroll deduction, but anyone may donate to the United Way. If anyone is interested they may send donations to P.O. Box 760, Roanoke Rapids, NC.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to approve the November 6, 2019 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as drafted.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer stated with the holiday shopping season beginning to ramp up, I want to emphasize to our citizens how much sense it makes to shop local for their holiday needs.

He asked how many times have you left Roanoke Rapids to buy something that was, in fact, available right here in town? Between our hardware stores, grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, clothing stores and other businesses, there are very few things that you can't get here in town. By the time you factor in fuel costs and your valuable time, you are often saving yourself money by shopping local.

He said every dollar you spend in Roanoke Rapids helps your neighbors and local businesses. Locally owned businesses have a long-term commitment to our community. They relate to their community's lifestyle and they have a vested interest in our city's quality of life. Equally important, local businesses are major contributors to our economy and tax base. In economic development efforts, existing successful businesses make a positive statement in new business recruitment.

He said talk about a win-win situation; Viable, healthy businesses are apt to remain in our City when we demonstrate constant and vibrant commitment to them. Supporting local businesses also demonstrates support of job creation and additional community cash flow. Every dollar you spend in Town helps your neighbors and local businesses. Do you really want to contribute our sales tax leakage to another city?

City Manager Scherer stated he wanted to challenge each of you to stop and think before you leave Roanoke Rapids to buy something. Ask yourself, "Can I get that here?" If the answer is yes, then stay in town and support your local businesses. Not only does shopping local help keep the coffers full, it also promotes a sense of community. As you go into local enterprises, they begin to recognize your face. They know who you are, and you begin to build relationships.

He said when you shop local, especially from a small business, you're not helping a CEO buy a 3rd holiday home, you're helping a little child get dance lessons or their team jersey and helping Mom and Dad put food on their table.

City Manager Scherer reported in other economic development activities, they continue to work with Ms. Scott and other entities on feasibility studies and other opportunities for business growth prospects at the I-95 interchanges. Ms. Scott is trying to arrange a meeting with the new Becker Village Mall owner for us to discuss his future plans for the property. He met with Halifax County representatives today to discuss development opportunities on delinquent City properties for their transformation to market rate housing with a positive cash flow situation for the City and County.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge gave the following financial report for the month ending October 31, 2019. She reported the General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$5,929,871. The percentage of actual monies collected of adopted budgeted figures total 35.0%. General Fund year to date expenditures totaled \$5,843,687. The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures total 34.5%. After the month of October 33.36% of the budget year has been completed. As a result, year-to-date revenues exceeded expenditures by \$86,184.

She stated the revenues received during the month of October are the first Ad Valorem Tax Revenue, Motor Vehicle Tax Collections (two months) and Sales & Use Tax Revenue (for August sales). She reported all regulatory database compliance for grant and awards systems on behalf of City departmental areas was completed in October, 2019. Annual Sales & Use tax reimbursement report was submitted to the NC Department of Revenue in October.

Finance Director Etheridge said the Operating Cash and Investment reserves have increased some after the receipt of Ad Valorem taxes, Sales & Use taxes, Utility Franchise taxes, and other revenue sources in September. These funding sources are still critical in offsetting revenue shortfalls during the months of July and August, 2019, as well as continuing operations for the remainder of fiscal year 2019-2020.

Mayor Doughtie asked if they were anticipating to receive any more money from Penn Credit. Finance Director Etheridge replied they were in the preliminary processes of building those accounts with the credit and collections company so that is underway. She clarified the \$390,000 is the amount that has been submitted to the company for collection, not what has been received.

Councilman Smith asked if the City had only collected 50% of the Ad Valorem Taxes. She replied that was correct. They are 5% behind collections at this time last year. They still have an opportunity in December and January when the statutory penalty date comes due. He asked if that is when the majority of the money comes in. She replied yes and they should see another allotment by January.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked what was the total collection rate last year. Finance Director Etheridge replied it was 98% from the audit.

Mayor Doughtie asked if this was the first time the City had used a collection agency. She replied yes, that was correct. He said the City is trying to capture some of that money that is levied against properties and asked if he was correct to assume some of it was from lawn cutting. City Manager Scherer replied yes that was part of it.

Departmental Reports

Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Kearney presented the October report. She said during the month of October and at the present time, they have openings for a part-time Library Assistant and Police Officers. She believes they are interviewing for the Library Assistant but have not filled it yet. The department received nine applications during the month and hired one Administrative Assistant for the Planning Department and hired a part-time Public Works Worker.

She reported the department held a Flu Shot Clinic on October 9th for City employees. She informed everyone that they will be listing the holiday events sponsored by the City on Channel 193. They will also begin to play Christmas music after Thanksgiving.

Human Resources Manager Kearney said on behalf of the City and Fire Department,

Kevin Hawkins' family would like to thank everyone including fellow employees who supported him during his illness and all the citizens who participated in all the fundraisers to help with medical expenses. She said he passed away on October 22, 2019 and he will surely be missed.

Police

Police Chief Martin presented the department's October report. He noted a correction to his written report under Community Projects. It should be "19" rather than "9" Community Projects during the month of October.

He announced they would be hosting their R.A.G.E. Wrestling event, which is their last major fundraiser for the Christmas for Kids, this Saturday, November 23rd at Roanoke Rapids High School. The Christmas for Kids will be held on December 14th.

Police Chief Martin reported the department has some major investigations going on. They are currently following up on several individual complaints about the Gingerbread House and will continue until they have it resolved; it is early in the investigation. In regards to the recent homicide in the area, they have reached out to the Governor's Office and have requested a reward to assist in the information leading to the apprehension of the individual(s) responsible for this homicide. They also continue to work on the robbery at Presto's. Investigators are working on all three of these cases at the one time trying to get these resolved in a timely manner.

Planning & Development

Planning & Development Director Lasky presented the October report. She reported the department has been closing out some ongoing projects and some that are currently under construction.

The new automatic carwash to be located on Julian Allsbrook Highway has been permitted now. The H&R Block has moved from the mall to Premier Blvd. Wendy's Restaurant on Julian Allsbrook is under construction, but the drive-thru intends to remain open. They will close for a couple of weeks in early December but hope to reopen mid to late December or as soon as possible. Others that are under construction and review include: O Aetos, the new restaurant on Roanoke Avenue, for assistance with upgrades and new kitchen equipment; Blue Flame on 10th Street has done a remodel.

She announced this Thursday they will have a Planning Board meeting to review a Conditional Use request for a church at 939 Jackson Street which is on the corner of Tenth Street and Jackson Street. She said City Council will have a public hearing on the matter on December 3, 2019. She said she would be happy to answer any

questions if they have any concerning the quasi-judicial hearing process or if she needed to resend any materials. Since it is an evidentiary hearing they try not to talk about it too specifically prior to the hearing.

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon was absent. No verbal report was given.

Public Works

Public Works Director Chalker gave the report for the month of October. He stated the department is well underway with leaf season which started the beginning of this month, they have collected quite a few loads of leaves and is going very well. They have just completed grinding all the limbs in the limb and leaf yard. They have contracted with a mulch company from Brunswick County, Virginia and they have been hauling away the mulch for a couple of weeks. The limb yard is about empty even with bringing more leaves in; they plan to haul those away too.

He said they have done extensive work to the exterior of City Hall. The department removed the damaged solar array from the 11th Street side of the building and have now started making repairs to the stucco. When they had the storm and the solar awning started banging against the building, it did quite a bit of damage as well as other areas that over the years that have aged and wear and tear. The next step will be to repair and paint the exterior of the building. Then they will install new awnings to include new frame on the 11th Street side and new fabric awnings on both the front and rear of the building. These are special flame retardant sub-straights that they will use because it is in the Fire District. They will then contract with a solar vendor to relocate the equivalent amount of solar panels to the roof of the City Hall building. There are different phases of this project but our goal is to have a better looking building.

Councilman Smith thanked the Public Works Department and the City Manager for the job they are doing on City Hall; it is going to look good.

Fire

Fire Chief Patrick presented the report for the month of October. He stated the Fire Department was busy in the month of October with it being Fire Prevention Month. The firefighters were busy going out to all the schools and educating the kids on fire prevention. During the month, they saw 1,770 kids and adults. They were able to visit the preschools and some came to them. They were able to use their smoke house and hopefully this be the last year they will be using that particular smoke house. He reminded City Council, the Fire Department was awarded a grant for a new smoke house. The department is working on that this month and trying to figure out what

they need to do to get the funding in and to get it ordered. He reported during the month, the department responded to several mutual aid calls to assist the Weldon Fire Department and Davie Fire Department and had 464 man hours of training.

Fire Chief Patrick thanked all his fellow City employees and City Council for all the support and help they provided over the past year and during the ceremony for Kevin Hawkins. He also thanked the citizens for coming out and showing support the day of the funeral. The number of citizens along 7th Street was a sight to see.

He also reported that B shift of the department is working on painting the doors on the front and back of Station 1. He announced City Council should be receiving an invitation in the next couple of days for the Fire Department's Christmas party scheduled for December 4th at Kirkwood Adams Civic Center.

Councilman Smith thanked Chief Patrick for getting the doors painted.

Main Street

Main Street Director Caudle presented the October report. She reported many of the businesses on Roanoke Avenue have already held their initial holiday open houses. The feedback has been great and some reported having the highest sales days since they have been opened. She noted if that was indication of what our local economy is doing then that is a good sign for the rest of the shopping season. She thanked City Manager Scherer for sharing how important it is to shop local. The national statistic is for every dollar spent locally \$0.68 stays in the local economy so if you spend local it will stay local. That significantly drops when you buy from the big box retailer and less than \$0.10 when it is an online purchase. Every penny spent here is very important.

She announced Small Business Saturday is November 30, 2019. Various businesses uptown and downtown Roanoke Avenue will be open and ready to help you purchase gifts for everybody including yourself. Main Street has been granted the American Express Small Business Champion Award again this year. They have received free marketing and promotional items today and will be distributing that across the district in the coming days. She encouraged everyone to check with their local store and think about them next week while they are thinking about Christmas shopping after Thanksgiving.

Main Street Director Caudle stated Main Street is participating in two events during the holiday season. The first one is Christmas @ 1026 on December 6th from 6 – 8 p.m. in our urban green space at 1026 Roanoke Avenue. They are hosting this event

in partnership with the Parks & Recreation Department. It will be a family friendly event utilizing that space and all of Roanoke Avenue. It includes a very real looking Santa Claus who will be in a historic sleigh for pictures. They will have "Selfie with an Elfie" which will be kids dressed as elves entertaining the crowd and taking "selfies" with them. They will also have crafts, hay rides, hot cocoa, cookies and music. Several of the Main Street board members will be there as volunteers and they will have restaurant menus since most of the restaurants and businesses will be open.

She stated she hoped they all received their invitation to the Cheers to 10 Years social in their packets. December will be 10 years that Main Street Roanoke Rapids has been a designated Main Street community. There has been a lot of ups and downs but they have achieved a great deal in these 10 years and want to celebrate that with them and all of our historic Roanoke Rapids stakeholders. The event will be on December 10th from 5 – 7 p.m. at the Arts Council Gallery. It is an open house style event so stop in for as long or as little as they like and enjoy the company of other fellow stakeholders, board members and elected officials. She updated City Council that HB399 was signed into law on November 1, 2019 so the State Historic Tax Credits have been extended.

She announced the new restaurant O Aetos (formally David's Restaurant) did close in October on the building. They have been busy with a lot of activity to up fit. They did have an expensive kitchen replacement project which has delayed their opening but they are moving forward. Hopefully, they will have more information in the coming weeks when they will be open to the public. She said a new businesses was announced on November 9th called Edy's on the Ave. This is an eatery and coffee shop that will provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities so it is a great community outreach program in addition to being a new restaurant in the area. She said they have been working with this business owner for over 2 years. She has done a lot of community outreach and she is a teacher at Roanoke Rapids High School in the Exceptional Children's Program. She is finalizing her location details now so she hopes in the next couple of weeks that will be advertised. This is a great opportunity for those kids who graduate to have a job and a purpose as an adult and interact with people from across the community. The hours will likely be 7 a.m. to 3-4 p.m. daily. She said 935 Roanoke Avenue is still under contract for purchase and the closing date is early December. It will be the new home for Dixon Law Firm in the spring of 2020.

Main Street Director Caudle stated she was sure everyone had seen the new decorative crosswalks that were installed in October at the mid-block crossing in the 1000 block of Roanoke Avenue and another at the Canal crossing which is between the Canal Museum and Trail and the entrance to WestRock. That was an install by

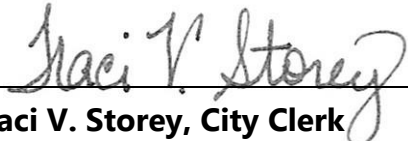
Geveko Markings and was a free product demonstration so they could become a NCDOT approved contractor. Because of that, they now have a competitor, Traffic Scapes and Ennis-Flint that will be here tomorrow to install two additional decorative crosswalks at no cost to the City or State as a demonstration. They will be putting these crosswalks across Roanoke Avenue at the intersection of 8th Street and Roanoke Avenue. They will start at 9 a.m. and project they will be completed by 3 p.m. The traffic process will be the same as the contractor has hired a company to handle traffic. There will be some lane closures but no official detours. As soon as they are done with one side of the road it opens up within 15 minutes and they start the other side so the installation is quick. She has notified the school, the paper mill and the surrounding businesses. Public Works Chalker will have some of his employees out there to see how the process works and she will be out there as well as NCDOT since it is a NCDOT project. This product is stamped into the concrete so the lifespan and the visual look will be the same but the actual product and installation are slightly different. This will be a great case study for NCDOT to see which one withstands the vehicular and foot traffic in the area and will help the City make an educated decision if we want to spend our dollars on more of these decorative crosswalks or not.

Other Business/Adjournment

Councilman Smith thanked each department head for everything they have done this year and he knows they will keep doing it. He appreciates the work they put into each individual department and wished them all a Happy Thanksgiving. Mayor Doughtie extended that same wish.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee added, to the families that were here earlier tonight, it was nice to see that the NC League of Municipalities and others look at those that have served because it is not easy up here or anywhere else serving. As part of the NCLM and the City he thanks them for that. He had the opportunity to serve with all those who were memorialized tonight at some capacity. They did a good job for the City.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.


Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: December 3, 2019