



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Wednesday, November 4, 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

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director
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

Mayor Doughtie opened the meeting and offered an invocation.

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, motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to approve the business agenda for November 4, 2020 as presented.

Special Recognitions

SAR Law Enforcement Awards

Ken Wilson with the Halifax Resolves Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution presented Police Officer John Wind with the SAR Life Saving Medal.

Mr. Wilson also presented Police Captain Charles Burnette with the SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Medal.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to approve the October 20, 2020 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes as drafted.

New Business

Enterprise Fleet Management Program

Finance Director Etheridge stated due to the current economic climate and the ever-present demands of the Theater notes payable on the budget, the City has had little to no funding available to acquire capital for our departmental needs- City wide. This is especially evident in the Police Department with its fleet of aging vehicles. Even with the acquisition of the few police vehicles from the most recent installment financing purchases, there still remains a great need for the replacement of the City's aging fleet.

She said as a result of the constant repairs of the aging fleet as a band aid approach, Vehicle Maintenance is a very expensive cost to the City through the Police Department budget. The City spent \$42,842 from last year's (19-20) operational budget for Police vehicle repairs. We expect to see this number surpass last year's spending based on the operational problems this fleet has already experienced during the first fiscal quarter of 2020. The City has spent and encumbered funding in excess of \$10,000 during the first quarter alone. We expect this expenditure to continually increase each quarter.

She stated the City has the opportunity to enter into contract with Enterprise Fleet Management, phasing into a leasing program to assist which allows the City to move their aged vehicles off the lot to surplus (sooner); while acquiring newer vehicles from Enterprise leasing in the process. The initial startup costs would be \$5,000 per new vehicle, followed by a monthly lease payment of \$950, or \$11,400 annually.

Finance Director Etheridge reported spending \$41,400 (\$5000 x 6 vehicles upfront, plus \$11,400 annual lease payment) for the acquisition of six new vehicles allows the City to enhance their fleet with newer, more reliable vehicles and will also result in a cost savings of approximately \$12,000 to the Police Vehicle Maintenance budget. It is also important to note that billing does not begin until the City takes possession of any new vehicle, so budgeting for a full fiscal year would not be necessary at this time.

She said this is a cost effective measure going forward due to substantially reducing vehicle maintenance costs as mentioned above in our operating budgets. Administration will also have a better opportunity to budget police fleet management requirements with cost of vehicle rotation through the lease payments each year; which will be offset by reduced fuel and maintenance costs. There are also no added costs to our insurance to add the additional vehicles upfront.

She stated additionally, cost savings will be seen through better surplus resale as we phase into the program and begin moving newer cars off of our rotation schedule. The City will receive more back in equity from the surplus of vehicles on a continuous rotation every 4 years versus 10 years or older (present age of vehicles), from a market value standpoint.

Finance Director Etheridge said the cost of leasing also allows the City to be consistent throughout the year with its fleet, in addition to providing patrol staff with more reliable vehicles in order to perform their primary responsibilities in keeping our citizens and our City safe. Other benefits of a managed vehicle program include:

- Flexibility and control over assets
- Improvement in the lifecycle of vehicles
- Reductions in additional hidden costs to ownership of an aged fleet such as taxes, registration, and depreciation
- Replace more of fleet on an annual basis while maximizing savings

She said Chief Martin has additional service information regarding the police operational fleet; to assist with performance, safety, and uniformity of the City's police vehicle concerns. Doug Reville and Chrissy Huff from Enterprise Fleet Management are in attendance and are available to answer any detailed questions about the program.

Chief Martin said he wanted to discuss the proposed agreement with Enterprise in regards to the Police Department's aged fleet. He referred to the document in City Council's packet showing the costs of the vehicles from the time they purchased the vehicles until now. Out of that list he was able to pull twenty-three (23) vehicles that are in dire need of being replaced at this time due to high mileage, high maintenance and so forth while trying to look at saving the City money at the same time. With the aging fleet, they are spending more time getting officers out of one vehicle, because it is broken down, and transitioning them to another vehicle. They have a tremendous amount of downtime going from one vehicle to another and transporting the broken-down vehicle to the shop. The Public Works garage has to deal with them from there. They are dealing with a tremendous amount of maintenance right now.

He said as Finance Director Etheridge noted in her report, they were looking at Dodge Chargers at this time. He presented another handout with additional information. In speaking to Doug Reville with Enterprise Fleet Management, Mr. Reville informed him that they also receive their vehicles at the State rate. They would get the best value for the vehicles they choose because they too get the vehicles on State contract. He referred to the information on the Dodge Charger on the handout. The Dodge Charger RWD – 3.6 Liter V6 cost \$26,714 on the contract and according to his conversation with Mr. Reville that is right there with the State contract. It could be a little cheaper or it could be a little more. Chief Martin explained the cost to upfit a vehicle is \$10,402.27 for a total of \$37,116.27. He calculated the price for five vehicles and for four vehicles. He also included the same information for some of the other vehicles and provided insight to the reliability of the vehicles. He conducted a lot of research of the vehicles and had conversations with the City garage and Public Works Director Chalker about vehicles the Police Department had in the past, what they have now and where they were going.

Chief Martin stated they were solely looking at the Dodge Charger because they want to save the City as much money as they can. They understand the City is under hard times as far as the budget goes, but they want to efficiently protect and serve the citizens of Roanoke Rapids. They have to be able to get from call to call. He said with the information presented, he hoped City Council would consider the City entering into this contract because in the long run it will end up saving the City money. If they could get started with this contract with Enterprise as they trade in their vehicles, instead of having vehicles that are 10-11 years old, they would be traded every 4-5 years or sooner. Part of the agreement is for Enterprise to manage the fleet where if a vehicle begins to have maintenance issues, they will recommend rotating it out. That is one of the benefits of this program.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he had seen this program in another city. He clarified they were looking at five or six vehicles and asked what would happen if something happened to one of those vehicles. Chief Martin replied that when they first get the vehicles they are going to be under warranty. As the maintenance grows or they may begin seeing issues beyond four to five years, that is why they were looking to rotate every four to five years in order to keep the maintenance down and within warranty. That will save the City in the long run with maintenance.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said Chief Martin identified there were quite a few vehicles that needed to be rotated out but he was talking about 5 or 6 now and asked what happens to the other vehicles that are in need. Chief Martin explained as they start trading the vehicles, by that time they will be able to get more vehicles. They will be using this program during budget time. In 2007, the Police Department got twenty 2007 vehicles: 13 were Fords, 7 were Dodge Chargers. Now all these vehicles that were purchased at the same time are beginning to give them issues. If they can lease

the vehicles through the program, they will then rotate them out where this will not happen again; that is where the fleet management comes in.

Mayor Doughtie asked if this was a going to be a four year lease with a 3-year warranty. Doug Reville with Enterprise replied the warranty was whatever the manufacturer warranty is on the vehicle. Warranties vary depending on the vehicle. Mayor Doughtie asked if there was a warranty issue would the vehicle go to the dealership. Mr. Reville replied that was correct. Once the vehicle is out of warranty, they would maintain the vehicle like they do today and take it to the City garage. Mayor Doughtie asked if the lease for the 5 or 6 vehicles had an end to it. Mr. Reville said these are open ended equity leases so they do not have an end per se. They can get extended or short cycled, that is why they would hire them to keep an eye on the vehicles at all times to make annual recommendations. They would meet with them 3-4 times a year, especially during budget season where they would make recommendations. The decision would always be up to the City. They would let them know when the optimal time was to replace the vehicle. Mayor Doughtie asked if they had to pay \$5,000 each time they get a new car. Mr. Reville explained the \$5,000 was half of the upfit into the lease. Some other cities and towns do it different. They are able to put up to 50% of the upfit into the lease. Some say since they are only leasing the vehicle, they will pay for the upfit separately. That would be up to the City and how they wanted to do that.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked for clarification that the \$5,000 was going against the \$10,402. Mr. Reville replied the \$5,000 would go into the lease and be capitalized into the lease. The other \$5,000 if they cap it in will show up on the first invoice. They will have a \$5,000 outlay per vehicle because that is the other half of the \$10,000 upfit. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the total dollar value shown here for five vehicles was through the end of the lease. Mr. Reville said it would be throughout the lease; they would get a monthly bill.

Chief Martin clarified that the handout was the figures to what the cost would be if they purchased the vehicles, not leasing them.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he was trying to get to the savings part. Mr. Reville said the savings would be getting on a healthy cycle. As Chief Martin said, they currently were at a point of no return. Unless they start replacing more vehicles at a faster cycling pace, they would continue to spin their wheels. He said they run into this with everybody. Many cities and counties are in similar situations, they were not on a healthy enough cycle, therefore they do not get enough vehicle year over year and get to the point where they have a lot of old, aged vehicles that cost a ton in maintenance.

Councilwoman Bryant asked if they were to lease these five or six vehicles now for

four years and then they need to be replaced, how would that help the City if they did not replace any of the other twenty-three vehicles. Mr. Reville replied that would need to be looked at during budget season. That is why they meet with them several times a year and look at what their budget was going to be and how they can get as many vehicles as they can with that budget. They don't just look at the cost up front, they look at the total costs of running a vehicle. They look at a fleet savings as to fuel, maintenance, resale and the vehicle payment all in together and come up with a number on how much that reduces the total costs, not just the original purchase of the vehicle.

Mayor Doughtie asked Mr. Reville to explain the process where Enterprise resells the vehicle and how that money comes back to the City. Mr. Reville explained they were open ended equity leases so what they do is write them down to a reduced book value or a residual which is extremely conservative. For example, they write it down to a \$5,000 residual. At the end of four years they take that vehicle to market and sell it for \$8,000. The City would owe the \$5,000 residual and the \$3,000 belongs to the City. All or 99% of the government agencies take that \$3,000 equity and put it towards the next vehicle which drives down the City's cost year after year. They will always have equity because they would be getting out of these vehicles a lot sooner than what they were doing today. That is how the City will see their costs going down year after year.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked about the numbers presented to City Council. He sees \$5,000 per vehicle and \$950 per month per vehicle and five vehicles would cost \$185,000. Mr. Reville said he did a 10-year model for the City about 1-1/2 years ago and he could forward that to City Council as well. The 10-year model shows a savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars over that time frame. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he has seen this program and a recommendation from another city that was doing it and they liked it. However, he was trying to get the numbers right. He did not see how the \$950 per vehicle per month was a savings.

Chrissy Huff with Enterprise interrupted and stated the \$950 was for a Chevy Tahoe, not the Dodge Charger. She manages about fifteen government accounts in North Carolina. Bertie County was one of the first counties that partnered with them. When they first partnered with them, they were able to purchase nine vehicles the first year. Their first year they saw a substantial savings in maintenance repairs. It has been four years and they told someone with the City that they saved 85% in maintenance. That is a huge number in savings. She could not recall what vehicle they first started with, but last year they switched to Tahoes and are now moving to all Tahoes. Ms. Huff said they look at the total cost of ownership. How much is it going to cost the City to operate the vehicle on a 3 or 4 year term. Which vehicle is going to make the most sense in regards to reliability, maintenance and total value. The information they showed Bertie County, it makes sense for them to switch from the Dodge

Chargers which they had consistent issues with, to the Tahoe. Bertie now has approximately 35 vehicles leased with Enterprise. They have seen a substantial savings. She has numerous examples of these savings. The Town of Mount Olive in their first year saw \$30,000 in savings. They are a 40 vehicle fleet. Her role is to meet with the City 3-4 times a year and talk about what is going on in the industry, talk about the savings they should see and how much it is costing to operate these vehicles. Lots of times a city will spend more money in maintenance than what the vehicle is worth. It is her job to show them why they do not need to do that anymore. She plans to meet with a county next week who got 10 pick-up trucks 18 months ago and they are going to be able to switch out all 10 ten trucks and sell them for more than they paid for them 18 months ago. They will be taking that equity and rolling it into the next vehicles and reducing their costs. She stated the City would see a savings with this program. Out of all her governmental accounts, there is not one account where it has cost them more money.

Mayor Doughtie said he and Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee were looking at the \$950 per month multiplied by 12 comes to \$11,400. That multiplied by 4 years comes to about \$45,000. Looking at the handout, that is about the cost to upfit the Tahoe. So the savings part is during that 4 years hopefully there is no big ticket maintenance costs. Ms. Huff replied that is part of the savings, but the biggest piece is Enterprise is going to let them know the right time to sell the vehicle and get the max amount for them. Right now when they sell their vehicles, they are so old they are not getting much for them. When they start selling vehicles for them, instead of seeing \$2,000-3,000 per vehicle, they would see \$15,000-20,000 per vehicle.

Mayor Doughtie asked her to explain the scenario of when it gets to four years, Enterprise is going to tell them it is time to sell a vehicle and they get \$15,000 for it. Ms. Huff said whatever the reduced book value is, let's say its \$4,000. They sell it for \$15,000, Enterprise takes the \$4,000 you owe them and \$11,000 belongs to the City. The City chooses what to do with it. They recommend rolling it to the next vehicle to reduce the cost, but it is their choice.

Mayor Doughtie asked if it was \$5,000 down for each vehicle. Ms. Huff said the \$5,000 is for the upfit; they do not require money down. If the City chose to pay for the upfit separate, there would not be any money down. But because the City has \$10,400 in upfit, they require 50% down of that upfit.

Councilwoman Bryant asked what the monthly payment would be for the Dodge Charger. Ms. Huff replied it was approximately \$550.

Councilman Smith stated if he recalled correctly, they had tried the Dodge Chargers before and they were not a good vehicle. They ended up wishing they had not bought them. He asked what other options were out there without the \$950; is it cheaper on

a 3-year lease. Ms. Huff replied no it was not. The Ford Explorer was a little cheaper than the Chevy Tahoe. Councilman Smith questioned whether they should get Dodge Chargers or not. If they break down, the dealer is going to have to fix them and he was not sure how much warranty was on them. He said the front-end would probably give them problems and they are not comfortable for the officers. He was not convinced the Dodge Charger was what they needed to get into. Maybe Public Works Director Chalker and even Chief Martin can tell them about the problems they've had with them.

Chief Martin said to answer his question, they have had issues with the front end, the lifters and things like that and each time it happens, the vehicle is taken away from the fleet for months at a time. They've had vehicles where the lifters have been replaced and even if done within the warranty, it leaves the City's facility to handle the warranty work and they have spent 3-4 months waiting for those chargers to come back. There has been issues with the Dodge Chargers along the way. Mr. Reville asked how old were the Chargers. Chief Martin replied 2011 and 2013. Mr. Reville said the vehicles were 9 years old and the way police vehicles are run, it is inevitable they will have issues.

Public Works Director Chalker said he had been involved with every Dodge Charger they've had, even before he started working for the City. The first problems they saw were the brakes. The cars have a lot of engine but not adequate braking. They were running through the braking systems quite frequently. They found out the front end components, the arms that move up and down and the shock absorbers, were not adequately sized or engineered for the amount of beating the front end of the car takes. That has been an inherent and recurring issue for the new cars and old cars and for all the Dodge Chargers. He said Mr. Reville is correct to say they have a lot of time and mileage on these cars. To go to a lease program would be very helpful in reducing the amount of time the car has exposure. He noted, although he did not know the cost, they have had very good service with the Ford Explorers they've had. As for the size of the compartment for the officers to drive the car, the Charger is better than some options but not as good as other options. At the end of the lease or time when Enterprise notifies the City that it is time to turn a vehicle over to get another one, the savings produced by less maintenance and with the residual value left in the vehicle is very valuable to the City. As far as the Chargers go, although the City does not have the newest Chargers so he cannot tell them about the very latest, there have been and continues to be issues with life of the vehicles the City has now.

Councilman Smith asked what the resale value would be of a Dodge Charger after four years; he thinks it would be very little. Chief Martin said after a five year resale value, where they would pay approximately \$35,000 for a Charger that is upfitted, the resale would be approximately \$17,000 after five years. According to any vehicle website, that is what they would get. Councilman Smith asked if that's what they

would get for a police car; it's different than a personal vehicle. Chief Martin replied there was no guarantee.

Councilman Smith asked what the monthly payment was on a Ford Explorer. Mr. Reville replied they were looking at \$800s for the Explorer and they also have the Dodge Durango that would be in the \$600s.

Councilman Smith asked if they wanted to save on the front end and lose on the back end or spend a little extra on the front end and save on the back end. Chief Martin said he would love to have the Tahoe but it would be irresponsible of him to put more on the City that it can afford. That is his main goal for looking at the Dodge Charger. He was looking at the affordability, how he could save the City money and also be able to respond to calls and handle what the officer's needs were as far as vehicles. That was his goal and what his discussion has been with the City Manager. That is what this program with Enterprise was ultimately going to do. He reported Halifax County just went with Enterprise because they saw the savings they were going to have and the ability to rotate their fleet out versus what they pay outright for vehicles. The leasing program is where they are going to make the difference and save the City more money.

Councilman Smith asked if Halifax County went with the Dodge Chargers. Mr. Reville said they were doing a mix of Durangos and Chargers; about 50/50.

Councilman Smith suggested instead of 6 vehicles go with four vehicles. They would be getting a better vehicle with better resale value because every year at budget time they would be coming in asking for two or three more vehicles. Why are they risking the back end to save on the front end. Chief Martin replied it was basically to save the City money and he did not believe they were going to lose on the back end with the Charger. They have the option of the Durango as well to go along with the Charger. Although on the back end the resale value may be less for a patrol vehicle, but there will be savings on the maintenance. Councilman Smith said they would only save on maintenance for two years because once the front end goes out that is not under warranty; he asked what the warranty was. Ms. Huff replied 3 years or 36,000 miles.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he understood what they were doing and how it was going to shape up, but he wanted to see a better analysis of the full fleet and the 4-6 vehicles they were looking at from a dollar standpoint. He would like them to show him the savings somehow. He knew they had some actuals on what it was going to cost and the savings. He said because looking at what they have right now doesn't look like savings to him. He understands the program and knows some cities that participate in the program. He would like to see a full amortization of the City's vehicles and what the plan is; which vehicles they would be rotating. He feels like they were losing something here.

Councilwoman Bryant asked if they were getting Tahoes or Chargers. It appears they were getting Chargers but charged for Tahoes. Chief Martin replied the \$950 was a typo; it should have been \$550 for the Chargers. Councilwoman Bryant questioned whether the Chevy Tahoe was a reasonable or regular type vehicle they would need for officers to be driving around on a daily basis. Chief Martin replied yes, the Tahoes are used all across America. Councilwoman Bryant stated she would not be agreeable to that.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he would like to see a better summary and also to make the decision whether it would be for Chargers or Tahoes. Chief Martin said they were looking at Dodge Chargers; earlier he was asked by Councilman Smith about the Tahoes. He said although they had issues with them in the past they were looking forward to the future of the new vehicles and them being rotated out.

Councilman Smith asked for some information on the Dodge Durango. Chief Martin replied it is a mid-size SUV, has a comfortable interior and has pretty good reliability. Through his research on the Internet, it has had its issues here and there, but it is rated for pursuit through law enforcement. It would also cost less than the Ford Explorer with full upfit. Councilman Smith asked how much the Durangos cost again. Mr. Reville said he believed \$650.

Councilman Smith asked if Chief Martin had discussed the vehicles with any of the officers and asked if the new vehicles were going to patrol. Chief Martin said they would be going on the street; strictly to patrol.

Councilman Smith asked what the payment would be on a three year contract. Mr. Reville replied he would have to run those numbers and will get them to City Council. He did not want to give numbers off the top of his head.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked Chief Martin if they had reviewed the proposed contract and felt good about what they had so far. Chief Martin responded yes. Attorney Davis added he had reviewed the draft agreements involved in this program and he did not see any problems from a legal standpoint.

Public Works Director Chalker clarified they have had inherent problems with the Chargers. If the City were to purchase six new Chargers as opposed to a lease, then for three years they would not see those maintenance issues because the car would be under warranty. The same warranty applies to this lease. If the lease is for longer than three years and the warranty is only three years, the City may decide in two years if Enterprise says it is time to turn this car over and make money at the end of the lease, even though you may shorten the term of the lease. That is really where some of the savings will be. The time to sell is advised by Enterprise. They do not put the car up for auction, they have set pricing they know the car will bring and they offer those set prices. In some of the first meetings with Enterprise, that was a very

key point that needs to be put in front of City Council. The City does not have to negotiate with anybody for that price; that price is guaranteed. So at a certain time in the lease and not necessarily the end of the lease and possibly before the car is out of warranty, it could come up at the certain sweet spot to sell that vehicle. The City would be allowed the best money for the vehicle and possibly make money on it. Even with the Dodge Charger and its inherent problems could still be a realized financial savings based on this program.

Councilwoman Bryant asked what was the average yearly mileage of a patrol vehicle. Chief Martin replied they figure per night they patrol 55 – 100 miles which equates to 14,000-16,000 per year; that is a rough estimate.

Councilman Smith asked Chief Martin if he wanted the Dodge Chargers. Chief Martin said going back to a question asked earlier about whether he had talked with the officers, he had and the officers with the Roanoke Rapids Police Department do not have any issues with the Dodge Chargers. They are looking at them to replenish their fleet.

Councilman Smith stated he did not have any problem with the agreement then if that is what Chief Martin wanted to do.

Mayor Doughtie stated it was difficult to compare what they were looking at with what they already have because the benefit to it is after a few renegotiations of a contract, the City will have a much newer fleet of vehicles. It may take a little bit of time for that savings to start showing up, but on the other hand they will have a much more reliable fleet of vehicles. In 8-10 years they will not be looking at what Mr. Reville talked about, selling a vehicle for \$800 and Public Works Director Chalker working on them. That is where the City gets into the expensive repair bills.

Mayor Doughtie asked the Enterprise representatives if they could share information from another government agency that has been in the program for some time and could show what they were spending on repair bills and how they were saving money. Ms. Huff replied yes, Bertie County reached out to the City of Roanoke Rapids and shared they had saved 85% in maintenance over the past three years. They did not start out with Tahoes, they started out with other vehicles. She said they would see savings right off the bat. If they start with six vehicles they would not see a tremendous savings because they would only be taking six vehicles out of their fleet, but they will still see a savings. The miles per gallon will be much better on a newer vehicle versus an older vehicle plus the reliability and soft dollar costs. There is less down time for officers with a newer vehicle. The Town of Mount Olive saw a savings of approximately \$30,000 in the first year. The City of Fayetteville does their undercover department with them and recycle their vehicles every three years and Enterprise gave them a check back last year for \$18,000 for a couple of vehicles they

sold for them. The program works. They definitely have a lot of references that she believed they had already reached out to. She does not have one client that she manages where the program has not worked. They will see savings.

Mayor Doughtie asked Chief Martin if he was in agreement to what Ms. Huff just said. Chief Martin said he spoke with Bertie County and they are about to complete their fleet and they have seen tremendous savings in their maintenance. That's what is hitting the Police Department so hard, the cost and down time. Every time now when one of the Chargers goes down with a top end, it costs around \$4,000 and is gone for three months. They are paying that through maintenance. He reported in his research the V6 has less problems than the V8 and they do not have the same front ends. They were looking at the quality vehicle out of the two to save money all the way around. These vehicles are going to save money and help the police department keep officers on the street in a safe vehicle.

Councilman Smith asked if they could run these vehicles unmarked. Chief Martin replied he would prefer they be marked. The reason is because when they are out in the middle of an intersection with a traffic accident, they are more visible. To keep from putting excess holes in the roof they would do slick tops, not any bar lights. They would have plenty of excess lighting so the public would see the vehicle. He believes for the patrol division it would be better for the citizens to see a marked patrol car on the street. Councilman Smith asked how much it cost to put all the markings on the car. Chief Martin replied between \$1,200-\$1,400.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he did not oppose what they were doing; he thinks it is good. He would like to see a full analysis of their vehicles and how they were planning to rotate some of the other ones into the program. Just looking at it from this standpoint it is not showing him enough to feel warm and fuzzy about the savings. He would like to see the number of cars and for how many years spelled out on a plan before he says yes.

Mr. Reville stated he met with the City two or three years ago and created an 8-10 year model over the entire City's fleet and there was a savings of a couple hundred thousand dollars. He would be able to put that together again for them. If this program ends up making sense for the Police Department, it would make even more sense for the rest of the City's trucks.

Councilman Smith asked what the timeframe was for getting the vehicles. Mr. Reville replied unfortunately worse than ever because they did not manufacture vehicles for 90 days when COVID hit so there is a huge backfill; probably four months at least.

Councilman Smith made a motion to allow the City Manager to enter into the Enterprise Fleet Leasing Program for the Police vehicle fleet for the City of Roanoke Rapids on the Dodge Chargers.

Discussion and questions ensued about the number of vehicles and the terms of the contract.

Councilman Smith called for a point of order; there was a motion on the floor. Either get a second or let the motion die.

Mayor Doughtie asked for Councilman Smith to restate his motion.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith; seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough to allow the City Manager to enter into the Enterprise Fleet Leasing Program for the Police vehicle fleet for the City of Roanoke Rapids on Dodge Chargers.

Mayor Doughtie asked if City Council would see the contract before the City Manager executes it.

City Manager Scherer said he could bring it before City Council before he actually signs a contract.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the City Manager could at least look into bringing back to City Council a detailed program they can look at rather than just saying okay. In addition, he would like to look at the full fleet.

Mayor Doughtie said they do have some problems because they have a lot of old vehicles. If they could agree in some way to start the process to turn them over to get some new vehicles. He feels this is a way to do that without requiring a huge expense, especially up front. If they do not like it, they would not be tied up into something that would be a penalty to them.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if Councilman Smith would be willing to alter his motion to have the City Manager to bring them back a program that they were 100% doing.

Councilman Smith stated he made a motion and the City Manager said he would bring the contract back before signing so he did not see any reason to amend his motion. Either City Council can approve the motion or turn it down.

Mayor Doughtie called for a vote. Councilman Smith, Councilwoman Scarbrough, Councilman Bobbitt voted in favor; Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and Councilwoman Bryant opposed. Motion carried by a 3-2 vote.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer gave the following report:

The voting process went smoothly yesterday at all City polling locations with no incidents reported of any disruptions or other acts of civil disturbance.

Halloween also went smoothly in this year of the pandemic. The City held walk-through events at both Doyle Field and Chaloner Recreation Center, as did other religious and business locations. No incidents were reported the entire evening, even though it was a full moon night and had the daylight saving time change.

The Police Department's Stop the Violence Campaign results to date have contributed to the goals of the campaign, which are: show a police presence in high crime areas; stricter enforcement of motor vehicle laws for the motoring public safety; deter the sale, delivery and use of illegal contraband; and deter and combat violent crimes. For the month of October, their efforts resulted in 47 charges, 12 arrests, 39 citations issued, 30 grams of narcotics seized and \$30,000 and a firearm seized. It is important to the Police Department to begin being more proactive in crime deterrence. We commend the property owner who has demolished dilapidated houses in the Church/Carter Streets area, thereby eliminating places where criminal activities were being carried out.

The Police Department recently had increased their enforcement activities around the TJ Davis complex with complaints from neighbors about noise and loitering. Also, during this time, the press box there was vandalized. Since the increased enforcement, complaints have decreased.

The Police Department also responded quickly after recent reports of two armed robberies of gas stations in the city. They were able to catch one suspect when they ran from their vehicle, and another was apprehended the next day. Other suspects have been arrested in the last 24 hours.

The Police Department has received several complaints from citizens and the County Health Department about businesses not having their employees and customers wear masks. The officers educate the businesses about the need to comply with the Governor's Executive Order and confirm they will be cited by officers if compliance is not achieved. I believe the County Health Department is having people spot check businesses for compliance.

The external auditor has completed his audit of the City's finances and submitted his

report to the Local Government Commission. Once he receives their approval, he will coordinate to brief City Council on the report. They found no deficiencies in the City's accounting policies or financial processes, which we anticipate will result in what is called an unmodified report (no deficiencies noted).

The Planning & Development Department was approved for a grant of \$20,273 through the Upper Coastal Plains Council of Government to complete the GIS mapping of our stormwater infrastructure system. Ms. Lasky feels this amount should be enough funding to have the contracted company complete the project. This is an important project for the City to have accurate locations of all our stormwater infrastructure that we are lacking now. The County Economic Development Director is holding another meeting on the Premier Blvd. development plan tomorrow that Ms. Lasky, the Mayor and myself will attend. Also, the new Dunkin Donuts shop is on schedule and getting closer to opening.

A traveling carnival tried to set up and operate in the Becker Village Mall lot last week. They tried to submit an application at the last minute to the Planning & Development Department and began to set up, but the County Health Department and the Police Department notified them that their permit was denied and to cease and desist with the set-up. They did so and left shortly after.

Public Works has begun leaf season collection. They were busy last week collecting all the trees, limbs and brush from the severe windstorm and are working on a location to deposit the large amount of grindings. The Wayfinding Sign near Sheetz was also blown down in the storm and Public Works is working on res-installing it.

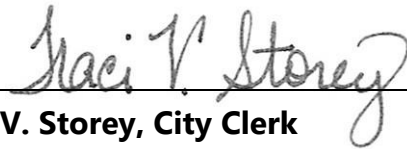
The Fire Department has been busy with three fire calls recently, resulting in three families being displaced, but no injuries except to one pet dog. The fireman did try to resuscitate it but were unsuccessful. They were able to keep the fires from spreading to neighboring structures. The Department was informed they were rejected for a federal grant to purchase new radios, so they will use the monies from their recent fundraiser to purchase a smaller number of radios. The training safe house they were able to order with funding from another grant is due in sometime next month.

The Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce has sold their portion of their Visitors Center facility and will temporarily move into the Halifax Arts Council Gallery on the Avenue. They will be open there next Monday the 9th. The new Mediterranean restaurant on the Avenue, O'Aetos, opened last weekend. Another new eatery, The Mill Coffee and Eatery, in the 1000 block on the Avenue, is awaiting their inspection by the Health Department before opening.

Veterans Day is next Wednesday, the 11th and City offices will be closed in honor of that day.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: November 17, 2020