



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, July 20, 2021 at 5:30 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
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director
Kelly Traynham, Planning & Development Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief

Absent: Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Bobby Martin, Police Chief

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order and opened with an invocation.

Adoption of Business Agenda

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

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to amend the agenda to add a Closed Session under Other Business as Item 9 a) to discuss a Personnel Matter (Salaries) as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) and to move Item 6 d) under Other Business as Item 9 b).

Public Comment (Scheduled)

DJ Jones (Boys & Girls Club)

Mr. Jones, President of the Halifax County Boys & Girls Club informed City Council they had locations on Third Street in Roanoke Rapids, Everetts Elementary School and Inborden Elementary in Enfield. He said he arrived here a week before everything shut down due to the pandemic last March.

He said he grew up in the Boys & Girls Clubs in Raleigh. He started at 5 years old and stayed until he was 18 years old. He went to college for 4 years, graduated on a Sunday and on Monday he was back in a club again 21 years ago. It wasn't a goal, but it was a calling and an opportunity to give back to the kids and families. He sees a Boys & Girls Club as a hub and a place for kids to come, especially those who need it most to get support, resources, advice, mentorship, discipline and encouragement for them to be successful. His mother was raised here in Roanoke Rapids and he recalls coming here every summer.

Mr. Jones said the program serves kids ages 6-18 years old. They have programs and activities in three priority outcome areas: academic success, healthy lifestyles, good character and citizenship. The kids they serve are not always the kids that come from well to do circumstances. The Club offers support and provides the opportunity and guidance they need to be successful.

He said their location on Third Street is a small building and thanked the City for allowing them to be in that facility basically cost free. The building will hold a maximum of 35 kids and it is full. During COVID they did virtual programming and had 200 kids in the summer. They continued to feed the kids in partnership with K&W Cafeteria from Rocky Mount who delivered meals to them. This summer for 9 weeks they have been in-person. They were getting the meals from Halifax County Schools and appreciate that partnership. After the summer program wraps up they will start back up with the after school program again. They have a waiting list at the Club of 50-60 kids that cannot fit into that facility.

Mr. Jones announced the highlight of their year has been the Youth of the Year Program. This is the highest honor a young person can achieve as a Boys & Girls Club member. The national winner represents over 5 million kids worldwide. They receive \$50k-\$70k in scholarship money and a new car and are an ambassador of the Boys & Girls Club. On a local level, their five-county organization Youth of the Year was from here in Roanoke Rapids. He was a rising junior at KIPP and earned a \$3,000 scholarship. It gave him a sense of accomplishment. He was actually hired and worked at the Club this summer.

He said the Boys & Girls Club is about achievement. They do homework and field trips; it is about whole opportunity. They want to be a part of the community and do what they can to fill the gap and make sure the young people have a successful opportunity.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked about finding other partnerships to help with all the kids on the waiting list. Mr. Jones replied he and Parks & Recreation Director Simeon have planned a meeting in August to see how they can collaborate. One of his goals is to talk with community partners to see what they can do. He has run clubs in park and rec facilities, churches and in free standing facilities. They have a model that works; they are a 150 year old plus organization. He plans in the next few month to work with his team to see where the possibilities are because their program works.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if they were open every day. Mr. Jones said they were open Monday-Friday, after school and right now (summer) they are open 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Doughtie asked if they found a facility to accommodate all the kids, would they have enough staff to support the number of kids. Mr. Jones replied yes, when they open a center there is funding attached that goes with the Boys & Girls Club name. There are opportunities for them, they just have limitations on the space.

Mayor Doughtie invited Mr. Jones back again to give them an update.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Kathleen Robinson

Ms. Robinson said once again God sent her to Roanoke Rapids to build the community. She announced that she would be at Rochelle Park every Saturday starting this Saturday. She invited not only the children, but the families to come to clean it up and make it a sense of pride. They need to teach the children. She was sad because when she got back here she did not see that unity they had built three years ago. She knows COVID has affected a lot of them. She needs to help the families have pride in their community. They need to get back to all of them being a family. They will have lunch, drinks and a lot of love. She thanked City Council for listening.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to approve the June 15, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting and June 29, 2021 Special Meeting minutes as drafted.

Committee Appointments

Senior Center Advisory Committee

City Clerk Storey stated the terms of Ann Gibbs and Lisa Vincent on the Senior Center Advisory Committee will expire August 2, 2021. Ms. Gibbs has served the maximum number of 2 consecutive terms allowed by City Policy. City Council took a ballot vote earlier and both candidates received a unanimous vote to be reappointed.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to waive the City Policy for Ms. Gibbs and reappoint Ann Gibbs and Lisa Vincent to the Senior Center Advisory Committee.

New Business

Resolution Adopting the 2021 Halifax Northampton Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Planning & Development Director Traynham reported the Hazard Mitigation Plans that are required under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 are updated on a 5-year basis. Throughout the COVID times, they have held virtual planning meetings to identify the risk assessment to the community. Mostly it is natural hazards that are weather related such as thunderstorms, hurricanes or tornados, the City is subject to certain elements of threat. Throughout the planning process, they identified those risks and conducted a capability assessment of all the jurisdictions in Halifax and Northampton Counties. Everyone's abilities on how to respond were documented and mitigation strategies were identified. All this was done in accordance with guidelines established by the State Emergency Management Department as well as FEMA.

She reported the State has approved the plan the City falls under and the plan is also under review by FEMA. Prior to FEMA's approval, every jurisdiction that is covered by the plan has to adopt a resolution accepting it. She presented the following resolution for their consideration.

Resolution No. 2021.04

City of Roanoke Rapids RESOLUTION ADOPTING HALIFAX-NORTHAMPTON REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the citizens and property within the City of Roanoke Rapids are subject to the effects of natural hazards that pose threats to lives and cause damage to property, and with the knowledge and experience that certain areas of the county are particularly vulnerable to drought, extreme heat, hailstorm, hurricane and tropical storm, lightning, thunderstorm wind/high wind, tornado, winter storm and freeze, flood, hazardous material incident, and wildfire; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to seek ways to mitigate the impact of identified hazard risks; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of North Carolina has in Part 6, Article 21 of Chapter 143; Parts 3, 5, and 8 of Article 19 of Chapter 160A; and Article 8 of Chapter 160A of the North Carolina General Statutes, delegated to local governmental units the responsibility to adopt regulations designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of North Carolina has enacted General Statute Section 166A-19.41 (*State emergency assistance funds*) which provides that for a state of emergency declared pursuant to G.S. 166A-19.20(a) after the deadline established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency pursuant to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2002, P.L. 106-390, the eligible entity shall have a hazard mitigation plan approved pursuant to the Stafford Act; and.

WHEREAS, Section 322 of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 states that local governments must develop an All-Hazards Mitigation Plan in order to be eligible to receive future Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Funds and other disaster-related assistance funding and that said Plan must be updated and adopted within a five year cycle; and

WHEREAS, the City of Roanoke Rapids has performed a comprehensive review and evaluation of each section of the previously approved Hazard Mitigation Plan and has updated the said plan as required under regulations at 44 CFR Part 201 and according to guidance issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management.

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids to fulfill this obligation in order that the County will be eligible for federal and state assistance in the event that a state of disaster is declared for a hazard event affecting the County;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids hereby:

1. Adopts the Halifax-Northampton Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.
2. Vests Halifax County Emergency Management with the responsibility, authority, and the means to:
 - (a) Inform all concerned parties of this action.
 - (b) Cooperate with Federal, State and local agencies and private firms which undertake to study, survey, map and identify floodplain areas, and cooperate with neighboring communities with respect to management of adjoining floodplain areas in order to prevent exacerbation of existing hazard impacts.
3. Appoints Halifax County Emergency Management to assure that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is reviewed annually and every five years as specified in the Plan to assure that the Plan is in compliance with all State and Federal regulations and that any needed revisions or amendments to the Plan are developed and presented to the Roanoke Rapids City Council for consideration.
4. Agrees to take such other official action as may be reasonably necessary to carry out the objectives of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

ADOPTED this the 20th day of July, 2021.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor
City of Roanoke Rapids

Attest:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk
City of Roanoke Rapids

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 2021.04 to adopt the 2021 Halifax Northampton Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Budget Amendment (Ordinance No. 2021.09 – Inmate Worker Program)

City Manager Scherer stated the City of Roanoke Rapids contracts annually with the Department of Corrections to utilize the State inmate labor program. This program allows inmates who qualify to assist the City with grass mowing, and grass maintenance needs throughout the City. Due to COVID-19, the State DOC suspended this program during the pandemic timeframe. As a result, these funds were not budgeted in the 2021-2022 budget as the program was still suspended. As operational meetings are taking place, he respectfully asked Council to consider a budget amendment appropriating the funds for the City to enter into this contract when ready for FY2021-2022. The funds pay the DOC monthly contract, meals for prisoners and supplies for the inmate van. He presented the following budget amendment.

**Ordinance No. 2021.09
CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS
BUDGET AMENDMENT**

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

SECTION 1. The following additional amounts are hereby appropriated for the operation of City Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES

Fund Balance – NCDOC Inmate Program

Project Revenues – NCDOC Inmate Worker Program **\$22,000**

(State Contract not available for budgeting or renewal due to COVID)

FUND PROJECT TOTAL **\$22,000**

SECTION 2. The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available

for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES

Funding to General Fund – Expenditures Required for Inmate Worker Program

Project Expenditures **\$22,000**

FUND PROJECT TOTAL **\$22,000**

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Councilman Smith asked if any of the inmates have started working yet. City Manager Scherer replied they had five start this week and they have picked up ten bags of litter.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked what other types of jobs the inmates performed. City Manager Scherer replied they mow grass, pick up litter and other tasks for the Parks & Recreation and Public Works departments.

Mayor Doughtie said they previously had about fourteen inmates to work and asked if they expected to have less than that interested in participating in the program this year. City Manager Scherer said he did not know that at this point; he guessed the hot weather was contributing the low numbers. Maybe more will want to participate in the fall of the year.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2021.09 approving a budget amendment to appropriate funds for the City to enter into a contract with the NC Department of Corrections for FY 2021-2022 when ready.

Traffic Code Amendment (Ordinance No. 2021.10)

City Manager Scherer reported Marshall Street between Julian Allsbrook Highway and East 10th Street has been the site of numerous unsafe traffic issues, especially speeding and reckless driving. In reviewing law enforcement traffic stop statistics in this area for the last 18 months, they show over 550 citations or warnings were issued. While the Police Department has concentrated enforcement activity on Marshall Street when they can, they cannot patrol it constantly. They have received numerous complaints from citizens who live in this area on Marshall Street about the unsafe traffic conditions.

He said the main issue on Marshall Street is the absence of any traffic stop points between Julian Allsbrook Highway and East 10th Street. Many drivers use this corridor to speed through the neighborhood to get to one or the other main roads.

He stated it is the consensus of both the Police Department and the Public Works Department that the establishment of a 4-way stop intersection at 13th Street and Marshall Street would be the best and safest way to improve the traffic safety on this section of Marshall Street. The Public Works Department has the materials, including warning signs and lights, to install the traffic control measures at the intersection.

Mayor Doughtie said they installed a four-way stop at 5th Street and Hamilton Street some time ago and asked Captain Hardy if they were seeing results. Captain Hardy replied yes, it has been a tremendous help. Although it has been a big change, the wrecks and amount of encounters they've had with motorists has gone down tremendously.

Mayor Doughtie stated he did not believe putting up a stop sign just to put one up is a good idea. But after the Police Department studies an area such as 5th and Hamilton and it shows it slowed down the wrecks and violations that helps the public understand why they do what they do.

TRAFFIC CODE AMENDMENT
Ordinance No. 2021.10

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE TRAFFIC CODE OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS, NORTH CAROLINA.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS, NORTH CAROLINA that:

SECTION 1. The Roanoke Rapids Traffic Code is amended to install "Stop" Signs at the intersection of 13th Street and Marshall Street, making this intersection a Four Way stop.

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall become effective upon the installation of the appropriate signage.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to adopt Traffic Code Amendment – Ordinance No. 2021.10.

Appointment of Interim City Manager

Mayor Doughtie stated City Manager Joseph Scherer will be retiring effective August 1, 2021. City Council will need to appoint an Interim City Manager. He said City Council has spoken with several candidates and agreed to make a decision on the matter tonight.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee confirmed this was for an interim and asked about the process for filling the permanent position. City Manager Scherer replied he was awaiting the information from a search company with a proposal for City Council to consider. If they agree, then the company will do the advertising, screening, interviewing and testing potential candidates. They would then provide City Council with a recommended list of candidates for them to meet with and interview.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if they would have an interview committee that works with Human Resources to help with that. City Manager Scherer said the company would conduct a very thorough screening process and testing. Based upon their test results, they would give City Council a list of their most qualified candidates for consideration. He stated City Council could do their own as well.

City Manager Scherer suggested once they receive the proposal from the company, he would recommend City Council have the company's representative attend a meeting and give them more details on the process.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he agreed with that, but usually there is a hiring committee that works with the company before coming to City Council.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated in the past City Council has been very involved in the process of hiring a City Manager and the questions asked to the potential candidates have been pertinent to the City of Roanoke Rapids. City Manager Scherer said City Council would have the opportunity to meet the candidates and interview them as well. The company is just screening and giving them a list of the top candidates they recommend City Council interview.

Mayor Doughtie asked when he expected to receive a proposal from them. City Manager Scherer said the last time he spoke with the company, they were supposed to send the proposal by 5 p.m. today.

Councilman Smith asked if City Council would get a chance to look at the contract for the Interim City Manager. Attorney Davis said they have prepared one and he can circulate that to them. He shared it with the current City Manager and planned to wait to see what City Council did tonight as far as appointment of that interim. Then discuss with the individual where things stood.

Councilman Smith asked if Attorney Davis felt that City Council needed to know what was in that contract. Attorney Davis said they could share it with them.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if they had the contract ready for review. Attorney Davis said they did and felt that would need to be discussed in closed session. He did not have a copy on hand, but could get one.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if they could discuss in closed session. Attorney Davis replied yes. Councilman Smith added that he did not believe anyone knew there was a contract out there. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he knew they were working on one.

Attorney Davis said it was drafted after their meeting last week and he sent it to City Manager Scherer last Friday afternoon.

Mayor Doughtie added that City Council also discussed when they appointed someone it would be subject to a contract agreement. Previously when hiring someone in the City Manager position it was always subject to a contract.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he believed City Council would need to view what was being proposed in the contract and asked if they could discuss it now in closed session.

Attorney Davis said he was not sure, but believed City Council could address the appointment of the Interim City Manager and take up the contract at another meeting. He advised City Council could make the motion to offer the Interim City Manager position subject to a contract and discuss that contract.

Councilman Smith stated in the future that all contracts need to come before City Council before anything is done before Council. Attorney Davis replied that is understood and normally the way he would do things. The unusual part of this was the close timeline by this situation.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to appoint Kelly Traynham as the Interim City Manager subject to a contract offer and acceptance.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer gave the following report:

There has been a recent surge of violence in the 300 blocks of Madison and Monroe Streets. To address this situation, Chief Martin and the Police Department have partnered with the Sheriff's Department to conduct Operation Enough is Enough. Both departments conducted saturated patrols which consists of officers and deputies walking the neighborhoods along with roving patrols and check points in and around the City. The saturated patrols are part of the Stop the Violence initiative. The ability to have officers on foot patrol in the neighborhoods is essential to combat crime and have the officers interact with the neighbors. So far, this operation has resulted in 56 traffic stops, 14 citations and 2 arrests, and more importantly no further acts of recent violence.

The Partnering of the Police Department and the Sheriff's Office is just the beginning as the citizens will continue to see this type of activity. The citizens of this City deserve

to feel safe in their homes and in the yard with their children. The Roanoke Rapids Police Department encourages anyone that has information about crimes in your neighborhoods to contact the Police Department at 533-2810 or for any emergencies dial 911. You can also report crimes using Halifax County Crime Stoppers hotline at 583-4444, which is completely anonymous.

The Police Department has received a grant of \$8,500 from Vidant Health. They will use the grant to purchase more portable Automatic External Defibrillators (AED's) which will provide the Patrol Division with 4 AED's per shift.

The Police Department has received generous donations from several local businessmen for the acquisition of 10 mobile cameras to be mounted around the City on existing poles. These cameras will allow the Department to monitor areas and major roads around the City for criminal activity and other problems. The cameras operate via satellites and are solar powered. They can be moved and mounted on any existing utility pole.

The 2nd annual Sarah Keys Evans Day will be held on Sunday, August 1st at Martin Luther King Jr. park beginning at 4:00 PM.

The Chamber of Commerce is hosting a free concert this Friday at Centennial Park from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Come hear the group "Wild Country Band" while enjoying a hotdog and some refreshing ice cream for purchase from local food trucks. Parks and Recreation Department will set up the park and have Lloyd Andrews open for restrooms, while the Police Department will provide assistance with traffic control on 7th Street between the Avenue and Jackson Street.

As you may know, the RRHS is celebrating its 100-year anniversary on the weekend of October 1st. We are meeting with committee members next week to review their support requests and some proposed activities during that weekend.

The Centennial Clock has now been repaired and a rededication ceremony will be scheduled in the near future.

City Manager Scherer announced this would be his last City Manager's Report. He will be riding off into the proverbial sunset next week to ultimately throw his energies into who knows what. Importantly, the decision to leave has been entirely of his own making. The time is simply right for him to at least temporarily pack away the field gear and enjoy life. To the Mayor and City Council and to all the wonderful people he had the opportunity to work with the past nine years, thank you. He stated he was very proud of what they achieved and they have been times he will never forget. He

had the opportunity today to sit down and listing some things that have happened over the last nine years.

- Reduce the Theatre debt to almost half.
- Seven years of perfect financial audits with no management letters.
- Survived the last year and half the COVID pandemic.
- Projects at Chaloner Park (splash pad, shelter, new playground, improved trail).
- Fire Department was able to acquire a new training Fire Safety House.
- First ones in the area to provide body cameras to the Police Department and recently upgraded them.
- Installed Wayfinding Signage throughout the city.
- Improved response to snow storms which includes own brine plant.
- First ones in the area with LED street lights.
- Recently received a \$750,000 CDBG grant.
- Most of the railroad crossing in the city have been repaired.

These are some of the things they have managed to do over the past nine years. He was sure there was a lot more.

He said the times shared, friendships forged and successes they have enjoyed have been a special part of his life. He was looking forward to having the time and freedom to pursue his hobbies and interests which include travel, reading and hanging out with family and friends. He believes the City will continue to grow and prosper. There are some promising developments on the horizon that will make Roanoke Rapids a better place to work and live.

Mayor Doughtie said all the things he listed were by him trying different ways of leadership to guide them through the last 9-10 years. He said City Manager Scherer came to the City when they had just gotten through the downturn in the economy. He doubted he would have come to a city that had as much on it as Roanoke Rapids did - they were heavily in debt. They have worked on that debt and paid \$16M of the taxpayer's money on that debt since he has been the City Manager. He cannot imagine what the list would have been if they did not have that debt over the past nine years. They have managed as a community to provide a level of services which is beyond what they could have done if they had not managed their money very well. He thanked City Manager Scherer for his leadership and the Finance Department for their work giving the City clean audits. He said the auditor always praises the City on how well they handle and collect their money. He believes that is why the City has been successful in getting grants. For that he gives City Manager Scherer credit. He invited

City Manager Scherer back on August 3rd for a special recognition.

Councilwoman Scarbrough thanked City Manager Scherer for his leadership and appreciated all he helped her with.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he echoed what Mayor Doughtie said. He had the opportunity to work with many city managers during his time with the City on the Planning Board and City Council. He said City Manager Scherer has brought stability to the city manager position here and he appreciates him for that. They needed that and he was able to bring the community back together and bring trust back to the position and the City.

Councilman Smith also thanked City Manager Scherer. He believed they had some good conversations and he helped him a lot when he first came onto City Council. Although they had some disagreements, they were always able to work them out. He felt they worked pretty well together. He appreciated everything he did and wished him luck with his retirement.

Councilwoman Bryant thanked City Manager Scherer for his service to the City and appreciated his efforts. She was a short-timer on the City Council but listening to the accomplishments that had been done during his tenure speaks highly of his work and leadership.

Councilman Bobbitt said he enjoyed working with City Manager Scherer and they had some good times together. He said he would miss him and wished him well.

Finance Director's Report

In Finance Director Etheridge's absence, City Manager Scherer presented the Preliminary June 2021 Financial Report. General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$15,708,255. (The percentage of actual money collected of adopted budgeted figures is 99.6%). General Fund year to date expenditures totaled \$14,818,661. (The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures is 94.0%). After the month of June, 100% of the budget year has been completed. As a result, Year-to-Date revenues exceeded expenditures by \$889,594.

He said the City still has both revenues and expenditures to accrue on behalf of the FY 2020-2021 which have not been received for final Sales & Use, Ad Valorem and Motor Vehicle Taxes. Other miscellaneous revenues will continue to be accrued through August 15th.

City Manager Scherer reported the Finance staff continues working on year-end close and all that is required with opening a new fiscal year for operations. They are also preparing for the FY 2020-2021 annual audit which begins August 24, 2021.

Councilman Smith asked City Manager Scherer if after the accruals through August 15th did he believe the City would end the year with a surplus close to \$1M. City Manager Scherer replied he believed they would be at or over \$1M in surplus.

Mayor Doughtie said that was very good. When a city can collect 99.6% of a budget it is doing a good job of collecting their money. He thinks the City is run very effectively. They expected this past year to be difficult so they made it tight on everybody. They only spent 94% of the budgeted amount. The City was also fortunate with sales tax this year. Other revenues that had a 23% increase included permitting and fees which tends to show they are in a city that is continuing to move forward and grow. That shows there is economic activity going on in the community. All of these are positive things for their community.

Councilman Smith thanked all the department heads for really tightening their belt and doing the things the City needed to do so they could have this surplus and possibly put some of this money back into the fund balance.

<p style="text-align: center;">Closed Session</p>
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Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough to go into Closed Session to discuss a Personnel Matter as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(6).

Councilman Smith asked if they would be coming back out into Open Session to vote on what they plan to discuss in Closed Session. City Manager Scherer replied they could but he was not necessarily asking for a vote.

Lance Martin with RRspin questioned the validity of going into Closed Session to discuss a matter that was listed on the agenda. He asked if City Council would be speaking on specific people.

Attorney Davis replied the subject of the matter did get put on the agenda, but after speaking with City Manager Scherer, there may be some specific names and positions that will be addressed.

Councilman Smith asked since Ms. Traynham had been selected as the Interim City Manager, did she need to stay for the Closed Session. Attorney Davis replied as with

any Closed Session, City Council may give permission and he thought that would be appropriate although they have not technically executed a contract yet.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated until there was an offer and acceptance, he did not feel that was appropriate.

With no further discussion, Mayor Doughtie called for a vote to go into Closed Session. All voted in favor to go into Closed Session to discuss a Personnel Matter.

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Minute Book Pages 20488 - 20493 contain Minutes and General Account of a Closed Session which have been sealed until such time as public inspection of those minutes would not frustrate the purpose of the Closed Session.

Other Business

City Council returned to Open Session. In Closed Session, City Council discussed Personnel Matters.

Consideration of COLA Proposal

City Manager Scherer stated due to increased actual revenue collections and stringent budget control measures, we anticipate ending Fiscal Year 2020-2021 with a budget surplus. Depending on the actual amount of sales tax and other revenue sources received for the month of June, he anticipates a substantial surplus amount. As the City is in a position to finally be able to fairly compensate its employees, he had a proposal on how to utilize the budget surplus.

He proposed to allocate at least one-half of the total surplus amount back to the Undesignated Fund balance and utilize the remaining amount for employee Cost of Living Allowances (COLA salary increases). He felt this would address City Council's priorities of increasing the Undesignated Fund balance, ensure the Police Department is adequately staffed with qualified personnel and improve overall employee morale, recruitment, and retention.

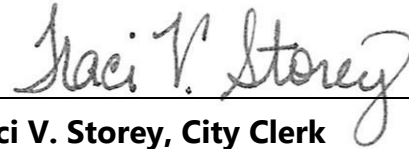
He reported employees have not had any COLA increases for a number of years and while City Council has been able to offer bonuses in recent years, position salaries are key to employee recruiting and retention. While the City does offer excellent employee benefits, personnel, especially at the lower end of the salary wage scale, care more about how much money is going into their wallet at the end of the week. Salary levels also impact retirement compensation. They have had several employees leave for higher paying positions elsewhere. In the current employment environment, it has been very hard to find people to come to work for what the City offers, especially given some of the working conditions the positions require. The salary survey he presented previously reflects the City's compensation levels compared to other cities near our size. It shows our employees are generally underpaid across the board. While some of these other sample cities are more affluent than Roanoke Rapids, we need to more fairly compensate our workforce to remain competitive in hiring and retaining quality people, especially in the public safety departments.

City Manager Scherer proposed a COLA increase of \$3,000 be offered to every full-time City employee and a \$1,000 COLA be offered to all part-time City employees.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to accept the COLA proposal City Manager Scherer presented and do a budget amendment to take care of that.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: September 21, 2021