



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, October 19, 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

Sandra W. Bryant)

Suetta S. Scarbrough)

Wayne Smith)

Rex Stainback)

Council Members

Kelly Traynham, Interim City Manager/Planning & Development Director

Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney

Traci Storey, City Clerk

Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager*

Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director

Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

Jason Patrick, Fire Chief*

John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director*

Bobby Martin, Police Chief

Larry Chalker, Public Works Director*

*Denotes joining the meeting via Zoom.

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 or if there were any changes that needed to be made to the meeting agenda.

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

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Gorham Spencer

Ms. Spencer stated in the last City Council Work Session on October 5, 2021, the Council discussed the 2020 Census & Redistricting Program. She expressed some of her concerns.

- Will public hearings be held before and after maps are drawn?
- In the last meeting, it was moved that a community member be on the committee drawing the maps. Will those members be involved in developing the criteria for drawing the maps or has the criteria already been set?
- Is the public going to be educated on the redistricting criteria so they will know what standard is being used for drawing the maps?

She said it was also noted in the last meeting that the numbers from the 2000 Census might be used in the redistricting. She employed them not to do this as it will give a skewed result. She reported Google 2000 census population for Roanoke Rapids was 17,313 and 2010 population 15,726. A loss of 1,589 which is a 9% difference. The population for 2020 is 15,229 for a loss of 497 from 2010 which is a 3% difference. If they use the 2000 population numbers less the 2020 numbers there will be a difference of 2,086 which is a 12% difference and that is a huge difference. She wanted to bring that to their attention. She also asked if the numbers shown the changes in the population in each district from 2010 to 2020.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated Council and the committee will be looking at those things as well as Interim City Manager Traynham. He thanked Ms. Spencer for her comments.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to approve the September 7, 2021 Special City Council Meeting; September 7, 2021 Work Session; September 21, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting and the October 5, 2021 Work Session minutes as drafted.

Committee Appointments

Beautification Committee

City Clerk Storey stated the terms for Joyce Tillery and Steve Holliday on the Beautification Committee expired August 9, 2021. Ms. Tillery and Mr. Holliday have expressed interest in continuing to serve on the committee. They both have served

the maximum number of two consecutive terms allowed by City policy. City Council has the authority to waive this policy. City Council took a vote earlier and Ms. Tillery and Mr. Holliday received a unanimous vote. She requested Council waive the City policy and reappoint Joyce Tillery and Steve Holliday to the Beautification Committee.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to waive the City policy and reappoint Joyce Tillery and Steve Holliday to the Beautification Committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if they were advertising for these committees as it seems City Council is waiving the policy more and more. It may be because people are not interested in serving on the committees. He asked how and where the committee openings were advertised.

City Clerk Storey said it was advertised on the City Page which is published on RRspin.com and in the Daily Herald newspaper and it is also on the City's website. He reported the committees were pretty full right now except for this committee. She does receive calls from time to time with people expressing certain interests. She noted the Beautification Committee has not been active since COVID. She said they could reach out to Ms. Tillery to get the committee active again and that could spur some interest.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he was not speaking of just this committee. It appears to be a loss of interest in all the committees. When this happens they tend to have to waive the City policy. They need to find some way to get people interested in those committees.

City Clerk Storey agreed and stated she would try to come up with ideas and was open to City Council's suggestions as well.

Councilman Smith said at one time, City Council received reports from the committees, but it seems like it has stopped. He did realize COVID may have affected that. City Clerk Storey replied that was correct. She would look into it and see if there was enough activity to compile a packet for them.

New Business

Appoint a Census Redistricting Advisory Committee

Interim City Manager Traynham reported she did not have the complete final numbers yet. The numbers she is seeing so far is looking as if they will have to do some district modifications based on a preliminary snapshot of things. It appears District 2 has

grown the most in population and District 3 had some growth as well. District 1 has lost a little in population. This could be because of the growth in Hwy. 125 area and Cross Creek subdivision area and multiple family developments on Southgate Drive that were not present at the time of the 2007 Voting District Map.

She stated Halifax County GIS/Tax Collector, Doris Hawkins, has been a tremendous help in gathering the data since they do not have the voting districts electronically available where they could overlay it to the census blocks. She has gone block by block to get the rough population number estimates. They were very close and feels a committee is necessary to help review what she has done so far. She was not sure of what changes needed to be made, but the committee would be involved in any changes to create alternative district boundaries. Part of the process of the map being changed, one public hearing is required prior to adoption of a new map. They are accepting public comments and noted that Ms. Spencer's comments have been noted and she hopes to get her questions answered.

Interim City Manager Traynham said the committee will work together to see how the district boundaries change with the population and come up with a couple of alternatives for City Council to consider as a final map. Changes will have to be reviewed by the Department of Justice as well to ensure the City is compliant and equitable in all areas.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked what kind of time frame they were looking at again. She replied the City is required to notify the Halifax County Board of Elections by November 12th to let them know if the City is going to have a new map in place by November 17, 2021. He asked if she foresaw that happening. She replied they were getting close. She has spent 40 hours in the last couple of days focusing on these maps.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he would not want to rush it and asked if they did not meet the deadline, then what was the next step. Interim City Manager Traynham replied if they don't then by the November Work Session they will have a better idea. At that time, she can let City Council know whether or not they need to put in a request for an extension to December 17th. They would send a letter to Kristin Scott, the Halifax County BOE Director. She did not feel December 17th would be a problem. She has made this a top priority.

Attorney Davis stated if the City requests an extension, the effect of that is going to be they would move the filing period. Interim City Manager Traynham added that the election would still be held March 8, 2022. If the extension is requested, the filing period would be January 3-7, 2022.

Councilman Smith asked if they nominate a committee tonight were they prepared to notify the people and start the meetings. Interim City Manager Traynham replied yes. He asked if she had the list of people City Council nominated and would she read the list before City Council votes on the committee.

Interim City Manager Traynham read the 2020 Census and Redistricting City Council appointees are as follows:

- Susan Barmer
- Hugh Bazemore
- Al Eatman
- Calvin (Rocky) Lane
- Ruby Mason

Councilman Smith suggested Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee serve on the committee as well.

Interim City Manager Traynham said City Council members could rotate in the meetings and she would like them all to be involved in the process. She suggested those Council members with elections coming up may want to remain neutral.

Councilman Smith confirmed that Interim City Manager Traynham stated earlier that the main districts that may be affected were Districts 2 and 3. She replied yes although District 1 has lost some population but that does not mean there will not be any change to the boundaries. The goal is to get them more proportionally equal in terms of the numbers and distribution of the population.

Attorney Davis added whatever comes out of this committee, City Council would have to approve it. He noted that each Council member has recommended one of the individuals to be on the committee. Even if the individuals on the committee are assisted by the City Manager and Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee that does not mean another Council member could not come into the session. If the discussion found that it could affect another district, they could contact the Council members in that district to have the opportunity to look at it before the final report is prepared. No matter what individuals are named to the committee, he felt like any and all Council members should be involved in the process leading up to the final recommendation.

Interim City Manager Traynham stated she did want to discourage participation because advertisement of an official meeting, but they do want to make sure they appropriately advertise if there would be more than three elected officials present as to not violate any open meetings laws. She plans to have a session on this matter in the November Work Session. She reminded City Council that in a previous meeting

they considered and adopted some of the redistricting and guiding principles. When they do consider moving boundaries, they agreed to try and keep neighborhoods intact and follow natural geographic courses.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant to approve Susan Barmer, Hugh Bazemore, Al Eatman, Calvin (Rocky) Lane, Ruby Mason and Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee as the committee for redistricting; seconded by Councilman Smith. Before a vote was taken, Interim City Manager Traynham asked that Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee serve as an ex officio member.

Councilwoman Bryant amended the motion to have Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee serve as ex officio member of the committee; seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried.

City Manager's Report

Interim City Manager Traynham asked Police Chief Martin to give a report on upcoming holiday events.

Chief Martin reported the Police Department has been working diligently with the Police Club over the last few months to prepare for the Christmas for the Kids program. They recently held a fundraiser which was a corn hole tournament over the weekend. He said the businesses in Roanoke Rapids went above and beyond expectations with the amount donations and raffle prizes. The citizens that came out and participated was tremendous. He commended Sgt. Joey Spragins who recently took over the Police Club since Bruce Norton retired. He stated this community steps up in times of need. The tournament itself raised \$3,300 which is phenomenal. With everything including donations, they raised \$9,075.78 total. He thanked Roanoke Rapids and Halifax County for their support and supporting the Police Department's efforts to help the children at Christmas. With this amount of money, he roughly estimates they will be able to help at least 40 children with \$250 each. The event will be held on December 4th and he invited City Council to come out and witness this.

He announced they would be holding Trunk or Treat at Doyle Field and a Halloween Party at Chaloner Recreation Center on Saturday, October 30th. It will be a safe, fun night for the kids. The activities at Doyle Field will be from 4 – 7 p.m. and Chaloner Recreation will be from 5 – 7 p.m. They would also be doing Trick or Treating the same night from 5 – 9 p.m. He did not discourage doing it on the traditional night of October 31st, but they would like to continue with the safe and fun festivities on the same night. He invited one of the food trucks that helped with the corn hole tournament to come out as well.

Chief Martin acknowledge the Fire Department for their help with these efforts. If they can keep doing this together, they will have great programs for the children. They will have safe, quality things for them to do. They also get to see who they are and get to know them.

Interim City Manager Traynham stated candy donations are welcomed and can be dropped off at the Police Department at City Hall. Trunk or Treats are becoming the norm and provides a safe atmosphere. She said to support what Chief Martin said about the Christmas for Kids program, that shopping experience and seeing the need in this community is significant for many children. She commended the Police Department for their fundraising efforts and making these children a priority at Christmas time. Many of them do pick out clothing, socks and try to find something for a sibling. These are things they need although they may want a toy; they look to their needs first.

Interim City Manager Traynham said the Fire Department has actively been working on Fire Prevention Month for the month of October. Since the beginning of October they have served approximately 1,200 children. They are fully booked until the end of the month.

She reported the Public Works Department has been helping the school district to respond to a collision that occurred near Manning Elementary School on Virginia Avenue recently. They have been working to clear site visibility in the area and improve signage.

She stated the GovDeals.com auction that recently posted surplus items brought in about \$20,000 so far. There are still some items to sell and they anticipate receiving another \$30,000 from the auction.

Interim City Manager Traynham announced that Public Works was gearing up for leaf season and awaiting the grinder contractor grind limbs from the limb yard. The contractor is on a two-month delay right now.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge presented the financial operations for the City of Roanoke Rapids for the period ending September 30, 2021. General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$5,934,145. (The percentage of actual money collected of adopted budgeted figures is 35.6%) General Fund year to date expenditures totaled \$4,099,256. (The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures is 24.6%) After the

month of September, 25% of the budget year has been completed. As a result, Year-To-Date Revenues exceeded Expenditures by \$1,834,888.

She said during the month of September, the City received:

- Ad Valorem Tax Revenue
- Utility Franchise Tax Revenue
- First allotment of Sales & Use Tax Revenue (for July)
- First allotment of Powell Bill Funding

She noted since much of September revenue was used to offset prior operational deficits and obligations from July and August, much of the City's revenue allocations have been utilized, year-to-date. As a result, the City must remain cautious about retaining as much revenue as practical for the leaner months of the fiscal year.

Finance Director Etheridge said revenue will continue to be critical for covering quarterly theatre bond payments, administrative overhead, utilities, operational costs, installment loan/debt payments, required projects, and inter local agreements.

She said the City Audit firm is in process of completing the FY 2020-2021 fiscal year audit. Management will advise when the report has been completed for presentation to Council.

Finance staff is working towards completion of all required regulatory reporting for quarter ending September 30. All State, Federal and Fiduciary requirements will be completed timely.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked how did the revenue versus expenditures compare to previous years. Finance Director Etheridge replied they were \$300,000 better than last year. The variance last year was \$1.5M. Now they have a reserve of \$1.8M.

Councilman Smith asked Finance Director Etheridge to thank the department heads and staff for how well they are doing on the budget.

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Closed Session</p> |
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Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to go into Closed Session to discuss a legal matter with the City Attorney as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3) and to discuss a Personnel Matter as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(6).

Minute Book Pages 20559 - 20569 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

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order in open session.

He stated Council had been discussing some ideas of what they were looking for in a new city manager for the City of Roanoke Rapids.

Councilwoman Bryant stated they were looking for a candidate with the following criteria:

- Minimum education with a Bachelor Degree, however a Master of Public Administration or equivalent degree is preferred.
- Ten years of progressive management experience as a division manager, department head level or higher with a small to medium size municipal government organization is required.
- Five or more years at the level of department head, assistant city manager or city manager experience is preferred.

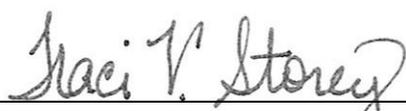
Mayor Doughtie stated those were some of the qualifications Council was looking for in a city manager.

Councilman Smith stated he had seen the qualifications and made a motion to offer Kelly Traynham the job as city manager pending the approval of a contract coming forth from the City Attorney and City Council; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously approved.

Mayor Doughtie stated Attorney Davis would begin working on a contract. Attorney Davis said he should have a draft to them very soon.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee; seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: 11/16/2021