



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A Work Session of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, March 1, 2022** 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, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Tammy Fahey, Interim Finance Director
Bobby Martin, Police Chief
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief

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

Public Service Recognition (Structure Fire on Roanoke Avenue)

City Manager Traynham reported the Saturday before last the city experienced a structural fire in the 200 block of Roanoke Avenue. Because of the response efforts and teamwork involved in it, the fire was able to be contained to one building. Unfortunately, it is a shame to lose any building. She stated while the Fire Department was the lead agency in this effort, they did not work alone and they never do. All the City departments truly never work alone. While the Fire Department was pursuing the active fire, the Public Works and Police Departments were blocking off streets and securing the perimeters aided in the efforts to keep people and other property safe. She commended everyone for their part in it. It does not just go to the day of the event. There are many things on the administration side such as looking at buildings and the aftermath, possible demolition or clean up permits. They never want to experience a loss, but this was minimized to the greatest extent possible. She thanked all the firemen and first responders who were there to help with the situation.

She called upon Fire Chief Patrick to share some slides and comments.

Chief Patrick stated he had been working with the City for 25 years. The 200 block is one of their biggest concerns for fire; the buildings are older. He believed the building involved, Mrs. Fitts building was over 100 years old. Many of the buildings are not in as good of shape as hers was. The Fire Department personnel did a great job along with the mutual aid departments that came in to help them. This allowed them to keep the fire to the one building. The guys received the call about 6:30 a.m. and they were on scene in less than 5 minutes. They started working on the fire very quickly from the inside trying to get to the fire.

He shared a slideshow of photos while he made comments. The photos showed a little smoke to start with from the outside, but all the heat, smoke and fire were contained to the inside of the building. Once the firefighters made it up to the top of the stairs, the heat was pushing them down to the floor. The thermal imaging camera at one point was not doing them any good because the heat levels were so hot. Their primary goal at that point was to get some ventilation up there to allow some of the heat and smoke out. It would help them with visibility. They worked for over 1-1/2 hours to try and extinguish the fire from the inside. At that point they figured they would not be able to do anything from the inside and putting the firefighter's lives at risk. They set a perimeter all the way around and kept the fire from extending to any other buildings. The two-story building beside it had some damage to the roofing material and single story building has some brick fall off and puncture the roof.

Chief Patrick stated there were multiple agencies working together. As City Manager Traynham said the three City departments worked together. Early on the Police Department was there to help stop traffic on the Avenue and redirect it. Then Public Works came in and started blocking off the street and redirecting traffic which allowed them plenty of room to work. They also called in Davie, Gaston and Weldon Fire Departments to help them. He said they were there 7-8 hours and they could imagine how tired the firefighters would be if they had to do it all by themselves. They were rotating people in and out. Overall, they had 50-60 responders at one time. The Roanoke Valley Rescue Squad set up and helped along with Halifax County EMS doing their rehabilitation. After every firefighter achieves his task he goes to rehabilitation where they check blood pressure and other vitals and give them hydration. The Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District helped to ensure they had enough water flow. They were flowing 1500 gallons per minute out of the aerials. Dominion NC Power also helped. Many residents lost power during this timeframe. The electrical lines that run up the Avenue are 13,000 volts and feeds most of Roanoke Rapids. Early on Chief Cook talked with the Dominion Power representatives and they said they would need to shut down power. Initially it shut down up to City Hall, but then they started rerouting the electricity. They had about 60 businesses and houses that were without power the entire time (3-4 hours).

He thanked Chick-Fil-A who brought food out to the firefighters as well as Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Clark (parents of one of the firefighters).

Mayor Doughtie thanked them for good service and asked Mrs. Fitts if she had any comments to share.

Mrs. Fitts stated she could not say enough nice things about the Roanoke Rapids Fire Department. They had wonderful service and appreciate all the help they had from Davie, Gaston and Weldon that came to the rescue. She appreciates the contact by the Mayor and some of the City Council who reached out to them; it means a lot. Those little things mean an awful lot. She stressed that the City or leadership do something about the communication with 911 or the City has something in place. They found out about the fire through her daughter-in-law who heard it on the scanner since her son was a volunteer fireman in the Darlington Fire Department. It was not up to the fireman to let them know, they are fighting fires. They need to do something about communication. They had a tenant who had a water leak from a washing machine the next Saturday and she called 911 who did get in touch with them. She pleaded for them to have something in place for the key holder or landowner is notified of these situations. She hopes the City will go back and readdress the mutual aid situation that she understands that was changed when the other city manager was here. She thanked the firefighters again. They brought out their safe and some filing cabinets and it would not have happened without them.

American Rescue Plan Act Funding (Final Guidance from US Treasury)

City Manager Traynham stated the interim guidance that had been provided to them up until January 6th had many cumbersome restrictions that they found would be burdensome to the local governments. On January 6, 2022 the US Treasury issued its final guidance for the American Rescue Plan funding. In that they have alleviated most of the stringent requirements that were identified to be cumbersome to local governments. In NC alone over 500 municipalities received less than \$10M with Roanoke Rapids being one of them. The US Treasury has expanded its category for revenue replacement to include a standard allowance. This allows the entirety of the funds up to \$10M into any category of general government services. One of the City's greatest expenditures is salaries. The City's salaries line item from July 1, 2021 – January 31, 2022 has already expended over \$3.5M. This fiscal year, they have received \$2.281M in ARP funding and will receive their second allocation in August 2022 so it will be the next fiscal year.

She reported the City has a report which is due by end of April where the City has to indicate what they plan to do with the ARP funds or give them a progress report. She recommends the City follow the standard allowance that is provided under the final ruling. This will be much more efficient for the expenditure and review of funds so it will create offsets. They would no longer be talking about what they would do with ARPA money. The

ARPA money would be used towards general government expenses such as salaries. They essentially reimburse themselves and supplant the monies already spent. The money they already spent would basically be considered part of the general fund now. By the end of April the City would submit their reports for the \$2.281M to the State and complete the annual report. The use of the funds has been documented and reported. They would do it again upon the receipt of their next allocation.

City Manager Traynham stated Halifax County followed this same standard allowance guidance and discussed it at their last meeting after discussing several other options. Based on her research of other communities that have received less than \$10M and other that received more than \$10M are claiming up to \$10M in there. The attachments in their agenda packets include excerpts from the NCLM that describes the flexibility allowed by the standard allowance for revenue replacement. There are excerpts from Kara Millonzi with the UNC SOG describing how the final ruling allows the governments to claim the standard allowance for up to \$10M and expend that full amount in general government services. It significantly simplifies the process of administering these funds. The City does not have the staffing and resources. She believes it to be in the best interest of the City to accept the standard allowance for the use of funds and for City Council to be able to make funding decisions that do not have the strings attached that come with federal expenses. With the standard allowance they would not be under a strict deadline to spend the funds because effectively they would have already made use of them. She noted these key changes have made a big impact for local governments. She also included an article from the US Treasury that she highlighted.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there was any way they could get Kara Millonzi to do a call into City Council to talk about this a little further. He fully agrees with the standard allowance going under administrative. He does question regarding doing it under one item like that. It appears the standard allowance is probably the best for the City and he can 100% agree with that, but when they get into the reporting, it says all those remain in place. They have to track and report all the ARP expenditures. He asked if they were looking at bringing it in under one line item or were they talking about bringing it under personnel and then other items under that. City Manager Traynham replied the way their accounting is set up in the software system, they refer to salaries. They would have it set up strictly under salaries which is one of the City's greatest expenses as a government. They could spread it out, but this would be cleaner and easier to use salaries.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there would be any other personnel related at all. She replied no, it would strictly salaries. He asked if they could get Ms. Millonzi to talk with them about that piece of it. City Manager Traynham stated they could make the request but cannot make any promises or assurances. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he may be able to help with that since he sits on that board.

City Manager Traynham said as far as the documentation goes, she would work with the finance staff and follow all the government accounting standards.

Mayor Doughtie clarified that City Manager Traynham was saying in using the standard allowance by putting the funds into the salary line item and the money they don't spend on salaries they would not have to report. She confirmed that was correct. They would be reporting that they were effectively reimbursing an expense they have already made. They have already spent the money on salaries; they are supplanting it. This is the intent of the final guidance to make it easier.

City Manager Traynham stated at the next meeting in March they would have City Council take action for accounting purposes so they will properly document the process. They will need to be in compliance so they can complete the report by the end of April.

Mayor Doughtie asked City Manager Traynham to make contact with Ms. Millonzi to answer Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee's question.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he would like for he and another Council member to be included in the call.

Interim Finance Director Fahey reported these funds were already set up in a separate fund but are all in the same bank account. The salary expenses will be the backup for the money City Manager Traynham was talking about so when they make journal entries to move money from fund to the other.

Councilman Smith asked how much time it was going to save her from all the paperwork. City Manager Traynham replied a significant amount of time; comparing days to weeks. This is a report they could get done in a day compared to hiring outside resources and having to spend at least 10% of the allocation in administrative fees. This is the clearest and most effective thing they could do with this money and Council can make decisions on budgeting. They are following the guidance from the US Treasury Department and is supported by the UNC School of Government and NCLM. It is supported by every state government in the United States right now.

Councilman Smith stated from the paperwork she submitted to Council it appears to be the best route to take. They can go ahead and spend the monies without all the paperwork. He thinks she did some good work on this and appreciated the time she spent informing him on this.

Mayor Doughtie asked Councilman Smith if he would join Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee on the call or Councilwoman Bryant if he cannot go. They both agreed. City Manager Traynham

stated she would make the request. Prior to the release of final guidance the School of Government indicated they would not answer direct questions from local governments. They suggested they participate in their office hours.

Councilman Smith asked to set a time limit on this meeting so they would not be tying up the City Manager all day. He suggested no longer than one hour.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he thought that would be enough time too, but he wanted to make sure all the questions were answered. If your questions are answered and you no longer want to be there, then you don't have to be there. He did not want set a time and cut it off. If they do not do this right, they will have to pay this money back.

Councilman Smith stated he thinks with the research the City Manager has done on this, he did not see why they had to go ask somebody else. They will have to find out the answer and come back. He thinks City Manager Traynham has done the work that needs to be done.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he did too, he does not disagree with him on that. Ms. Millonzi is the person City Manager Traynham got her information from and held numerous meetings on this item. If they read about this, it says that reporting and accounting requirements previously established by the Treasury remain in place. Even though they would be putting it under one item, they still have to do some good reporting. They can still take the standard allowance and do not have to justify how much money they get and every dime they spend which is great and he can fully agree with that. He referred to what he mentioned before concerning the reporting and accounting. He was not saying City Manager Traynham was not right, he just wants to make sure they were right.

Mayor Doughtie interrupted and said he felt they were getting into too much detail. They hired the City Manager to give them direction. She has spent a lot of time on this which is a very short resource for her. He feels she has brought them the best information she has received from Raleigh to get this work done and make it as little as of a time consuming effort for her departments as possible. He asked her to get someone to give Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee the answers to his questions. He has asked one more person to attend that meeting and believes they should get whatever answer they may want within an hour, but again if someone wants to leave after that it's fine. They need to move on with this. He feels she has given them good direction. If they have people they cannot depend on and make decisions for them, then they need somebody else. They were not getting anywhere right now.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he would help make the call to Ms. Millonzi. Councilman Smith stated he was through with it.

Departmental Budget Priorities

City Manager Traynham said as requested as part of their consideration of spending, they are moving into the upcoming fiscal year budget for 2022-23. North Carolina General Statutes require departments to submit their budget requests to the City Manager by April 30th of each year.

She stated they have been requested to present information for them tonight. Department heads are working very diligently along with their other day to day tasks in providing this information. They have found in many ways where costs just continue to go up.

She noted the State allocation grant contract agreement was signed today by Mayor Emery Doughtie. Those items that were part of those initial budget discussions are going to be funded under that including the Strategic Plan; Kirkwood Adams roof, fire alarm and flooring replacement; site work at Chaloner and the elevator at City Hall. That represents a lot of the major expenses. At this point she asked department heads not to include those expenses. Those projects will begin as soon as they are able to. They hope the money will be in place within the next two weeks.

City Manager Traynham said she asked department heads to go one by one to talk about their needs separate from going through the justifications. They will have many days and hours of time to talk about the reasons why. She wants to give each of them 3-5 minutes to talk about the big capital items and needs.

Human Resources

Human Resources Director Christina Caudle said one of her requests is a city-wide request which is a city wide software update project. She feels this is a priority level one. It does impact human resources, finance and payroll, but it also touches a lot of other departments. Her department touches every department each day but there are a lot of citizen services that can come with some of these software services as well.

She explained to implement software as a service or SAS product it does take a lot of time and resources. It is a multi-year contract. When they get full numbers in front of them please keep that in mind. If they commit to something in this upcoming fiscal year that would be their first year annual software subscription but they will also have one-time implementation and training fees. Year one will always be extremely high compared to future years.

She said one of the goals they have talked about is the need to modernize to meet today's expectations as well as tomorrow's expectations for employees and the customers they interact with every day. She has demoed a number of software products in the last three months. There are a lot of products out there that could work for the City. Cloud-based or subscription software are always the current version of a software product so that will be

their best fit. That is where the subscription fee comes in. Cloud-based products will always stay up to date and do not require maintenance fees or high storage costs.

Human Resources Director Caudle said there is a citizen service product that would address permitting needs primarily for the planning department but could address everything from renting a park facility through Parks & Rec to reporting potholes through Public Works. It really is all-encompassing. That product is a cloud-based product and could take 3-6 months to integrate. She said there is a full HR and payroll suite through NeoGov that is of interest to them. That provides employee ownership of their own pay and benefits; right now they do not have that.

She stated that overall these products are out there and she realizes they will have one on one discussions through the budget process where they will get into the details about what they do. The overreaching piece is that it's going to make the organization more efficient. One of these products through NeoGov is saying there's going to be a 68 percent workflow efficiency improvement.

She said to look at these products as an employee who works 24/7 at part-time employee rate. They don't have a sick kid or take a vacation day so they are working for the City all the time. That allows citizens to gain access to things 24/7 which is what they are used to doing in today's world. It is something they really need to consider. If they do a complete integration across all departments they would be looking at a year one cost of more than \$500,000 with a significant drop in year two. If they pick and choose products, they are looking at a bare minimum that year one cost would be just under \$100,000. After that the cost would be around \$160,000 and then \$193,000 the following year.

Human Resources Director Caudle said the software is a public sector tool. The cost is high, yes, but it does make the City modern, it keeps them moving 24-7, it makes all of the employees more efficient and also it's going to help them in 5 to 10 years to recruit new employees. She reported Hyde County which has just over 5,000 people is implementing a complete product suite right now. With places like Hyde County making these decisions now, the City will become obsolete if they don't make these decisions and put the tools in place soon.

She said the other request which is a high priority for her and the Human Resources Department is the consideration of a full-time administrative support employee. She is finding that is critical in this position. Ms. Kearney had asked for this in years past and now she understands why. There is a lot of day to day work that needs that support person so the director level position can keep things moving in an effective manner. The cost of that position with salary and fringe benefits is up to \$50,000 a year. That position is not frozen, it needs to be created.

She stated those were her two big requests. She believed City Manager Traynham was planning to review some of the Main Street requests although most was covered under the \$250,000 State Directed grant allocation. That contract was also signed by Mayor Doughtie so they should receive that allocation soon.

Councilman Smith asked what the costs per year were for the software. Human Resources Director Caudle replied it depends on what they chose. If they went with the full integration of products, year one (after the initial costs) would be approximately \$160,000. In year two, it rises to approximately \$193,000 and stay at that point. They would renegotiate contracts every three years.

Human Resources Director Caudle gave an example of a building permit process with Chapel Hill utilizing this type of program which allows 24/7 access for contractors. It allows application submittal, payment and scheduling of inspections. She said this could make things go five times faster and be much more efficient. This can apply to other departments as well. There is a tremendous amount of savings and workflow efficiencies that they can probably equate to a dollar amount, but it's hard to estimate that without having it within their own organization. In the long run it is going to be critical in recruiting good employees too.

City Manager Traynham added the typical process in the City now is that a developer would have to download and print an application. Then they would have to mail it in or hand deliver it to City Hall. They have to pay in person by check, cash or credit card. Calling in for inspections or other things. It would save contractors a lot of time and it furthers the economic development opportunities.

Human Resources Director Caudle stated these contractors are typically working in multiple communities. They are also getting accustomed to these types of processes with other places. This could aid the City in becoming more business friendly or hinder them as they keep going year after year not answering the needs of the modernization that people are expecting. She plans to demo these products so they will know how they work. Although the costs sounds scary, after the first 24 months to get fully integrated, there is going to be a lot of cost efficiencies and improvements they will all be grateful for.

Finance Department

Interim Finance Director Tammy Fahey requested two desktop computers, two laser jet printers, one laptop, one check scanner and one lateral file cabinet.

She said the costs associated with the request are under \$10,000.

Planning Department

City Manager Traynham said it has been a few years since the department has upgraded a vehicle. She asked for one replacement vehicle to keep the fleet of the department more modernized. She said the training budget for the department needs to be adequate so employees can maintain required certifications.

She stated desktop or laptop computers were also needed. It has been since 2016 since they were replaced. Five of the seven desktops need replacement.

She said the requests for the department is around \$50,000.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there would be any additional dollars for demolition. She replied yes, demolition is part of their routine budget. The demolition line item has always been a contingency line item. When Council has funded it, it has also been taken away to help fund other things that are of higher priority. They have requested \$50,000 for many years and they end up with \$25,000 or less. She added they do have money set aside for demolition in the State Directed Grant as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if they were talking about ARP monies. She replied she was hoping they were going to put ARP money towards the standard allowance and City Council would have the discretion to spend general fund money as part of the budget process.

Councilman Smith said that was what she was talking about now. Once it goes in General Fund for that then what general fund money comes out will be used for these things. That is why they are getting the figures now.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee questioned it and said that would not work for him.

Attorney Davis explained with the ARP money the intent is to reimburse costs they had already spent. This fiscal year the City has spent much more than the \$2.3M on salaries. Based on the guidelines, they can reimburse those monies they have already spent. By doing that, what goes to the federal government is that they are reimbursing themselves for money they already spent. What this means is that they have all they money that has come into the General Fund. They are not earmarking it for the General Fund, they are earmarking it to reimburse salaries they have already spent which results in them having a lot of money in the General Fund. Therefore, when budget time comes, they will be able to allocate that money just like they do other revenue.

Fire department

Chief Patrick stated they knew what the Fire Department's priority was and it is priority one; they need a fire truck. They actually need two fire trucks. The department is short one fire truck and has been for several years now. The red and white truck the department

uses is on its last leg. The guys are running that truck today because the ladder truck is out of service at the shop. They are one flat tire away from having to borrow a truck from another department.

He reported their other priorities are to replace a 1997 Yukon that was donated by Dominion Power in 2000. It has 170,000 miles on it. It has been good for them, but it's starting to cause more and more issues.

He reported the department has submitted a grant through the County firefighters association for Viper radios. If the Association is awarded that grant the Roanoke Rapids Fire Department would receive about half of the radios which they need. They would still need to purchase more radios in the future. They would need about 15 portables and five mobile radios.

Fire Chief Patrick said they are still trying to upgrade the generator at Station 1. The current generator will possibly run your house at home, but it will not run that complete station. The A/C units are aging and in need of replacement. They have been replacing a few a year, but still have 5 at Station 1 that need replacing. They are 24-25 years old.

He said the back ramp which is the driveway at Station 1 needs resurfacing.

Councilman Smith asked for the cost of the fire truck. Chief Patrick replied estimates for a fully-equipped fire truck are between \$650,000 and \$750,000.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if he had the other requests itemized. Chief Patrick replied yes. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he would get it from City Manager Traynham on the all-inclusive list.

Councilman Smith asked for estimate of the vehicle replacement. Chief Patrick replied roughly \$35,000.

Councilman Smith also asked for the estimates of the other requests. Chief Patrick replied the radios were \$79,000; generator was \$85,000; A/C replacement was \$35,000 and the driveway resurfacing was \$20,000.

Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Director John Simeon stated his first item was a Parks Resource Officer. This is to assist with safety at all their facilities and parks including the Canal Trail. This is an additional position but when they sit down he will ask Chief Martin to also join him in that conversation because it will be law enforcement with parks and recreation. That cost is estimated at \$38,000 which is the starting salary for a police officer.

Mayor Doughtie asked if they would have benefits included. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied yes. Chief Martin interjected the total cost for salary with benefits would be \$55,514.

He said the A/C chiller at T.J. Davis needs to be replaced. Right now this unit is on backup mode and could go out at any day. It could last for six months or it could last for a year but when it is on backup mode, they know it is definitely going to fail at some point. The cost is \$45,000.

He also requested that the T.J. Davis supervisor position be unfrozen. That estimated cost is \$42,000 with benefits.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon recommended demolishing four of the six tennis courts at Emry Park and resurfacing the two courts including painting and fencing for \$79,500. This does not include lighting. That will help when the park closes. The City parks are open from sunrise to sunset. He also recommended resurfacing another tennis court including paint and fence at Rochelle Park for \$38,000.

He requested replacement of an administrative vehicle; the 2001 Ford is failing.

He confirmed with City Manager Traynham that the playground swings at Chaloner were already covered. She replied yes, they would be included under the State Directed Grant as well as the site work needed.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated a failing 2000 Chevrolet maintenance vehicle needed replacing.

He requested new Zoom equipment for the Lloyd Andrews building. They think Zoom was here to stay and the City's Zoom equipment was very antiquated. He talked to the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District and several churches. He noted Councilman Smith's church uses the same system as the RRGSD uses. Complete equipment is estimated at \$12,000.

He asked to unfreeze the Library Supervisor position at \$39,700 and the Canal Museum Program Supervisor at \$41,600.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said they talked about grants earlier, more specifically the PARTF grant. Before they can apply for a grant they need a Master Plan for their department. A Master Plan would cost between \$40,000-50,000 before they ever start the application. He reminded them the PARTF grant was a dollar for dollar match.

He requested replacement of two park playgrounds. One is at Rochelle Park for \$75,000 and the other is at Long Park beside TJ Davis for \$50,000.

He stated the total for his requests comes to around \$550,000.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked him to discuss the park cleanup. He replied Ms. Robinson spoke at the last City Council meeting about cleaning up Rochelle Park. He met with her the next day. For the City to consider someone adopting a park they need to have a 501(c)(3) so when they collect money they can have a trail of it. She did not have a 501(c)(3). Since then Ms. Robinson has been talking to Tracy Story and the Story Foundation. She wants to do a co-adoption of the park so they would have the 501(c)(3) at that point. She is getting ready to have two park clean up days: March 26th and another one two weeks after that. Her group of community members want to start addressing some of the things she spoke about in the meeting. This is just for Rochelle Park.

Councilman Smith asked if there was going to be a supervisor out there. Parks & Recreation Director said he and his Maintenance Superintendent would be out there with them.

Police Department

Chief Martin said their major need right now is their radio system. As they move forward into the coming years, they are looking at everything to become regionalized. Viper radios were made for emergency management and the signal is phenomenal. They are starting to have issues where they are putting officers at risk by not having good communications. He has been in contact with Buddy Wrenn with Emergency Services. Halifax County Sheriff's Office and EMS have already starting moving forward with their purchase of Viper radios. He requested 50 portable and 50 handheld radios. The current rough estimate is \$325,000 for the portable, handheld and in car radios.

He reported the second major item was the need for patrol cars. They would like to request 8 Dodge Durangos outfitted with in-car cameras. The estimated cost for the vehicles is \$320,000 and the 8 in-car cameras are estimated around \$55,888. For a total of \$378,888.

Chief Martin requested unfreezing all positions. He feels this would help to appeal to and recruit seasoned officers. They can give the officers they have now advancement opportunities. He stated right now they have officers that are working hard to cover shifts. He believed they would be better served to have a full department that has all their positions open. They did apply for the COPS grant which will help them over the next three years with \$110,000 over that time period. They figured it to be \$35,000-36,000 per year.

Chief Martin reported they currently have two positions frozen. The salary for a patrol officer would be \$55,514. One investigator slot frozen with starting salary ranges from \$41,000 to \$42,000 depending on experience and with benefits added would put it around \$60,000.

He stated the last thing they were looking is laptops. They have been getting military grade laptops which are already outdated by the time they get them. They spend anywhere from \$1,500-2,000 on upgrades to get them going. They can get laptops at a fairly reasonable price. He requested 12 new laptops at \$1,000 each. That is with software and everything.

The total for his requests was approximately \$780,888.

Mayor Doughtie asked Chief Martin what the average tenure of their officers. He replied the average was 3-5 years. Their biggest thing is recruitment and retention. They want to recruit good quality employees and want to retain them instead of going somewhere else.

Mayor Doughtie stated there is probably nothing safer than having a veteran with those young officers. Somebody that has never been through a situation, they do not know how they are going to react. Even though they've had training. He agreed with Chief Martin about recruitment of officers with years of training would be beneficial.

Chief Martin said over the last few months, the department has been able to recruit a couple of officers, one with 12 years and one with 8 years. With that being said, unfortunately he had a 6 year leave the department for WestRock. It is what it is. Their goal is to have an environment where they can recruit them and retain them.

Mayor Doughtie said City Council understands that and tried to do what they could in the budget last year. They will continue to support them.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked if they had any K-9 officers. Chief Martin replied yes, they have two.

Public Works

Public Works Director Chalker requested the following:

\$30,000 for a traffic light upgrade at Seventh Street and Park Avenue. They will use the same poles, they have to change the heads and bring the light back into compliance.

\$445,000 for a vacuum truck to clean out the storm drainage catch basins.

\$240,000 for a trash truck.

\$65,000 for a leaf machine.

\$200,000 for a knuckle boom.

\$100,000 for 3 pickups to replace 3 trucks they got used from Pennsylvania DOT before he began working for the City. They are worn out.

\$100,000 for a backhoe. Right now only one out of the three is dependable.

He said for the expense budget, they were requesting \$500,000 for street resurfacing. It has been almost four years since they have resurfaced streets; they are behind.

Public Works Director Chalker also requested to unfreeze 4 positions in the street department for a total cost with fringes of \$170,352.

He reported the total capital budget was \$1,180,000 and the total for the expense budget was \$670,352.

City Manager Traynham thanked each of the department heads for providing a snap shot of their priorities. This is a quick glimpse of what to expect in the individual budget meetings. She encouraged Council members to visit the facilities, look and see what the conditions are and ride along. The needs are there. They will be coordinating the departmental review meetings in the next few weeks.

Miscellaneous

City Manager Traynham stated at the next meeting, City Council will need to consider action for the direction of the American Rescue Plan funds. They will have a legislative hearing for a rezoning application for a property located off of East Tenth Street behind Discount Tire owned by Tracy Story. Also, consideration of an Unsafe Building Order for property at 1302-1304 Roanoke Avenue.

Closed Session

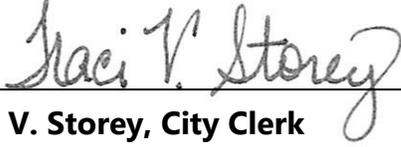
Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Stainback and unanimously carried to go into Closed Session to discuss a legal matter with the City Attorney as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3).

[Remainder of page intentionally left blank]

Minute Book Pages 20715 - 20719 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

Adjournment

City Council returned to open session. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: March 15, 2022