



# Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A Special Meeting (Budget Work Session) of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, March 29, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.** at TJ Davis Recreation Center.

**Present:** Carl Ferebee)  
Sandra Bryant)  
Suetta Scarbrough)  
Wayne Smith)  
Rex Stainback)

## **Council Members**

Kelly Traynham, City Manager  
Traci Storey, City Clerk  
Bobby Martin, Police Chief  
Tammy Fahey, Interim Finance Director  
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director

**Absent:** Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

The meeting was called to order.

## **Parks & Recreation Department**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon started off the meeting reading the Parks & Recreation Department Mission Statement. He reported they were currently not completing some of the aspects of this mission statement.

He reviewed his department's capital requests. He stated he was extremely concerned for safety. It has become unsafe in some situations. They had a full-time employee leave and on their exit interview they said they did not feel safe at work. He also had 3 part-time employees leave because they did not feel safe at work. That is unsettling. This is his number one priority. He informed City Council about several recent incidents that have occurred at parks and facilities. They have an off-duty police officer there from 3-7 p.m. and on the weekends to help curb some of the activity that has been going on.

City Council discussed if the activities were during school related functions on Parks & Recreation property.

Councilman Stainback stated many of the activities were at the skate park, parking lot and even the parks. He understands these activities are moving to these locations because the persons involved know the consequences if it happens on school grounds.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon added he receives numerous telephone calls for people not feeling safe on the Canal Trail. He has concerns for upcoming local youth sports activities. It takes a police officer to get the wrong-doers attention. In all his years he has never experienced issues like this. He has to get assistance at least 1-2 times a week. He reported there have even been issues at the library and the senior center.

He requested a Parks & Recreation Facilities Resource Officer/Park Ranger. They are very common throughout the state. He put out the question on listserv this morning. He reported the results which demonstrated many cities and counties have one or even more.

He said the salary and benefits for the position would be \$55,600. It would be a sworn officer through the police department but they would to work with the Parks & Recreation Director on where and how to appropriate their use. He suggested they could take the ARPA monies to set aside for a two-year program (two year contract) and re-evaluate it after that time frame. He stressed that he needed help addressing this issue. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if it would be a 40 hr/week position. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied yes.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated coming out of COVID, the park & recreation facility rentals are going through the roof. Also, since having the off-duty officer on site, the numbers have increased at TJ Davis.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon continued to review his capital requests.

- Air Conditioning Chiller (at TJ Davis) \$45,000
- Un-freeze TJ Davis Supervisor position \$42,295
- Emry Tennis Courts
  - (Demo 4 courts & resurface 2) \$80,000
  - (Demo all courts) \$30,000
- Rochelle Tennis Courts
  - (Resurface, paint, fence) \$38,000
  - (Demo court) \$10,000
- Administrative Vehicle (Replace 2001 Ford) \$33,000

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported they were having trouble keeping part-time employees, mainly because the pay is not competitive (\$9/hour). They have lost at least 10 part-time employees.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if that was a starting pay and then it progresses or was it \$9/hr for part-time. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied it was \$9/hr. They used to pay \$7.75/hr and last year increased it to \$9. He explained several of these employees that have been here for years. They discussed looking at increasing the part-time rate.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated the tennis courts at Emry Park have been locked for three years and is an eyesore. The courts were built in 1977 and the typical lifespan for courts is 20 years. He referred to photos in their packets of the cracks in the courts. He recommends demoing 4 of the courts and resurface, paint and have 2 new courts there. He did not believe they needed 6 courts. The cost is \$80,000. If they demo everything it would cost \$30,000. He said they currently have 4 courts at TJ Davis and 1 at Chaloner (multi-use court). They could also discuss demoing all the courts and putting something else in their place. There are other options that do not cost a lot of money (dog park, small soccer field). He could come up with a proposal if they wanted him to.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said a Master Plan is needed for a PARTF grant. When they did Chaloner Park, they did a park specific plan which is cheaper. A master plan will cost \$50,000 while a park specific plan for Rochelle Park for instance, it would cost \$12,000 - \$15,000. They could do something with the tennis courts (replace with something else such as a splash pad, basketball court), the shelter or pave the walking track around the park. He said the tennis court needed to come down.

He explained a Master Plan within the past 5 years was required for a PARTF grant.

City Manager Traynham said she and Parks & Recreation Director Simeon have discussed if they did a park specific plan for Rochelle Park for \$15,000, she could allocate the long-term strategic planning funds out of the State Directed Grant funds.

Councilman Smith suggested the idea to hire someone to look at all grants instead of piece-milling all these grants plus take that work off of staff.

City Council discussed possibly demoing the tennis courts at both Rochelle and Emry Parks, planting grass and waiting a year to see to what grants were available. They felt if they needed a plan before demoing courts. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said he would work on a plan to discuss at a later date.

City Council reiterated the need for the City Manager to set up a meeting with Reginald Speight with the USDA as soon as possible in order to discuss the City's needs and how to apply for the funding available.

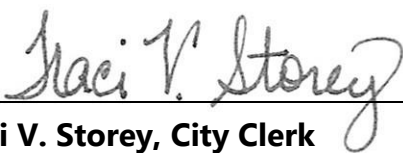
The Parks & Recreation capital requests total \$494,600 using the high end for the playground equipment and tennis courts.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked when the bathhouse would be completed at Chaloner Park. City Manager Traynham replied she could not give a date. It took 2 years for them to even release the funds. It would depend when they could get the engineering work completed and hire contractors.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon highlighted the following items in his operating budget:

- Camera system at TJ Davis \$4,000
- Camera system at Kirkwood Adams \$4,000

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

  
Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: April 19, 2022