



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, May 2, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

Present: Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem
Sandra W. Bryant)
Tommy Daughtry)
Wayne Smith)
Rex Stainback)

Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Carmen Johnson, Finance Director
Gorton Williams, Acting Police Chief
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief
David Wise, Planning & Development Director
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Tony Hall, Main Street Development Director

Absent: Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director

In Mayor Doughtie’s absence, Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee presided. He called the meeting to order and opened with an invocation.

Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked Council members if there were any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening. There being no conflicts, motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt the agenda as presented.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilman Smith, and unanimously carried to approve the April 11, 2023, 10 a.m. Budget Work Session, April 11, 2023, 2 p.m. Budget Work Session, April 13, 2023, 10 a.m. Budget Work Session, April 13, 2023, 2 p.m. Budget Work Session, April 18, 2023, Budget Work Session and April 18, 2023, Regular City Council Meeting minutes as drafted.

New Business

Consideration of Asphalt Overlay Contractor Bid Award

Purchasing Agent Krista Rourk stated earlier in the fiscal year, City Council voted to allot \$500,000 of the ARPA funding to repair city streets. Invitation to bid was advertised in the local newspaper and City website. The first bid opening was scheduled for March 29, 2023. Unfortunately, they only received two bids. According to general statute and uniform guidance, they must receive three bids on the first round of advertising. They put the advertisement back out in the newspaper and City website. The two bidders that showed up at the first round showed up again at the second round. They are now able to go forward.

She presented the bid tabulation sheet for their review. She reported Rightmyer Machine Rentals submitted a bid for \$898,227 or \$129 per ton. Adams Construction submitted a bid for \$941,246 or \$138.50 per ton. She stated obviously these bids are higher than the allotted amount they had set aside for this project. Public Works Director Chalker will be reviewing the city streets that are in need of repair and come up with a plan for which streets. They incorporated about 23 streets in the bid so that will need to be trimmed down. She asked City Council to consider a motion to award a contract to the lowest, responsible bidder and direct the City Manager to execute a contract with Rightmyer Machine Rentals for the FY 2022-2023 paving project.

Councilman Smith asked Finance Director Johnson how much money was in the Powell Bill and could they use any of those funds. She replied approximately \$421,000. He asked if they still had all those funds set aside. She stated those funds were part of the current year's budget and not necessarily set aside; they are in the operating funds.

City Manager Traynham added that the current Powell Bill funds are allocated across the Public Works Department for street maintenance and repairs and that type of work that is authorized for Powell Bill Funds. Therefore, they have already budgeted and expended monies as part of that budget.

Councilman Smith stated the motion should be for \$500,000 then rather than \$898,000. City Manager Traynham said \$500,000 is the budget for the list of streets given. The contractor has submitted a bid that will cost more than that so the City will need to trim the list down to get to \$500,000. The list will be trimmed down by going in order of priority need.

Councilman Smith said that is why he asked about using any extra Powell Bill funds towards it. City Manager Traynham replied she could not tell him at this time, but they will find out that information. They could bring that information back at the next meeting. She suggested City Council take action tonight based on the \$500,000 to allow the contractor to get started. If the City has additional funds, they could add to it and do so at the next meeting.

Councilman Daughtry asked if the contractor realizes he is going to get \$500,000. Ms. Rourk replied he does not know the amount is \$500,000, but the bid proposal does state that the City has the authority to increase or decrease the scope of work based on the budgeted funds. Councilman Daughtry said sometimes that has a bearing on the contractor's bidding. Ms. Rourk said the contractor was aware that their bid was over what the City was going to be able to do.

City Manager Traynham stated this was typical when the street bids come in. She believes the appropriate motion would be to award a contract and authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Rightmyer Machine Rentals as the lowest bidder for up to the budgeted amount of \$500,000.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there was a process of how they will determine the streets for the paving. City Manager Traynham replied the list of the streets were included in the bid package so the ones that need the most improvement will be the priority. Unfortunately, Public Works Director Chalker is out sick today and could not attend to answer some of these questions.

Ms. Rourk reported when Rightmyer Machine Rentals submitted their bid, they included an addendum to the back of it showing what the cost would be per street instead of a combination of all the streets. This should make it easier for Public Works Director Chalker to go through the list and not go over the \$500,000 budget.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Daughtry and unanimously carried to accept the bid from Rightmyer Machines Rentals for \$500,000.

Update on Roanoke Rapids Theatre Auction on GovDeals.com

City Manager Traynham stated initially Public Works Director Chalker was going to present the update, but he is feeling ill today. She said they have been working with the GovDeals staff to develop a marketing advertisement for the Roanoke Rapids Theatre property. A couple of the employees of GovDeals have visited the site, taken pictures and the city staff has sent them pictures and records. Right now they can go online to GovDeals.com and type Roanoke Rapids in the search bar to view the listing for the Theatre. It states the auction does not begin until May 25th at 9 a.m. and closes on June 26th at 9 a.m. The auction period will last about 30 days. She said it has been generating interest. This morning there were 3,330 visitors to the advertisement and this afternoon prior to the meeting it was close to 3,800.

She stated while at the CityVision conference last week, she had the opportunity to speak with a GovDeals representative who was able to show her on their administrative side of the portal the level of interest that is being generated. They seem to be very excited about the prospect of selling the Theatre. So far, the City does not have any expenditures into this which is good. Selling the property would help pay for their efforts.

City Manager Traynham thanked Public Works Director Chalker and the Public Works staff who have done a good job of keeping the building maintained.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked about the fees for GovDeals selling the Theatre. City Manager Traynham replied they will get their share of it based on the purchase price. It states on the actual listing what the fees are and so forth.

Proposed Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget

City Manager Traynham stated as far as the upcoming fiscal year budget, this is an item they will take up at the next meeting in two weeks. In all good faith, she had wanted to have the budget message ready to present to them tonight but assured them they were still on schedule. They were still in compliance as far as preparing the budget.

She said City Council had the opportunity to participate in the budget workshops with the departments to look at what their proposed, estimated expenses would be. Every year and in every jurisdiction, people are going to ask for more than can be afforded to give. Right now, they were looking at just over \$18M in requests and they will not have enough revenue to cover that. By the next meeting, they will have more detailed information on that and a balanced budget. Between now and then they are looking at various things for the final numbers in revenues.

City Manager Traynham stated the primary issue they are experiencing is the costs of everything going up. Costs are rising nationwide for various factors and reasons. Consumer spending is impacted by inflation. Organizations are offering additional salaries and benefits. She stated they have a tough budget to look at. Right now, their primary focus is to maintain current levels of staffing. Salaries and benefits are the City's greatest expense in the budget. The greatest revenues are property taxes, sales & use taxes, and other funds. They have made some adjustments to the fee schedule to bring in additional revenue. Over time they have made incremental changes, so it is not so dramatic to the customers paying for the services. They need to find a way to increase revenues for the City. She stated more information would be forthcoming on the budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked City Manager Traynham if she had a ballpark on how much the total budget would be. She replied the next property re-evaluation is scheduled for 2024 which is completed by Halifax County. Right now, they are still based on the levels from a few years ago. Last year, revenues were about \$16.5M so there is a gap like every year. Departments have been helpful; they have been conservative in their requests. Frankly, the costs for the same items such as a bottle of water has gone up. They do not want to cut services; they want to maintain the current levels of service.

Councilman Smith stated he hoped she was not looking to increase the budget and not looking at a tax increase. City Manager Traynham said she was not proposing a tax increase. He said they were going to have to maintain a low budget. He knows it is tough on the department heads, but it is something they need to think about as Council members.

City Manager Traynham said there are additional costs that are outside of their control that they have to continue to pay. For example, every year the retirement contributions that are mandated by the State go up incrementally. She said the prior year the City cut out a lot of preventive maintenance expenses.

Councilman Smith stated he understood what she goes through as the city manager, but they also have to understand what the citizens of Roanoke Rapids have to go through. They have the same cost of living as everyone else; they're struggling.

City Manager Traynham agreed and said the City has employees that are struggling as well. The last time the Council approved a cost-of-living adjustment was FY2017-2018 for 4%. Other years it was a mixture of bonuses. She did recall in 2022 there was a \$3,000 adjustment which did represent more than a typical COLA. Again, doing the budget is a very important decision the Council has to make. It helps to fund the

City's priorities and objectives. They are doing the best they can with limited resources.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there was some language concerning retirement from the NCLM to help cities and towns. City Manager Traynham replied she believed they were referring to the percentage increase that occurs every year. The employee contribution for retirement remains 6%. Every year the City's portion that goes to fund the retirement pool increases. The upcoming fiscal year that percentage is going up to 12.91% for regular employees and 14.04% for law enforcement. The current fiscal year law enforcement is 13.04% and the year before that was 13.01%. For regular employees, this current year is 12.1% and the year before that was 12.01%. When she first started in local government, the City paid around 7% so they can see how the City's expenses have continued to go up in a short amount of time.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said hopefully there will be some relief from that in relation to the legislative group looking into it.

Councilman Smith said six or seven months ago, Councilwoman Bryant suggested giving a letter to all the employees about their salaries and benefits. He asked if they ever did that. City Manager Traynham replied they will be receiving their salary and benefit information during open enrollment tomorrow and Thursday. Human Resources Director Caudle has revised the template and created a document showing their annual salary and benefits, which is their total compensation package.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham stated as they finish out the end of the fiscal year, they have asked staff to be mindful of spending in order to remain on budget.

She reported she, Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and Councilwoman Bryant attended the NC League of Municipalities CityVision Conference last week. There were some really good sessions that opened up her mindset into trying to define the direction in where they are going and where they need to be. Especially in the opening session conversations about values. City Council held an informal workshop on that, but they need to pick back up on that series and really start to define the organization from the top down as far as the organizational values and mission. She received the presentation from that session today. It was entitled, "From Conflict to Conversation." They are asking people to think about specific issues that need to move from conflict to conversation in the community to encourage people to work together. The City Council will be asked for more participation and effort that leads to strategic planning so that when they are working in these budget times, they can move forward with how

they want to direct their resources.

City Manager Traynham announced the following upcoming activities and events:

Open Enrollment – May 3rd & 4th at Kirkwood Adams

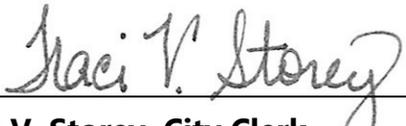
Veterans Breakfast – Friday, May 5th at Kirkwood Adams, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Event in Centennial Park – Saturday, May 6th.

Aquatics Center Name Unveiling – Saturday, May 13th at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant, and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: May 16, 2023