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**Roanoke Rapids City Council**

**September 17, 2013**

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on the above date at 7:00 p.m. in the first floor conference room of the J. Reuben Daniel City Hall & Police Station.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem

Ernest C. Bobbitt)

Suetta S. Scarbrough)

Carol H. Cowen)

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager

Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, City Clerk

Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney

Greg Lawson, Council Member

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer.

Mayor Doughtie called Council’s attention to the Conflict of Interest statement in the agenda packet.

With no one indicating a conflict of interest with any of the items on the agenda, motion was made by ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­Councilwoman Cowen, seconded by ­­­­­­Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for September 17, 2013.

Ms. Leah Anderson Reed of 49 Longstreet Road, Weldon, NC stated she works for the Eastern North Carolina Poverty Network, and has been in the Roanoke Rapids area since 2011 helping churches reach out to the poor in the community. She stated she started to see that there is little to nothing for homeless women. She stated they have very few options other than going house to house, couch to couch, or sleeping on the streets. Ms. Reed distributed the following informational handout to the Council members:

**Consideration for Use – Fire Station #2**

**Purpose:** Room at the Inn program

**Responsible Organization:** Eastern North Carolina Poverty Network

**Contact Person:** Leah Reed

There are many homeless women and children in Halifax County; local organizations get daily calls requesting help, but do not currently have anywhere to send them locally. Many of the women who call have worked, but have either had their hours at work cut to a point that they can no longer pay the bills or have lost their jobs. The children suffer the most; they bear no responsibility for what brought the family to this, but still have to live with the consequences.

**Program Overview:**

**Room at the Inn**

Room at the Inn is a Christian temporary emergency shelter program, modeled after those offered in many cities throughout the state. It is a direct response to the needs of local citizens facing this hardship. Local churches are invited to be a part by opening their doors for one week to homeless women and children. The churches provide two overnight volunteers, as well as breakfast and dinner. Air mattresses and bedding move with the guests as they transition from church to church each week.

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**Our Community Partners Are:**

\*Eastern NC Poverty Network \*Union Mission \*Angel’s Closet

\*The John 3:16 Center \*15 local churches

\*Halifax County Housing Collaborative – a group of concerned citizens that come from many

Backgrounds—local organizations, housing authority, physicians, mental health, etc.

**How do you control access?**

Each applicant to the program will be screened, including mandatory drug testing for any potential resident over the age of 16. They will agree to a covenant with the organization, including rules, expectations for their activities during the days, and what will occur during follow-up interviews. A maximum of 10 individuals (women & children) will be accepted.

**When is the program to begin?**

Room at the Inn is scheduled to begin November 4.

**Rationale for Request:**

A permanent location would make the logistics of this program much easier to plan. Rather than having to make transportation arrangements from different local churches, such a central building would allow easy access to the Union Mission for lunches, proximity to local schools and organizations, etc. In addition, beds, bedding, and records could be housed in the building, rather than requiring transport every week.

**Location Request:**

The building is in a good location in the City of Roanoke Rapids and is not currently utilized full-time. In addition, it has office space, a full kitchen, showers and bathrooms, and has two areas that could be developed for sleeping space. The building also has a fence-in area, which could readily be expanded.

**How could this benefit the City of Roanoke Rapids?**

* Addresses an issue that is detrimental to our community and makes clear that the city has a concern for its homeless citizens.
* This program offers not just a place to sleep, but support for personal and family growth, making recurrence of homelessness less likely.
* Assists in creating a pathway to stability and re-entry to the workforce.
* General maintenance will be done by the residents and volunteers, not by city workers.
* Arrangements could be made to provide emergency shelter in case of a catastrophic event.

For more information, contact Leah Reed at leahandreed@gmail.com

Ms. Reed stated they would like to ask consideration to use the old Fire Station #2 for a homeless shelter for women.

Mayor Doughtie asked Ms. Reed what timeframe she is looking at to begin the program.

Ms. Reed stated they would like to start November 4.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked if they intend for this to be a temporary or permanent location.

Ms. Reed stated a permanent location. She stated they would like to lease the building for two years with an option to buy.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked who would oversee the program.

Ms. Reed stated the Eastern North Carolina Poverty Network. She stated they also have 15 local churches that support the program in addition to The John 3:16 Center, Union Mission, Angel’s Closet and the Halifax County Housing Collaborative.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked how transient this group of women would be.

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Ms. Reed stated that is hard to know. She stated it will be a needs based thing. She stated some may be there six weeks and some may be there six months. Ms. Reed stated this will not be a flophouse. She stated they plan to work with these women on a daily basis to develop job and life skills.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked if her organization is a state-wide organization and if so, where are the other shelters located.

Ms. Reed explained that they are a national organization under the umbrella of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. She stated this shelter will be the first one.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated they will be breaking new ground.

Ms. Reed stated that is correct.

Councilman Bobbitt asked Ms. Reed how large an area they plan to draw from.

Ms. Reed stated probably the Halifax County area.

Councilman Bobbitt asked about Northampton County.

Ms. Reed stated they would help anyone that comes to them.

Councilman Bobbitt asked if they would be helping people that hear about this and come from as far away as Henderson or Emporia.

Ms. Reed stated yes.

Councilman Bobbitt asked Ms. Reed if she was aware of the fact that the old Fire Station #2 is already occupied by three different groups.

Ms. Reed stated they were told that these groups could possibly meet elsewhere.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if this would be a referral type program for people over 16.

Ms. Reed stated they accept women and children.

City Manager Scherer asked Ms. Reed if the lease would provide that they take care of all utilities.

Ms. Reed stated yes. She stated this is a win-win situation for the City. She stated it will be a tax write-off. Ms. Reed stated they will take care of the maintenance and will be doing the City a favor by offering hospitality to those that do not have anywhere to stay.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked Ms. Reed where her office is currently located.

Ms. Reed stated at All Saints Episcopal Church.

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Councilman Bobbitt pointed out that the building already has some issues with the roof and the AC unit. He stated it is also being used for storage for the Fire and Police Departments and the Civil Air Patrol.

Ms. Reed stated they will not have a need for the outdoor storage facilities.

Mayor Doughtie stated he believes some of the Council may be concerned about the number of individuals that will be accepted. He stated if the maximum is 10 and there are already 7 people there, if we take individuals in from other locations, we may not have “room at the inn” for people in our community. Mayor Doughtie stated he does not want it to sound like we are not willing to help people but this could be a touchy issue.

Ms. Reed stated they want to keep this small. She stated they cannot accommodate more than 10.

Councilman Bobbitt asked Ms. Reed if they have looked at any other locations for the shelter.

Ms. Reed stated they do have a backup plan but does not feel comfortable mentioning the location in public.

Mayor Doughtie stated volunteers were mentioned. He asked if they anticipate having one paid staff person.

Ms. Reed stated yes. She stated she will be doing intake for the program.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked Ms. Reed if she has gotten into any conversations about leasing to buy.

Ms. Reed stated that is what they would like to do.

Mr. Rick Gilstrap of 14 Dunshill Road, Roanoke Rapids, NC stated he has lived in Roanoke Rapids for about 35 years. He stated being poor; being in poverty is a horrible thing. He stated whatever we can do through churches and the City to give these people a step forward would be wonderful. He stated the City has the old fire station that can be converted to a shelter, and it would be beneficial for both sides. Mr. Gilstrap stated when he was President of Halifax Regional Medical Center they opened a free clinic and people were worried that potential patients would come from everywhere. He stated initially they did but then those they served came from within a 10-mile radius. Mr. Gilstrap asked how you could turn away someone that is homeless. He stated this program sounds real good and he is willing to provide assistance.

Ms. Evelyn G. Doughtie of 401 Sunset Avenue, Roanoke Rapids, NC stated she would like to add her support. She stated she sometimes wonder what she would do if she did not have a place to sleep at night. Ms. Doughtie stated she attended a meeting to hear about this program, and many churches in our community were represented. She stated they were all

very supportive of the program but the churches are not equipped to take on this project.

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Ms. Doughtie stated having this program at the old fire station is something that would make our town proud.

A ballot vote was taken and the Clerk announced that Todd Lockamon received the unanimous vote for reappointment to the Recreation Advisory Committee.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Cowen and unanimously carried to reappoint Todd Lockamon to the Recreation Advisory Committee.

City Manager Scherer indicated that the State Archives has recently published amendments to the 2012 NC Municipal Records Retention & Disposition Schedule that:

* Adds Accreditation Records to the schedule;
* Clarifies language for retention period of employee eligibility records to match U.S. Code;
* Consolidates three (3) different types of leave records.

City Manager Scherer stated copies of the amendments have been provided to Council for review. He stated these amendments must be adopted in order to legally destroy records under the amended Retention & Disposition Schedule.

Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to adopt the amendments to the September 10, 2012 NC Municipal Records Retention & Disposition Schedule as follows:

**STANDARD 4. BUDGET, FISCAL AND PAYROLL RECORDS**

Amending **Item 32** **Escheat and Unclaimed Property File** as shown on substitute page 29.

**STANDARD 12. PERSONNEL RECORDS**

Adding **Item** **1-A Accreditation Records** as shown on substitute page 101.

Amending **Item 19 Employee Eligibility Records** as shown on substitute page 105.

Amending **Items 36 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Records, 42 Leave File,** and **Leave Without Pay File** as shown on substitute pages 110-111.

City Manager Scherer stated the roof of the Chaloner Bath House is in dire need of replacement. He indicated that the roof currently leaks and the wood around it is rotted. He stated this replacement will cover the flat roof, fascia boards and gutter system. City Manager Scherer stated a budget amendment has been prepared for Council’s consideration that will appropriate $14,995.00 to replace the roof. He pointed out that residual funds are available for appropriation from the sale of surplus property.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Cowen and unanimously carried to adopt the following Ordinance:

**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, 2013 and ending June 30, 2014, according to the following

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schedule:

**SCHEDULE A – GENERAL FUND OPERATING**

Roof Replacement (Chaloner Bath House) $ 14,995.00

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL FUND TOTAL $ 14,995.00**

**SECTION 2.** The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013 and ending June 30, 2014 in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE B – GENERAL FUND OPERATING**

Sale of Surplus Property $ 14,995.00

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**GENERAL FUND TOTAL $ 14,995.00**

**SECTION 3.** This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Public Works Director Chalker stated this is a minor housekeeping matter. He stated the City never officially accepted the streets in the Canal Walk Subdivision even though we are already legally responsible for them. Public Works Director Chalker stated the streets have been paved through a cooperative agreement, and he requested that Council take action to officially accept the two dedicated streets *(Rivers Edge Parkway and Skipping Stone Way)* in the Canal Walk Subdivision.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to accept the dedicated streets *(Rivers Edge Parkway and Skipping* *Stone Way)* in the Canal Walk Subdivision.

City Manager Scherer reported that unfortunately we did not receive any proposals by the deadline for the refinancing of the Theatre debt. He stated we are still talking with two financial institutions, and hopefully will have proposals to present to Council in the near future.

City Manager Scherer stated he will be presenting the Finance Director’s Report as Ms. Hite had a minor procedure today.

City Manager Scherer reported that year-to-date expenditures exceeded revenues by $3,095,110.34. He stated it is normal to see a slowdown in revenues during the months of July and August. He indicated that the City will receive the first check from Halifax County this month for the 2013 property taxes.

City Manager Scherer reported that the audit has been completed and the auditor has tentatively scheduled presentation of the audit report for the October 15 meeting.

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City Manager Scherer reported that 97% of the 2012 levy for property taxes was collected and 90% of the registered motor vehicles taxes were collected. He stated the combined 2012 current year’s taxes collected totaled $6,975,638.00.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated the receipts for August from HSV, LLC for the $2 per ticket fee was only $390.00. She stated this is a low amount.

City Manager Scherer stated the attendance for the shows was low. He did point out that the lease payment increased and HSV, LLC has made that payment.

Mayor Doughtie stated the City Manager reported that $6,975,638.00 was collected for property taxes and motor vehicle taxes for 2012 but the citizens do not realize what we are up against. He stated when you look at the details of the Finance Department report, you see transfers for Theatre totaling $1.8 million. He stated that is about 25% of the amount collected. Mayor Doughtie stated this is why we do not have more police officers and firefighters, and are not able to pave more streets. He stated he does give credit to the staff for helping make the City more stable. He stated it is difficult to serve when you do not have all of the tools you need. Mayor Doughtie stated he met a man working in a local restaurant that had just moved here from up north. He stated this man commented on how much he liked Roanoke Rapids and how friendly people are here. Mayor Doughtie stated we all know each other and we help each other. He stated we have been able to overcome a lot of obstacles and thanked the community for their help. He stated the City Council will continue to refinance the City’s debt and also try to bring in new businesses.

City Manager Scherer stated all of our employees try to be good stewards of the City’s money. He stated one example is the recent purchases and donations that are in the parking lot for people to view after the meeting. City Manager Scherer stated a used motor grader and backhoe were acquired for the Public Works Department, and the Police Department was able to get several vehicles at no cost. He stated we do try to use the City’s funds to the best of our ability.

Fire Chief Coggins reported that Chief Jean is back at work on a limited basis. He reported that the benefit held for him on September 7 raised $6,000.00.

Fire Chief Coggins reported that A shift attended a flag burning ceremony and the department also participated in the 9/11 ceremony. He thanked all those that participated.

Fire Chief Coggins reported that October is “Fire Prevention Month” and the department will be busy with tours and school visits. He also reported that the Fire Safety House is getting a makeover through Lowe’s Hometown Hero Grant. He also reported that the Roanoke Rapids Senior Citizens Club donated money to have the vehicle used to pull the Fire Safety House painted.

Fire Chief Coggins also reported that Administrative Assistant Helen Reed is attending the Chamber’s Roanoke Valley Leadership class.

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Mayor Doughtie asked Chief Coggins if they would be participating in Harvest Days.

Chief Coggins stated yes.

Human Resources Manager Kearney reported that the City is currently advertising for: *Property Maintenance Worker (Public Works Department); Firefighter Applicant Pool; and Police Officer.* She also reported that she received 44 applications, and the following individuals were hired during the month of August:

**Name** **Position**

Jeremy Wells Firefighter

Michael Leggett Code Enforcement Officer

Charles Timothy Parker, Jr. Police Officer (Part-Time)

Melissa Hope Yandle Library Assistant (Part-Time)

Human Resources Manager Kearney announced that the annual flu shot clinic is scheduled for Wednesday, October 2 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the basement of City Hall.

Human Resources Manager Kearney reported that BARC (Benevolence, Awards & Recognition Committee), which is funded by donations from employee paychecks, was able to help seven employees with a total of $875.00 paid out to them. She stated this is a wonderful committee. Human Resources Manager Kearney stated they plan to try and schedule a fundraiser, and will also hold the annual employee Christmas luncheon.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that the Andrews Building is moving forward at a good pace. He stated they hope to be ready for the next City Council meeting.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reviewed with Council two drawings of the playground to be built at the Ledgerwood Complex with funds from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. He stated the Recreation Advisory Committee approved the plans and thanked the Committee, and particularly Councilwoman Cowen and Wayne Smith in attendance, for the efforts they put into this.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that he attended the Halifax County Commission meeting where they approved the contract for the County Recreation Master Plan. He stated this is also being done with funding from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. He pointed out that we have not had an update to our Master Plan since 2004, and this document is a very important tool to have when requesting grant funds. He stated we will only have to pay $500.00 which will be saving us around $15,000 to $20,000.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that the Christmas Parade is scheduled for Sunday, December 8 at 2:00 p.m. He stated CCB has agreed to sponsor the parade again this year, and registration for entry in the parade will begin on October 1. He asked that Council members let Lisa know if they plan to be in the parade.

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Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that Rodney Pierce is attending the Chamber’s Roanoke Valley Leadership class.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that the Chamber’s Business After Hours event held at the Canal Museum last Thursday was a big success. He thanked Chamber CEO Allen Purser for a great event. He stated it was very well attended, and all of the paintings were auctioned off.

City Manager Scherer indicated that Planning & Development Director Lasky is at the LGFCU Fellows Program class this week.

City Manager Scherer reported that the department continues the process of reviewing a large volume of plans. He indicated that Popeyes will go ahead and demolish the old KFC/Asian Buffet building. He also reported that Sheetz is moving forward and submitted plans to tear down the old Ryan’s restaurant for their construction.

Mayor Doughtie pointed out that the department reviewed 72 permit applications last month.

City Manager Scherer stated it is amazing that this number continues to increase.

Police Chief Hathaway stated he has to correct Ms. Kearney when she said we have one new officer. He stated we actually have two more new officers. He stated they came from Texas, have four legs and do not gossip. He stated we acquired these dogs at no cost from the United States Air Force. He pointed out that if we had to pay for them, they would cost about $15,000 apiece. Chief Hathaway stated our only cost was to travel and pick them up. He indicated that the dogs were already named when we received them. He stated “Back” is a Labrador and is a tracking dog, and “Po-cock” is a German Shepherd and is an explosives and narcotics dog.

Police Chief Hathaway reported that they purchased a Tahoe and Dominion Power will donate a dog cage for the vehicle. He stated this vehicle will be more heavy duty and will not be as confining to the dogs as the cars were.

Police Chief Hathaway reported that they are modernizing their fleet and now have three more vehicles on-line. He stated we also have three Humvees (HMMWV) acquired at no cost from the Department of Defense. He stated these vehicles cost around $89,000 apiece. Chief Hathaway stated these vehicles will be very useful during flash floods and will allow us to go anywhere we need to go.

Police Chief Hathaway reported that the Halifax County Crime Stoppers will hold a golf tournament on Saturday, October 26 at Scotfield Country Club. He stated they are still looking for sponsors. He indicated that Detective Frankie Griffin is coordinating this event.

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Police Chief Hathaway reported that the Turkey Bowl (City vs. County football game) will be held on Saturday, November 23 at 5:00 p.m. at Hoyle Field. He stated proceeds will go toward the “Shop with a Hero” Program to purchase Christmas gifts for less fortunate children.

Police Chief Hathaway also reported that he is attending the Chamber’s Roanoke Valley Leadership class. He stated it is a very enjoyable adventure. He stated we are all members of the community with different titles and jobs, and this program is a great opportunity to bring people together.

Public Works Director Chalker introduced new Cemetery Supervisor Josh Harrell in the audience. He stated Josh brought one of the pieces of equipment Council will see in the parking lot. He stated Josh is doing a really good job at the Cemetery. He stated he was very busy during the month of August with 14 grave openings and closings and 6 foundations. He stated the total collected for these services was $12,601.00.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that they sent out 70 letters for City Code Ordinance violations for lot cutting. He stated 36 lots were cut by City forces in the amount of $12,484.50. He stated they are as busy as they have ever been with lot cutting. Public Works Director Chalker stated he hopes this will slow down with cooler weather.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that the street sweeper has been down for a couple of weeks due to a lost radiator.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that the two new pieces of equipment purchased are in the parking lot—*Lee Boy Motorgrader* and *John Deere 110 Backhoe*.

Mayor Doughtie thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adjourn.

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10/1/13