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***Roanoke Rapids City Council***

***September 15, 2015***

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on the above date at 5:15 p.m. at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem

Ernest C. Bobbitt)

Suetta S. Scarbrough)

Carol H. Cowen)

Wayne Smith)

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager

Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney

Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, NCCMC, City Clerk

Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager

Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director

Chuck Hasty, Police Chief

Larry Chalker, Public Works Director

John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director

Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief

Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer. He also recognized the following special guests: Retired Police Captain Henry Wright and his family; former Mayor D. N. Beale; County Commission Vice Chairman Rives Manning and County Commission Chairman Vernon Bryant.

Mayor Doughtie announced that the agenda needs to be amended to remove “scheduled public comment” as the applicant is unable to attend the meeting.

There being no conflict of interest with any of the items on the agenda, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for September 15, 2015 as amended to remove “scheduled public comment”.

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Following remarks by Administrative Lieutenant Andy Bryant, Officer Jonathan Benthall was presented the Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate.

Mayor Doughtie thanked Officer Benthall and all officers for their service.

Mr. Vernon Bryant, Chairman of the Halifax County Board of Commissioners, thanked Mayor Doughtie and the City Council for giving him the opportunity to speak about a fellow citizen and friend, Retired Roanoke Rapids Police Captain Henry Wright. He also thanked the City Manager, the City Clerk and the Police Chief for helping to put together this presentation. He also recognized his long-time friend and former Roanoke Rapids Mayor and Police Chief D. N. Beale, and his colleagues County Commission Vice Chairman Rives Manning and County Commissioner Rachel Hux.

Chairman Bryant stated he thought he knew Henry well but “Judge” (Rives Manning) told him something unique about him--that Henry used to be Santa Claus. He stated he knew Henry did a lot of things for senior citizens but also did a lot for children.

Chairman Bryant stated Henry retired from the City many years ago and he is probably one of the few that still refer to him as Captain Wright. He stated when he was a probation officer, he worked very closely with Captain Wright. He stated he always took time with people, was always professional, kind and courteous.

Chairman Bryant read the following letter and presented a plaque to Captain Wright honoring him as not only a public servant but as a humanitarian and servant of the people of Halifax County:

September 10, 2015

Mr. Henry F. Wright

657 Williams Street

Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina 27870

Dear Mr. Wright:

On behalf of the Halifax County Board of Commissioners, I would like to honor and commend you for your exemplary and invaluable service as a humanitarian, public servant, and resident of Halifax County.

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It always brings the Board great pleasure to be able to commend one of our citizens for having such a profound and outstanding impact on the health, safety, and welfare of our community. Your long and distinguished career as a Roanoke Rapids Police Officer speaks volumes in regards to your leadership and dedication to the citizens of Halifax County and is to be celebrated and admired.

I applaud your efforts and would like to extend to you, on behalf of the Halifax County Board of Commissioners, our sincere commendation as being one of Halifax County’s finest and outstanding residents.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Vernon J. Bryant, Chairman/s/

Halifax County Board of Commissioners

Mayor Doughtie thanked Chairman Bryant for his presentation and also thanked Captain Wright for his service, not only to Roanoke Rapids, but to Halifax County as a whole.

Captain Wright stated the City of Roanoke Rapids and Halifax County have been very good to him. He stated he could not have done a lot of things if it wasn’t for his good friend Chief Beale guiding him along the way.

Chief Beale, who was visibly moved by the accolades given to Captain Wright, stated this honor is well deserved. He also shared a humorous story about Captain Wright from their days of working together at the old police station.

Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to approve the September 1, 2015 Council Minutes.

A ballot vote was taken and City Clerk Vincent announced that Ms. Sylvia Ezell received the unanimous vote for reappointment to the Senior Center Advisory Committee.

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Motion was made by Councilwoman Cowen, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to reappoint Ms. Sylvia Ezell to the Senior Center Advisory Committee.

Human Resources Manager Kearney stated staff is requesting a revision to the City’s Personnel Policy to address the issue of vacation payout versus conversion to sick leave. She stated it is recommended that Article VII “Holidays and Leaves of Absence”, Section 10 “Vacation Leave: Payment Upon Separation” be amended by adding the following wording:

***“Any excess vacation above the accumulated maximum payout that is not used may be rolled over to sick leave. An employee who is retiring will be given the option to accept vacation payout or allow it to be converted to sick leave, so that it may be credited toward the employee’s length of service under LGERS.”***

Human Resources Manager Kearney stated we have several employees that are nearing retirement that have vacation above the maximum amount. She stated instead of paying them for vacation, they would like the option to roll the vacation over to sick leave in order to retire earlier. She pointed out that she has checked with the NC Retirement System about this change and they had no problem with it as long as we amended our Personnel Policy.

Councilman Smith joked that this new section will not apply to the City Clerk. He stated we are not ready for her to retire.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2015.06**

**Resolution to Amend**

**City of Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy**

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***September 15, 2015***

***WHEREAS,*** the Mayor and City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids, recognizing the importance of its municipal employees in meeting the service needs of the City residents, adopted Resolution No. 2007.21 which adopted the current Personnel Policy; and

***WHEREAS,*** it is the desire of the current Mayor and City Council members to continue to maintain a municipal work force composed of qualified, competent and dedicated employees, and to maintain equitable rates of pay and reasonable conditions of employment for its workforce; and

***WHEREAS,*** it has been necessary over the years to amend the City’s Personnel Policy by Council action; and

***WHEREAS,*** an additional amendment is being proposed to amend Article VII “Holidays and Leaves of Absence”, Section 10 “Vacation Leave: Payment Upon Separation” of the City of Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy as follows:

***Section 10. Vacation Leave: Payment Upon Separation***

***An employee who has successfully completed six months of the probationary period will normally be paid for accumulated vacation leave upon separation not to exceed 40 days, provided notice is given to the supervisor at least two weeks in advance of the effective date of resignation. Any employee failing to give the notice required by this section shall forfeit payment for accumulated leave. The notice requirement may be waived by the City Manager when deemed to be in the best interest of the City. Employees who are involuntarily separated shall receive payment for accumulated annual leave subject to the 40 day maximum. Any excess vacation above the accumulated maximum payout that is not used may be rolled over to sick leave.***

***An employee who is retiring will be given the option to accept vacation payout or allow it to be converted to sick leave, so that it may be credited toward the employee’s length of service under LGERS.***

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED*** that the Roanoke Rapids City Council approves the foregoing amendment to the City of Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy as presented to Council on September 15, 2015, to become effective immediately.

***ADOPTED*** this 15th day of September, 2015.

ATTEST: Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Lisa B. Vincent, City Clerk

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City Manager Scherer stated each year representatives from the City attend the Annual Conference of the North Carolina League of Municipalities. He stated this year, Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee will be attending the conference in Winston-Salem in October. He stated the Annual League Business meeting will be held during the conference and a voting delegate needs to be designated by Council.

Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to designate Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee as the City’s Voting Delegate for the 2015 Annual League Business meeting.

City Manager Scherer reported on the following latest information on the State’s budget. He indicated that the State Legislature has announced that they have reached a tentative agreement for a $21.7 billion State Budget. He stated the plan includes the restoration of the Historic Preservation Tax Credits, includes funding for the high school Drivers Training Program and also includes expansion of sales taxes to services involving the repair and installation of tangible property. He stated Main Street Director Caudle has the details on the Historic Preservation Tax Credits provision.

City Manager Scherer stated the sales tax expansion is estimated to provide about $85 million and will be distributed to county governments and municipalities in 79 counties, with the money going to those mostly rural counties that would have benefitted from the earlier sales tax reallocation plan promoted by Senate Majority Leader Harry Brown. He stated the 21 counties and municipalities in counties that would have lost revenue under the earlier plan will not lose revenue under the latest proposal, but will not receive any distributions from the expanded sales taxes. He pointed out that we do not have any information currently as to what this will provide to the City.

City Manager Scherer stated Senator Berger and House Speaker Moore also seemed to indicate that the two legislative chambers are now in agreement on an infrastructure bond and business recruiting incentives. He stated the bill also is expected to increase Powell Bill transportation dollars to municipalities.

City Manager Scherer indicated that Senators were expected to take a first vote on the budget during a 2:00 p.m. session today.

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City Manager Scherer stated House rules require the budget sit for three legislative days before being heard which would mean the chamber’s first vote would be on Thursday. He stated Speaker Tim Moore said the first vote would be Thursday and a second, final vote would be Friday morning just after midnight.

Finance Director Etheridge reported that during the month of August, the Finance Department issued 66 purchase orders, wrote 87 payroll checks, 314 direct deposit vouchers and 222 accounts payable checks.

Finance Director Etheridge reported that the General Fund year to date receipts totaled $326,697.39 (percentage of actual monies collected of adopted figures stand at 2.1%) and the General Fund year to date expenditures totaled $3,297,520.80 (percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budget figures stand at 21.2%).

Finance Director Etheridge reported the trend still continues with expenditures well exceeding revenues at the beginning of the fiscal year. She stated to date, we have expended 21.2% of our operating budget with only 2.1% realized in collections. She indicated that at this same time last year, expenditures exceeded revenues by $2.6 million. Finance Director Etheridge pointed out that since this report was issued, the City has received its first material allocation of Ad Valorem Taxes in the amount of $3.3 million which is critical to help us offset expenditures.

Finance Director Etheridge reported that the auditor has completed the necessary field work related to the June 30, 2015 financial audit, and he will be presenting the completed audit report to Council as soon as it is completed, which is usually in the month of October.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated there were no exceptions noted in the audit.

Finance Director Etheridge stated that is what we are being told.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked about the actual year end numbers.

Finance Director Etheridge indicated that the auditor has not released the Fund Balance numbers at this time.

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Councilman Smith asked Finance Director Etheridge if she has a general idea of the numbers.

Finance Director Etheridge stated yes but she would rather wait until we receive the final numbers from the auditor.

Councilman Smith asked if we have any outstanding debt other than the Theatre.

Finance Director Etheridge stated yes, we have installment financing. She stated she can provide a breakdown to Council.

Councilman Smith asked if we have a date for the presentation of the audit.

Finance Director Etheridge stated not at this time.

Human Resources Manager Kearney reported that during the month of August, she advertised three positions: *Firefighter; Street Superintendent* and *Administrative Support Assistant I (RRPD - Records Division)*. She reported that we received four applications during the month of August.

Human Resources Manager Kearney reported that she met with representatives from Key Risk, our workers compensation provider, and went through our history. She reported that since 2010, our number of claims have reduced drastically. She attributed this to Walter Johnson’s role in scheduling safety meetings with employees. She indicated that back in 2006, we had 27 workers compensation claims and 3 lost time accidents.

Chief Hasty reported that the Police Department had 2,191 calls during the month of August which included among others 28 assaults; 67 disputes; 40 domestic disputes; 15 fights; 15 shots fired and 23 threats.

Chief Hasty stated the department participated in five community projects during the month of August: *(1) Library Reading Program on August 5; (2) Gregory B. Davis Foundation Bike Ride on August 15; (3) Youth Empowerment Seminar on August 22; (4) Roanoke Rapids Youth Baseball Association Banquet on August 25*

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and *(5) Fire Safety Fair on August 29*.

Chief Hasty stated this Saturday is the Unity in the Community basketball game to be held at 5:00 p.m. at Weldon High School. He stated he has tickets if anyone is interested. He also mentioned several other upcoming events such as Ducky Derby, Dylan Moore Day and a county-wide emergency drill.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported the concept plans for the skate park have been completed. He indicated that they are working through some concerns that local contractors may not be able to supply the type of concrete needed.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that they continue to field questions and inquiries about reunions, concerts and weddings at the Roanoke Rapids Theatre. He mentioned the Every Child is Beautiful concert to be held on November 8.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that there will be a flag pole dedication by the Woodmen of the World at the Roanoke Rapids Public Library this Saturday at 2:00 p.m.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported on a reception celebrating the Roanoke Canal’s designation as a National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom to be held on Monday, September 28 from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Canal Museum. He stated there will also be a sign dedication for this designation on Saturday, November 14 at 9:00 a.m. at the Roanoke Canal Museum.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that his department continues to work on the Christmas Parade for December 6. He asked that Council members let the City Clerk know if they wish to participate.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that the 1026 Roanoke Avenue demolition project is taking longer than originally expected. He stated they continue to work to stabilize the façade on the front of the building and are waiting for some of the steel.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that they are trimming the large Cedar tree next to the Post Office and putting up new lights.

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Public Works Director Chalker reported that they found an opportunity to paint all of the parking spaces at the Theatre. He stated the lines were fading fast.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that they have addressed a sink hole on Shell Drive and replaced the sidewalk in front of 1239 Hamilton Street.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that staff has collected $30,608.00 year to date in cemetery fees and the amount of lot cutting fees assessed year to date is $13,427.50.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that he is excited to report that the Public Works Department has been over 800 days without a lost time accident.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that the department is preparing for leaf season. He stated all of the machines are ready to go.

Councilman Bobbitt asked when leaf season will begin.

Public Works Director Chalker stated the first week in November.

Before beginning his report, Chief Coggins thanked Captain Henry Wright for his service. He stated there is nothing more beautiful than a servant’s heart.

Chief Coggins reported that during the month of August, the department responded to 196 calls with the average response time being 4.61 minutes.

Chief Coggins reported that the firemen engaged in a total of 423 man-hours of training and the Fire Marshal conducted 28 fire prevention inspections and/or re- inspections and completed 5 plan reviews.

Chief Coggins reported on a successful first Fire Safety Fair and thanked all those that attended as well as those that attended the 9-11 Ceremony. He also reported that the Brotherhood Bash Softball Tournament was also a success.

Chief Coggins reported that he will be in Charlotte next week attending the Chief Officers Executive Development Program. He also indicated that next month is Fire Prevention Month.

Main Street Director Caudle provided more details on the historic preservation tax credits mentioned by City Manager Scherer. She stated it will be similar to what

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we had before--20% State and 20% Federal. She stated for the State if the project is $0 to $10 million, the tax credit would be 15%, $10 million to $20 million, the tax credit would be 10%. She stated most of our projects would fall into the $0 to $10 million category and with the additional 5% for being in a Tier 1 county, it would put us back up to the 20%. She stated this is an awesome economic development tool.

Main Street Director Caudle reported that our final Fridays in the Park concert was held on August 28. She stated the City Manager provided during his report at the last meeting information on Officer Daniels’ performance at the concert that made him a social media celebrity which now has over 150,000 views. She stated it was a great concert series and thanked the Parks & Recreation Department, the Tourism Authority and the Halifax County Arts Council.

Main Street Director Caudle updated Council on the UNC School of Government project. She stated three graduate students will conduct a parcel and market analysis for uptown Roanoke Rapids, and then conduct a feasibility study and financial analysis for redevelopment of 1041 Roanoke Avenue (old Maxway property). She pointed out that there is no cost to the City for this project.

Main Street Director Caudle reported on some upcoming projects. She indicated that she continues to work with the local Chamber to develop and execute an educational field trip to another NC Main Street City. She stated she is working on an “Art Crawl” to be held on April 7, 2016 in conjunction with the Halifax County Arts Council and iCreate. She stated she continues to research ways to increase revenues for the non-profit.

Main Street Director Caudle reported on the following business district activities:

* Headz Up Beauty Salon - 1018 Roanoke Avenue - applied for business use permit
* S & L Pet Shop & Grooming - 1060 Roanoke Avenue - opened August 25
* Countryside Interiors - 933 Roanoke Avenue - closed and property is for sale
* I Want Candy! - 1034 Roanoke Avenue has moved to the 200 block of the Avenue
* Ladies clothing store coming to the 900 block

Main Street Director Caudle reported that the non-profit will be soliciting sponsorships for another “Trimming of the Tree” Contest which was very successful last year. She stated this will be done in conjunction with the City’s

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Christmas events. She stated voting will kick off at the City’s Tree Lighting Ceremony on Thursday, December 3 and close on Sunday, December 6 after the Christmas Parade. She stated the winner will be announced in the Tuesday, December 8 edition of *The Roanoke Rapids Daily Herald*.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to go into closed session as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) to discuss a personnel matter.

**[Remainder of page intentionally left blank.]**

***Minute Book Pages 17970 and 17971 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.***

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Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to return to open session.

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order in open session.

Mayor Doughtie reported that the City Council went into closed session to discuss the performance evaluation of City Manager Scherer.

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



10/6/2015