



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on Tuesday, November 15, 2016 at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

Present: 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
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief
Chuck Hasty, Police Chief
Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director

Council Members

Absent: Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

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

Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie asked Council members about any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening.

There being no conflicts, motion was made by Councilwoman Cowen, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda as written for November 15, 2016.

Special Recognition

Woodmen Life Presentation of US Flag

Jenny Watson with Woodmen Life presented a US flag to Police Chief Hasty and the Police Department thanking them for their service to the community.

Chief Hasty thanked Ms. Watson for the flag presentation and stated the flag means a lot because many people have died and bled for our Country so we can come gather and do what we do, whether we like it or not, it allows us that freedom.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Ms. Gorham G. Spencer

Ms. Gorham of 407 Rightmyer Drive stated she stands before the Council tonight imploring them to open the Chaloner pool. She said she was also a little bit disappointed that the pool was allowed to get in such a deplorable condition that they are talking about the major renovations costing \$300,000. She stated she feels that we have a city engineer that supposed to make inspections on facilities to see that the conditions do not get as such because that is a public safety hazard. She said she knew that the Health Department makes inspections yearly, but that was to check for bacteria and things that are growing in the pool. She said that if the engineer or whichever department was responsible for inspecting the pool would have done so in a reasonable, timely order it would not have gotten to a place where we were talking about \$300,000. She said at the first sign that something went wrong maybe it would have only been \$10,000 and to keep it maintained so that would have not gotten in such bad condition. She said we pay our taxes and we don't mind paying a little more taxes when you see what you are getting, but to raise taxes and then we don't see anything. She said she has driven by T.J. Davis and saw the new skate park that she understands that came from a grant; she said we need to find grants to have Chaloner pool renovated. She said it was no fault of the citizens, it was just wear and tear, how long has it been since the pool was maintained. She implored to the Council to do the right thing. We can find the money from somewhere. She said as citizen of the City, we say we are going to incorporate everyone, then it should be to be fair for everyone. She said our children see what is going on and she did not want to her grandchildren coming to see her to ask why they closed this one here and they have two there. She said they know it is not fair and she thinks we should find the money from somewhere.

Ms. Lakisha Flood-Scott

Ms. Flood-Scott of 158 Lee Lane Road said she stands on behalf of our children in regards to the recreation center. She said it feels good for the kids to come to the recreation center to have a safe recreational place. She said we should be fair in our decision making. We are committed to our children and we will come to every City Council meeting and we will invite the community. She said as far as the monies, you can borrow the monies, you do not need to use the cash that is in reserves. She asked the Council to be fair in their decision making.

Ms. Eunice Smith

Ms. Smith of 1104 Georgia Avenue said the Chaloner pool was a great landmark for her children and grandchildren. She said all of them were grown and she has great grandchildren. She said she was sure it cost twice as much to run the Aquatic Center and T.J. Davis Recreation Center. She asked to please find some monies to incorporate into the Chaloner pool because it was a great landmark and our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren need that pool so please consider keeping the Chaloner pool and opening it back up again.

Mr. Gary Danek

Mr. Danek said he was here for an update on the Unity recycling that he asked about two meetings ago. He said someone was supposed to contact him but nobody did.

City Manager Scherer replied he takes full responsibility for that, he forgot to reach out to him. He reported they did talk to two local companies that do recycling and indicated they do not or will not do individual recycling for curbside; they would only do city-wide recycling with a contract. He stated at this time he did not believe Council was willing to impose that fee on every household in the City; it would be a mandatory recycling program.

Mr. Danek asked if the City had a mandatory program for the trash. City Manager Scherer replied yes.

Mr. Danek stated recycling was for the environment; you have it for the County and we are part of the County. City Manager Scherer replied yes we are part of the County but we are not contracted with the County provider. Mr. Danek asked why couldn't we be, why can't we help the environment. He stated what happens when the environment goes bad. City Manager Scherer stated the City provides recycling, just not curbside recycling. Mr. Danek asked where the City provides recycling where there is no garbage. City Manager Scherer replied the

City has two (2) centers that are provided for recycling materials. Mr. Danek said he was familiar with both of them and they were full of garbage and the signs had been taken down because people do not adhere to the signs. He said the City has just given up and let people put garbage in there. He said this was fact because he uses them all the time because he does recycle. He asked if that was all; that the City was not going to get a contract. City Manager Scherer stated he did not believe Council was willing to impose that fee/service on every household in the City. Mr. Danek asked if he asked the Council. City Manager Scherer replied he had talked to several. Mr. Danek asked if he had talked to any citizens. City Manager Scherer replied no, just Council. Mr. Danek asked if it could go up for the citizens to decide what may or may not be good like these people were doing. City Manager Scherer said it would be up to Council, not him.

Ms. Catherine Davis

Ms. Davis of 52 Farley Circle said in a meeting with Councilman Ferebee, the Mayor, the City Manager and John Simeon, it was discussed on the costs of repairing the Aquatic Center. She said the City Manager said it cost approximately \$282,000. She said when it was asked where the money came from, it came from a cash reserve. She said her question was how do you decide, with the pool at Chaloner that was so run down and deplorable that the kids could not swim this summer, what pool gets the repair if you are maintaining one pool and letting the other turn to trash. She said the pool has been open for many years and she has not seen that much repair. She said the last time she went down there, they didn't even have a decent diving board or a lifeguard chair. She said that was stuff that should have been handled not now, but should have been taken care of through the years. She presented her question as cash reserve, can it fix the Chaloner pool.

Ms. Sofia Harrison

Ms. Harrison of 2280 Hwy. 48 stated there was a petition from the Chaloner Senior Club that was mailed to the Mayor and Council with an additional 32 names on it in addition to the 300 names already asking for repairs to the Chaloner pool. She stated her two questions were, did they receive the additional 32 signatures and do over 300 people in our community asking for repairs to the Chaloner pool mean anything to you.

Mr. Terry Buffaloe

Mr. Buffaloe of 316 Chockoyotte Street stated this was the second meeting he had been to where this was a concern of the citizens of Roanoke Rapids. He

stated he had read that there was a grant issued by this project to expand Hwy. 158 that was supposed to be used for Parks and Recreation, if he was not mistaken. He said he got the information from the Daily Herald. He stated in his 10 years here and the times he had gone over to the Chaloner Recreation Center, he had to drive around pot holes. He said he was not sure if it had been fixed since he had been there which had been about a year. He stated those conditions are deplorable. He said the first time he came to a City Council meeting, this room was packed with people concerned about the Aquatic Center next to the T.J. Davis Center. He said they have two pools over there. He said there was nothing wrong with the pool itself, it was the air humidifier or filtering system, but they fixed it. He said he did not like to point out disparities of services to one community over another, but it looks like that. He said not only is the grounds not kept up at the Chaloner Recreation Center but if you look at it side by side with the T.J. Davis Recreation Center run by the same City government, same Recreation Department there is a disparity, He stated they should be concerned about that because they were the officials of the whole City of Roanoke Rapids. He said when they have people coming to them meeting after meeting requesting something, he says to give it some thought, look into it, try to fix it even if you have to partner and get ideas from the community, but don't leave it hanging and don't close it down.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to approve the October 18, 2016 Regular Meeting Council Minutes as written.

New Business

Consideration of a Resolution Approving Financing Term with BB&T Governmental Finance

Finance Director Etheridge stated on November 1, 2016, the City Finance office received financing proposals on behalf of our formal bid process to acquire Council approved installment loan financing in the amount of \$611,000. She said Branch Banking & Trust submitted a bid with the lowest repayment terms at 1.78% interest, and a six year repayment term.

She reported bids were reviewed with the City Manager and we are recommending acceptance of the BB&T Governmental Financing proposal to accept equipment financing in the amount of \$611,000, at 1.78% interest, at a six year term; as stated in the following resolution for your approval.

She respectfully requested Council to adopt the following Resolution No. 2016.09:

Resolution No. 2016.09

Resolution Approving Financing Terms

WHEREAS. The City of Roanoke Rapids (the "City") has previously determined to undertake a project for the financing of vehicles and equipment, (the "Project"), and the City Manager has now presented a proposal for the financing of such Project.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, as follows:

1. The City hereby determines to finance the Project through Branch Banking and Trust Company ("BB&T"), in accordance with the proposal dated November 1, 2016. The amount financed shall not exceed \$611,000.00 the annual interest rate (in the absence of default or change in tax status) shall not exceed 1.78%, and the financing term shall not exceed 6 years from closing.

2. All financing contracts and all related documents for the closing of the financing (the "Financing Documents") shall be consistent with the foregoing terms. All officers and employees of the City are hereby authorized and directed to execute and deliver any Financing Documents and to take all such further actions as they may consider necessary or desirable, to carry out the financing of the Project as contemplated by the proposal and this resolution. The Financing Documents shall include a Financing Agreement and Deed of Trust and a Project Fund Agreement as BB& T may request.

3. The Finance Officer is hereby authorized and directed to hold executed copies of the Financing Documents until the conditions for the delivery of the Financing Documents have been completed to such officer's satisfactions. The Finance Officer is authorized to approve changes to any Financing Documents previously signed by City officers or employees, provided that such changes shall not substantially alter the intent of such documents or certificates from the intent expressed in the forms executed by such officers. The Financing Documents shall be in such final forms as the Finance Officers shall approve, with the Finance Officer's release of any Financing Documents for delivery constituting conclusive evidence of such officer's final approval of the Document's final form.

4. The City shall not take or omit to take any action the taking or omission of which shall cause its interest payments on this financing to be includable in the gross income for the federal income tax purposes of the register owners of the interest payment obligation. The

City hereby designates its obligations to make principal and interest payments under the Financing Documents as “qualified tax-exempt obligations” for the purpose of Internal Revenue Code Section 265(b)(3).

5. The City intends that the adoption of this resolution will be a declaration of the City’s official intent to reimburse expenditures for the project that is to be financed from the proceeds of the BB&T financing described above. The City intends that funds that have been advanced, or that may be advanced, for the City’s general fund, or any other City fund related to the project, for project costs may be reimbursed from the financing proceeds.

6. All prior actions of City officers in furtherance of the purposes of this resolution are hereby ratified, approved and confirmed. All other resolution (or parts thereof) in conflict with this resolution are hereby repealed, to the extent of the conflict. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Approved this 15th day of November, 2016.

By: _____ By: _____
(Clerk) (Mayor)

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked what type of equipment we were referring to financing. Finance Director Etheridge replied it was the list of equipment the Council approved in the spring sessions such as Police vehicles, a garbage truck, a truck and tractor for Parks & Recreation, a vehicle for Planning & Development, equipment for the Fire department and gun purchases for the Police department. She stated they would all be included within the financing for purchase.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked at some point in the future if additional items could be added to this loan. Finance Director Etheridge replied with this loan being finalized with these terms, we could look at issuance of a new loan proposal, but we would have to go back through the formal bid process.

Mayor Doughtie asked how long does the formal bid process take. Finance Director Etheridge replied approximately a month.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution 2016.09 as written.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer invited Council to take a group tour of the City's facilities, to review the condition of the buildings and equipment to gain a better perspective of how well the departments maintain their property and review those in need of future budget considerations, as well as improve your perspective of the scope of resources required to provide services to the City. He said he was looking at doing the tour on the date of the next Council meeting, December 6th, unless that date did not work for everyone. He said to please let him know at their earliest convenience if that date was okay or not.

He said he would like to compliment his staff on the outstanding work they do day in and day out for the City. He stated he believes their reports that would follow reflect their dedication and ability to help achieve the mission of the City, which is "to provide planned, efficient, acceptable services to the citizens in a cost-effective manner."

City Manager Scherer said as the holiday season approaches, families all across America with gather with friends and neighbors to rekindle relationships, honor holiday traditions, and renew the hope and spirit that is part of this special time of year. He said during these gatherings, he asked everyone to be thankful for a wonderful time of year of achievement and hopes for continued success, health, and happiness in the coming New Year.

Councilwoman Cowen asked what time would they do the tour. City Manager Scherer said he would anticipate starting around 9 am – 10 am and try to finish by lunch time.

Councilman Smith said he thought it was a good idea and they should get together and do it.

City Manager Scherer stated he would move forward with planning the tour for December 6th.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if all the facilities would be on the tour. City Manager replied yes as many we can, especially the ones we have worked on and others that need some work sometime in the future. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if Council could get a list of where they would be touring. City Manager Scherer stated he would provide a tour itinerary and plan everything. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he would like to make sure the Chaloner pool was added to

the tour. City Manager Scherer replied the Chaloner Recreation Center is on the list right now.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge presented the Financial Report for October 2016.

She reported October saw a lower revenue month because we did not receive several of our quarterly taxes and other quarterly payments. She said we saw higher than normal expenditures as well.

She said the General Fund YTD receipts totaled \$5,516,112.14 and the percentage of actual money collected of adopted budgeted figures stands at 33.4%. She said the General Fund YTD expenditures totaled \$5,783,172.34 and the percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures stands at 35%. She said the YTD expenditures exceeded revenues by \$267,060.20.

She announced Greg Redman, from Redman and Associates will present the 2015-2016 Financial Statements at the December 6, 2016 Regular Council meeting.

She reported the October costs associated with the 2007 Series Bonds totaled \$76,275.32; this includes \$50,823.92 Swap Payment, \$9,869.51 Interest Payment, \$290.00 Wire Fee, \$12,151.89 Merrill Lynch Administrative Fee, \$1,500.00 Moody's Administrative Annual Fee, and \$1,640.00 Administrative LOC Fee.

She reported during the month of October, the City received the following revenues:

- \$268,854.65 - Ad Valorem Tax
- \$260,085.76 - Sales & Use and Hold Harmless Tax

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked what percentage of fund balance the City had right now. Finance Director Etheridge replied currently we are at 25%, but we do not have the upcoming information regarding the audit; that would be presented in December.

Councilman Smith asked if the \$1,500 Moody's Administrative Fee had always been on the report. Finance Director Etheridge replied during her tenure here it had been an annual payment that was due. Councilman Smith stated they were

charging us \$1,500 to make payments for them. He said the Administration Annual Fee was \$1,600 so we are paying \$3,200 to administer the payments that we make each year. Finance Director replied yes, it was a required payment made annually. Councilman Smith said it frustrates him because we have to pay interest and administrative fees to get something done. He said he knew the City Manager and City Attorney were working hard on getting this stuff straight but seems like a long drawn out process to him. He said it really frustrates him that we are throwing this money out the door when we have people that need things but we can't do them because we are paying somebody else for no reason at all.

Mayor Doughtie asked if Merrill Lynch and Bank of America were the same company now. Finance Director Etheridge replied that the City receives an invoice from them that needed to be paid on a monthly or annual basis as part of the loan agreements.

Departmental Reports

Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Kearney reported that during the month of October, we conducted a flu shot clinic for the employees, received 24 applications, hired 3 part-time employees (2 Library Assistants and 1 Public Works) and 1 full-time Firefighter.

She reminded the citizens if they wanted an idea of what was going on in the community, the City has Charter channel 193 where we keep information updated concerning City activities and events.

Human Resources Manager Kearney also thanked Council for approving in the budget the \$25 Walmart gift cards that are given to all City employees. She stated for some it may not seem like a lot but it was very special to our employees to get this; they will receive them this Friday in order for them to spend it before Thanksgiving.

She announced the BARC Christmas luncheon will be held on December 14th at Kirkwood Adams. She said this year they would be doing the Service Awards at the same dinner. She said they would be sending something out in their next packet about it.

Police

Police Chief Hasty stated the Council had his report and he wanted to highlight some items for October.

He said the Trunk or Treat was a great success and he believed they would be making that an annual event.

He announced they had several officers participating in the “No Shave” November in order to raise monies for charities; several of the guys would be donating toward the Christmas for the Kids project.

He said Christmas for the Kids is scheduled for Saturday, December 10th at 10:00 a.m. He said they will meet at Chick Fil A where they will have a meal and then we will take them over to Walmart for shopping. He reported our citizens, businesses, some of vendors the department uses really stepped up and they held a fundraiser which allowed us to raise a lot of money to help those that are needy in the area.

He invited Council to the Police Christmas Lunch party on December 23rd at 12:30 p.m. in City Hall.

He reported that a lot of the guys in the Police department donate the Walmart gift card that the City gives them and pools them together to feed needy families in the area for Thanksgiving.

Police Chief Hasty announced they have some training coming up in January. He said they will have Crisis Intervention, Mental Health, First Aid and De-escalation Training for the officers.

Planning & Development

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported the department had been active with Main Street Roanoke Rapids, creation of a group and had selected a consultant to work with creating a Streetscape and Concept plan for 1026 Roanoke Avenue.

She stated they held a preliminary meeting last week where the consultant spent most the day riding up and down Roanoke Avenue taking pictures. She said they hope to have some concepts back to us to review as early as the first or second week of December. She stated she would continue to keep Council

informed of the progress of that project and encouraged them to attend the meetings.

She reported she has continued to participate in the Commerce Fellows training program at East Carolina University. She said she would be there tomorrow and the program will finish up in early December. She stated ECU is still committed to assisting the City with any of our needs as they may see fit and with the time available with the student's schedules.

She said the new Dollar General store on Hwy. 48 has submitted their construction plans.

She announced Kristopher Jordan completed his Plumbing Level 1 certification and he returns to school in Charlotte this weekend for his Mechanical Level 1 certification course.

She said the new State Employees' Credit Union to be located the corner of 10th and Jefferson Streets has indicated they will begin site work this week.

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported they had received quotes for the renovation of the Chaloner pool. He said the total renovation project is \$300,000; \$225,000 for the pool renovation and \$75,000 for the bath house renovation. He stated these were informal written quotes and may change if the City went to formal bid package or RFP.

He said the department was preparing for the Christmas Parade scheduled for December 4th at 2 p.m. He stated plans were going well. He announced they were doing something new this year. He stated Main Street Director Caudle was coordinating with Main Street Roanoke Rapids to provide food trucks and vendors to be located on 7th Street next to Centennial Park.

He said this Thursday he would be announcing the Grand Marshal for the Christmas Parade on the Charlie Beaver radio show. He stated it was a very well deserving individual from Roanoke Rapids.

He announced the Lighting of the Christmas Tree was scheduled for December 1st. He said refreshments will be served in the Lloyd Andrews Building at 6 p.m. and the lighting of the tree at 6:30 p.m. followed with the Roanoke Rapids High

School Chorus singing Christmas carols. He said James Goble will be turning the switch this year for the lighting of the tree; he is the son of Thomas Goble who is the Supervisor of the Senior Center.

He announced the David Allan Coe concert was scheduled for this Friday at the Roanoke Rapids Theatre. He said doors will open at 6:30 p.m. He said on December 14th the Oakridge Boys Christmas show will be at the Theatre and on February 11th there will be a Tribute to Motown show.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked how many bids did he get for the pool. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied he received three (3) bids, but they contacted over twelve (12) industrial pool companies from Richmond to Charlotte to Wilmington.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he recalled from those three quotes there was one a little less than that so he was not sure how we selected that \$300,000. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied Aqua Haven Pools out of Raleigh was \$218,500, he just rounded it up to \$225,000. City Manager Scherer added that the majority of the quotes are closer to the \$300,000 figure at this point. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said that was why he stated they were informal bids because if it was put out to a formal bid package, it may be a little different.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he understood the fund balance to be at 25% now and asked Finance Director Etheridge what it would be if the City were to look at using \$250,000 of the fund balance toward the pool renovation. Finance Director Etheridge replied with what we have committed from fund balance in the operations of our current fiscal year and if you add \$300,000 to that it would bring our fund balance down to \$2.9 million and with a budgeted expenditure level at \$16 million, we would have a 18% uncommitted fund balance and that was an estimate.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated early in this process we talked about a lot of different things in relation to the pool. He said he appreciated the Mayor, City Manager and John meeting with us the other night because it was a lot of good information put out from that. He said earlier on it came up if we did add the pool to some other expenditure what it would cost to do that. He stated maybe we cannot afford the whole thing at one time. He said it was like having a major repair that comes up with your home, you usually can add that to another portion of what you were already paying by getting a loan and can usually afford that especially at 1.8%. He said that sounded like a possibility early on so he

was just bringing that up and putting it out there as a possibility. He stated he understands they have not made a decision on it at this point.

Councilman Smith said that most of the Council members would love to have the funds to fix the pool but all of us need to know that the City and Council have a responsibility to everybody in the City. He stated Public Works saved the City \$100,000 by buying a used lift, but we have a street sweeper that was broken down and that was about \$250,000 that we need to spend. He said we have an asphalt patcher that we need to fill holes in town and that was \$150,000. He said we have a Fire Department that any day we could have fire truck break down and not be able to protect our community and that was \$500,000. He asked what do we do; fix the needs for all the people of Roanoke Rapids or do we fix the wants that want to be done. He stated he was not saying that in the future let's fix the pool, but right now there are not funds available to do anything we really need to do in the City. He said the thing that would help us more than anything else was if we could get a one cent sales tax or anything to bring up the funds coming into Roanoke Rapids. He said he thinks this Council looks at everybody as a whole and wants to do the things they need, but there were a lot of needs in this town that we have been putting off for over two years. He said if we borrowed more money, we could not make the payments on it.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he totally disagreed with that, but there has always been needs in the city and there always will be needs in this city. He said at some point in time we need to look at those needs because we would never do anything. He said just because a department such as the Fire department was anticipating it happening, but find it's not there yet, do we always anticipate something and never do anything or do we move forward with some things. He asked what was in the fund balance now. Finance Director Etheridge replied \$3.8 million. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he would sit down with the Mayor, the City Manager and John and talk about this because he thinks it's important that we do.

Mayor Doughtie stated \$3.8 million was a huge amount of money. He said \$2 million is a lot of money and \$2 million is what the City is encumbered each year to service just the large debt we have and we have ten (10) more years left on that debt; we've already been paying on it for ten (10) years. (Referring to the Entertainment District).

He said the City has one or two other long term debts that the Finance Director, City Attorney and City Manager have been able to refinance. He said one was the new Fire Station and the other was the New Resources Building downtown.

He said several months ago we received a letter from the NC State Treasurer's Office in reference to getting a one cent sales tax passed. He said that would generate a couple million dollars for Halifax County on an annual basis. He said a lot of that money would be from people travelling on the Interstate. He said they have tried really hard not to increase the tax rate and have not except for the one time we had an adjustment on property values. He said most people when they buy a home or vehicle they get a fixed interest rate where they know their payment will be the same each month. He said interest rates were low right now but the question was when will they go up because they will go up. He said the City has a variable rate on the Entertainment District and we still owe about \$16 million on that note. He said \$300,000 is a lot of money but if we get an increase on our interest rate on \$16 million it could make a difference of hundreds of thousands of dollars in the amount we would have to pledge to service that debt. He said Attorney Chichester was helping us to get a lower rate on that debt. He said the City's payment was \$1.8 million a year so if we could get our payment down to \$1 million or \$900,000 a year it would free up monies that we could do some things that were coming before this Council. He said he had a resident call him today to ask why can't the City take down the Rosemary Mill and why can't we provide other services that citizens were asking about. He said it all goes back to things we are obligated to do right now. He stated \$3 million was a lot of money but when you are looking at paying out \$2 million on one long term debt that you have which could be increased considerably, it makes you sit back and look at what you are going to do 1, 2 and 5 years from now. He said as a person that has been in business for himself his whole life, I feel like that has to be on your mind and you can't just look at today, but what could happen tomorrow.

Public Works

Public Works Director Chalker presented the October 2016 Report.

He reported the cemetery staff performed twelve (12) openings and closings and sold three (3) lots. He said the total collected for these services for the month were \$11,004.00 with a total year to date collected of \$48,814.00.

He reported in the month of October the department sent out forty-three (43) letters to property owners informing them of various City code ordinance violations. He said thirty-four (34) lots were cut by City forces in the amount of \$11,105.00. He reported the total year to date was \$48,679.50. He explained that was not the amount actually collected but was assessed to the property so whenever it was sold, the City would collect these fees before the closing was complete.

Public Works Director Chalker announced several employees went to Concord, NC last week to attend an auction to purchase a bucket truck. He said they went in ready to spend \$50,000 on a bucket truck, but only spent \$13,000.

He said on the tour of the City's facilities, they will see the department has done some expansion. He said they purchased storage containers and attached them to the building.

He reported one of the rubber tire loaders had been down, but was now up and running. He said they had to rebuild the entire engine. He said they had some talented employees. He said he was proud to be part of this team; we have some of the best employees in NC. We work very hard every day to see to our citizen's needs.

He said Roanoke Rapids would host a meeting on Thursday for Northampton and Halifax County with FEMA representatives at the Theatre concerning reimbursement for Hurricane Matthew.

He reported the department performed its quarterly streetlight inspection where they send the employees out at night to look at our streetlights. He said the City pays almost \$400,000 per year whether they are burning or not. He stated it was a record that they only had sixty-three (63) lights out this time; usually it was in the 200-300 range.

Public Work Director Chalker announced a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) representative came by his office today. He said this program prepares vulnerable and disconnected youth and other job seekers for successful employment through increasing the use of proven service models and services. He stated this was something President Obama signed into law in 2015. He reported they received a young man through the Halifax County agency heading up this program who worked with the City and it did not cost a dime. He stated they taught him how to be an employee and he has since become a full time employee and we are very proud of that. He said Roanoke Rapids was selected as the Employer of the Year by WIOA Student Incentive.

Fire

Fire Chief Coggins presented the October 2016 report. Chief Coggins reported the Fire Department responded to a total of 150 responses throughout the month with the average response time being just under 5 minutes.

He said in an effort to reduce unnecessary calls the department deferred 10 calls and remained in stand by status. He reported firemen were engaged in a total of 774 man hours of training covering various topics. He said the inspections division conducted 28 fire prevention inspections and completed 2 plan reviews.

He announced the department's hiring pool has increased to seven (7) qualified candidates that would be eligible for employment. He said our newest hired firefighter, Gabriel Fanar will begin employment December 14th. He reported the department was extremely busy in the month of October with Fire Prevention month. He announced they were able to reach 1,200 children and adults with the fire prevention message.

He said the air packs they received through the Assistance to Firefighters grants are now placed in service. He announced the grant committee and one of his members Chief Cook were now working on a grant to replace their entire radio system; the request would be for \$200,000.

He reported one of their firefighters, Kyle Horton, was in the Western part of the State helping fight the wildfires in the mountains. He said they had several other firefighters that wanted to go, but with staffing levels low we are unable to send them.

He said the department was working with Angel's Closet and Phil Hux repairing bicycles that would be given away to children for Christmas. He stated this was something they did every year.

He said they would be having the Firemen's Christmas party in December but did not know the date yet. He said he would let Council know the date as soon as possible and invited them to attend.

City Manager Scherer asked Chief Coggins how many bicycles they would be providing Angel's Closet this year. Chief Coggins replied 50-100 bicycles.

Fire Chief Coggins presented a slide show of pictures from the department's visits last month for Fire Safety Prevention month.

Main Street

In the absence of Main Street Director Caudle, City Manager Scherer gave comments on her behalf.

He reported the Tourism Authority and Halifax County are working on the Roanoke Rapids area being designated as a retirement community which would allow us to offer some incentives for people to retire here. He stated the application has been submitted and we should hear back sometime in January.

He announced several businesses have opened in the district. He said Designer Corner just opened a few doors down from City Hall. He said Mr. King's building has been rented to two different people. He stated Tillery Designs should be closed by the end of this week and has been sold to Tracy Story to open a cross fit gym.

City Manager Scherer said the laundromat located on 2nd Street & Roanoke Avenue has done a lot of work and it looked very nice. He encouraged everyone to go by and see it.

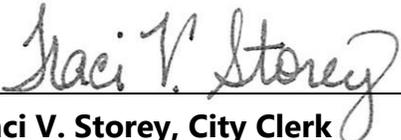
Mayor Doughtie recognized Halifax County Board of Commissioner's Chairman, Vernon Bryant and thanked him for attending the meeting and for his service to Halifax County.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee thanked the Firemen and Policemen for their efforts on the event held Halloween night at the Chaloner Recreation Center. He said they had over 150 kids participate. He stated Joyce Jones was working there at the time and she did a tremendous job. He said we would like to see her full time there if at all possible.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he had been on the Council for 17 years and been in city government for 27 years. He said he has never seen it where we've had the money we needed to buy everything. He stated if there is a will, there is a way. He said when things are needed and it depends where you think the need is, we have always gotten the necessary things. He said we need to search in our hearts and do the right thing. He said if we search hard enough, there is a way. He said we will continue to work with those parties to find that way. We are the leaders and we should be able to set a good example, whether it was by perception or not, that we are fair.

Other Business/Comments by Council Members

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adjourn.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: *December 6, 2016*