



# Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, July 18, 2017 at 5:15 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

**Present:** Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem  
Ernest C. Bobbitt)  
Suetta S. Scarbrough)  
Carol H. Cowen)  
Wayne Smith)

## **Council Members**

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager  
Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney  
Traci Storey, City Clerk  
Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager  
Chuck Hasty, Police Chief  
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director  
Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief  
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director  
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

**Absent:** Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor  
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director

In the absence of Mayor Doughtie, Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer.

## **Adoption of Business Agenda**

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked Council members about any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening and noted there needed to be an addition to the agenda. He stated Chief Coggins has requested the Fire Department recognize their Promotions and New Hires as well this evening.

There being no conflicts, motion was made by Councilwoman Cowen, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for July 18, 2017 as amended.

## Special Recognitions

### Police and Fire Department Recognitions

Police Chief Hasty and Fire Chief Coggins recognized the following for their Life Saving Actions on June 23, 2017:

**Sgt. Terrance Tyler, Master Officer Adam Salmon, Officer Ryan Cross, Battalion Chief Richard Cook, Lt. Bryan Hollowell, Firefighter Sean Marshall, Firefighter Carter Rowland and Engineer Ramah Long.**

Chief Hasty read an email to Captain Bryant from Halifax County EMT Craig Phippen:

*I wanted to touch base with you and let you know about the efforts of your uniformed guys last night at the Bibb Parking lot. They did their job and more by helping render first aid to the shooting victim. Sgt. Tyler, Officer Cross and I believe it was Officer Salmon were very valuable in getting equipment, shining lights and helping us find where all the victim was shot at and treating the wounds. Prior to arrival of EMS, Officer Cross had applied pressure dressing and was holding pressure on a wound to the abdomen that the victim was bleeding from. I applaud their efforts in rendering aid to help us stabilize and save the life of this citizen. Your officers and the city firemen that responded were vital in providing the care needed to hopefully keep this case from turning into a murder investigation. Please let the officers know that we really appreciate their efforts on this call as well as all of assistance in all of the daily calls we run with them. Their actions reflect highly on their commitment to the citizens of the City of Roanoke Rapids that they protect and serve.*

Chief Coggins also read an email from Halifax County EMT Craig Phippen:

*Please keep in mind this is still an ongoing investigation and the victim is still in critical shape so please don't post to Facebook about this but I just wanted to pass on my sincere appreciation for a job well done last night at the Bibb parking lot. Chief Cooke, Lt. Hollowell, Engineer Long and their firefighter were a great help in providing aid, equipment as well as helping us to provide stabilization and transport to the victim. While it is still an ongoing investigation and the victim is still critical. I strongly feel that your efforts in conjunction with the efforts of the*

*RRPD and Halifax EMS made the difference. Thanks again for all of your hard work and know that we sincerely appreciate all of your efforts.*

*Chief Coggins, I know yesterday morning at the hospital you and I talked about budgets and such and how money only goes so far, well I wanted you to know that your department's first responder program is money well spent on the citizens of Roanoke Rapids. This call is one such example of that. Thanks again and stay safe!*

Craig Phippen added that the City Council may not know how much of a help these guys were on calls for them as providers to the citizens of Roanoke Rapids and Halifax County. He stated it has been numerous times; this was just one such case that they had gone above and beyond to help them out. This was a service they all do whether it be helping them drive, helping with stretchers, helping them find victims or just holding hands of people involved in accidents; it was money well spent. He said he hoped they never had to be in a situation where they had to make a life or death decision, but these guys go above and beyond to make those split second decisions. A lot of times people don't get the credit or pat on the back they deserve and he felt they needed that and their Chiefs needed to know they had done a good job.

Chief Hasty and Chief Coggins presented each of them with a certificate and life-saving award pin.

Chief Hasty added the victim was at home recovering, but it was still an ongoing investigation.

### **Police Department Recognitions**

Chief Hasty introduced **Curtis Batchelor, Morgan Worrell, Elijah Ellington** and **Dwayne Ponton** as New Hires to the Roanoke Rapids Police Department. He stated the department took a different approach and getting to President Obama's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Task Force on policing by being open and transparent in the hiring process. In doing so, he invited some people in the community to sit on the interview board. He said Terry Buffaloe, Mr. Hillsman and his assistant pastor at Victory Baptist Church, Dan Bybee came and helped conduct the interviews. He stated it was a little different and it was an eye-opener for who they had applying. He announced Curtis Batchelor was hired the end of June, he was in his FTO; Morgan Worrell and Elijah Ellington started July 5<sup>th</sup> and Dwayne Ponton will be starting next week. Chief Hasty said he was sending Worrell, Ellington and Ponton to the BLET academy; the City was investing in these people because they feel they were the future for the department. He said they all did well in the interviews and

it was a community process. He welcomed them to the department and wished them a long service with the City.

Chief Hasty announced **Jonathan Benthall** has been promoted to **Investigator** and **Greg Colson** has been promoted to **Master Officer**. He added **Obert Wilstie**, who is on the way to the meeting, was promoted to **Investigator**.

Chief Hasty announced the **Officers of the Quarter** for April – June 2017 were **Police Officer Ryan Cross** and **Investigator Obert Wiltsie**.

Chief Hasty recognized **Officer Daniel Hundley** for going above and beyond the call of duty. He read a letter from **Master Officer Benthall**:

*The purpose of this letter is to formally commend Officer D. Hundley for his actions while responding to an assistance call on June 8, 2017. In my opinion, Officer Hundley went far above the call of duty and showed a level of compassion that demonstrates his true devotion to serving the citizens of Roanoke Rapids.*

*On June 8, 2017 at 8:44 p.m., Officer Hundley was dispatched to 1022 Vance Street in reference to assisting someone pick up their belongings from the residence. Upon his arrival, Officer Hundley made contact with the caller and learned that she desperately needed to get diapers out of the house for her two small children. Officer Hundley would later convey to me that both the caller's children were wearing soiled diapers and needed to be changed. He attempted to make contact with the resident of 1022 Vance Street, who was the father of the two children, but he could not get anyone to answer the door. Officer Hundley then searched the area and eventually found the father. The father was unwilling to cooperate and refused to provide any diapers for the children. Officer Hundley realized that the two innocent children would likely continue to suffer and not receive the level of care that any small child was entitled to if he did not take action. He then took it upon himself to purchase some diapers for the mother with his own money.*

*Officer Hundley's actions display a level of empathy, kindness, and selflessness that should be inculcated in all members of the Roanoke Rapids Police Department.*

### **Fire Department Promotion & New Hire Ceremony**

Chief Coggins conducted a Promotion and New Hire ceremony for the following individuals:

- ❖ Newly hired **Cory Jenkins** as Firefighter.
- ❖ Newly hired **Gabriel Fanana** as Firefighter.
- ❖ Newly hired **Sean Marshall** as Firefighter.

**Public Comment (Unscheduled)**

**Terry Buffaloe**

Terry Buffaloe stated he has people asking him questions about what is going on with the Chaloner pool. He said there was a decision made back in February or March and the people want to know when the work will begin and also if the monies have been set aside so if something else comes up it won't be dipped into and that money be used for something else. He said he would like some assurances from City Council. He also asked if the buses were being sent over to Chaloner Recreation Center to bring children over to the T.J. Davis Recreation Center. He stated if he could get answers to those questions, he could satisfy those people asking him and they would all be happy, joyous and free.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated those questions would be directed to the Parks & Recreation Director at that time.

**David Harvey**

David Harvey thanked Chief Hasty and the City of Roanoke Rapids for their efforts, work and hiring process and factoring in diversity. He said he has previously discussed it with Chief Hasty and the City Council; that was a concern of the NAACP here in Halifax County. He thanked them for looking at the city as whole and seeing the importance of diversifying the police department.

He said for those that did not know him, he was the president of the Halifax County NAACP. He stated back earlier in the year, a vote was taken on \$300,000 to repair the Chaloner pool. He said he understood there has been some work done and estimates done and it has been decided the pool was beyond repair. He said he was aware that the City was going to be looking at possibly trying to replace the pool. He stated he hoped the seriousness that the City Council took and with the work that was put in to come up with the money to repair, will have the same energy, enthusiasm and importance in replacing the pool. He said he knows \$300,000 was not going to replace it and it would require the City to come up with more funding. He stated he hopes that would be as equally important to get done as it was to repair.

**Approval of Council Minutes**

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to approve the June 20, 2017 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as written.

## City Appointments/Reappointments

### Senior Center Advisory Committee

City Clerk Storey stated **Gladys Wells, Larry Beale** and **Sandra Clements** have applied for reappointment to the Senior Center Advisory Committee.

She said Mr. Beale and Ms. Clements are eligible for reappointment. Ms. Wells has served the maximum number of consecutive terms allowed by Council policy; and pursuant to this section of the policy, Council has authority – and as done so in the past – to waive this section of the policy. Copies of the appointment applications and a list of current membership were included in your packet for your review.

City Clerk Storey reported a ballot vote was taken earlier and all three appointees received a unanimous vote and requested a motion be made to waive the City policy and reappoint all three nominees.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Cowen, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to waive the City Policy for Gladys Wells and accept the reappointments to the Senior Center Advisory Committee.

## Old Business

### Chaloner Pool Update

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated Jim Miller with James Miller & Associates was present tonight and they wanted to discuss cost estimates for the design and build for a new pool at Chaloner Recreation Center. He reported they have gone from a renovation to a design/build. He said these were cost estimates; they were not firm numbers they would see in proposals, commonly known as RFPs. He said through Mr. Miller's extensive research, he has recommended they consider the estimate from the pool design company Counsilman-Hunsaker Aquatics for Life. He said this company comes highly regarded from references and other municipalities such as Raleigh, Greensboro, New Bern, Chapel Hill, Durham and Charlotte who have all used their services within the past couple of years.

He said the current Chaloner pool was an L-shaped pool that slopes from 3-feet to 5-feet with a 9-1/2 feet dive area. He said to try to minimize costs as much as possible, they asked for estimates for a 35-foot x 75-foot rectangular pool that has a zero depth entry that extends down to a 5-foot water depth. He said this would take out the "L" part of the pool, the dive area, and the 35' x 75' rectangular pool was exactly what was there without the diving area.

He reviewed the following cost estimates with City Council as follows:

Demolition and compacted infill:	\$40,000.00
Concrete pool and equipment:	\$450,000.00
Soil compaction and concrete testing:	\$5,000.00
Electrical panels, wiring and ground grid:	\$25,000.00
Equipment room and chemical storage renovation:	\$10,000.00
Site plumb, electrical work and landscaping:	\$10,000.00
10% contingency:	<u>\$54,000.00</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$594,000.00</b>

**Professional Fees as follows:**

Councilman-Hunsaker:	\$26,000.00
James Miller & Associates:	\$24,000.00
10% contingency:	<u>\$5,000.00</u>
<b>Total professional fees:</b>	<b>\$55,000.00</b>

**Total estimated project cost: \$594,000 to \$649,000**

He stated moving forward, this was his recommendation. He and City Manager Scherer met last week with G.K. Butterfield's office to see if there were some federal resources and grants available. He said they should hear back from them in about two weeks. He said in addition, he and City Manager Scherer will meet with Recreation Resources on August 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund (*PARTF*) and also to seek resources and grants on the state level. He requested City Council allow him the time get feedback from G.K. Butterfield's office and also Recreation Resources and report back to them at the August 15<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting with an update on possible resources and grants.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he was able to sit in on the meeting with G.K. Butterfield's staff person and it seemed like they were anxious in helping the City get this project done. He added they said they did not have any monies, but knew a lot of resources and connections.

He recalled earlier on in the process they met with other resources/companies and he believed one could not provide dollars toward renovations and the pool now was not able to be renovated. He asked Parks & Recreation Director Simeon if he could circle back and look into that resource.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said there had been an unofficial dollar value for rebuilding the pool and there was a big difference between what they originally thought it

would cost to do this even with not doing the “L” shape for the dive pool. It appears the estimate was much greater than it was first thought to be.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied they went from a renovation to a complete demo and rebuild; that’s where they see the difference in costs. He said that the figure of \$300,000 which was approved by City Council was for the renovation of the pool.

Jim Miller added they did consider the renovation would have been to repair all the leaks that were letting ground water into the pool. He said they were repairable, but they got an expert in materials and concrete that came out and did some borings. They found out that beyond the visible leaks, there was damage internal to the concrete and it would be accelerating as time went on.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if someone could answer the questions posed earlier by Terry Buffaloe.

The first question was concerning whether or not the monies allocated for the pool have been earmarked. City Manager Scherer replied the monies have been set aside for this project.

The second question was whether the buses were picking up children from Chaloner Recreation Center and taking them to T.J. Davis Recreation Center. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied they had offered that and contacted the community and no one has taken advantage of that opportunity as this time.

Mr. Buffaloe added he guessed the children were finding their way there. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied yes, especially since lowering the price of the pool entry to \$1 for residents and \$2 for non-residents. He reported in the month of June 2016, they had 900 participants and in June of this year they had 2,000, so they had seen a significant increase in the number of swimmers at the T.J. Davis pool.

Councilman Smith asked if there was still water in the Chaloner pool. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied there was seepage all the time and they run a sump pump several times a week to remove it; it was a constant battle. Councilman Smith asked how much liability was that to the City for it to be wide open all the time. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said the fence was locked. Councilman Smith stated someone could still climb over a fence and if somebody got hurt over there, how much liability would that be to the City. City Manager Scherer said the City has it posted and secured by a fence that covers any liability on the City. He



referred to Attorney Chichester stating the City could still be sued and it would have to be addressed at that point. As far as the City's liability insurance, they were meeting the requirement. Councilman Smith stated if the pool was not going to be repaired, why wouldn't the City just fill it up with dirt. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied that was an option, if the City Council want to go in that direction, he could address it, but there would be costs associated with doing that.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee added that would just add to the costs of what they were trying to do and the pool had been open for 50 years. He said the lock has been successful and whether or not water was in the pool, somebody could climb the fence if they wanted to and drown. He personally believes the pool was secure and was satisfied with the lock and how it was presented without having to spend additional dollars. He said he hoped soon they would be starting on the other portion of the project, which was demolition of the pool.

Councilman Smith said he did not understand where the additional costs would come in because it was going to cost \$40,000 to demolish it, fix it and fill it in. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee replied the additional costs would be to bring in dirt, add it in and then take it out.

Attorney Chichester said from the legal standpoint, if a city or a private residence has a swimming pool that's what was considered an attractive nuisance - if someone wants to come in, get in the water and some harm comes to them whether drowning or some other kind of injury. But if a private residence owner or a city has a pool and has it fenced in and locked, at that point they have done all they can do to protect itself and protect people that want to come get into the pool. He stated he was certain that the case law was clear that once that was done and posted they would not be liable for any harm or damage done to a person. But in the outside chance that someone wants to sue the City, they had liability insurance which covers retaining an attorney that would defend the City at no cost to the City. He said as for the pool in its present condition, they were doing everything they could do to protect the City from any potential liability. In reference to filling it in, it was up to the City Council, but he was certain it was not required.

### **City Manager's Report**

City Manager Scherer stated one of the bills passed by the General Assembly this past session, and ratified by Governor Cooper, was SB 155. Section 4 of this bill authorized cities and counties to pass legislation to allow alcohol sales beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays. The current law restricts alcohol sales to begin at noon

on Sundays. To date, no one has contacted my office about having a city ordinance drafted for this purpose. In your packet is a draft ordinance from the NC League of Municipalities if you wish to consider such an ordinance. GS 160A-205.3 allows cities to allow the sale of specifically malt beverages, unfortified and fortified wine and mixed beverages on licensed premises. No public hearing or special public notice of this ordinance is required. No action is required on this issue tonight; I've just included the draft ordinance for your review and discussion if Council is so inclined.

He said he had been informed the Center of Energy Education at the old county airport site is now scheduled for a grand opening on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

City Manager Scherer said as you may have already noticed, NCDOT has begun a repaving project on US 158, beginning at the intersection where Drugco and Walgreen's are located. The project will require the milling of the highway from there to the intersection of 158 and 48 in South Rosemary and then repave the highway. They are doing the work at night and should take a few days. NCDOT is planning on widening the shoulder on the north side of the highway for the safety of pedestrians.

He reported at the road construction project on Julian Allsbrook Highway, the sewer and pipe replacement is currently underway. NCDOT originally planned to have the road closed 4-5 weeks. While re-routing the sewer line, they discovered that the gas line was bored through the sewer. The gas line has been re-bored and the sewer is being re-routed. He stated he had hoped to have an estimated completion date, but has not heard back yet.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated in reference to the draft ordinance, whether the City Council addressed it tonight or some other time, he felt they needed to address it at some point. He said he believed they needed to take a stand on it whether to allow it or not allow it.

### **Finance Director's Report**

In the absence of Finance Director Etheridge, City Manager Scherer gave the June 2017 Finance Report.

He said the City had collected 88.2% of revenue and expended 94% of their projected budget, leaving a shortfall of \$978,225.86. However, they were still waiting on some revenue information to come in. They had not received the June

Ad Valorem nor the vehicle tax distributions from the county. He said there were some other revenue sources that were running behind their projection and a couple have come in ahead of projections. As you may know, the City was still facing the loss of privilege license revenue which continues to put a major hole in the budget.

He said referring to the report, the City was basically at the same numbers as June 2016 with 90.8% in revenue, 96.9% in expenditure for a shortfall of \$958,000. They continue to monitor the revenue and hopefully those numbers will improve by the time they close out/finalize the FY 2016-2017 budget.

He announced the annual audit was scheduled for the week of August 28, 2017.

## Departmental Reports

### Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Kearney stated currently the City was advertising for the following positions:

Library Operations Supervisor *(Long-time supervisor Shirley Rozier will be retiring the end of July; she has been with the City 30 years.)*

Sanitation Worker

PT Public Works Worker

PT Building Supervisor (Recreation)

She reported in the month of June, the department received 12 applications, hired 5 lifeguards, 1 police officer and 2 street maintenance workers.

Human Resources Manager Kearney said on July 12<sup>th</sup>, BARC hosted an employee hot dog luncheon at Kirkwood Adams from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. and it was the first one they had that it did not cost the employees anything. They had a really good turn out and the lunch included hot dogs, chips, cookies and beverage. The lunch was completely paid for by BARC. She noted the donations have gone up in recent months so they will be able to do more than what they had been doing. She stated they appreciated any donation from anyone.

### Police

Police Chief Hasty presented his report for the month of June. He reported the department recently held a Police Academy and they averaged over 40 kids each day for the entire week. He said the kids had a ball and it was their biggest one yet.

He said they were preparing for the National Night Out which will be held August 1<sup>st</sup>, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. at The Centre on the HCC campus. He announced the Holiday Band would be performing and another special guest will be coming; he will be announcing it on *Facebook* tomorrow. He said the event would be hosted by the Halifax County Sheriff Office, Roanoke Rapids Police Department, Weldon Police Department and Enfield Police Department. He said the event was free.

Police Chief Hasty announced he was looking to bring in another community seminar in August or September. He said he met a man at the Chief's Conference, Tru Pettigrew who has a program called COHORT (*Community Organizers Helping Officers Restore Trust*). He wanted to bring that program to the area; it would be about a 2 hour program. He was looking into the cost of bringing the training here for the community and police relations.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked where the program would be held. Chief Hasty replied Kirkwood Adams.

### **Planning & Development**

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported the month of June has been fairly packed with inspections and code enforcement activities. Primary they have been in discussion phases of preliminary development plans; one in particular was the Sonic Restaurant on 10<sup>th</sup> Street which was planning to expand.

She said primarily their goal was to address several zoning and code violations that have been observed throughout town. She stated they were trying to obtain abatement of those or working with property owners to try to get some of the issues resolved.

She reported they had spent some time working with Main Street Director Caudle on 1026 Roanoke Avenue and completing year end documents and reporting to the State and to the Census Bureau for the City's building permit and demolition data.

She reported the building inspections has been actively busy trying to continue with inspections at Manning School and the State Employees Credit Union. She announced Harbor Freight Tools was expected to open today.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the building inspections were up or about the same in comparison to the same period last year. Planning Director Lasky replied they did have some increases and the month of May was substantially higher than any other month, but they have continued to see an increase. She said this time of

year, June and July, with fiscal year/banking schedules, they typically see a little bit of slow down, but it was primarily because projects were permitted and were in the construction process.

### **Parks & Recreation**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon announced Barn Burner Productions will be hosting Jamey Johnson at the Roanoke Rapids Theatre this Friday night. Front doors will open at 6:45 p.m., theatre doors open at 7 p.m., Ray Scott will open at 7:30 p.m. and Jamey Johnson will take the stage at 9 p.m. The next scheduled event will be a stage play entitled, *In Everything Trust God*, on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

He also announced the Library will hold its Reading Summer Awards Ceremony on Friday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 p.m. He invited the media to attend the event. He said the program was based on children ages 6-13 who have read books from an approved list and have read 15 minute blocks and have logged their readings. City Manager Scherer will be there giving out the awards.

He congratulated Senior Center Supervisor Thomas Goble, he had an exceptional Spring Luncheon at the Senior Center. He had 75 seniors come out for the luncheon. There was a lot of compliments and praise for the program.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon thanked everyone for their support with the U10 State Baseball Tournament. He thought it was a successful tournament.

Councilman Smith asked if anyone had ever contacted the NC Symphony to come to the Theatre. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied the last time that took place, the Arts Council contacted them and he believed it was a Christmas show back in 2012.

Councilman Smith thanked Parks & Recreation Director Simeon and the department heads for the work they did for the U10 State Tournament. He was on the Little League board and it was an excellent tournament because of the work and efforts by the City to make this a big event.

### **Public Works**

Public Works Director Chalker presented the June report. He reported the total collected for the Cemetery was \$127,602.00; total assessed for grass cutting was \$32,367.00.

He reported that the Powell Bill information has been submitted to the State of North Carolina. This information tells the State how many miles of roads the City has and out of that mileage a certain amount qualifies for funding from the State. He stated this was a large part of their budget and thanked Nick Rightmyer for his help in submitted the map.

He reported last month the department was working on up fitting one of the mosquito sprayers and they were now spraying for mosquitos. He said they not only spray for mosquitos but if they find standing water they cannot resolve, they have tablets they place in the water to prevent mosquito larvae from growing.

He said the street sweeper was almost ready to be put back into service; they had it sent off for a fairly expensive repair. He stated he was glad they could have it repaired because he was a little low on his initial estimate for a new sweeper last month; a new sweeper would be around \$280,000.

Public Works Director Chalker announced that on days with the extreme heat indexes/warnings, the trash crew will be going out at 5 a.m. in order to get routes run sooner and to get off the trucks before it gets unbearably hot. He reported they have not had anyone injured by the heat thus far; they try to stay diligent with that by pushing fluids on the workers. He said the public may hear the trucks out earlier than usual for this reason.

He reported the department has been working on finding a solution to the City's telephone system. He said they have found a solution with *Verizon*, who currently provides cell phone service to the City. *Verizon* has a system called OneTalk where all the phones work on the internet and were cloud managed. He said the technology is VOIP (*Voice Over Internet Protocol*). He said the City's current system has been in service for many years and there were no parts available unless you happen to find a used part. He said the local telephone company has been telling them the system was not going to last. About two months ago at Fire Station I their phone system just stopped working. He said they contacted *Centurylink* and they happened to have a system that had been taken out of another local business and saved it in case someone else needed it. He said the incident at Station I really accelerated their search for a solution for the City's phone system. They believe they can show significant savings with what they were proposing. He said they held a meeting this morning with all the department heads and authorized persons from each department. He said in another week or so they plan to roll out the system at the Public Works Department for a trial run. He said long-term they were looking for a viable solution so when the public calls, they will be able to answer those calls and handle them efficiently.

He said currently they average \$50,000 per year city-wide for telephones. This system will come in about half of that. He said they were looking at a \$25,000 per year savings. He said they hoped those numbers hold true and have a new phone system that works like they want it to.

### **Fire**

Fire Chief Coggins reported the Fire Department responded to 130 calls of service during the month of June with an average response time just under 5 minutes. He said in effort to reduce unnecessary calls, they deferred 4 calls and remained in standby status. He said firefighters were engaged in 648 man-hours of training covering various topics. He stated the Inspection Division conducted 38 fire inspections and 6 plan reviews.

He said the department conducted their bi-annual firefighter fitness course this past month. This was where all the firefighters, including himself, go through the same agility course they use for new hires. This was something they do twice a year to show they were fit for duty.

He stated the department attended the open enrollment put on by Human Resources Manager Kearney. They attended First Christian Church VBS where they taught fire safety and sprayed the kids with water. They assisted the Police Department with their summer camp where they also sprayed the kids with water.

He said firefighters attended a safety meeting put on by Public Works which focused on heat stress and heat related emergencies.

Chief Coggins reported he would be in Charlotte attending the International Association of Fire Chief conference.

### **Main Street**

Main Street Director Caudle reported they have been working on Phase I Development for 1026 Roanoke Avenue. She said the Public Works Department started site prep work on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. She stated they were removing plaster from the exterior brick walls. They have removed and will continue to remove some of the concrete pad in order to be safe for the public and ADA compliant which was their top priorities for Phase I Development. She said this phase was funded by the NC Downtown Revitalization Grant they received last year.

She reminded City Council that Jim and Gayle Garrett purchased the Patterson Mansion and they continue to use and support the current use of the building

which was commercial office space. They were exploring additional business opportunities for the property. She said the building has four floors and two of the floors were completely vacant and four of the seven commercial spaces on floors 2 and 3 were filled; there's a lot of opportunity there. She said they hosted Reid Thomas with the State Historic Preservation Office on July 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss their opportunity to use State and Federal historic tax credits to do some of the improvements to the property.

She reported the following new businesses in the district:

The Concrete Rose Dance Studio at 936 Roanoke Avenue, the business use permit was completed and they were opening this month.

The Mill City Market at 933 Roanoke Avenue, they had completed their initial business use inspection and has received a building permit and started their renovations last week.

Burger King has reopened after closing for a few weeks to do a \$375,000 remodel and it looks really nice.

In addition to the Laundromat downtown that was close to opening, right next door with the same property owner at 142 Roanoke Avenue, a building permit was issued for Liberty Dollar Store.

She announced the *Reunion Band* would be performing this Friday for the Fridays in the Park concert. The concert was free from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in Centennial Park. The next concert date would feature *The Deep* on August 18<sup>th</sup>.

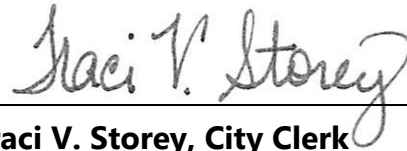
Main Street Roanoke Rapids was holding their Annual Dinner next Monday, July 24<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at the Halifax County Arts Council Gallery. Everyone is invited to attend. The cost is \$25 which includes dinner, annual report presentation and annual Main Street Awards. Please RSVP to her this week.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked what kind of offices were in the Patterson Mansion. Main Street Director Caudle replied it was mainly medical offices and most have been there for many years. She added she believed they were trying to attract similar type offices for those two floors.



**Other Business/Comments by Council Members**

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

**Approved by Council Action on: 8/1/2017**