



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, October 17, 2017 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)

Council Members

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

Absent: John Simeon, Parks & Recreation 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 Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to approve the business agenda for October 17, 2017 as presented.

Special Recognitions

Police Department Recognitions

Police Chief Hasty introduced the department's newest hire, Clarice Hagbourne. He said she grew up in Ahoskie, NC where she graduated from Hertford County High School. She received her BLET from Halifax Community College and began her career in Woodland, then went to the Hillsborough Police Department and then NC Central University Police Department before deciding to laterally transfer here to Roanoke Rapids to be closer to home. He said she has her Intermediate Certificate from the NC Criminal Justice Training & Standards and has received many specialized training courses from Wilson. She is a Traffic Enforcement Specialist.

Police Chief Hasty recognized Lt. Charles Vaught, Investigator Gorton Williams, Master Officer Jamie Hardy and Officer Joe Desare as Officers of the Quarter for July – September 2017.

Police Chief Hasty awarded Lt. Vaught and Investigator Williams with a Certificate of Merit for assisting a family recently when they were unable to afford a room. It was over 100 degrees outside and the family did not have any money nor anywhere to go. Lt. Vaught and Investigator Williams paid for a room at the Fairfax Motel with their own money. He recognized them for their display of human kindness.

Mayor Doughtie said to all the officers that they were glad they were here. He stated that when they go to bed at night, they feel about as safe as anyone in this country. They were a small town, but big enough to attract quality people like they are and they were glad they forgo economic opportunities sometimes to stay with us. He said they hope as a City they will be able in the future to reward them for staying here. Having a good police department is one of the things to keep crime as low as possible which helps bring people and industry to the community. He commended them for their service.

Planning & Development Recognitions

Planning & Development Director Lasky gave a PowerPoint presentation in honor and recognition of National Community Planning Month. She said one of the initiatives was to educate, advocate and celebrate planning efforts throughout the community. She stated Planning Month was an observance of achievements and the opportunity to educate non-planning audiences such as the media, general public, and elected officials. She said planning was involved in creating spaces in general. One of the most important things to do with planning was helping others understand why it was important to the community and it involved a lot of

deliberate conversations and planning about the community. During the month of October, it was a time to draw attention to the entire process that goes into it.

City Manager Scherer recognized Planning & Development Director Lasky for her professionalism, outstanding technical abilities and the way she had improved the business planning processes for everyone. He thanked her for her efforts she has put into her position.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Gorham Spencer expressed concerns about things happening in the community of Webb Hill and across the street from her church, First Baptist on Hwy. 158. She said the Roanoke Rapids Police Department is wonderful; we have fine officers. She said what she had to say was no reflection on them, but it was something we should try to do and as a community we can do better with. She said the latest thing she had a concern about was the shooting that occurred across the street from the church which happened Sunday at approximately 10:45 a.m. when parishioners were going in. She said not only for us but those who live in that neighborhood. She said the Mayor said he felt safe when he went to bed, but some people don't feel safe in the day time because of activities. She said they had a meeting at their church and the officers were wonderful and they gave good information and they started things rolling. She said there was a lady that could not go sit on her porch in the summertime because of the activity that was going on at a certain residence. She said she knows the police are spread thin but thinks we could do better with community police presence showing a relationship with the community and the police force. She said there was a lady who overdosed and her daughter had to find her; can you image a 13 year old going in the find her. The son was on the way home from school, thank goodness he did not see that site. She said the death was bad enough, but now the family is split up; the daughter has gone with one family and the son with another. She said she feels if they could get some kind of better community relationship, a police relationship presence where maybe officers can go knock on doors of these communities. She said maybe if people see the police are there then they may want to help more and maybe the other unwarranted ones would leave. She stated she thinks we can do better. These places need to be gone; not from one community to another but out of Roanoke Rapids.

Mayor Doughtie thanked Ms. Spencer for the way she puts a positive note on an unpleasant topic.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee agreed with Ms. Spencer that the Police Department was doing a very good job. He stated we have gone to first base and hopefully we can continue on with the process we've started. Hopefully, we can move that activity out of the city as a whole. He thanked her for her comments and Chief Hasty's department. He added it was getting bad not only here in Roanoke Rapids but it is all over the place. He said as a whole we need to start looking at it and trying to figure out how to take care of some of these things. He said there was still a lot of work that needs to be done.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the October 3, 2017 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as written.

New Business

Consideration of Resolution to Amend the Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy (Military Leave)

Human Resources Manager Kearney presented the following Resolution No. 2017.08 for Council's consideration amending the Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy to revise Section 21. Military Leave:

RESOLUTION NO. 2017.08

Resolution to Amend City of Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy

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 amendment is being proposed to amend Article VII, Section 21 of the City of Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy to read as follows:

Section 21. Military Leave

Regular employees who are members of an Armed Forces Reserve organization or National Guard shall be granted ten (10) workdays per calendar year for military leave with full pay. If military duty is required beyond the ten (10) workdays per year, the employee will be placed on Leave without Pay status. However, the employee can opt, prior to being placed on Leave without Pay Status, to use any and all accrued annual leave as the employee chooses.

While taking military leave, the employee's leave credits and other benefits shall continue to accrue as if the employee were actively working with the Town during this period. Employees who are eligible for military leave have all job rights specified by the Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act.

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 October 17, 2017, to become effective immediately.

Adopted this 17th day of October, 2017.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

She explained that currently any employee in the military now must use vacation leave. She was requesting the policy be changed to grant them ten (10) calendar days per year paid leave.

City Manager Scherer added the ten (10) days were the annual training period they have to attend; it is usually a two week period of duty they get called to do.

Councilman Smith asked how many employees does the City have in the military. Human Resources Manager Kearney replied only one right now.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2017.08 amending Section 21. Military Leave of the Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy.

Consideration of Resolution to Amend the Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy (Transfer of Leave)

Human Resources Manager Kearney presented the following Resolution No. 2017.09 for Council's consideration amending the Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy to add Section 13 (a) Sick Leave Transfer from Other Organizations:

RESOLUTION NO. 2017.09

**Resolution to Amend
City of Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy**

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 amendment is being proposed to amend Article VII, Section 13 to add the following new Section:

Section 13 (a) Sick Leave Transfer from State or Local Government Organizations

An employee who has credible service in the State or Local Employee's Retirement System may transfer his or her sick leave balance from the organization(s) in which the retirement service was gained. Transferred sick leave may only be used towards retirement.

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 October 17, 2017, to become effective immediately.

Adopted this 17th day of October, 2017.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Council discussed that Section 13 title heading should specify that sick leave could be transferred from State and Local Government Organizations.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2017.09 amending the Roanoke Rapids Personnel Policy to add Section 13 (a) Sick Leave Transfer from State or Local Government Organizations.

Consideration of Resolution Supporting the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program

Main Street Director Caudle presented the following Resolution No. 2017.10 for Council's consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. 2017.10

Resolution Supporting the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program

WHEREAS, the Roanoke Rapids City Council supports the efforts of the City's Main Street Program that advocates for utilizing Uptown and Downtown Roanoke Rapids historic buildings as a catalyst for economic development; and

WHEREAS, the Roanoke Rapids City Council recognizes that a healthy, vibrant downtown makes all of the economic development initiatives in the community easier to achieve; and

WHEREAS, many private investors have made significant investments in the community by investing in older often vacant buildings; and

WHEREAS, the Roanoke Rapids City Council understands the importance and wealth of historic structures that offer unique opportunities by differentiating Roanoke Rapids from other communities; and

WHEREAS, Roanoke Rapids Historic District may benefit from large and small historic preservation tax-credit projects that could increase our tax base; and

WHEREAS, Federal Historic Preservation tax-credits could make otherwise unsuccessful projects an enormous success and benefit to our community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Roanoke Rapids City Council does hereby support the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program and the continued availability of the tax credits as a tool to spur economic development in our Historic District and throughout Roanoke Rapids and Halifax County; and urges Congress to include the Tax Credits in the proposed FY 2017/18 Federal Budget; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be sent to our Federal Legislative Delegation and other partners related to historic preservation projects.

Adopted this 17th Day of October, 2017.

Emery Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2017.10 supporting the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer reported recently City officials attended a conference sponsored by the County regarding the opioid epidemic that is sweeping the country. Both elected and appointed officials from municipalities in the county were also in attendance, and the discussion focused on what efforts and resources are needed to combat this problem in our communities. No specific solutions were arrived at but we need to continue to look at how we can reduce the spread of opioid addiction here, as it affects the entire community.

He announced NCDOT will be holding a public meeting next Tuesday the 24th at the Lloyd Andrews building to review two upcoming projects, the widening of NC Hwy. 125 and the extension of Premier Blvd. The time for the public official meeting is 4:00 p.m. and the public is invited to participate beginning at 5:00 p.m.

He also announced there would be a Veterans Day ceremony at Veterans Park on the Avenue on Saturday, November 11th beginning at 11:00 a.m.

City Manager Scherer said the next scheduled City Council meeting is November 7th which is also Election Day and the building here is a voting site. Currently, we do not anticipate any matters needing to come before Council by that date, so he recommended Council consider cancelling the meeting.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to cancel the November 7, 2017 City Council meeting.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge presented the September 2017 Financial Report. She reported for the month of September the General Fund year-to-date receipts totaled \$4,874,487.73. The percentage of actual monies collected of adopted budgeted figures stands at 31.1%. She said the General Fund year-to-date expenditures totaled \$3,913,463.42. The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures stands at 25.0%.

She said after the month of September, 25.02% of the budget has been completed. As a result, the year to date revenues exceeded expenditures by \$961,024.31.

Finance Director Etheridge reported during the month of September, the City received the following revenues to support operations and to offset the prior year-to-date deficit: Ad Valorem & Solid Waste Taxes: \$3,440,827; Sales & Use Taxes for the service month of July: \$289,304; Utility Franchise Taxes: \$337,394; Powell Bill Street Allocation: \$224,200.

She said operating cash and investment reserves have increased some after the receipt of these revenue sources. These funding sources are still critical in offsetting revenue shortfalls during the months of July and August as well as continuing operations for the remainder of FY 2017-2018.

Mayor Doughtie asked Finance Director Etheridge when was the next Theatre payment. She replied November 1, 2017 for \$239,000.

Councilman Smith stated it seems like the prior year taxes were coming in slow and asked Finance Director Etheridge if she had heard from the County. She replied she had not but could contact Ms. Hawkins with Halifax County and discuss the status and to see if there was anything they needed to do differently.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked what was the percentage of payment in relation to the total. Finance Director Etheridge said the City was on track with most revenues as they were last year. Mayor Pro Tem asked what the total collections percentage was last year. She replied it was 98%.

Departmental Reports

Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Kearney stated currently they were advertising for an Equipment Mechanic at the garage in Public Works, a part-time Aqua Zumba Instructor at Parks & Recreation, a part-time Building Supervisor at Parks & Recreation and a part-time Public Works Worker.

She said during the month of September, the department received eighteen (18) applications and rehired an employee who had retired, Ms. Shirley Rozier is working part-time at the library.

Human Resources Manager Kearney announced tomorrow, the City would be holding a flu shot clinic for City employees. The clinic will be held from 9 a.m. – 12 noon in her office.

Councilman Smith asked what was a part-time Building Supervisor. She replied they are in the building to make sure people are doing what they're supposed to do and nobody gets rowdy. Basically, supervising the activities going on in the building; mainly at night and on weekends (20 hours a week at the most).

Police

Police Chief Hasty presented his report for the month of September. He said the 2nd Annual Trunk or Treat will be held October 31st on Doyle Field, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. to go along with the other activities at TJ Davis Recreation Center.

He announced the Police Club was sponsoring a wrestling event November 4th at Roanoke Rapids High School; \$10 adults, \$5 children 12 & under. All proceeds go to their program, Christmas for the Kids. They have begun to receive names from the school system, DSS and Angel's Closet to take the kids Christmas shopping.

Chief Hasty announced the department will be holding another speed campaign beginning the 23rd of next month and run for about four weeks.

Mayor Doughtie asked Chief Hasty if he could name one thing for citizens to ask, tell or notify the police about. He replied cooperation, calling in when they see something; they need people to come forward. He said it can be anonymous so they can follow up on those leads.

Planning & Development

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported during the month of September the department had a fairly active month with applications, especially in the Code Enforcement and Building division with an approximate \$10 million renovation to Dominion Energy and final inspection on several other projects such as the Solar Farm on American Legion Road. She said the Manning School has approximately a month to go. She announced the State Employees' Credit Union on 10th Street opened this past Monday.

She said the department held a pre-application meeting for the senior citizen apartment development that was proposed at Becker Drive and Hunting Ridge Road. That project was moving forward with some due diligence that was required

on part of the financing and what was required of the developer to provide. They would probably not see any movement on the site until Christmas to early spring.

Planning & Development Director Lasky said they have a nearly complete revised set of plans for a new DrugCo to be located at 1096 E. 10th Street.

She said the department was processing some dilapidated homes including one on 11th Street where a hearing has been set for November. She reported they were soliciting bids for the lobby area of the Peoples Theater.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked what has happened to the development on Hwy. 125 where they issued a rezoning. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied she heard from the developer, Mark Gregory a couple of weeks ago. He contacted her to let her know they were still planning to move forward within the year, but he had another project in Elizabeth City. She said she would notify Council when she receives site plans and a formal application.

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon was absent.

Public Works

Public Works Director Chalker presented the September report. He reported for September the Cemetery collected \$7,076.00. They had the second largest month of the season for lot cutting where they sent out 117 letters to citizens who did not maintain their lots and assessed \$15,872.50. Total assessed for the 2017 season is \$69,190.50. He said the department spent 983 man hours cutting grass.

He said the Street Department continues to work on 1026 Roanoke Avenue along with the City's engineer, Nick Rightmyer. They are working on the interior of the space and installing the storm drainage pipe to tie it into the storm drainage system. When this is done, they will be setting up to pour concrete after they build the last seat wall.

He said the department has completed a cemetery expansion which will allow 300 more graves. They have sown a particular kind of grass seed for this season and will be coming back later on with the final grass seed. He stated they did use a contractor to take the trees out, but once they were removed the employees did the final portion of the work. It looks good and they did a really good job.

Public Works Director Chalker reported in Parks & Recreation Director Simeon absence that they had a comedy show at the Theatre this past weekend. He said

approximately 500 attended and it was a good show. He announced on November 4th there would be a car show in the parking lot of the Theatre. He said on December 12th, the Air Force Heritage Band will be performing at the Theatre; it will be a free event.

Fire

Fire Chief Coggins reported the Fire Department responded to 155 calls of service during the month of September with an average response time just under 5 minutes. He said in effort to reduce unnecessary calls, they deferred 7 calls and remained in standby status.

He said firefighters were engaged in 784.5 man-hours of training covering various topics. He stated the Inspection Division conducted 45 fire inspections and 3 plan reviews for proposed new businesses within the district.

He announced their hiring pool was up to 10 candidates. Three people who had relocated here have recently turned in their resignations. The department will have those 10 candidates to choose from to fill those slots.

Chief Coggins said this past month the department had live fire training as well as vehicle extrication training with Roanoke Valley. He has a 5 minutes video of the extrication training that he plans to show at the November meeting.

He reported the department has visited the local schools the past couple of weeks to teach about fire safety and had several fire station visits. He said A Shift was very instrumental this past month in cutting back a lot of their trees at Station 1.

He thanked Public Works Director Chalker and his team for helping build the shelter for the generator at Station 2 as well as installing the phone system at Station 1.

He reported he was a guest speaker this past month at Victory Baptist Church for their Public Servants Appreciation Day.

He stated last week there was a house fire on Franklin Street and the department was able to save a man who was in the house. He was unresponsive, but they were able to resuscitate him and get him to the hospital. He reported he was at Chapel Hill in the Burn Center.

Chief Coggins announced the department has 50 bicycles from Phil Hux at old Station No. 2 where they will be working on the Christmas For Kids bike restoration project for the kids in need in the community to receive bikes.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked how someone would get in touch with them about receiving one of the bikes. Chief Coggins replied the project was in conjunction with Angels Closet. They find the children in the community that need them most, but if he knew someone that was in need to let him know and he would try to help.

Main Street

Main Street Director Caudle reported further to Public Works Director Chalker's report on 1026 Roanoke Avenue, they have found several "budget busters." The most significant one was instead of replacing a portion of the concrete, they discovered they will need to replace the entire concrete pad. She assured Council they were still financially on track. They are able to shift some of the funds for the NC Downtown Revitalization grant they received to still make Phase I happen. She thanked Public Work Director Chalker and his team along with Engineer Nick Rightmyer for their hard work. She said they were hands on and doing things right the first time.

She announced Mill City Market located at 933 Roanoke Avenue opened October 7th. She said they were a retail shop, but they offer classes on how to use the products they sell.

She reported a ServePro franchise, if all goes well with permitting, will be located in the 1100 block of Roanoke Avenue.

She said Main Street Roanoke Rapids held a board visioning session in conjunction with the NC Department of Commerce Rural Planning & Main Street Division. She said the Director, Liz Parham and staff member Chuck Hassell were here to facilitate the session. She said in the coming months she will bring new mission and vision statements to review with Council.

She announced the first weekend in November, the Avenue shops will host their annual Holiday Open House. A lot of businesses will offer discounts and have refreshments. She encouraged the public to attend.

Main Street Director Caudle reported Roanoke Rapids was again an American Express Main Street Champion for Small Business Saturday which is the Saturday after Thanksgiving on November 25th. Many of the shops will be open and she

encouraged the Council and public to remember to shop local when purchasing holiday gifts this season.

Other Business

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to go into Closed Session to consult with the attorney as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) to discuss contract and personnel matters.

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Minute Book Pages 18887 - 18892 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.

Open Session

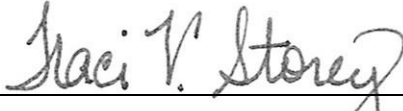
City Council returned to Open Session and Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order.

City Council consulted with the City Attorney in closed session to discuss contract and personnel matters.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to give City Manager Scherer a one-time \$5,000 bonus.

Attorney Chichester stated he had told the media that Council would not be taking any action after the Closed Session, so with this he suggested the Mayor or someone contact them to let them know of this action taken as a courtesy. City Manager Scherer said he would contact them.

There being no further business, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: 11/21/2017