



# **Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council**

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, January 16, 2018 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)  
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  
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director  
Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief  
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

**Absent:** Carol H. Cowen, Council Member  
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 adopt the business agenda for January 16, 2018 as presented.

## Special Recognitions

### Police Department Recognitions

Police Chief Hasty recognized Officers Joe DeSare and Matthew Hunsucker for their outstanding work performance during a recent traffic stop. He read a letter of commendation from their supervisor, Lieutenant Jeff Baggett. The letter stated Officer Hunsucker stopped to assist Officer DeSare on a traffic stop on December 17, 2017. Officer DeSare reported an odor of marijuana was coming from the vehicle. As Officer DeSare got the driver from the vehicle, Officer Hunsucker had one of the passengers step out of the vehicle. During this time, the right front passenger jumped out of the vehicle and Officer DeSare gave pursuit of the fleeing suspect. Officer Hunsucker called in the pursuit and stayed with the vehicle. While calling in the pursuit, a second offender took off running from the vehicle. Officer Hunsucker pursued the second fleeing suspect on foot through yards as the offender was throwing items in the officer's path as he fled in attempt to avoid apprehension. Officer Hunsucker was able to trip the fleeing suspect and force him to the ground. He kept the suspect covered and immediately reverted back to call in Officer DeSare's last known location. Meanwhile, Officer DeSare was in a violent fight for his life and was unable to call for assistance. The suspect began to fight with him and reach for items in his pocket. Unbeknownst to Officer DeSare at the time, the suspect had a gun on him. Officer DeSare was able to get the suspect under control and into custody without the use of deadly force. The teamwork exhibited by both officers resulted in the arrest of both offenders and no report of injuries to the officers nor the suspects. Their selfless devotion to each other and astute decision making was instrumental in this having a successful outcome. The actions of both officers reflects great upon them, the City of Roanoke Rapids, the Police Department and the citizens of our City. Chief Hasty thanked them for their dedication and for the job they do. Chief Hasty also reported the suspect Officer DeSare apprehended had a gun with an altered serial number and was out on bond on a murder charge.

Police Chief Hasty recognized Lieutenant Perry Parks, Officer Matthew Hunsucker and Officer Curtis Batchelor as Officers of the Quarter for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2017. He said they had just recently started recognizing Officer of the Quarter. Deputy Chief Andy Jackson came up with the idea about a year or so ago to recognize what these guys and girls do every day on the street. He stated there were a number of things they look at such as the number of arrests, drugs/guns taken off the street and overall doing a good job and reflecting good on the City and the Department.

Police Chief Hasty asked all those in attendance that had received Officer of the Quarter to come forward. He stated he was missing a few, but these officers were eligible for the Officer of the Year. He thanked each one of them for the job they did for him and the citizens of Roanoke Rapids. He announced and recognized Joe DeSare as the 2017 Officer of the Year.

Officer DeSare thanked everyone for the support. He thanked City Council and Chief Hasty for sending him to school and for allowing him to work for him.

### **Public Comment (Unscheduled)**

#### **Gary Danek**

Mr. Danek stated he had concerns about the safety and danger at the intersection of Becker Drive and Old Farm Road. He reported people constantly run the traffic light there. He said putting a camera up there would just make people mad that don't like to get caught. He asked for the City to consider a 3-5 second delay in the yellow light to the red light. It has been tried and proven in many cities and states he's lived in to greatly reduce accidents. He said the delay will give a chance for the intersection to clear even if someone runs the light. He said he was not sure how many times city staff has been called to that intersection and they cannot patrol every intersection in town, but that would be one of several that need their consideration. A 3-5 second delay would be a whole lot less expensive than a camera. It would be on the north/south direction on Old Farm Road. He suggested putting a patrol car there every once in a while to nab them. He stated it was a dangerous intersection.

### **Approval of Council Minutes**

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the December 5, 2017 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as written.

### **Old Business**

#### **Consideration of Renewal of Inter-Jurisdictional Agreement with Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District**

Planning & Development Director Lasky stated a few months ago they brought to City Council's attention the 5-year Inter-jurisdictional agreement between the City and the Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District. She said primarily this agreement achieves that both parties will work together to review new applications and changes of uses so that the RRSd can enforce their own regulations as required to maintain clean water and provide water service and sanitary sewer to the citizens of Roanoke Rapids and the surrounding area. She said during that meeting, there was a question about item number (7) and that item has been amended under 7(c) that would allow either party to terminate the agreement where before it just said the RRSd. This agreement has been reviewed by the City Attorney. She asked for City Council to consider a motion to direct the City Manager to execute the agreement.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to renew the Inter-Jurisdictional Agreement with the Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.

<b>New Business</b>
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**Consideration of Order Directing the Code Enforcement Officer to Demolish and Remove the Unsafe Building in Compliance with the Order for 106 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street**

Planning & Development Director Lasky presented Ordinance 2018.01 which was an order directing the Code Enforcement Officer to Demolish and Remove the Unsafe Building for 106 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street.

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported the property is located behind the City Hall parking lot and adjacent to the Kirkwood Adams Community Center. The structure is a single family dwelling that has been vacant for over ten (10) years. About five years ago they began to receive complaints of homeless people living there so the Planning Department requested Public Works board it up and it has remained that way. Several years ago when they first looked at the house, it was one large hole in the roof over the living room. At this time, the house continues to deteriorate and there are two significant holes in the roof in addition to other findings. They have determined the house is unfit for human habitation and it should be unlawful for anyone to occupy it; it needs to be demolished and removed. She added they feel there is imminent danger and that it is going to collapse into itself, onto 11<sup>th</sup> Street, the alley or a combination of both.

She said when they started this process some time ago, there was a deceased owner. Since they have taken the item back up after reviewing conditions, the parties of interest that could respond in place of the owner has indicated to Code Enforcement staff that they have no interest in the property. They are not willing to take over and resolve the outstanding issues and dilapidated conditions.

Planning & Development Director Lasky reviewed the timeline which goes through the formal process. The parties of interest have been notified properly, full research has been conducted with the Halifax County Register of Deeds and advertisement of the hearing and of this meeting has been published in the *Daily Herald*. She said they feel they have done a comprehensive outreach to try to reach any person related to the owner that could resolve some of the issues. She said on November 16, 2017, a hearing was held and a Findings of Fact was developed. The current tax value of the dwelling is \$7,500 with the repairs estimated at \$33,500. When the costs of repair substantially exceeds the value of the home, it's in the best interest that it be demolished and removed.

She said the Findings of Fact were sent to the parties of interest by certified mail and we did receive their return receipts that they did receive it. She added the notice of this hearing has been advertised properly. She said the property owner has nearly \$4,000 for lot cutting fees that remain outstanding and there are several years of property taxes that have not been paid.

Planning & Development Director Lasky stated following their examination and inspections of the dwelling, they declare it is in a dilapidated condition and recommend the City Council consider adoption of Ordinance 2018.01 which would direct Code Enforcement to demolish and remove the dwelling that is unfit for human habitation at 106. E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee clarified that the dwelling was valued at \$7,500 and there was close to \$4,000 owed for lot cutting and asked for the amount of taxes owed. Planning & Development Director Lasky asked Code Enforcement Officer Donald Tart for the amount. Mr. Tart said \$980 was owed for the years 2012 – 2017.

Councilman Smith asked if the lot would be big enough to build another single family dwelling. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied it was possible for a small home. Councilman Smith asked for the amount to demolish the dwelling. She replied they had not solicited any formal bids, but they have received some informal quotes from \$10,000 - \$13,000. She added there is presence of asbestos in the home. She said the costs are driven by the need for fill material to be placed as a result of the foundation walls to stabilize and tree removal.

Councilman Smith asked if there was any asbestos. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied they had the property surveyed and asbestos was found in the kitchen and bathroom flooring. He asked for the cost of disposal for that. She said it depends on where it is taken and it has to follow certain procedures. She stated the structure itself is unsafe to a point they would not walk inside because the floor is collapsing.

Councilman Smith asked Planning & Development Director Lasky if they planned to put a lien against the property. She replied yes. He asked if the tax amount included both Halifax County and Roanoke Rapids City taxes. Code Enforcement Officer Tart said it was only city taxes.

Planning & Development Director Lasky said generally what happens with the high amount of debt accumulation on it, the City can request Halifax County to do a tax foreclosure on the property based on the debt to value ratio.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the demolition costs quoted included the asbestos removal. Planning & Development Director Lasky said the asbestos inspection has already been completed and funded by the department. She added the department has the funds available to accomplish the demolition of the structure.

Councilman Smith asked if the City takes a lien on the property and in order for us to sell the property, does the City have to pay County taxes.

Attorney Chichester replied there was a procedure that generally would be followed since they have an agreement with Halifax County to collect taxes for the City. The City could request the County do a tax foreclosure on the property. When that happens they will notify him as the City Attorney and he would also file a claim that joins in that tax foreclosure that includes the costs for demolition, grass cutting expenses and any other expenses. He said the County would foreclose for the City and County taxes and put the property up for sale. He said the City's lien would be part of the tax lien itself. If someone bought the property, more than likely the property would not sell for enough to pay off the taxes and expenses because it would be a vacant lot at that point. It would then be dealt with on a pro rata basis.

Councilman Smith asked if the City would be able to take possession of the lot and sell it once it goes through the procedure. Attorney Chichester replied no, just because the City has it demolished and puts a lien against it does not give the City possession of the property. The property would have to be put up for sale on a tax foreclosure and if someone put in a bid, then they would become the owner of the property.

Councilman Smith asked if the City could execute on the lien or judgment that we have against them. Attorney Chichester said they can and that was the way the property gets sold pursuant to that judgment. He added there was also an ordinance in Roanoke Rapids that states whoever the owner(s) was and they own any other property, the City can put a lien against that as well to satisfy the City's lien. He said the way you execute on a judgment was the judgment would be based on the liens on the property so the property would be sold to the highest bidder and that money would be used to satisfy the lien to the extent it can.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he guessed Councilman Smith was looking at it like they all look at it and that is having some means of the City getting some of the monies back for demolition. He said there are other properties the City may have out there that they have demolished and would love to get some dollars back. He said if there was some way whether it was changing some rules or laws so they can do that, they would like him to work with whomever such as a legislative group so they could do that. It is a lot of dollars already the City has out there and he had another house he planned to ask to have placed on the list that burned.

Planning & Development Director stated this house was a priority due to the unsafe conditions including the collapsing, dilapidated conditions of it, but it was also in an area with a lot of activity. The structure is between the Kirkwood Adams Community Center and 10<sup>th</sup> Street and also behind City Hall where there is a lot of cars. Their concern was people trying to enter the structure to live there or take shelter there. She said the threat of loss of life exceeds the cost of demolition.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt the following Ordinance No. 2018.01 directing the Code Enforcement Officer to demolish and remove the dwelling located at 106 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC with a lien to be placed against the real property upon which the costs of removal are incurred:

**ORDINANCE 2018.01**

ORDINANCE DIRECTING THE CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER TO DEMOLISH AND REMOVE PROPERTY AS UNFIT FOR HUMAN HABITATION AND DIRECTING THAT A NOTICE BE PLACED THEREON THAT THE SAME MAY NOT BE OCCUPIED:

**106 E.11<sup>th</sup> Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC      Halifax County PIN: 0907462**

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids finds that the dwelling described herein is dilapidated and unfit for human habitation under the provisions of the Housing Code, and that all of the procedures of the Code of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, have been complied with; and

WHEREAS, this dwelling should be removed or demolished, as directed by the Code Enforcement Official, and should be placarded by placing thereon a notice prohibiting the use for human habitation, in that the costs of repairs needed to bring it into compliance with the minimum housing code exceeds **50%** of the current value of the dwelling; and

WHEREAS, the owner of this dwelling has been given a reasonable opportunity to bring the dwelling up to the standards of the Housing Code pursuant to an Order issued by the Code Enforcement Official and the owner has failed to comply with the lawful Order of the Code Enforcement Official to repair or demolish the property within the time therein described; and

WHEREAS, G. S. 160A-443 (5) and Chapter 152 of the Code of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, empowers the City of Roanoke Rapids to have its Code Enforcement Official to remove or demolish a dwelling when an Order of the Code Enforcement Official has not been complied with;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids that:

Section 1. The Code Enforcement Official is hereby authorized and directed to place a placard containing the legend:

“This building is unfit for human habitation; the use or occupation of this building for human habitation is prohibited and unlawful.”

on the building located at **106 E.11<sup>th</sup> Street**, in the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

Section 2. The Code Enforcement Official is hereby authorized and directed to vacate the dwelling of all occupants and to remove or demolish the dwelling, said dwelling being located at **106 E.11<sup>th</sup> Street** in the City of Roanoke Rapids North Carolina, and owned by **William C. Jordan**. In accordance with the Order of the Code Enforcement Official issued pursuant to the Minimum Housing Ordinance contained in Chapter 152 of the Code of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

Section 3. (a) The cost of removal or demolition shall constitute a lien against the real property upon which the cost was incurred. The lien shall be filed in the office of the City Tax Collector, and shall have the same priority and be collected in the same manner as the lien for special assessments in Article 10 of G. S. Chapter 160A.

(b) Upon completion of the required removal or demolition, the Building Inspector shall sell the materials of the dwelling and credit the proceeds against the cost of removal or demolition. The Code Enforcement Official shall certify the remaining balance to the Tax Collector. If a surplus remains after sale of the materials and satisfaction of the cost of removal or demolition, the Code Enforcement Official shall deposit the surplus in the Superior Court where it shall be secured and disbursed in the manner provided by G. S. 160A-443 (6).

Section 4. It shall be unlawful for any person to remove or cause to be removed the placard from any building to which it is affixed. It shall likewise be unlawful for any person to occupy or to permit the occupancy of any building therein declared to be unfit for human habitation.

Section 5. If the owner of the property should either demolish the dwelling at his own expense, or if, in the opinion of the code enforcement officer, the owner has rehabilitated the dwelling to the extent that it meets or exceeds the requirements of the minimum housing code prior to the time scheduled for demolition under this ordinance, then the City Manager is authorized to rescind this demolition order without further action by the City Council.

Section 6. This Ordinance shall become effective **immediately** after its adoption.

City of Roanoke Rapids

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Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

### City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer reported the new year brings us some of the usual challenges and some bright opportunities. We are again facing a winter storm tomorrow that will test our departments to respond effectively to provide for our citizens' safety, which I know they will do with pride. The national economy continues to do well, with the stock market nearing the 26,000-point mark. However, we still face tight budget constraints in the near future in trying to manage local government services as efficiently as we can.

The flu bug going around has hit some departments harder than others, but we continue to maintain operations as best we can without lowering our standards.

Councilman Bobbitt and I are City representatives for the local and regional transportation matters in the Peanut Belt Regional Planning Office (RPO). The Mid East Commission previously provided technical guidance to the RPO on transportation matters. However, their contract was not renewed, so Halifax County was allowed to hire someone to provide this technical guidance for the RPO. They have now hired this person and he will maintain an office at the Visitors Center.

Due to the approaching winter storm, the City Council retreat has been cancelled for this Thursday. We are looking at a new date of January 29<sup>th</sup>. He asked Council to let the City Clerk know if that is alright and we will move forward with rescheduling it.

He announced due to the winter storm, City Offices and Facilities will be closed tomorrow (Wednesday) and on a 2-hour delay opening on Thursday morning.

The department heads will cover their specific issues in their reports tonight.

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

Finance Director Etheridge presented the December 2017 Financial Report. She reported during the month of December, the Finance Department issued 43 purchase orders, 387 payroll checks, 503 direct deposit vouchers and 247 accounts payable checks.

She called Council's attention to the operating statement which showed a \$(505,883.55) year-to-date loss. She stated it was important to note the loss this same time last year was \$(1,500,000.00). She said the difference was the prior year had a higher deficit due to the July 1<sup>st</sup> lump sum Theatre payment. Therefore, we are starting to see some relief there although it will take quite some time.

She reported for the month of December the General Fund year-to-date receipts totaled \$7,490,818.54. The percentage of actual monies collected of adopted budgeted figures stands at 47.8%. She said the General Fund year-to-date expenditures totaled \$7,996,702.09. The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures stands at 51.1%.

She said after the month of December, 50.04% of the budget has been completed. As a result, the year-to-date expenditures exceeded revenues by \$(505,883.55).

Finance Director Etheridge reported the collection of revenues and cash flow during the month of December: Quarterly Utility Franchise Tax payment, the second and final allocation of the year of the Powell Bill Funding, Ad Valorem & Solid Waste Taxes, Sales & Use Taxes for the service month of October and Motor Vehicle Tax Collections for the month.

She stated the Local Government Commission has completed their review of the FY 2016-2017 Financial Statements. Mr. Gregory T. Redman, CPA, will present the City's financial audit at the February 6, 2018, Regular Council meeting.

### **Departmental Reports**

### **Human Resources**

Human Resources Manager Kearney reported at the present time, the City only has two positions open: PT Library Assistant and PT Aqua Zumba Instructor. She said the Department accepted nine (9) applications during the month of December and hired one (1) new employee, Daniel Bybee who is a part-time police officer.

She reported in December they held the BARC Employee Christmas luncheon and service awards. She said on behalf of the employees, she wanted to thank Council for all they do for the employees during the year. They were very appreciative of the Christmas bonus, Thanksgiving gift cards and for Council attending the luncheon and helping with the door prizes.

### **Police**

Police Chief Hasty presented two reports: one for the month of December and a yearly report. He noted several stats for 2017: answered 25,373 calls, patrol served 2,235 papers, investigated 1,029 motor vehicle collisions, conducted 104 community projects, animal control answered 1,503 calls (only one man answered all those calls), CID obtained 444 warrants, the City & County Task Force arrested 265 individuals and seized approximately 40,000 dosage units of heroine.

### **Planning & Development**

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported during the month of December the department reviewed a set of site plans for a reconstruction of the Sonic Restaurant at 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Park Avenue. The intent is to redesign and enlarge the current offerings for Sonic. They also reviewed plans for the new Mid-Atlantic Eye Care Center which is in the City's planning and zoning jurisdiction but outside of the City Limits. They received the final piece to approve their site development plans on Hwy. 125. They also reviewed the following business use applications: a new orthodontist office on Professional Drive (completed) and Scotts Garage (pending) located on the 1300 block of Roanoke Avenue.

She said the Building Inspections Department, especially Code Enforcement Supervisor Brian Dudadaway was at Manning School every day for many hours and she wanted to thank him for his tireless efforts and going above and beyond to ensure the school could be completed to allow students to come back the first week of January.

Planning & Development Director Lasky stated the Building Inspections Department is also reviewing the Sonic plans. Permits have been issued for the

foundation and shell building for the new DrugCo Express and an interior remodel at Walmart which is valued over \$1 million that they are doing in phases.

She updated Council on the house located on Love Street. She said since that was a fire damage related structure, there is a 135 day waiting period between the time the City notice is given to the owner and the time to make the repairs. At this time, the deadline to make the repairs is January 25<sup>th</sup> and after that date if the repairs have not been made, then the City can move forward with the formal process which will eventually lead to a demolition order. She said at this point in time the department has not received any correspondence from the owner or representative. No improvements have been made, but the City cannot do anything until after January 25<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated the reason for him bringing it up was that it appears to be unsafe. He said he understands the City has to wait for whatever the time is, but he did not know if the property could be secured or to put something up to keep kids from going in; maybe put some yellow tape up. He stated it is unrepairable.

Planning & Development Director Lasky said since it is a duplex structure, when the fire damage occurred and the meters were pulled off the house, inspections staff did go inside the house before releasing power to the occupied side of the duplex. It was communicated to the tenants that this was considered one structure and if the owner did not comply with the order to repair or remove then it would include the entire home, not just half of it. Some of the constraints they face right now are the assumptions that insurance companies have to go in and do investigations of damage and assess repairs.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he was also speaking about the second fire on Church Street. Planning & Development Director Lasky said there were two fires the same night which occurred in December and they would undergo that same 135 day waiting period. She said the owner can make repairs during that time, but they cannot go to that next level; this is based on codes by the State.

Planning & Development Director Lasky updated Council on the Forest Hills shopping center. Since the turn of the year, they have had several meetings and correspondence between the Ice House machine owner, the property owner and plumbing contractor. Tonight at the Halifax County Commissioners meeting, they will consider an easement agreement to allow the plumber to pipe a sewer line underneath a small portion of the County's property. The wastewater instead of draining across the parking lot, will be piped underground to the sanitary sewer

system. She stated they do see this moving forward and promises a resolution in the near future.

### **Parks & Recreation**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon was absent. No report was given.

### **Public Works**

Public Works Director Chalker presented the December report. He reported during the month the Cemetery performed fourteen (14) openings and closings and sold four (4) lots. Total collected for the month was \$10,550.00 and total fiscal year-to-date was \$61,258.00.

He said leaf season continues, although it has been hit or miss recently with the weather they have been facing. He stated the department did not pick up leaves today and will not tomorrow because those personnel were busy applying salt brine. They have to pick and choose what they do because of staffing levels.

Public Works Director Chalker said he wanted to talk about snow. He said they started their brine plant up this morning at 7 a.m. As he speaks, they continue to put out brine so before they finish tonight all 93 miles of city streets will be covered with salt brine. This helps the department with battling the snow and keeping it from adhering to the asphalt. They purchase their salt from the Morton Salt Company; it's \$10,000 for a typical order. He said they have ordered twice this year. A \$10,000 order was two (2) tractor trailer dump trucks. He said that was about what they used for the last storm. He said they have made some improvements on how they make the salt brine. Most recently, they made 16% more salt brine with 19% less salt. At \$10,000 per order those numbers mean a lot more to them than they ever have. They track it pretty hard and continue to make improvements and refinements to their plant.

He announced that the National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning for us. Officially, the forecast for snow for this event is 3-4 inches, but we have been told we could see up to 4-7 inches or more. These totals started out at 1-2 inches this morning and have increased throughout the day. He said it seems that we are in a difficult area to get a very accurate forecast for the snows so they plan for the worst and hope for the best.

### **Fire**

Fire Chief Coggins reported the Fire Department responded to 192 calls of service during the month of December 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 496 man-hours of training covering various topics. He stated the Inspection Division conducted 22 fire inspections and 3 plan reviews for proposed new businesses within the district.

Fire Chief Coggins announced the department was fully staffed now. He said the Fire Department hosted a visit from the NC Fire Insurance Commissioner, Mike Causey a couple of weeks ago. Next week they will have a fire department inspection performed by the NC Department of Insurance; they are ready for that. He reported this past month, they had numerous night drills in which they invited several departments including Weldon Fire Department, Davie Volunteer Fire Department, Rhesville Volunteer Fire Department as well as Roanoke Valley Rescue Squad. They had a great turn out for those training sessions.

He said he had a meeting today with the Roanoke Rapids Graded School Representatives and Rightmyer Construction about using Manning School for training for the next month. They are going to let the department use the school they are tearing down for training. He said also had a meeting today about the upcoming snow storm and talked about staffing priorities.

City Manager Scherer asked Chief Coggins if the NC Department of Insurance inspection would have an impact on people's insurance rates. Chief Coggins replied it would not, it is called a 9s inspection and it was just an inspection to prove they are a fire department. He said when they come in to do an overall inspection to change the rating, they do that with a fine-tooth comb. He reported it has been about five years so it's about time for them to come in again. If they do, the fire department will more than likely maintain the same rating.

### **Main Street**

Main Street Director Caudle reported she completed and turned in the NC Main Street Annual Assessment the beginning of this month. She stated they do this every year and it evaluates all aspects of the local Main Street program. It was a required report that the NC Department of Commerce uses to assess the following: which programs need additional organizational assistance, determines which programs have established best practices that other communities in the state can benefit from and determines which communities were eligible for National Main Street Accreditation. She said it usually takes 4-8 weeks to hear back from them so hopefully in another month or two she will be able to report back that they received National Accreditation again.

Main Street Director Caudle said they did form a very small Streetscape Committee. She stated they did this because NCDOT anticipates paving Roanoke Avenue from the junction to Kapstone in the next 12-24 months. It will be a pretty big undertaking for them and a great opportunity for us to execute some of the streetscape designs Council approved this past summer. The priorities of this committee, including the biggest one, is to identify and research funding opportunities so we can make this happen when NCDOT is here. Prioritize what pieces of the design should be their top priority. Obviously, NCDOT only goes up to the curb and gutter and the rest is us, so the things we approved including the enhanced crosswalks and anything physically on the street will be priority number one for us. She announced the next committee meeting is scheduled for this Thursday.

She reported the Federal Historic Tax Credits were included in the final version of the Tax Reform Bill which was passed with the full 20% on December 22, 2017. She said it was the same 20% federal tax credit for income producing companies which means the State level credits stay intact as well. Here in a Tier 1 county we get 15% credit plus 5% bonus for a combined total of 40% which is what we had before. The only major change to the program is the 20% credit has to be taken over a five year period where the previous program it could be taken in year one on income taxes or spread it out over the course of a few years. Now they are mandating that it be taken in five equal parts.

Main Street Director Caudle stated there are projects that can qualify under the old program if they meet two requirements. They must be the owner of the property on record on or before December 31, 2017 and any approved tax credit work must begin within 120 days of when the tax reform bill was passed (12/22/17). Otherwise, everything that comes about will operate under the new program.

Councilman Smith asked how many property owners in Roanoke Rapids has applied for the Historical Tax. Main Street Director Caudle replied since she had been here, zero commercial properties. She said there has been a handful of residential owners that have taken the 15% tax credit, but she did not know of any commercial properties within the city limits that have used it. She reported out of the approximate 1,200 properties located in the Historic District, the majority are residential properties.

Councilman Smith asked if renters could use the tax credits. She said residential properties can use the 15% tax credit and we have had many of those but as for commercial properties (income producing properties), no one has used that here in

the last three years. She noted they have inquired and we have even had people come in from the State, but they have elected not to restore to historic keeping. He asked how many residential properties have received tax credits. She replied she did know an exact number, but she would get him that total.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other Business</b></p>
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Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to go into Closed Session to consult with the attorney as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3).

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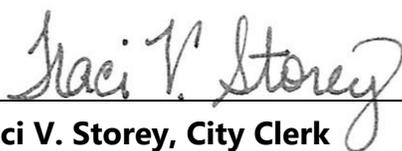
*Minute Book Pages 18942 - 18946 contain Minutes and General Account of a Closed Session which have been sealed until such time as public inspection of those minutes would not frustrate the purpose of the Closed Session.*

**Open Session**

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

City Council consulted with the City Attorney in closed session. No action was taken.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

  
Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

**Approved by Council Action on: 2/6/2018**