



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, April 3, 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)
Carol H. Cowen)
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
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 and stated he believed there was one item on the agenda that needed to be omitted. He said it was Item No. 6 b) Consideration of NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Basic Facts and Assurances.

There being no conflicts, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for April 3, 2018 omitting Item No. 6 b) Consideration of NC PARTF Basic Facts and Assurances.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Tamera Etheridge

Ms. Etheridge stated before she introduced herself, she would like to take a moment of silence for Father of heaven and earth. She said she was a resident of Roanoke Rapids, her parents were born and raised here. She said when her father retired from the Air Force, they came to live here in 1968. She has worked for the City of Dallas, Texas and the City of Roanoke Rapids. She came tonight because she has a concern. In the *News & Observer* on March 27, 2018, the ten most dangerous cities in North Carolina were listed; we were one of them. She stated that was a concern for her and thinks it should be for all of us. When she worked for the City of Dallas, Texas, they had an internal affairs that handled things that went on with the city. The City of Roanoke Rapids does not have that and most of that probably lies on Gilbert Chichester. She said she is thankful for Roanoke Rapids because it is the city God chose to reach her, break her and save her soul. She is praying for our town to grow economically, politically, relationally and most of all, spiritually. She stated there were a lot of lost souls here; I think we realize that when we ride around the city. She said there may be some lost souls in this room tonight. And if there is, she asks God almighty to prick any heart in here and help save their soul. She is reminded of the bible teaching us about Moses and Pharaoh; Moses continued to go to Pharaoh over and over. Pharaoh continued to harden his heart and brought destruction by not listening. She was also reminded of Jonah. God asked Jonah to preach to his city and he did and Jonah got angry and started not to care for the souls in his city. She did not want to do that; she did not want to be angry. She cares about souls. And after this past weekend, we should all have Jesus on the forefront of our heart and mind. She said she would continue to pray. To the City Council, City Manager, City Attorney and all the City leaders, may the Lord bless and keep you, may he make his face shine upon you now and forever. In the blessing of God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit be amongst and remain with you always.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the March 15, 2018 Special Meeting (Council Retreat) and the March 20, 2018 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as submitted.

New Business

Consideration of Contract with Gregory T. Redman, CPA to Conduct Annual Audit for Fiscal Year End June 30, 2018

Finance Director Etheridge presented City Council the upcoming contract with Gregory T. Redman, CPA and stated in accordance with NCGS 159-34(a), City Council must approve a contract for the audit of the City's financial statements. She requested City Council consider a motion to approve the letter of engagement and contract with Gregory T. Redman, CPA to conduct the audit of the City's financial statements for 2018 for the sum of \$19,900, and to authorize the Mayor to execute the engagement letter and contract.

Councilman Smith asked if the contract amount was the same as last year. Finance Director Etheridge replied yes it was the same amount, no increases.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Cowen, seconded by Councilman Smith to approve the letter of engagement and contract with Gregory T. Redman to conduct the audit of the City's financial statements for 2018 in the amount of \$19,900 and to authorize the Mayor to execute the contract.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer stated the City is partnering with the County to apply for a grant from the UNC School of Government for assistance with opioid addiction problems. If approved, the grant is a two-year program to support our efforts in combating this problem. It would include technical support from the school faculty, help county teams set goals and plans for implementation and host regional forums for education and collaborations with peer community teams. The School will also provide each team \$20,000 to assist with the costs of hiring a project manager and implementation efforts. They will offer a maximum of 10 grants across the state.

He said we are participating in a program sponsored by the Golden LEAF Foundation called the Community Based Grants Initiative (CGBI). This is for the 17 counties in the Northeast Prosperity Zone. The initiative will build cross-county partnerships to identify regional assets and needs and then develop innovative projects to promote economic growth. Through a competitive application process, Golden LEAF's CGBI will focus on projects that address agriculture, education, workforce development, economic development, public

infrastructure, and health care. The competitive application process is designed to identify projects that are ready for implementation at the award date and have the potential to have significant local economic impact. The Rural Center will provide coaching and technical assistance to project teams over the next six months with an expectation that Halifax and Northampton Counties will work together with initial project ideas. The initial meeting was held last week and the next one will be tomorrow.

City Manager Scherer reported the City Attorney and Police Chief, along with state enforcement officials, met today with the owners of The Carolina Inn. All parties signed an agreement that the owners must improve and maintain the physical property, improve security procedures and operate the facility as a motel instead of a boarding house. We feel this will help improve the living conditions there and drastically reduce the number of incidents the police department respond to there.

He stated the Fire Department continues to conduct hydrant testing around the City, with about 100 remaining. No major problems have been encountered with them. They have filed the request with the EPA to burn the house in front of the old Manning School on Park Avenue for training purposes and are awaiting their response.

He announced the Parks and Recreation Department is holding a public comment event on the 158 Master Plan project this Thursday at Chaloner Recreation Center from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. All area residents are invited to come anytime during these hours to provide comments on anything about the proposed facilities or anything else they like or dislike about the project.

He said the Roanoke Valley SCLC is sponsoring a march for non-violence this Saturday beginning at the Kirkwood Adams Community Center at noon, move down Roanoke Avenue and end at Centennial Park. The Police Department will provide safety escorts for the route and the Parks and Recreation Department will provide logistical support for the speakers and attendees.

He announced the BARC Committee is holding a fish fry fundraiser next Friday, the 13th at the old ProBuild site. They are trying to raise money for their scholarship fund for employees' children.

City Manager Scherer said the Planning and Development Department continues to receive and review plans for new or remodeling development. They held a hearing on the burned property at 103 Love Street and the owner was advised of

what is needed to bring the property into code compliance. He has hired a contractor and has 90 days to complete the work. A hearing on the dilapidated property at 1000 Cedar Street will be held tomorrow at 10:30 a.m.

He reported the Public Works Department has been recently dealing with illegal dumping of housing material. They continue to make minor repairs on potholes and have been monitoring the work of a Sanitary District contractor making road repairs on Pinecrest and Oakwood Streets. They have made the contractor fix some repairs that were not to standard. Their mechanics have been busy making repairs to our refuse trucks, knuckle boom vehicles and other rolling stock.

He said Police and Fire personnel are taking part in the SERVPRO Emergency Management Forum next Tuesday at Calvary Baptist Church, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

He said Ms. Caudle, along with other staff, continues to work on the Wayfinding Signage and Avenue Streetscape projects. NCDOT has let the contract for the repaving of Roanoke Avenue, but no firm timeframe has been scheduled for the project. It is to be completed by the fall of 2019.

Mayor Doughtie asked if the City still had a junk/inoperable automobile ordinance. City Manager Scherer replied yes we do and we just addressed one vehicle last week. He stated if the City determines that it meets the standard of our ordinance, it allows seven (7) days for someone to do something with it. Mayor Doughtie asked if individuals contact him about it, who should he direct their complaint to. City Manager Scherer replied Planning & Development Director Lasky; it was a code enforcement issue.

Councilman Smith stated contractors cutting grass in the city limits are blowing the clippings into the city streets instead of back onto the lot and asked isn't there an ordinance against doing that. City Manager Scherer replied yes, but we have to catch them when they do to be able to enforce it. He said he will get with City personnel to see if we can do a better job with that. Councilman Smith asked if they see this occur, who do they call. City Manager Scherer replied to please call him and he will reach out to the appropriate departments.

Other Business

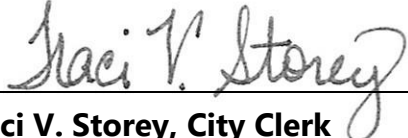
Mayor Doughtie stated he wanted to make comments to the City Council and any other members of the community in attendance.

He said Friday a week ago, he went to Halifax to meet with the Board of Elections Director in reference to the absence of an early voting site in Roanoke Rapids. He stated they had a very good meeting; at that time there were only two members on the County Board of Elections. Since that time, the Governor appointed four (4) new members to the County Board of Elections. He said yesterday there was a meeting at 12:00 p.m. where three of the members showed up, one did not. Those board members were seated and they elected a chairperson. Their first order of business was the absence of an early voting site in Roanoke Rapids. It seemed like it was not going to generate very much discussion before they were ready to vote and move that we not have one. It was his sole purpose to go down there to represent the people that live in this area, although he knows they are elected for Roanoke Rapids. He thinks the City and the County have always worked together knowing that we need each other. He said he felt like he and all of them were being somewhat let down yesterday. It seems like they were not interested. In fact, they were not going to be able to speak (Mayor and Councilman Smith) and he thought he may be called out of order because he raised his hand to ask if he would be able to speak. He said he was told by the Chairman that he could if he had information to share on the subject they were discussing. He proceeded to tell them he was there for the citizens of Roanoke Rapids and we were very much concerned because we share in the city limits about 25-28% of the population in the county. He said we have all lost population, but it seems that the county has actually lost more; you see a lot of vacant houses. He said we have a lot of older people in town because we have several senior facilities. If they do drive, some do not like to drive in certain places. It was their purpose to have some type of centrally located early voting center. Even the people from Hollister and Littleton, this would have been their closest place to come.

He had talked with the City Manager and proposed the Lloyd Andrews building as a site and we were told it was unsafe and there were chaotic situations that happened at this building. That concerned him because he did not feel that was an accurate description of how they have voting at this place in the past. We also offered the library, it was also turned down so actually we asked them to tell us a site that would be suitable and he believed the City Manager could get that site and make it deemed safe. He said their words fell on deaf ears and then he began thinking about being safe and he believed he read in the media that there had been two bomb threats at HCC in recent weeks. He said there were other issues at HCC that may be in violation of some policies. He stated he was dissatisfied with the response they got from the Halifax County Board of Elections. He reemphasized as Mr. Avent used to say, "Working Together Works" and he thinks County Commissioners, City Council, Sheriff Department, Police Department,

Public Works, Recreation and people with the County, have to have some interwoven means of operating together. He said he felt they just got shut out completely and that bothers him. It makes it not quite equitable for the citizens in Roanoke Rapids and as the elected official he felt like he had an obligation to go speak that and he was sorry he disappointed them and that they were not able to get that accomplished, so far.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: April 17, 2018