



# 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 17, 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  
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director  
Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief  
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

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

## Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie asked Council members if there were any changes or any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening.

A motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt to adopt the business agenda for April 17, 2018 as presented.

## Special Recognition

### Police Department

Chief Hasty recognized and presented Officer Curtis Batchelor a Certificate of Merit

for going above and beyond the call of duty for his actions on February 9, 2018. A victim of a motor vehicle B&E was very appreciative of Officer Batchelor. The window was broken out on the passenger side and he contacted the victim's daughter and went back a few of days later to put plastic over the window when it was raining. Chief Hasty stated Officer Batchelor put forth extra effort in carrying out his duties above and beyond the call of duty with a positive and professional attitude.

Chief Hasty recognized Sgt. Mike Moseley, Master Officer Jamie Hardy, Officer Alex Green (not present), Officer Scott Blythe (not present), Officer Cody Fortier, Officer Clarice Hagbourne, Captain Bobby Martin, Investigator Obert Wiltsie, Investigator Jeff Davis and Narcotics Agent Chris Babb. He stated he received an email from SBI Special Agent in Charge Michael Denning Sr. expressing his appreciation for the assistance provided by the Roanoke Rapids Police Department regarding a homicide, kidnapping, robbery and arson investigation out of Warren County, NC which led to the apprehension of suspect Lester Kearney on March 14, 2018. The email stated the collaborative efforts of all greatly benefited the investigation. Chief Hasty read an email from Captain Martin recommending Master Officer Jamie Hardy for a letter of commendation for taking the initiative to gather important information and used his vast knowledge of sources to help bring the wanted suspect into custody without anyone getting hurt. He also commended the members of A-Squad along with Detective Davis and Agent Babb for the quick response and ability to set up a perimeter to ensnare Lester Kearney. Chief Hasty stated there was an old saying "Working Together Works" that goes along with the SBI, but also goes along when you communicate and listen to each other's ideas instead of just going one way. Cooperation goes both ways; talking and working things out and getting a plan together with the different agencies.

Chief Hasty read a letter from Captain Bryant recommending the following to receive a Life Saving Award for their response and actions taken on April 3, 2018 for a victim who was in cardiac arrest: Sgt. Moseley, Officer Green (not present), Fireman Austin Jarret, Fireman Ben Sloan, Fireman Ramah Long, Lt. Bryan Hollowell, Halifax County EMS paramedics Nate Zabel and Jordan Williams. Chief Hasty and Chief Coggins recognized and presented each with a Life Saving Award certificate.

Chief Hasty recognized Sgt. Moseley and Officer Matt Hunsucker as the Officers of the Quarter for the first quarter 2018.

## **Public Comment (Unscheduled)**

### **Gorham Spencer**

Ms. Spencer stated she had a traffic concern. Traveling up E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street going towards Roanoke Avenue on the corner of Washington and Hamilton, a lot of times cars are parked on both sides of the street. She said there is a stop sign, but by the time you inch out your car is all the way in the street that someone could hit your car. She asked if the City could have no parking 30 feet from the corner to help see oncoming vehicles better.

### **Gerald McDaniel**

Mr. McDaniel stated one morning several years ago he heard no one had filed for City Council in District 2 and he thought that was insane. He said what was actually insane was that he filed. He found out he was opposing a person that he had no problem with their qualifications nor did he have anything bad to say about them. He said he took the shellacking that he so deserved. He meant no disrespect to the Council. However, what he is doing now does not compare. After a bazaar meeting with the incumbent in which he was invited to “bring it on.” With such a challenging invitation he decided to choose the option of political nemesis more so than actual candidate; nothing more, nothing less. He promised not to bore them with this anymore.

## **Approval of Council Minutes**

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to approve the April 3, 2018 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as written.

## **Appointments/Reappointments**

### **Canal Museum Advisory Committee**

City Clerk Storey advised the terms for Lori Medlin as the Tourism Authority Representative and Mike Green as the Canal Commission Representative on the Canal Museum Advisory Committee will expire on April 30, 2018.

She stated both have served the maximum two (2) consecutive terms allowed by the City policy. Council has the authority to waive this section of the policy and has done so in the past.

She reported a ballot vote is not required as these reappointments are not for At-Large members. She asked Council to consider a motion to waive the City policy and reappoint both Ms. Medlin and Mr. Green to the Canal Museum Advisory Committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there were any other candidates trying to get on the committee. Ms. Storey replied no and they are the representatives for those agencies.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to waive the City policy and reappoint Ms. Lori Medlin and Mr. Mike Green to the Canal Museum Advisory Committee.

### **Roanoke Rapids Area Planning Board/Board of Adjustment**

City Clerk Storey advised the term for Gregory Browning on the Roanoke Rapids Area Planning Board/Board of Adjustment will expire on June 1, 2018.

She stated he has served the maximum two (2) consecutive terms allowed by the City policy. Again, Council has the authority to waive this section of the policy and has done so in the past.

She reported a ballot vote is not required because it is a recommendation to the Halifax County Board of Commissioners where they vote to approve the reappointment. She asked Council to consider a motion to waive the City policy and recommend Mr. Browning's reappointment.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if anyone else was seeking that seat on the committee. Ms. Storey replied no, currently she has other openings for ETJ members on the board that will hopefully be filled later. She added Mr. Browning was also the Chairperson on the board.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to waive the City policy and recommend to the Halifax County Board of Commissioners the reappointment of Mr. Gregory Browning to the Roanoke Rapids Area Planning Board/Board of Adjustment.

Councilman Smith requested the City Clerk give Council a 30-day notice on when these appointments are to come up so they can look to see if anyone else may be interested. Ms. Storey replied she could and had included in their packet a list of upcoming appointments for the rest of the year for their review. She added that

sometimes it is difficult to get back the applications in a timely manner, but she would do her best to give Council 30-day's notice on appointments and reappointments.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he realizes the City does advertising for the committees in some degree and suggested advertising the City is seeking people to serve on the committees on the City's website. Ms. Storey said it was on the City's website but was at the bottom of the main page; we could put it at the top. She said it is also advertised on the City Page that runs every other week. She stated she asked Planning & Development Director Lasky to ask other fellow Planning Board members at their meeting on Thursday if they knew anyone wishing to serve because there has been several openings on this committee for some time. Mayor Doughtie added the best thing to do is to be thinking of someone all along and talk to them rather than waiting until two weeks before they need to be filled.

## **New Business**

### **Consideration of Resolution Adopting a City-Authorized Wayfinding Signage System**

Main Street Director Caudle presented Council with Resolution No. 2018.03 which is a Resolution Adopting a City-Authorized Wayfinding Signage System and its funding. She updated Council of where they were in the wayfinding signage process since the last meeting. She said this project was a partnership between the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the City of Roanoke Rapids. She reported that Public Works Director Chalker, Planning & Development Director Lasky and she have been working in conjunction with Ms. Medlin to come up with a final set of designs and move forward with NCDOT approval and installation of signs throughout the city.

She gave a PowerPoint presentation showing existing signage and the proposed signage system. The proposed signage system will improve navigation, increase awareness of key public locations, sites and attractions and gives an overall comprehensive branding. They are planning phased implementation of the signs and the system is funded through the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau by using City Occupancy Tax that is collected throughout the year. She said they have budgeted \$20,000 for this budget year's phase of the project. She stated the system is coordinated between NCDOT and the City Public Works for proper installation that includes an encroachment agreement with NCDOT. Currently all the signs they have identified except for two are located in NCDOT right-of-way. She reported shortly after the presentation to Council, they met with NCDOT and learned about MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices)

standards for sign design. MUTCD is set forth by the Federal Department of Transportation and NCDOT follows this standard. She reviewed sign and pole requirements. She noted they require the directional arrows with tails, lettering must be 6 inches in white or black and DOT approved break-away pole systems. She showed the new sign design implementing the MUTCD standards that has much improved visibility.

Main Street Director Caudle stated following the adoption of the resolution, the City and Tourism will officially submit a system to NCDOT for consideration. Once they are approved, they should be able to issue one encroachment agreement and then they can start right away with fabrication and installation of the Phase I signs. Tourism's goal is to fund the additional set of signs in the next fiscal year which starts July 1<sup>st</sup>. They plan to do Phase I purchasing by the end of June and will start the installation then they will roll right into purchasing another set of signs with next fiscal years' money. She noted there is potential that we will have additional fiscal years to be able to fund the entire wayfinding signage program. She asked Council to consider a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2018.03.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked how many signs would there be total. Main Street Director Caudle replied when they had their original design that was presented to Council last meeting, they felt confident they could fund ten (10) signs. But now that the signs have grown in size, they were working through the final set of quotes and hope to have that within the next couple of days. It appears it will be less than ten (10), but she could not give an exact number yet.

City Manager Scherer asked Main Street Director Caudle about the welcoming signs at the 171 and 173 exits. She replied a separate project that Tourism is working on and funding is welcoming or gateway signs. The priority would be Exit 173 and they were also looking at adding one at Exit 171. Although those signs are not directional, they still will have to follow the NCDOT standards. They will follow a similar design style that they were looking at adopting today so to add to the overall brand cohesion of the community. It is a separate project now that Tourism will be funding.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there was a time frame for that. Main Street Director Caudle replied Ms. Medlin is hoping to start the project next fiscal year. She has collected some quotes for Ms. Medlin but she has not moved forward on it because they are focused on getting this complete first.

Councilman Smith questioned Section 3 of the resolution about the wayfinding signage system shall be an on-going program contingent upon continued funding

by the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau Board. He stated it was the City's money and asked how can we depend on whether their board wants to continue it or not and if they don't, will it be left up to the City. City Manager Scherer replied the statute requires them to submit information to us as well as us to them on what we want to do with the money. He feels that should not be an issue if we tell them we want to spend "x" amount of dollars on the signage program then they would have to follow through on it.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked if the 1% would cover that. City Manager Scherer replied yes, along with the other activities they plan for marketing tourism in the city.

Councilman Smith asked City Manager Scherer if he felt it would not be a problem. He replied he did not believe so; it was up to the City to tell them what to do with that money. As long as it relates to tourism in some fashion, their board should agree to it.

Councilman Smith asked Attorney Chichester his opinion on Section 3 of the resolution and if he thought there would be any problems. He replied he did not because as the City Manager said, the City has to vote on that. As a safety precaution, if the City votes to pass the resolution, they can also pass another resolution revoking it.

Mayor Doughtie asked if in the event the City did not continue to get the funding, the City would not be obligated to keep it going would we. City Manager Scherer said this does not obligate the City for any ongoing financial spending on this program.

Mayor Doughtie asked if he understood correctly that the \$20,000 was the only money going into the project for this year. Main Street Director Caudle replied that was correct.

Mayor Doughtie asked Main Street Director Caudle if she felt comfortable that the sign vendor that has been selected has not put the City in a position where other vendors may have wanted to put in a bid. She replied the local vendor they are using in addition to partnering with the City's consulting engineer, Nick Rightmyer, who has done wayfinding signage in another community, will ensure that everything meets the MUTCD standards. She feels that they are going in the right direction. They have also determined that the City Public Works Department will be working with NCDOT on the installation of the signs as well.

Councilman Smith asked if there was going to be any monies used out of the Public Works department for any concrete or for any installation or would it be for just the work itself. Public Works Director Chalker said they spent several hours in committee meetings discussing what he was asking. He stated they have committed to the project. The amount of concrete needed to put the signs up are pretty minimal as to the cost of the signs; especially with the breakaway signs NCDOT requires. He said the concrete base will remain so they would concrete the signs one time. The department does have monies available for the concrete so that would not be a sticking point for them.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2018.03**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS, NORTH CAROLINA  
ADOPTING A CITY-AUTHORIZED WAYFINDING SIGNAGE SYSTEM  
(AND ITS FUNDING)**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Roanoke Rapids recognizes the value of attracting tourists and providing for tourist activities to promote the economic development goals of the City; and

**WHEREAS**, wayfinding signs are an integral part of a successful tourism industry and will further enhance and strengthen Roanoke Rapids' sense of community identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Roanoke Rapids Planning Director and Halifax County Tourism Director have further refined the tourist district signage plan by developing a city-wide wayfinding signage system that includes recommended sign locations, a common logo and specific designs for wayfinding signs; and

**WHEREAS**, the wayfinding signage system is intended to be a long term program and funding by the City will include a portion of the initial implementation costs and long-term maintenance operation costs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Halifax County Convention & Visitors Bureau Board has offered to provide a contribution to the implementation of this wayfinding signage system; and

**WHEREAS**, the City collects an Occupancy Tax for the purpose to support tourism, and the Halifax County Convention & Visitors Bureau Board authorized by applicable state law to expend such funds in furtherance of said goal; and

**WHEREAS**, the City plans to dedicate a portion of the Occupancy Tax for the costs to implement, maintain, and operate the wayfinding signage system; and

**WHEREAS**, the Roanoke Rapids Land Use Ordinance, Section 151-278(2), allows directional signs as part of a city-authorized program; and

**WHEREAS**, the City does not desire to create a public forum through its wayfinding signage system, but instead seeks to provide visitors with directional assistance in locating a discrete and limited category of unique, local tourist attractions;

**NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS, NORTH CAROLINA, DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:**

Section 1 – The City of Roanoke Rapids hereby establishes a city-wide wayfinding signage system; and

Section 2 – The City of Roanoke Rapids supports the wayfinding sign locations for Gateway, Secondary and General Directional signs; and

Section 3 – The wayfinding signage system shall be an on-going program contingent upon continued funding by the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau Board; and

Section 4 – Landscaping may be considered for future improvements to the wayfinding signage system and shall use the Occupancy Tax revenue for funding source unless otherwise designated by the City Council in the annual budget.

Section 5 – The informational posting encouraged and authorized by the wayfinding signage system shall be for the sole and exclusive purpose of providing directional assistance to visitors in attempting to locate unique, local tourist attractions as determined by the City of Roanoke Rapids. Nothing herein shall be construed as creating a public forum for the communication of other information.

Section 6 – The City of Roanoke Rapids expressly and in its sole discretion reserves without limitation its right to alter, restrict, expand or terminate the wayfinding signage system established hereby.

**ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AND SIGNED INTO AUTHENTICATION OF ITS PASSAGE THIS 17<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2018.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the above noted Resolution No. 2018.03 Adopting a City-Authorized Wayfinding Signage System.

**Consideration of NC Parks & Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) Basic Facts & Assurances**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant requires the City to adopt a Basic Facts and Assurances document which has been included in their packets.

He said the document gives basic information on the City of Roanoke Rapids and also assures the City matches the funds requested. The City matching funds are \$150,000 from the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation and \$50,000 from the City of

Roanoke Rapids. This document is needed for the completion of the PARTF grant application that is due May 1, 2018.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated this is the second grant the City would be seeking where the City plans to use the \$150,000 from the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation grant and \$50,000 from the City as the matching part of the PARTF grant. He said the PARTF grant is due May 1<sup>st</sup> and the City should hear from the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation grant also on May 1<sup>st</sup>. He said May 1<sup>st</sup> was an important date. He said they would be notified on August 1<sup>st</sup> if awarded the PARTF grant.

Mayor Doughtie asked Parks & Recreation Director Simeon what kind of back-up plan the City had. He replied there is a unique aspect to that by using the Kate B. Reynolds grant of \$150,000 as the match for the PARTF grant that is due May 1<sup>st</sup>; the dates do not coincide very well. Today he spoke to a Kate B. Reynolds representative and the proposal was presented to them and it was accepted positively and there were no concerns. He said when he talked with her he explained the situation that the City was in and there was no reason for any concerns. He said this was forwarded on for final approval. He said the Trust looked at it today as presented and they were positive, but will not give any word until May 1<sup>st</sup>. All signs look good at this point. If for some reason we are not fully funded for the \$150,000, he will bring back alternatives at that time.

Councilwoman Scarbrough said she was the City's liaison for the Jo Story Senior Center and they held a Volunteer Appreciation reception for the volunteers this afternoon. She said we are very fortunate to have the volunteers at the Jo Story Senior Center. She hoped she was quoting this correctly, but Thomas Goble (Senior Center Supervisor) said the hours put in by the volunteers saves the City or amounts to \$65,000. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated that figure would not surprise him, but he had stepped out to talk with the Kate B. Reynolds representative. He said there was information from that meeting that he would like to share with them that was very important. He said if all the volunteer hours that are added up at the Jo Story Senior Center calculated to that amount it would not surprise him.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Cowen and unanimously carried to adopt the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Basic Facts and Assurances.

## City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer reported there is an important case being argued today in the United States Supreme Court that may have far-reaching impacts on state and local governments. In January 2018, the Court agreed to decide *South Dakota v. Wayfair*, whether states can require out-of-state retailers to collect sales tax, even though they have no in-state physical presence to collect sales tax.

He said in *Quill Corp. v North Dakota* (1992), the Supreme Court held that states cannot require retailers with no in-state physical presence to collect sales tax. South Dakota asked the Supreme Court to overturn *Quill* in *South Dakota v. Wayfair*.

He stated internet Sales have risen astronomically since 1992, and state and local governments are unable to collect most taxes due on those sales from out-of-state vendors. In November 2017, a U.S. Government Accountability Office report estimated that state and local government could “gain from about \$8 billion to about \$13 billion in 2017 if states were given the authority to require sales tax collection from all remote sellers.” Supreme Court Justice Kennedy wrote in a 2015 court decision, “When the Court decided *Quill*, mail order sales in the United States totaled \$180 billion. But in 1992, the Internet was in its infancy. By 2008, e-commerce sales alone totaled \$3.16 trillion per year in the United States.”

He said following the Kennedy opinion, several state legislatures passed laws requiring remote vendor to collect sales tax. South Dakota's law was the first to be ready for review by the Supreme Court. The North Carolina State Legislature considered Senate Bill 81 in last year's session, which would establish an “economic nexus” of at least 200 sales in North Carolina a year or \$100,000 in revenue from sales in the state as enough to require a retailer to collect sales tax.

City Manager Scherer said in September 2017, South Dakota's highest state court ruled that the South Dakota law is unconstitutional because it clearly violates the *Quill* decision, and it is up to the Supreme Court to overrule it. In October, South Dakota filed a petition asking the Supreme Court to hear its case and overrule *Quill*. The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in this case today and it will issue an opinion by the end of June.

He said this has the potential to possibly provide us with some well needed revenue if this goes well.

## Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge presented the March 2018 Financial Report. She reported during the month of March, the Finance Department issued 94 purchase orders, 74 payroll checks, 333 direct deposit vouchers and 326 accounts payable checks.

She reported as of the month of March, the year-to-date revenues exceeded expenditures by \$435,452.01. The General Fund year-to-date receipts totaled \$12,013,625.95. The percentage of actual monies collected of adopted budgeted figures stands at 76.5%. She said the General Fund year-to-date expenditures totaled \$11,578,173.94. The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures stands at 73.7%. She said after the month of March, 75.06% of the budget has been completed.

Finance Director Etheridge said the following revenues were received during the month of March:

- Utility Franchise Taxes: \$320,580
- Ad Valorem & Solid Waste Taxes: \$165,603
- Sales & Use Tax for month of January: \$313,362
- Motor Vehicle Tax: \$56,611

She reported the City still has several very large expenditure requirements forthcoming in April and May, for Installment Financing and Series 2017A and 2017B loan repayments. These requirements are in addition to daily operational spending. We all have to be mindful with day-to-day expenditures going into 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to remain favorable to budget as we end the fiscal year.

She stated the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget planning process is well underway. All budgets were submitted to the City Manager and Finance Director for review on April 12, 2018.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked since the budget was three-quarters of the way through, did she have any projection or estimate on where the City would be at the end of fiscal year. Finance Director Etheridge replied at this point we are still tracking revenues and expenditures very carefully. The fourth quarter is typically a low revenue quarter and we have several large expenditures not related to day-to-day operations so we are trying manage that to see how we will look going further into the fourth quarter.

Mayor Doughtie asked if the City had any notes that would be coming off the books this year. City Manager Scherer replied two notes would be coming off.

Councilman Smith asked if in last year's budget did the City have a carry-over of \$500,000 that the Council approved. City Manager Scherer replied not for this year's budget. Finance Director Etheridge added they did not use any fund balance.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked Finance Director Etheridge if she knew the percentage of the City's fund balance. She said at the end of the fiscal year June 2017 audit, it was at 24%.

## Departmental Reports

### Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Kearney stated they have one vacancy which is a part-time public works worker. She advised Council that she advertises committee vacancies on the City Channel (Spectrum) 193 along with job openings, city events and positive things about the city employees.

She announced they held the BARC Fish Fry Fundraiser on April 13<sup>th</sup> with the help of D.I.R.T. Ministries, Herman Moseley and his team. They sold 354 plates which will help fund the City Scholarship Fund. The scholarship applications are due by May 2, 2018. She plans to announce the recipients of the scholarships at the second Council meeting in June.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked how the employees know about the scholarship. She replied she sends the announcement and applications out to the departments where it is posted so the employees can see it. The employees that have children graduating this year and are going to a four-year college in the fall submit an application. She said it was not a long application, but they have to get letters of recommendation, submit their grades and that is what it is based on. She stated luckily the last several years they have been able to fund everybody that applied; one year they gave two and another they gave three. They are hoping this year they will not have to choose because it is a difficult situation when you know there are deserving children that will be going to college and know they need the money. She said the fish fry is their big money maker for the year and they try to use the money from it for the scholarships. This frees up the money donated from the employee's paychecks to help with employee hardships.

## **Police**

Police Chief Hasty presented his March report. He reported the following statistics in the first quarter 2018: seized 406 grams of marijuana, 46 grams of cocaine, 1.3 grams of heroin, 9 doses prescription drugs. They got 19 guns off the street and had 14 DWIs. The guys on patrol and CID are working hard to combat the crime and drug problem that we have in the city.

He said today he met with US Attorney Jeff Sessions and US Attorney of the Eastern District, Robert Higdon, Jr. to talk about the opioid crisis. They informed him that monies have been appropriated for three phases: prevention, enforcement and treatment. He stated it was a good meeting and they were able to talk about plans and things that were going on in our district. Mr. Higdon has something new and unique for the eastern district that he is working on with us. We were able to submit some cases to attorney's assigned to us so we will can get some stiffer sentences and we are working on the civil asset forfeiture reform with the US Attorney.

## **Planning & Development**

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported during the month of March, the department has received and is reviewing site plans for minor parking lot and parking lot circulation at the Dominion Energy plant. They have also received site plans for the apartment complex at the intersection of Becker Drive and Hunting Ridge Road as expected and site plans for a storage facility on the opposite end of Becker Drive near the River Town Manor Senior apartment development.

She said during the month of March there has been a lot work with the Wayfinding Signage project and reporting to the State Preservation Office the activities within the Historic District; this was required report 7 out of 10 as part of the CDBG funding that was received back in 2011 for a housing program.

She said Walmart has submitted its 6<sup>th</sup> phase of interior renovation plans as part of their major remodel project. Also, they are reviewing remodel plans for US Cellular at 297 Premier Blvd.

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported minimum housing actions: 103 Love Street and 1000 Cedar Street. The hearings have been held and the findings have been sent out and at this time they have to comply with the time allowed for the owner to achieve compliance or demolish the structures. They anticipate the potential to bring those before Council sometime in June for a demolition ordinance if those actions are not completed within the time frame.

She announced a building permit has been issued for the new Sonic at 10<sup>th</sup> and Park Avenue. She said the end of March or first of April they did a final inspection for the ice house at Forest Hills shopping center. The affluent water is now piped into the sewer and the parking lot in that area has been patched at this time.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked about the structure on Church Street and whether it would be good fire training. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied the owner of that structure has applied for a demolition permit and the asbestos inspector has been out there so no City funds are anticipated in the demolition. She said they were waiting for the owner to complete the process for the demolition. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there was a timeline on it. She said it follows the 135 day process if we start one, but they feel the owner will comply in a shorter timeframe than they could do. Fire Chief Coggins added the fire department would be happy to burn it, but it is too close to neighboring homes to use for fire training.

### **Parks & Recreation**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation awards their grant on May 1<sup>st</sup> which would be the \$150,000, coupled with the City's \$50,000 and together that will be used for the match for the PARTF grant that is due May 1<sup>st</sup>. He will have news on May 1<sup>st</sup> and will pass it along to Council as soon as he gets it.

The Chockoyotte Park concession and restrooms project continues to move along. He hopes to have it complete in the next couple of weeks. He announced the Roanoke Valley Aging Expo will be held Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Kirkwood Adams Civic Center. Free health screenings will be offered and there will be speakers and exhibits. Family Fest will be held on Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Roanoke Rapids Lake Park. The event will highlight education, health, fun, fitness and healthy eating for the entire family. He invited everyone to attend.

### **Public Works**

Public Works Director Chalker stated he wanted to go back to a topic Human Resources Director Kearney spoke about, the BARC Scholarship. He said he was the proud father of a son who was a recipient of the BARC scholarship and he graduates on May 13<sup>th</sup> from UNC-Chapel Hill. He said Assistant Chief Clements' son, Ben Clements, was the co-recipient of the scholarship and he became a City employee yesterday.

He highlighted the March report. He said grass season begins now so next month the accumulative total on the report for grass season will reset. From last year up

until now, they have collected/assessed \$76,208. If people did not comply or pay, the amount is assessed as a tax lien to property. When the property is sold, that money will come back to the City.

He updated Council on 1026 Roanoke Avenue. They have poured concrete from Roanoke Avenue through the project and back to the alley in the rear. They have completed the connection and are starting some of the landscaping activities as well as some lighting; that will take care of Phase I. He said Phase II will include a water feature. The goal is to get the space functional as soon as they can so Main Street Director Caudle can get some artwork into the space. Public Works has been excited to be a part of this project and looks forward to continuing the implementation.

Public Works Director Chalker has recently been doing some Theatre preparation for a show next week. Progressions Dance Studio will be holding their dance recital; they have been holding its recital there every year since they started. They were able to work that out with the Theatre scheduling with the impending sale of the Theatre. The following weekend an outdoor Relay for Life car show will be held there as well. Since the Theatre has been dormant for some time from a show perspective, they wanted to make sure the lighting and sound were working okay.

He announced that tomorrow he and some of his staff will be attending the ODB (Old Dominion Brush) Trade Show at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. They get to look at trash trucks, street sweepers, knuckle booms and other equipment that they use every day. They will also get a look at any new technology that is available.

He said as they predicted there has been very narrow lanes with the Julian Allsbrook Hwy. project, but they have kept the road open. They are still setting storm drainage and when that work is complete, they will pitch the curbing and gutter and put in a new sidewalk. It is a slow project because there is a tremendous amount of work to be done; he asked that everyone have patience.

Mayor Doughtie asked if they would have to do the digging/put in storm drainage on the other side of the road. Public Work Director Chalker replied there was a little bit of work to be done on the other side, but most was on the side they are expanding the street. There is a lot of technical data that has been collected, some utilities had to be moved so it is not as simple as putting down asphalt. When it is finished it's going to look like it does in front of Presto; it is going to be wider, have a sidewalk and a turning lane. He stated he thought the Police Chief would agree that once completed the accidents at Georgia Avenue and Julian Allsbrook Hwy. are going to plummet and be much safer.

## **Fire**

Fire Chief Coggins reported firefighters were engaged in 750 man-hours of training in the month of March covering various topics.

He said the shipping containers used for their prop have arrived at the Hinson Street site. They are going to be going in stages pretty quickly. It will be a nice facility when they are finished. He presented a fire safety talk for a women's group at the Pentecostal Church this past month. He and Chief Hasty spoke at the ServPro Emergency workshop last week.

He stated the department has approximately thirty (30) hydrants left before they are complete with the hydrant testing. He noted the department is fully staffed at this time. He thanked Public Works Director Chalker and his team for helping unload and setting up the training props as well as Grey Parnell for installing a keyless entry system at Fire Station 1.

Chief Coggins reported they had a fire last night at 125 Monroe Street. Nobody was inside, but the fire appears to be suspicious in nature. He said the house was about half engulfed when they arrived, but had it in control within approximately fifteen minutes; the fire had gotten into the attic. He stated the mill houses are balloon type construction so when the fire gets into the wall, it goes right up to the attic. It was unsafe to put the guys inside so they had to wait for the roof to burn through. No fire fighters or residents were injured.

## **Main Street**

Main Street Director Caudle stated it was an exciting time for the Historic District as there are several public improvement projects coming to fruition. She said they still plan to open Phase I of 1026 Roanoke Avenue to the public on May 24<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. This was in conjunction with Arts on the Avenue. This has long been anticipated especially for the Main Street non-profit. She said in the final six weeks, the City will be ending their hard work and subcontractors will be coming in to finish to space. This includes a stone face and top to the seat walls, landscapers, front façade work, painting, lighting and hanging artwork at the end. She thinks it will be a tremendous asset to that block because it leads out to the large public parking lot.

She updated Council on the repaving of Roanoke Avenue. NCDOT has awarded the project to Rose Brothers Paving and they have until the fall of 2019 to complete that project. The project involves milling down 1-1/2 inches of asphalt from the county line to Hwy. 158. Then they will pour and grade new asphalt then at the end they will stripe lanes, parking and crosswalks. NCDOT engineers are

estimating the work will take three to four weeks. She said they did not have an estimated start date, but they are working with NCDOT to make sure to get ample notification because approximately 300+ businesses will be impacted by that work. In addition, they met with NCDOT about some potential streetscape improvements they hoped to achieve while they are here doing the resurfacing. At the conclusion of that meeting they encouraged us to prioritize all the streetscape elements and it was submitted to them before Easter. In May, they will be discussing that with the Board of Transportation in Raleigh and from there we will have a better idea of what can be achieved in partnership with NCDOT to implement some elements such as the mid-block crossing that lines up with 1026 Roanoke Avenue and high visibility crosswalks.

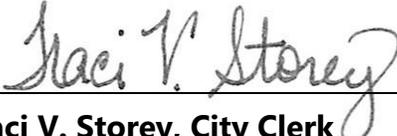
She reminded Council that Main Street formed a Streetscape Committee specifically for this project. One of the things they identified was to take the Streetscape Master Plan that Rivers & Associates completed last summer and take it into a Phase II that involves cost estimating. We requested funding from Halifax Business Horizons and they approved the entire amount last week. They are working through those last minute details with NCDOT and will potentially move forward with Rivers & Associates. She stated they have had a lot of community partners that have been helping to try to solidify some of these important design changes that could come with the resurfacing project. Her hope and goal by the end of 2020 is that the Avenue will look like it's had a facelift and in turn spur some additional private and public investment.

She announced Arts on the Avenue is scheduled for Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup> from 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. in the 900 and 1000 block of Roanoke Avenue. This will be the third annual event that they do in partnership with the Halifax County Arts Council. The Arts Council Gallery holds their high school art show that evening so art students from three or four local high schools will be showing their work. They are currently seeking artists and there is an artist call out. Once they have the final list of artists, they will be pairing them with participating businesses. She invited anyone that is an artist or knows an artist to refer them to the Arts Council.

<b>Other Business</b>
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Mayor Doughtie recognized and thanked Halifax County Commissioner Linda Brewer for attending the meeting.

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

  
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**Traci V. Storey, City Clerk**

**Approved by Council Action on: May 1, 2018**