



# Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, July 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  
Chuck Hasty, Police Chief  
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director  
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director  
Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief

**Absent:** Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director  
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.

There being no conflicts, a motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee to adopt the business agenda for July 17, 2018 as presented.

## Special Recognitions

### Police Department

Police Chief Hasty recognized Daniel Hundley and Ryan Cross who had recently been promoted to Master Officers. He noted Master Officers were responsible for training the new officers and they help with crime scenes. He also recognized Jamie Hardy who was promoted from Master Officer to Investigator. (He was not present due to being on a traffic stop).

He recognized Investigator Jeff Davis who recently earned his Criminal Investigator's Certificate through the Wilson Community College Law Enforcement Training Center. He completed the training in May 2018 which consisted of 364 hours of extra training plus 100 hours of electives through the program. He said it was a long program and most of the department's investigators have it or are working toward it.

Chief Hasty recognized the following as the Officers of the Quarter (2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter): Investigator Jamie Hardy, Lt. Jeff Baggett and Officer Curtis Batchelor. He said this was for what they do every day on the street from leading their squad or a particular unit for different things such as felony arrests, drug arrests or getting guns off the street to make Roanoke Rapids a safer place.

He recognized and welcomed Officer Hayden Marshall who started July 2, 2018. He said she was originally from Roanoke Rapids and a graduate of Roanoke Rapids High School.

Chief Hasty recognized and thanked the Police Department's CID team for their hard work resulting in the arrest of the suspect in the recent home invasions who was shot. They put in long hours doing follow up investigations, handling evidence to get to the lab and then getting the results back to tie this man to several violent crimes in the area.

Mayor Doughtie recognized and thanked Natalie Scarbrough who has been the summer intern for the Planning & Development Department.

## Public Comment (Unscheduled)

### Terry Buffaloe

Mr. Buffaloe said he wanted to follow up from last week's meeting. He had some questions to ask because every time the Economic Development Board Director makes a presentation, he had never seen a forum for Q & A. He said one of the questions he had was about the statement that the average manufacturing job in

Roanoke Rapids pays \$944 per week. He wanted more information and ask where that was. The best he could find out when he asked around was at Don Poncho and Reeser's, but they would have to work 12 hours a day, 7 days a week to make anything close to a decent wage. Every time he asked that board about some of the things they were working on and wondered where's the beef? Over the last ten years they have spent close \$10M and have not produced 200 jobs from some records he had seen. He asked the Halifax County Board of Commissioners to ask the same questions and believes it was all of our responsibility to ask these kinds of questions because we are swimming in poverty here. There are those who have and way more who have not and that was why this was a Tier 1 county. So when they represent all those optimistic kind of things, where is it? He did not think he should be the only one asking it. It would behoove every one of us to want to have some hard core back up. When he talked to her in the hallway, she sounded like a Sarah Huckabee or a Kellyanne Conway; they are just telling me all this stuff that is optimistic and rosy and it was just not translating to the bulk of the community here in Halifax County and Roanoke Rapids.

### **Approval of Council Minutes**

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to approve the July 10, 2018 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as written.

### **Appointments/Reappointments**

#### **Canal Museum Advisory Committee**

City Clerk Storey advised the Canal Museum Advisory Committee has a vacancy for a city resident and Ms. Gail Biesecker has submitted an application to serve on this committee. She would serve the remainder of the term which expires April 30, 2019.

She stated a ballot vote was taken earlier and Ms. Biesecker received a unanimous vote to be appointed. She requested Council to consider a motion to appoint Gail Biesecker to the Canal Museum Advisory Committee.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Cowen and unanimously carried to appoint Ms. Biesecker to the Canal Museum Advisory Committee.

#### **Senior Center Advisory Committee**

City Clerk Storey advised the terms of Arizona Putney and Ann Gibbs for the Senior Center Advisory Committee will expire August 2, 2018. Ms. Putney has served the maximum number of two consecutive terms allowed by City Policy.

She stated a ballot vote was taken earlier and both candidates received a unanimous vote to be reappointed. She requested Council to consider a motion to waive the City Policy for Ms. Putney and reappoint both Ms. Putney and Ms. Gibbs to the Senior Center Advisory Committee.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to waive the City Policy for Ms. Putney and reappoint both Ms. Putney and Ms. Gibbs to the Senior Center Advisory Committee.

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

City Manager Scherer reported they were preparing for the transition and closing of the sale of the Roanoke Rapids Theatre this coming Monday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>. The signing of the deed will take place at the Theatre at 1:00 p.m. and all of Council is invited to the event. We are excited to see the facility in the hands of commercial developers who will bring a level of needed professional management to the venue. We look forward to working with the new owners to help the entertainment district attract new growth and fulfill the district's potential as a positive economic development tool for the City.

He said as they would hear in the department reports, they continue to provide efficient services for the residents while remaining fiscally responsible. As they begin a new fiscal year, he was confident they will meet both Council's and the citizen's expectations of providing a fair and effective city administration that is fiscally responsible.

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

In the absence of Finance Director Etheridge, City Manager Scherer presented the Preliminary June 2018 Financial Report. The percentage of actual monies collected of adopted budgeted figures stands at 90.9%. The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures stands at 96.7%.

He reported year-to-date expenditures exceeded revenues by (\$911,295.83). He said as a comparison at this point last year, the year-to-date expenditures had exceeded revenues by (\$978,222). So they were just a little bit better than they were a year ago, but they still had two months of Sales & Use Tax to collect and some other revenue sources they expected to come in. He said he could not tell Council exactly where they were at, but he expects they should be relatively close to covering the gap in revenue versus expenditures.

City Manager Scherer announced the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 annual audit was scheduled to begin August 27<sup>th</sup>. He reported one thing that did hurt the City in June was they had three (3) payrolls to cover. He stated again he was confident they will come in okay.

## Departmental Reports

### **Human Resources**

Human Resources Manager Kearney presented the June report. She reported there were vacancies for a Minimum Housing Inspector, Code Enforcement Officer – Building Inspector, Police Officer positions and PT Public Works Worker. During the month of June they received seventeen (17) applications and hired five (5) lifeguards and an intern. They also filled the PT Public Works Worker position. She said they had a Sanitation Equipment Operator position and they filled that position with someone that used to be a lifeguard and he came back and now he works at Public Works.

She said during the month of June the BARC Committee reviewed applications and gave five (5) scholarships. They also completed open enrollment.

### **Police**

Police Chief Hasty presented his June report. He announced the following upcoming events:

- Friday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, they were holding a small community forum at Supercuts II called Meet Me at the Barbershop. They will talk about different things going on in the community and get ideas from citizens.
- August 3<sup>rd</sup>, they were holding a non-perishable can food drive to replenish Angel's Closet. They were working in conjunction with Food Lion and they will have a place set up at the location on Roanoke Avenue and Julian Allsbrook. If Council has any items they would like to drop off, they can drop them off at the Police Department.
- August 7<sup>th</sup> - National Night Out at Halifax Community College. They were partnering with the Halifax County Sheriff's Office, Weldon Police Department and Enfield Police Department. The event will be held indoors and Jim Quick and the Coastline Band will be performing.
- August 9<sup>th</sup> – Hotdog Cookout in the downtown area. He wanted to work with Mr. Leach at the new laundry mat there on Roanoke Avenue to use his facility and parking lot. The event would help to get involved with the community and the kids by giving them a hotdog, chips and a drink.

He invited everyone to participate in any of the events.

### **Planning & Development**

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported throughout the month of June, the department has been in a transition period with Donald Tart's retirement and advertising new positions as well. The department was still working on the census local address update information for the US Census Bureau which is due the end of July. This information will be used for the mailings of the 2020 updates that would be coming out in the next year or so.

She said the site development plans that were in the final stages of review were the same ones they had been looking at with the addition of a Dollar General proposed at Roanoke Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Planning & Development Director Lasky stated they have had a few different Business Use activities taking place. The Rooney Ridge Senior Apartments development at the corner of Becker Drive and Hunting Ridge Road was nearing the completion of site plan and building plan review. They anticipate the start of construction later this year.

She said they continue to receive complaints from the public concerning junk cars and minimum housing issues. Although Mr. Tart has retired they are still trying to handle those complaints. She thanked the Police Department and Public Works for their assistance and helping manage that work load.

### **Parks & Recreation**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said the PARTF grant awards meeting has been scheduled for August 24<sup>th</sup> in Raleigh. He would be attending the meeting to represent Roanoke Rapids.

He announced the following upcoming events:

- July 20<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m., A Night at the Museum at the Canal Museum featuring Jan Wicker with an educational discussion on bears. Free event.
- July 25<sup>th</sup> – Splash Fest at the TJ Davis Recreation Center pool.
- July 25<sup>th</sup> – Department will be taking kids to the Carolina Mudcats baseball game.

He reported the department was still in summer mode with special programs including summer camps. He has a meeting tomorrow with the contractor at Chockoyotte Park to wrap up the concession stand project.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked how much the skate park was used. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied it was used daily. Depending on the weather,

typically 20–50 kids would use the skateboard park every day.

### **Public Works**

Public Works Director Chalker recognized Doug Love who started with the City in 1995 and was recently named the Assistant Public Works Director.

He reported during the month of June, the department received 213 calls for service and the Cemetery collected \$22,106 for the month and the total for the fiscal year was \$103,891.

Public Works Director Chalker said for the month of June, the department sent out 105 letters for lot cutting, cut 51 lots and assessed \$16,674.50. He stated there was some misinformation circulating that the City may not be enforcing things in the city quite the way they should, so he wanted to share some numbers to put some facts behind this. For the year 2017 for nuisance and abatement, they sent out 752 letters to citizens whose properties were out of compliance, they put city forces out on 219 different locations and assessed \$76,208. Already this year up to July, they have sent out 551 letters, sent forces out to 120 different properties and assessed \$40,367 in tax liens. He said they have more grass to cut than they have people, equipment, trucks or trailers to send out to cut it so they stay behind on that because there was such a need.

He stated the department spent five Wednesdays picking up litter city-wide and now every Wednesday they are sending forces out to trim back trees, grass and bushes that are sticking out in the alleys because it hits the sides of the trash trucks. The employees ride the back of the trash truck to collect the sanitation and trash. Probably in times past, residents cut the alley behind their fence in the backyard, but a lot of them don't do that anymore so that was one more thing added to the department.

### **Fire**

Fire Chief Coggins reported the Fire Department responded to 165 calls throughout the month of June with a response time of just over five (5) minutes. Firefighters were engaged in 532 man-hours of training. The inspections division conducted 16 fire inspections and completed 11 plan reviews.

He said the department held a smoke detector campaign with the Office of the State Fire Marshall and American Red Cross which was a success. They installed over 100 smoke detectors. He reported 65 of the homes did not have a working smoke detector prior to their visit.

Chief Coggins reported the department had their annual tour of the MRI facility at the hospital. As a part of making the department more diverse, they recently hired Jeff Brown, a former employee of Lowe's Home Improvement. Jeff was also a member of the Davie Volunteer Fire Department. He will start in the next couple of weeks.

He said this past month the department installed four child safety seats. Engineer Michael Butts and two of the firefighters taught hands on CPR to Ms. Kathleen Robinson and 30 children with Lighthouse Ministries at her camp that was held at Emry Park.

Chief Coggins announced Ms. Reed is working diligently to get things ready for their Annual Fire Safety Fair which will be held Friday, August 17<sup>th</sup> at Kirkwood Adams. The event will be from 5 – 8 p.m. and invited everyone to attend.

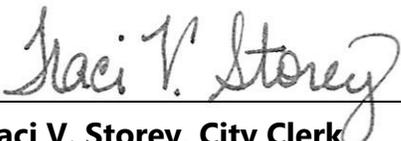
He said on behalf of the Roanoke Rapids Fire Department, he wanted to thank Council for the bonus they gave this budget year. He stated this Wednesday and Thursday, the new firemen will tour the dam which they do once a year.

### **Main Street**

Main Street Director Caudle was absent, no report was given.

<b>Other Business</b>
-----------------------

There being no further business, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

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

**Approved by Council Action on: August 7, 2018**