



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 16, 2019 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)

Council Members

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager
Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director
Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager
Bobby Martin, Interim Police Chief
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief

Absent: Councilman Wayne Smith
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation 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 stated a Closed Session needed to be added to the agenda under Other Business 9 a) to discuss legal matters and asked Council members about any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening.

There being no conflicts, a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for July 16, 2019 with the addition of Item 9 a) Closed Session to discuss legal matters as allowed by NC G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(3).

Mayor Doughtie asked Jacob Spence to stand and tell why he was attending tonight's City Council meeting.

Mr. Spence said he was a Boy Scout from Troop 146 and he was attending the City Council meeting because he was working on his Communications Merit Badge. Mayor Doughtie presented him with a City lapel pin.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to approve the July 2, 2019 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as drafted.

City Council Appointments

Beautification Committee

City Clerk Storey said the terms for Chris Lehman and Sandra Bryant on the Beautification Committee will expire on August 9, 2019. Dr. Lehman has served the maximum number of 2 consecutive terms allowed by City policy. Council has the authority – and has done so in the past – to waive this section of the policy. A copy of their volunteer applications and a list of current membership were enclosed in the agenda packet for your review and consideration.

She noted that a ballot vote was taken earlier and both Dr. Lehman and Mrs. Bryant received a unanimous vote. She requested City Council consider a motion to waive the City policy and reappoint Dr. Lehman and Mrs. Bryant to the Beautification Committee.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to waive the City Policy and reappoint Dr. Lehman and Mrs. Bryant to the Beautification Committee.

Senior Center Advisory Committee

City Clerk Storey reported the terms for William Mueller on the Senior Center Advisory Committee will expire August 2, 2019. Mr. Mueller has served the maximum number of 2 consecutive terms allowed by City policy. Again, Council has the authority – and has done so in the past – to waive this section of the policy. There has also been a vacancy on this committee for some time and Lisa Vincent has submitted an application to serve on the committee for your consideration. A copy of their volunteer applications and a list of current membership were enclosed in the agenda packet for your review.

She said a ballot was taken earlier and both candidates received a unanimous vote. She requested City Council consider a motion to waive the City Policy and reappoint Mr. Mueller and appoint Mrs. Vincent to the Senior Center Advisory Committee.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to waive the City Policy and reappoint Mr. Mueller and appoint Mrs. Vincent to the Senior Center Advisory Committee.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer reported NCDOT will begin the NC48/Roanoke Avenue highway resurfacing project tomorrow, Wednesday, June 17, 2019. The project will start near the WestRock paper mill and is anticipated to take 3-4 weeks to complete. NCDOT contractors intend to conduct a "mill and fill" operation during daytime business hours while maintaining traffic flow on the Avenue. Expect tractor-trailer detours, lane closures, and traffic delays. Motorists should drive with caution and patience through the area.

He announced the Babe Ruth Regional Baseball Tournament begins tomorrow at Ledgerwood Field. The tournament brings teams and their families from several states to our city for the rest of the week. The Tourism Director tells us all the hotel rooms are sold out for this period. This is a positive tourism economic development activity for the City with the additional dollars being spent by the team's families for lodging, food and shopping needs while they're here.

City Manager Scherer said he was in the process to contract with a government collections services company to collect on liens that have been assessed by the City on property owners for property maintenance activities performed by Public Works. Examples of these activities include grass cutting and rubbish removal. Not only will this provide the City with additional revenue we are owed but I hope it sends a signal to other property owners that they need to be proactive in cleaning up their sites as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the detour would be just for tractor trailers. City Manager Scherer replied he did not know for sure but due to their size there would probably be some detours for them. This was NCDOT project and they will be determining the detours. The Police Department may have to provide some traffic control assistance.

Mayor Doughtie asked City Manager Scherer to let City Council know of any success in the next couple of months with the collections. City Manager Scherer said the company will provide a monthly report on collections so he would be able to do that.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge gave the following preliminary financial report for the month ending June 30, 2019. She reported the operating statement for the month of June shows the General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$15,885,920. The percentage of actual monies collected of adopted budgeted figures total 87.0%. General Fund year to date expenditures totaled \$16,616,737. The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures total 91.0%. After the month of June, 100% of the budget year has been completed. As a result, the preliminary year to date expenditures exceeded revenues by (\$730,816.80.)

She said it was important to note that the City still has revenues to accrue on behalf of Fiscal Year 2018-2019 which have not been received for Sales & Use, Ad Valorem, and Motor Vehicle Taxes. Other Miscellaneous revenues will be accrued through August 15.

She said finance staff continues working on year-end close; and all that is required with opening a new fiscal year for operations. Additionally, we are preparing for the Fiscal Year 2018-19 annual audit, which is scheduled for the week of August 26, 2019.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked that once the City receives the accrued revenues did she believe the (\$730,816) would be closer to \$0 at that point. She replied they were hopeful, it was very hard to say based on trending with ad valorem taxes and sales and use taxes when they have not seen a lot of growth. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said it seems like there should be some anticipation that if we get this then it will be at a certain point. Finance Director Etheridge said there have been many fourth quarters that the City has received revenues they had not anticipated. That has happened in the past with ABC distributions where there was an extra distribution. So that is why it is difficult to say exactly where we think the number will end. We are very hopeful that the final revenues will help move us forward. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked what if they do not get anything in. She replied the good news was we have other funds to offset that at the present time. The auditor looks at this collectively with all funds combined; it is a separate report that they do.

Mayor Doughtie asked if someone pays their taxes early before August 15th for 2019 would that go to last years' budget or this years' budget. Finance Director Etheridge replied any taxes paid in August would be for the new budget year.

Departmental Reports

Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Kearney presented the June report. During the month they advertised for a Purchasing Agent because the City's long-time Purchasing Agent, Lynn Rooker will be retiring the end of August. They also advertised the Sanitation Equipment Operator, Recreation Program Supervisor at the Aquatic Center, Firefighter Applicant Pool (the application process closed on July 12th) and they still have a PT Public Works Worker position open.

She said the department received 13 applications in the month of June and hired 3 full time employees and 1 part-time employee. They are also advertising for a PT Building Supervisor.

Mayor Doughtie asked Fire Chief Patrick how many people did they have in the Firefighter Pool. Chief Patrick replied they had three. Human Resources Manager Kearney added she has received two more in this last round. Chief Patrick said the pool was starting to dwindle down. He plans to get together with her to discuss where they were going to go from here; in the past they have received a lot more.

Police

Interim Police Chief Martin presented the department's June report. In regards to the department's K-9 units in the last month they were deployed 29 times which is exceptional. They seized 146 grams of marijuana, 7 grams of fentanyl, 6 dosage units of Opiates and 3 grams of heroin. With the squads almost having a K-9 per squad has picked up finding these narcotics in the vehicles.

He reported last month the department answered a total of 2,158 with approximately 55 foot patrols and 1,350 in service training hours on top of that. He said the PACE Team continues to do well with their operation. They are hitting the streets hard and conducting search warrants and they are starting to see good things out of that unit.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked if the City still received K-9s from the Air Force. Interim Chief Martin replied no, they have been dealing with Ventosa out of Scotland Neck. All the dogs they received from the Air Force has since retired. The department has a great working relationship with Ventosa and have received great quality dogs. The last K-9, Dubai that was assigned to Officer Hunsucker, came from Ventosa which was donated from another agency. He is doing a phenomenal job. Councilwoman Scarbrough remembered they did not have to pay for ones from the Air Force because the K-9s were extremely expensive. Interim Chief Martin said the last K-9 was donated to the department because he broke a tooth and the other agency found they could not use it. They went and looked at it and found there was nothing wrong with him except for he was missing a few teeth.

City Manager Scherer asked him to highlight some of the 11 community projects he has listed. Interim Chief Martin said the PACE Team went to DSS and conducted a presentation to parents doing adoptions about gang awareness and how to recognize gang and drug activity. They also participated in a program at Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee's church. The department has been working hard with the community and the PACE Team is being utilized for community service.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee thanked Interim Chief Martin for attending the program at his church and for sharing information with them.

Mayor Doughtie agreed that Interim Chief Martin did a good job at that program and appreciated him sharing some of the bumps he had in his life with the other individuals who attended. He said Interim Chief Martin did not talk about how they were arresting people but rather how he was trying to improve the community. He also encouraged them to reach out to the Police Department and to him if they did have concerns. He said there was an individual that came to a City Council meeting about two years ago to tell them about a problem he was having in his neighborhood. He saw him today and he told him things were a lot better. He told the individual that the Police Departments depends on the citizens to tell them what is going on in their neighborhood because they are there all the time and they needed to let the Police Department know when we see things that go on that do not look right.

Interim Chief Martin asked if he could elaborate more to Councilwoman Scarbrough's question on how they pay for the K-9s. He stated the drug dealers were paying for them through asset forfeiture. The more they get and carry to the federal level, the more assets they get back. They are taking that asset forfeiture money and putting it toward the K-9s which does not cost the department anything. It pays for the dog and the training. This is why they are able to have a K-9 per squad now and the department's narcotic and PACE units are reaping the benefits of that. They are able to benefit our agency to get new equipment without having a lot of expenditures.

Planning & Development

Planning & Development Director Lasky stated the reason for her delay in arriving to the meeting tonight was she just submitted the CDBG grant application in Raleigh this afternoon for the \$750,000 for the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. She noted it would take a couple of months before they would hear back from the State for the award notification. Until that time, she would like to prepare as if the City would accept it and move along with some of the due diligence items they could prepare for.

She reported the department has been reviewing site development plans for the redevelopment of the Hardee's on Julian Allsbrook Hwy. It was going to be a complete demolition and rebuild. They are also reviewing plans for an office building in the Cross Creek area for the eastern office for Roseburg Forestry Products. She participated in a webinar in early June on lead based paint abatement and that notice of funding should be opening soon. She would be looking into submitting an application to the HUD office which would benefit not only homeowners but tenants as well. She said the department has received some inquiries about vacant lots for different types of businesses. Two of them were for carwash businesses.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if she knew when the redevelopment of Hardees' was going to start. She replied they have not stated specifically yet but with it being the travel season right now, she believes they were not trying to shut down.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked for more information about the Roseburg Forestry office building. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied it was going to be a one-story office building approximately 5,000 square feet. She understands they have purchased a lot properties along the east coast and this would be their eastern office for wood products. She was not sure how many people they would employ – this was just their office building not any manufacturing. The proximity to I-95 was attractive to them when they located that site.

Parks & Recreation

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

Public Works

Public Works Director Chalker presented the report for the month of June. He explained the asphalt patch process. They started patching with the machine on April 4, 2019 and to date they have patched 396 pot holes. In the beginning there was a learning curve but now these crews have become quite proficient in putting down patches. One part of this process is important for City Council and the public to know and that is the final layer is fine loose gravel. That allows them to immediately put traffic on it and for that traffic to pack the gravel down into the emulsion. Once the gravel leaves, there is a really good, durable patch. Sometimes the public may not understand that process and they are trying to reach out to educate them as they receive complaints. He stated to patch that number of pot holes in that amount of time is outstanding.

He said there were also some questions about the department's mosquito spraying program. They spray for mosquitos when they are flying and biting. In the evenings when they are spraying they want a temperature inversion to keep what they are spraying as close to the ground as they can. They have safety data sheets on the

chemical they use and encourage the public to come to Public Works and get a copy of those sheets. He stated it is not recommended to breathe it right out of the nozzle but it is not deemed hazardous if it floats through the neighborhood. Another part of the program they employ is larvicide. They put these pellets in pools and puddles of standing water especially along the Canal Trail. As the mosquitos lay the eggs, the larvae never mature so it kills the mosquitos in the water. Public Works Director Chalker added that the chemical gets on the wings of the mosquito and they absorb it into their bloodstream and it kills them.

City Manager Scherer asked Public Works Director Chalker to put the safety data sheet on the Facebook page and have the City Clerk put it on the City's website as well.

Public Works Director Chalker stated we are experiencing an extreme heat load. The department is cutting grass and working on the streets as much as they can every day, but once it hits a certain heat index, they are pulling their workers inside. They do not want anyone going down with heat exhaustion or heat stroke. He said the department is supporting every department participating in the baseball tournament. They are taking light towers, generators, water, equipment and general support. They are also providing them a repeater to use so everyone is on the same channel; it is a coordinated effort. He asked everyone to think about those young men out there playing because it is going to be hot.

Mayor Doughtie asked if Public Works offered those with retention ponds those pellets. Public Works Director Chalker replied whether private or public, it was part of the mosquito program. They have applied some of the pellets in those ponds. The closest one here is the new Dollar General. It still has the limiting feature in it and it is required to have that feature in it until the grass around it takes good root. Once that happens, the City's engineer will give them permission to unplug that and it will go to full flow. Because of that, they have been putting larvicide in the pond since the beginning. If they find a pond that is not draining properly, they are going to put pellets in it. Most of the people with these ponds do not mind if they put the pellets in them.

Fire

Fire Chief Patrick reported during the month of June, the department responded to 182 calls with an average response time of 4.3 minutes. Firemen were engaged in 687 man-hours of training during the month, they conducted 41 fire prevention inspections and completed 3 plan reviews. As part of their outreach, they participated in the Market at the Mansion where they handed out fire prevention materials and talked to citizens about fire safety issues. They also assisted with the Police Camp and took the smoke house to the Sheriffs Junior Deputy camp. They took 60-70 kids

through the smoke house. In their social media outreach which is their Facebook page, they put a new safety message on the page each week and have reached 2,282 people.

He said one of their notable calls in June was a fire at the Burger King on Julian Allsbrook Hwy. The building sustained about \$20,000 worth of damage. When the firefighters arrived there the restaurant was filled with smoke, but they could not find fire anywhere. It was finally located in the wall. What appears to have happened was someone may have discarded a cigarette outside the building and somehow the fire got into the wall. The firefighters had to tear out the wall to get to it. It was interesting; they had never seen that before. There was no electrical in the wall. The restaurant had to shut down for 2-3 hours but was able to open after that for just the drive-thru.

Fire Chief Patrick announced they have started their pre-fire survey campaign so they will be out in the next few months at the businesses gathering information on the businesses and their contact information.

He announced Helen Reed retired last month and she will be sorely missed. They plan to recognize her at one of the upcoming City Council meetings. He said the Fire Safety Fair will be held August 16, 2019 from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Kirkwood Adams Community Center. They will have the puppet show, bounce house, food and different departments will be set up with safety literature. He invited everyone to come out and have a good time.

Main Street

Main Street Director Caudle was absent. No report was given.

Other Business/Closed Session

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee thanked the Parks & Recreation Department along with all the other departments that helped get the Chaloner Recreation splash pad open. He announced it was open on weekends right now. It started out a little slow on Saturday morning but over the 2-day weekend there were 150-200 kids that went. There is still a little more work that needs to be done so that is why it is only open on the weekends. Once the shelter, basketball/tennis courts gets in place, he believes it will be well used.

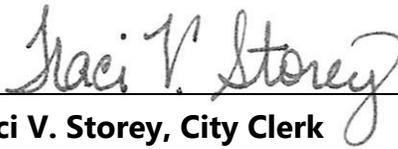
Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to go into Closed Session to discuss legal matters as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3).

Minute Book Pages 19566 - 19569 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/Adjournment

City Council returned to Open Session. No action was taken.

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 6:15 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: August 20, 2019