



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Wednesday, November 6, 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)
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
Bobby Martin, Police Chief
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief

Absent: Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

Prior to the meeting, the Roanoke Rapids High School Army JROTC posted the colors. Mayor Doughtie thanked the cadets and stated it gives those in attendance a sense of pride for their country. They admire them for the role they are taking as young adults and the leadership role at their school.

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

Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie asked Council members about any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening.

There being no conflicts, a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for November 6, 2019 as presented.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated as the liaison on the Canal Museum Advisory Committee, she wanted to announce that tomorrow night at the Canal Museum a historian from Raleigh, Darrell Stover will be presenting a lecture entitled, "Run on Water: Finding Freedom and Family in the Mid-Atlantic." It is a lecture about the Underground Railroad. It is at 7:00 p.m. and there will be a reception following the lecture. She invited everyone to attend.

Mayor Doughtie congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and Councilman Bobbitt for their re-election last night. He stated they will have a new Councilwoman joining the Council to take the seat previously held by the late Carol Cowen and that will be Mrs. Sandra Bryant. She is the wife of Halifax County Board of Commissioners Chairman, Vernon Bryant. They have both given back to the community for many years.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee thanked everyone for their vote of confidence in him and who voted him back in as a City Council member. He will continue to do his best and work for all citizens in the City of Roanoke Rapids.

Public Comment (Scheduled)

Anthony Morris

Mr. Morris stated he has been a resident of Roanoke Rapids for over 18 years and he is also a business owner in the area. He has done construction work and a few years ago he moved to retail. He has some concerns about some issues he sees going on around the city. Nothing is being done about it. One of the issues that concerns him is the pandering of drug addicts at the highways and street corners. He has called the Police Department about 50 times. They will run them off, but they will come right back. There is no deterrent for them to stop. A lot of the guys he knows that he has seen out there begging for money by Food Lion, Pet Smart and I-95 get a check every month. One had an encounter with a customer of his from Emporia; he said some real nasty things to him. He feels it sheds a real bad light on Roanoke Rapids. He has been to a lot of different cities around the country and they have basically barred pandering on street corners. They give them a fine of \$200 if they tell them so many times and then they lock them up; they just deter it period. About a year ago at Food Lion there was a guy on all three corners. It really looks bad. He did speak to the Acting Police Chief at one point and he said he would look into it. The police respond and run them off, but there is just no deterrent to stop it. He wanted to bring this to their attention.

Mr. Morris said the other issue he has and he has been down to City Hall about it, is this Chapter 98, use of merchants displaying items in front of and away from their stores. It seems like nothing has been done about that. It says all merchandise for the purpose of sale should be displayed except for certain items and they may be displayed during business hours. It states how far away you should display your items and in which manner and so forth. There is a retailer or two that he sees displaying stuff 50 feet away on the roadside. It is chained up like it is in the ghetto. It looks bad. He has heard comments about it. He is trying to find out who enforces this. He spoke to one gentleman who said they did not have the funds to go to court or something like that. He thought it was just an ordinance where they would write a ticket to deter them from doing it. That is why he was here tonight, to see how this can be deterred. Because if you get one merchant doing it then another merchant doing it, then all of Julian Allsbrook is going to be full of merchandise up and down it. And the same thing with the vendors that are popping up. He thought they were supposed to have some kind of permit or license. They are selling the same things they sell in the grocery store. It is no different if someone has a tire store and a guy with a pickup truck full of tires pulls up in front of the business and starts selling tires. That cuts out the income from the legitimate retailers, but nothing is being done about it. He sees them popping up more and more; it just looks bad. They were the only two issues he had to bring to them tonight and would like to see if they can get resolved and under control before it gets out of hand.

Mayor Doughtie told Mr. Morris to work with the Police Chief on the issue concerning the pandering. He stated sometimes it takes more than one conversation. He said to continue to have dialogue with the Police Department. The issue concerning the code would be through the Planning & Development Department and Ms. Lasky. He stated they generally do not try to solve issues at the meeting but appreciated him bringing the information to City Council. He directed him back to those people and to come to City Hall to talk with both of them. He also said to continue to call the Police when he has an issue.

Mayor Doughtie asked Mr. Morris where his business was located. Mr. Morris replied he was in the Big Lots shopping center. He has a retail discount store there going on 3 years now. He started off in the mall and moved over to the plaza.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to approve the October 15, 2019 Regular City Council Meeting minutes as drafted.

City Council Appointments

Roanoke Rapids Area Planning Board

City Clerk Storey said the Roanoke Rapids Area Planning Board currently has several vacancies. Dr. Carrie Tuning submitted a volunteer application to serve on the Board. She is eligible to serve the remainder of the “in-town” Planning Board Alternate seat that expires June 1, 2021.

She reported City Council took a ballot vote earlier and Dr. Tuning received a unanimous vote to be appointed. She asked City Council to consider a motion to appoint Dr. Carrie Tuning to the Planning Board.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to appoint Dr. Carrie Tuning to the Roanoke Rapids Area Planning Board.

Mayor Doughtie recognized a young man in attendance tonight, Yosiyah Y'Israel. He said Chief Martin invited him to come tonight.

Chief Martin said this young man is doing a lot of good things for the community. He does outreach for the food bank and other things like that. He is trying to get to a higher education program next summer. His mother came to speak with him and he has reviewed some of the videos Yosiyah has been involved in and he is doing some great things at such a young age. He thought it would be beneficial for him to come tonight and see how we do things at City Council meetings and meet the Mayor and City Council.

Mayor Doughtie said Yosiyah attends KIPP and is in the 3rd Grade. He called Yosiyah to the podium and presented him with a City lapel pin.

Yosiyah said he was 8 years old and is in the 3rd Grade. His mother added he met the Governor of Virginia. He went to feed the homeless for several years and the Governor who was running for the presidency gave him his coin when he first got into office. The Mayor of Emporia also honored him. He went to the Capitol this year where he received a standing ovation for his humanitarian service that he does in North Carolina, Virginia and Washington, D.C.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer congratulated all the newly elected officials. The Administration looks forward to working with all of them to continue to make Roanoke Rapids a better

place to live and work.

He thanked everyone on behalf of the Fire Department that helped or was involved with Chief Kevin Hawkins' funeral. All of us appreciate the outpouring of support shown for Chief Hawkins, especially during the procession to the cemetery. Recently, the Fire Department made a visit to the Gingerbread House and all the children and teachers had on green Team Hawkins shirts along with a Team Hawkins banner. The firefighters were very touched by this gesture.

He said October was Fire Prevention Month. The Fire Department reached 1,700 kids during visits to all the City schools. They have a few more outreach activities this week. They will start elderly outreach programs to all the local long-term care and assisted living facilities to help ensure their fire prevention and protection plans are current and effective in case of an emergency.

He reported there has been some recent court rulings by the State Legislature to reinforce the illegality of the internet gaming businesses. The State Court of Appeals has issued a stay on the enforcement of these rulings but the Police Department has decided to no longer supply security at these businesses in the city. The Police Department continues an intense investigation into the recent murder at Creekside Court.

He announced the annual Christmas Shopping with Kids by the Police Department will be December 14th. They will meet at Chick-Fil-A at 10 a.m. They have coordinated with the Parks & Recreation Department for bus transport from Chick-Fil-A to Walmart at 11 a.m. They received a \$1,320 donation from the car show last Saturday at the Theatre. They are hoping after all their fundraising is done to take 30 or more kids on the shopping trip, spending approximately \$250 on each child.

City Manager Scherer said as part of their fundraising, they are holding a RAGE Wrestling event on November 23 from 6 – 9 p.m. at the Roanoke Rapids High School. This is a fundraiser event for the Christmas Shopping with the Kids.

He stated in the past month or so the department participated in 19 community events. They are trying to reach out to the kids early. He attached a list of the events for their review.

He announced the BARC Christmas Luncheon will be on December 18th at Kirkwood Adams. The service awards will be given out starting at 11:00 a.m. with lunch following at 11:30 a.m.

City Manager Scherer reported the Finance Department completed and submitted \$390,000 in old liens to the credit collection company we have contracted with. We hope to start seeing some revenue from this program in the near future.

He said we have begun a comprehensive review of all the capital items and buildings covered by our liability insurance policies to insure everything to be covered is listed and the appropriate values are identified for replacement costs.

He said the Halloween events at TJ Davis and Chaloner, as well as city-wide, went very well this year. The Police Department estimates approximately 2,000 children attended the Truck or Treat event at TJ Davis.

City Manager Scherer announced the Christmas Tree Lighting will be on Thursday, December 5th at 6 p.m. Parks & Recreation Department employee, Ryan Newsome's sons, Wayland and William will light the tree this year.

He said on Friday, December 6th from 6 – 8 p.m. the Parks & Recreation Department and Main Street Roanoke Rapids will host a Christmas at 1026 event on Roanoke Avenue. This event will include Santa Claus with a sleigh for taking pictures, hayrides, refreshments and crafts. The Christmas Parade will be on Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m.

He reported the construction of the new tennis courts behind TJ Davis Recreation Center began today.

He said the Planning & Development Department received the asbestos report for one of the houses the City is planning to demolish on Washington Street. Asbestos was only found in the siding. They will have to work with a contractor to remove it. Ms. Lasky will coordinate with Chief Patrick to see if it is still viable for fire training as part of the demolition process.

He said NCDOT has begun installing a mid-block crossing at Oscar's Restaurant. NCDOT along with Public Works cut down two hazardous trees on Roanoke Avenue today. One was across the street from the Patterson Mansion and the other was at 6th Street and Roanoke Avenue.

City Manager Scherer said since the City recently settled the insurance claim for the damage to City Hall from a recent storm, Public Works has removed the solar panels that were alongside of the building. New ones will be installed on the roof for better sun access. They also removed the old overhang on the side and a new one will be installed.

He said they are also prepping the building to repaint the City Hall building. Ms. Caudle and Mr. Chalker are reviewing options for aesthetic and historically correct colors and have submitted a couple for him to review and recommend to Council. Public Works is in the process of painting some test panels on the side of the building, but these are not the final choices. Once those are made, Council will be asked to review the panels and determine their final choices.

He announced Main Street will be hosting a *Cheers to 10 Years* event on Tuesday, December 10th at the Arts Council Gallery. This is to celebrate their 10 years of existence. Board members, elected officials and business owners within the district will be invited. Officials from the State Main Street program may also plan to attend.

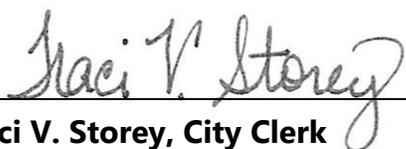
City Manager Scherer said Main Street is planning a Christmas Holiday Window Decorating Contest. Information will be going out to merchants soon. Voting will take place from November 25 – December 7th.

<p style="text-align: center;">Other Business/Adjournment</p>
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Mayor Doughtie recognized and congratulated Sandra Bryant for being elected to serve on the Roanoke Rapids City Council. She will start next month and they were looking forward to working with her.

Councilman Smith thanked the department heads for the minutes from the committees and boards. He said he read every word and they were very informative.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: November 19, 2019