



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

Present: Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor
Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem
Sandra W. Bryant)
Suetta S. Scarbrough)
Wayne Smith)
Rex Stainback)

Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager*
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Bobby Martin, Police Chief
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director

*Denotes joining the meeting via Zoom.

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order and opened with an invocation.

Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie asked Council members if there were 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 Smith and unanimously carried to adopt the agenda as presented.

Special Recognitions

Retirement of K-9 Dubai

Chief Martin said K-9 Dubai is assigned to Sgt. Matt Hunsucker and started his career in April 2019. He stated the police department received a call from Ventosa Kennels

that another agency would not be utilizing Dubai because he had lost a tooth. At the time, Sgt. Hunsucker expressed interest in becoming a K-9 handler. The department sent them to school and they became partners. He completed the 240-hour certification course and K-9 Dubai began working on the road full-time in May 2019. Chief Martin reported from May 2019 to November 2021, K-9 Dubai has been responsible for the following:

- 4,038.8 g of Marijuana
- 26.27 g of Cocaine
- 466.7 g of Fentanyl
- 11.2 g of Meth
- 7.3 g of Heroine
- 114 DU MDMA
- Seven (7) Firearms
- \$4,445 US Currency
- Four (4) Suspects located on tracks/deployments

Chief Martin said recently K-9 Dubai suffered an injury to his leg on a track while assisting a neighboring agency that has gotten worse and deteriorated over the past few months. Unfortunately, at this time the recommendation is that he be retired. He respectfully requested that K-9 Dubai be declared surplus property and given to his handler.

RESOLUTION NO. 2021.08

K-9 RETIREMENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, K-9 Dubai is owned by the City of Roanoke Rapids; and

WHEREAS, K-9 Dubai has faithfully served the City for Five years, and has recently been retired; and

WHEREAS, retired canines cannot be adopted to private citizens because of their specialized training for police situations; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Matt. Hunsucker, K-9 Dubai's handler, wishes to keep him; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council, by this resolution, wish to express its great appreciation to K-9 Dubai for his service, loyalty, and dedication to the City of Roanoke Rapids;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Roanoke Rapids City Council in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 160A-266 declares K-9 Dubai to be surplus property upon retirement from service and authorizes his assigned handler, Matt Hunsucker, to take ownership of K-9 Dubai upon his execution of a hold harmless agreement to provide proper care for the dog for the remainder of the life of the animal and a \$1 adoption fee. By executing that agreement, Matt Hunsucker will assume all liability and responsibility for the dog.

ADOPTED this 16th day of November 2021.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2021.08 declaring K-9 Dubai as surplus property and awarding him to Sgt. Matthew Hunsucker.

Police Recognition of Volunteer Jo Wrenn

Chief Martin recognized Mrs. Josephine “Jo” Wrenn. He said she has been a citizen of Roanoke Rapids her entire life. She raised four children and shared her life for 62 years with her late husband, Mason Wrenn. She worked many years with Charter Communications. After retiring from Charter, she would spend her spring and summers in Roanoke Rapids and find happiness in warm sunny Florida in the winter. Mrs. Wrenn is always hosting meals for her family and readily available to her grandchildren and great grandchildren. Mrs. Wrenn is also an active member of Calvary Baptist Church. He stated that Mrs. Wrenn doesn’t have much free time however, she has included the Roanoke Rapids Police Department into her schedule for over two decades.

Mrs. Jo Wrenn has been a faithful active volunteer with the Roanoke Rapids Police Department for over 22 years. She began her volunteer work with the Roanoke Rapids Police Department Records Division, and then became a member of the Citizens on Patrol created by former Chief Greg Lawson. Mrs. Wrenn’s faithful dedication to this Police Department has been a benefit to us all. This presentation is no means a retirement celebration, but an appreciation of her being a part of our law enforcement family.

During her time with the Roanoke Rapids Police Department, she has provided service to our citizens and assisted Records with daily tasks during peak times. She has provided hours of service with the Citizens on Patrol, planning events, social gatherings, and community policing programs that connected citizens to law enforcement in a positive manner. Mrs. Wrenn is a vital part of our agency, and we would like to express our appreciation on this 16th day of November 2021 with recognition of Mrs. Jo Wrenn. He thanked Mrs. Wrenn for all she does and has done for the Roanoke Rapids Police Department.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to approve the October 19, 2021 Regular City Council meeting, November 3, 2021 Special City Council Meeting and the November 3, 2021 Work Session minutes as drafted.

New Business

Presentation of Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Audit Report

Mr. Greg Redman, CPA summarized the FY2020-2021 audit report (On File in Clerk's Office). He reported the audit report was an unmodified opinion. He reviewed the Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2021 starting with the cash in the bank at \$4,371,954. He noted last year the City had \$3.1M. He reported the Undesignated Fund Balance is \$4,118,325 which is 27.6% of total expenditures. Last year they had 16% in fund balance so it is quite a bit of an increase. He said they should not stop there. The LGC has put out performance indicators that cities the size of Roanoke Rapids average 46%. The minimum is 8%; they would like to see 24-32%.

He continued his review with the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance. Revenues - \$16M which is approximately \$400,000 more than last year. He said the City has done a good job in cutting their costs every year and this year the total expenditures were \$14.9M. Last year expenditures were \$15.7M which is \$800,000 less than prior year. Net profit or increase is \$1.3M.

Mr. Redman reviewed the Notes to Financial Statements. The City started the year at \$1.9M and ended the year at \$1.8M that included a new loan of \$180,000 during the year. He pointed out the theatre debt (special revenue financing bonds) where approximately \$1M had been paid leaving a balance of \$11.9M. OPEB liability is the projected costs for retirement and health insurance over the life of retirees of the City.

Mayor Doughtie asked if the special revenue bonds (Theatre bonds) were both loans added together. Mr. Redman replied that was correct.

Mr. Redman reviewed the Analysis of Current Tax Levy. He pointed out the Levy Collection Percentage is 99.05%. He said the collection rate is now over the state-wide average collection rate. He realizes Halifax County collects the taxes, but it's the citizens that pay. As long as tax collection rate stays that high, it's easier to not have to raise taxes.

He referred to the letter on page 75 and stated they were happy with internal control,

the increase in cash to \$1M and the 10% increase in fund balance; overall it was a good audit. He added there were no findings.

City Council discussed the matter of other cities similar in size having an average of 46% in fund balance. City Manager Traynham asked Mr. Redman if it had anything to do with having utilities involved. He replied he was not sure but a lot of towns depend on their electric fund or water/sewer fund to supplant the general fund. The general fund is supposed to just hold its own where utility funds help out.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to accept the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Audit Report.

Consideration of Budget Ordinance

Finance Director Etheridge stated as presented and discussed at the City's November 3rd Work Session, the trash cans are generally replaced every two years. The last full replacement was January 2019, making the cans an extreme necessity for street sanitation operations.

She requested Council consider the following budget amendment in the amount of \$29,000.00 to purchase rollout cans for sanitation operations in the Public Works Department.

Ordinance No. 2021.14 CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS BUDGET AMENDMENT

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS:

SECTION 1. The following additional amounts are hereby appropriated for the operation of City Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES

Fund Balance – Public Works – Trash Cart Replacement (not budgeted)

Project Revenues – To Fund Trash Cart Purchases **\$29,000**

FUND PROJECT TOTAL **\$29,000**

SECTION 2. The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available

for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES

Funding to General Fund – Public Works – Trash Cart Replacement

Project Expenditures - To Fund Trash Cart Purchases	<u>\$29,000</u>
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$29,000

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adopt Budget Ordinance No. 2021.14 for the purchase of replacement trash cans.

Consideration of Resolution Establishing a HOME program Housing Consortium

City Manager Traynham stated as described during the work session earlier in the month, Halifax County is taking the lead on the five-county consortium. The intent is to establish the consortium and the interested municipalities within that region adopt a similar resolution for participation. This will enable the residents and property owners of the city to benefit from funding provided through the HOME program. The consortium is in partnership with the State Employees' Credit Union as well as the East Carolina University Economic Development and Community Engagement Division. It would be about a five year program and would bring approximately \$650,000 to the five-county area over several years. She said the need for improved affordable housing is significant in this area.

Councilman Smith asked City Manager Traynham if there were any startup funds the City would have to put into the program. She replied not that she knew of at this time. The counties have to pay a small portion, but the City has not committed to any funds at this time. He asked if the City commits to be a part of this, will they have to pay for anything. She stated she had not been informed of any of those specifics at this time. This is a part of the County's application to the program. Concerning the funding part of it, if they were being asked to allocate any funds or make promises, it has not been part of the discussions at this point in time. In her opinion the resolution does not burden the City with any financial commitment. Councilman Smith asked if she believed that the City would have to put up any matching funds if they did get the grant. She replied she was not certain, but with these programs they allow for other types of matching to be applied. At this point, they do not have a specific project associated with it.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the City was not part of the consortium and the monies started coming in, then the City would not be a part of it. City Manager Traynham said that was correct and the resolution is to give the City's intent to participate in the program. She added this program significantly helped the City of Greenville on the west side between the hospital and the university. The City could

not apply individually for any of these funds. The federal program requires a consortium because they want to do a regionalized effort. She presented the following resolution for Council's consideration:

Resolution No. 2021.09
RESOLUTION
Establishing a HOME Program Housing Consortium

WHEREAS, the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, has determined that the health and welfare of the citizens within the jurisdiction may benefit from increasing the availability of safe, affordable and standard housing; and

WHEREAS, the City of Roanoke Rapids has determined that providing safe, affordable and standard housing will benefit workforce productivity and area economic development; and

WHEREAS, a Consortium of local governments will be entitled to receive funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that the local governments would be ineligible to receive individually; and

WHEREAS, the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, as amended, makes provisions whereby units of general government may enter into cooperative agreements and form Consortiums to undertake and assist in undertaking affordable housing pursuant to the HOME Investment Partnership Program; and

WHEREAS, the City of Roanoke Rapids, along with Bertie County, Halifax County, Hertford County, Martin County, Northampton County, and the municipalities contained therein (the Consortium members), desires to establish the Choanoke Area Housing Consortium to undertake and assist in undertaking affordable housing under the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990; and

WHEREAS, Article 20, Chapter 160A of the North Carolina General Statutes authorizes units of local government to enter into interlocal agreements with each other in order to execute an undertaking such as the contemplated Choanoke Area Housing Consortium;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved, by the Roanoke Rapids City Council that

1. The City of Roanoke Rapids hereby supports the establishment of the Choanoke Area Housing Consortium.
2. The City Manager is hereby authorized to pursue a Cooperation Agreement with the Consortium members and present the proposed agreement to the City Council for ratification.

Be It Further Resolved, that this resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption this the 16th day of November, 2021.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2021.09 to establish a HOME Program Housing Consortium.

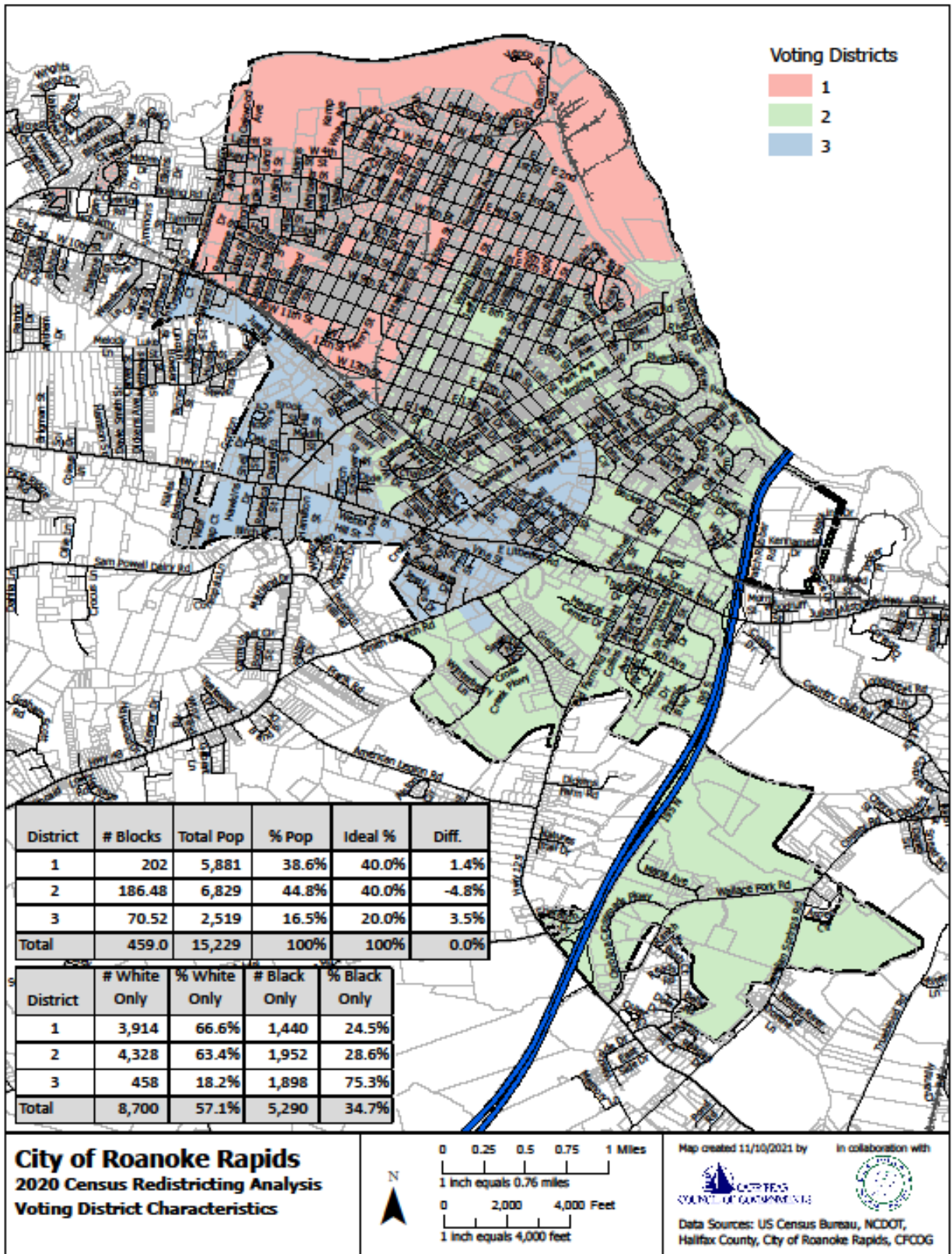
2020 Census and Redistricting Presentation

City Manager Traynham said they have been discussing the 2020 Census data for a few months now. After searching through the Census Bureau's instructions, she had indicated she needed another level of assistance to help in the City's review of the voting districts relative to the data. The City contracted with the Cape Fear Council of Governments through the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments because their member council did not have the staff to do so. Allen Serkin, Executive Director of the Cape Fear Council of Governments, assisted the City with this and is listening to the meeting via Zoom. He is prepared to answer any questions or make comments.

She summarized the findings Mr. Serkin was able to quickly turn around for the City in order to comply with the November 17th deadline and also notify the Halifax County Board of Elections of the results by the 12th. The primary objective with the redistricting is to study the population relative to the three electoral districts to determine if there is substantial equality and to determine if there has been a deviation of more or less than 5%. The City has advertised for public input and encouraged comments through the City's website and other outlets. The City received the census data in August and received instructions the end of September on how to review and access the data.

City Manager Traynham reported they have seen some changes in the City's population from the year 2000, 2010 and 2020. The population has been decreasing but in the last ten years it has gone down 3.33% overall. The City established its redistricting program not knowing if they would have to redistrict at that time, but took the necessary steps to prepare themselves for it. She reported City Council identified committee members: Susan Barmer, Hugh Bazemore, Al Eatman, Rocky Lane and Ruby Mason. She thanked them for their willingness to help the City with this important mission.

She announced the City is able to maintain their current voting district boundaries. She referred to the Voting District map. *(See map on next page)*. She stated Districts 1 and 2 are represented by two elected officials. District 3 is represented by one elected official and is intended to be a minority district. Districts 1 and 2 should each be approximately 40% of the City's population and District 3 should be at 20%. District 1 – 5,881 persons (38.6% - difference 1.4 %), District 2 – 6,829 persons (44.8% - difference of -4.8 %) and District 3 – 2,519 persons (16.5% - difference of 3.5 %) for a total of 15,229 which is the City's 2020 Census population. She reminded Council that the threshold for the percentage difference was a positive 5% or negative 5%.



City Manager Traynham stated the percentages and numbers work out. The deviations between the ideal percentage and the actual percentage fall within the legal threshold. They have completed the census data analysis. They do have a policy or directive for population equity to ensure statistically fair representation is maintained due to a federal court ruling under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act back in 1991 where the City entered into a consent decree to establish minority voting district for the black or African American minority population. And to ensure that district has representation on City Council. As part of the analysis, they took it a step further to look at the population and statistics of these districts. The 2020 Census data shows District 3 still maintains its intended purpose for having minority representation at 75.3% black or African American and 24.7% white or other. Districts 1 and 2 are 75.5% and 71.4% white or other. The balance is there. 75% black or minority in District 3 and 24-25% in Districts 1 and 2.

She announced the candidate filing period for the next election on March 8, 2022 that was pushed from this past November will be December 6-17, 2021.

She called on Mr. Serkin for any comments relative to this process and his experience with other communities doing this as well.

Mr. Serkin added that he wanted everyone to understand that the population numbers are estimates because the census is only as good as the responses. They take them for what they are and they are instructed by law to utilize those numbers. They had all of the census blocks which is the smallest geography they report, to figure out this information. All the census blocks were easily assigned to a voting district except for one. They had to distribute the population of that block to the districts that were contained within it. They developed a sound methodology for doing so. He referred to the top table on the map where they will see Districts 2 and 3 show fractional blocks. That is what it represents: 48% of that partial block was assigned to District 2 and 52% of that block was assigned to District 3 based on the number of housing units within each half of that block. He also mentioned in relation to race, the Census Bureau provides a large number race characteristics. They could have gone much deeper but they only looked at white alone and predominately black alone. Those numbers do not add up to 100% because there are other races and a number of people that identify as more than one race. They felt that 75% black or African American alone in District 3 was sufficient. That number was a baseline and would go up if you added other minorities or multiple races. He also corrected one statement made by City Manager Traynham about the 5% threshold. It is a State Supreme Court ruling; it is not statute.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked what was the percentage baseline to be considered a minority district. City Manager Traynham said it is 65% and in 2007 when the map was adjusted and the information came back from the Department of Justice, the black population in District 3 was 65.25% where now it is 75.3%.

Mayor Doughtie thanked Mr. Serkin for his assistance with this process.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee thanked the committee members for agreeing to volunteer to be a part of the committee.

City Manager Traynham added that the presentation by Mr. Serkin last week was recorded and sent to the City Council members and the committee members as well to give them the opportunity to review and comment. Each member was contacted today to see if they had any comments. There were none given and they were accepting of the findings.

City Manager Traynham stated she felt a motion would be appropriate by City Council to state the City had reviewed the data and determined there were no changes needed to the voting district map.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried that City Council reviewed the data and accept the findings of Allen Serkin and City Manager Traynham as presented.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham reminded City Council that the Thanksgiving holiday was next week and City offices would be closed on Thursday and Friday. She thanked City Council on behalf of the employees for the Thanksgiving gift cards they approved in the budget for them.

She announced Small Business Saturday will held on November 27th and asked everyone to shop local this holiday season. This is one of the biggest times of year for the local merchants to capture the holiday sales.

She also announced Human Resources Manager, Kathy Kearney will be retiring effective January 1, 2022. Main Street Director Caudle has been named to succeed her in that position.

City Manager Traynham reported in the 1100 block of Roanoke Avenue, a historic highway marker has been placed to honor Sarah Keys Evans. A dedication ceremony

is being planned for Saturday, January 15, 2022 at 2 p.m.

She stated Public Works is currently in full leaf season and they are grinding and hauling mulch.

She hopes they will have Representative Michael Wray attend the December 7th City Council meeting where he will discuss the State's budget. He will explain more of what that means for the community. He has worked hard to get monies for our region.

She called upon Parks & Recreation Director Simeon to highlight the upcoming holiday events.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated he and Main Street Director Caudle have been working on two events. On Friday, December 3, 2021 beginning at 6 p.m. they will have the Christmas on the Avenue and Tree Lighting event in Centennial Park and Roanoke Avenue. He was happy to announce Roseburg Forest Products is the corporate sponsor of this event. They anticipate this year's event will be bigger and better than last year. They will have additional Christmas ornaments, food trucks and hayrides going between Centennial Park and 1026 Roanoke Avenue throughout the night. They will begin with the Roseburg representatives greeting the community and turning the lights on. Chief Martin will escort Santa Claus to the park where they will have photo opportunities.

He said the Roanoke Rapids Christmas Parade will be held Sunday, December 5, 2021 at 2 p.m. on Roanoke Avenue. He announced Halifax Linen would again be the corporate sponsor of the parade this year. Clinton Boyd (works at ice plant and is the greeter at the downtown Food Lion) has been selected to be the Grand Marshal this year. He asked City Council members if they had not already done so, to please let City Clerk Storey know if they plan to participate in the parade. He thanked his staff for the hard work they put into the parade and he also thanked all the department heads for their efforts.

City Manager Traynham thanked Finance Director Etheridge and the Finance Department along with the City management team for their efforts in receiving another good audit report this year.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge presented the financial operations for the City of Roanoke Rapids for the period ending October 31, 2021. General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$7,777,850. (The percentage of actual money collected of adopted budgeted

figures is 46.7%) General Fund year to date expenditures totaled \$5,504,967. (The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures is 33%) After the month of October 33.33% of the budget year has been completed. As a result, Year-To-Date Revenues exceeded Expenditures by \$2,272,883.

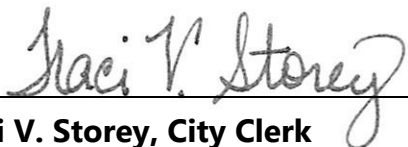
She stated revenue will continue to be critical for covering quarterly theatre bond payments, administrative overhead, utilities, operational costs, installment loan/debt payments, required projects, and inter local agreements.

Finance Director Etheridge reported staff attended and completed the required ARPA training as hosted by UNC-SOG during the month of October.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the \$2.2M was just how the money was coming in or if the City better off than they were last year. She replied it was how the revenues were coming in for the Ad Valorem Taxes at this time. He asked if the City was on target or were they ahead. She replied they were ahead of last year.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee; seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: 2/15/2022