



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 15, 2022 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
Tommy Daughtry)
Wayne Smith)
Rex Stainback)

Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Carmen Johnson, Finance Director
Bobby Martin, Police Chief
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director
David Wise, Planning & Development Director
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief
Tony Hall, Main Street Development Director

Absent: Sandra W. Bryant, Council Member

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, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt the agenda as presented.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Steve Snyder

Mr. Snyder stated he was concerned the Canal Museum was not open as often as it

could be. He knows there is some State funding out there that could hopefully pay for some of the hours of maybe some senior citizens or volunteers of senior citizens to have it open between 8 or 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday – Friday. Right now it is only open two days a week. Having travelled around and been to locations where he really wanted to see something and when he gets there it is closed because various reasons, it was really a letdown. He can imagine those coming off the highway all the way to the Canal Museum only to find it closed. He would like to see it open more often.

Mayor Doughtie thanked Mr. Snyder for his comments and will forward them to City Manager Traynham to see if there were some things that could be done.

Jeff Watson

Mr. Watson said he was the retired head librarian and was grateful for the 14 years he served the City of Roanoke Rapids and its citizens. He was very happy to see the direction the public library was going. He also wanted to share something about a couple of his former supervisors. Chris Wicker is honored tonight and John Simeon the current Parks & Recreation Director. Between those two men, they have served the City over 40 years, providing excellent leadership for the City. He counts both of them as friends and mentors in his life. He is happy to hear Mr. Wicker will be honored with the Aquatic Center being named after him.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to approve the October 18, 2022 City Council Regular Meeting, October 31, 2022 Special Meeting (Retreat), November 1, 2022 Special Meeting and November 1, 2022 Work Session minutes as drafted.

Committee Appointments

Halifax-Northampton Regional Airport Authority

City Clerk Storey stated Assistant County Manager Christina Wells contacted me to make the City aware that Chris Canady's term on the Halifax-Northampton Regional Airport Authority will expire January 31, 2023. Ms. Wells contacted Mr. Canady and he would like to continue serving on this board as one of the City's representatives. It would be a 3-year term which expires January 31, 2026.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to reappoint Chris Canady to the Halifax-Northampton Regional Airport Authority.

New Business

Consideration of Resolution Naming Aquatic Center After Chris Wicker

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated over the past year he and Councilwoman Bryant have received requests from the community to name the Aquatic Center after former Parks & Recreation Director Chris Wicker. Under Mr. Wicker's vision and leadership the Aquatic Center was built in 1992. It is an Olympic size pool that has between 15,000-20,000 contacts per year. It is very active and offers an array of programs. It encompasses toddler and youth swim lessons, competitive youth and high school swim meets, lap swim for exercise and arthritis classes for seniors. He stated Mr. Wicker believed in honesty, integrity and hard work which has created a legacy in the Parks & Recreation Department for the City of Roanoke Rapids.

He introduced Greg Lawson, former Police Chief and City Councilmember to speak on behalf of the community.

Mr. Lawson said he has dealt with Mr. Wicker for years and he is a true friend. They know Chris Wicker and that he has a servant's heart without a doubt. When he came here, that servant heart led to quality leadership for the Parks & Recreation Department. He had a vision and that vision accumulated to a number of things they all utilize today and sometimes take for granted. The Aquatic Center and the TJ Davis renovation was this man's vision to make it happen. They would not have a Canal Trail if not for his vision along with a lot of others. The Canal Trail is something they all should be proud of because what other community this size has a greenway that is 8 miles long and has such a rich history. With that was the development of the Roanoke Canal Museum. As the Chairman of the Canal Museum said earlier, it needs to be open more. That attraction and the Canal Trail brings in revenue. The quality of the parks and recreation enhances the quality of life for everybody and they should be proud of that. He appreciates City Council honoring Mr. Wicker with the resolution renaming the Aquatic Center after him.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated it was truly an honor to request the Mayor and City Council to adopt Resolution No. 2022.06 naming the Aquatic Center after Chris Wicker.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2022.06 naming the Aquatic Center the Chris Wicker Aquatic Center.

Mayor Doughtie read the following resolution and presented a copy to Chris Wicker:

Resolution No. 2022.06
RESOLUTION
APPROVING NAMING THE AQUATIC CENTER
AFTER CHRIS WICKER

WHEREAS, Christopher "Chris" Paul Wicker was born on March 30, 1955 in Aberdeen, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Chris graduated Cum Laude from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in May of 1977, receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in Recreation Administration; and

WHEREAS, Chris has been involved in recreation and with mentoring youth since 1969 when he began working in Boy Scout Summer Camps; and

WHEREAS, Chris began working for the City of Roanoke Rapids March 1, 1983, serving 26 years with the City of Roanoke Rapids when he retired in November, 2009; and

WHEREAS, one of his top accomplishments, the Aquatic Center was built in 1992 and has been instrumental for senior arthritis classes, swim lessons, and competitive swim meets; and

WHEREAS, other notable accomplishments from Chris' tenure include the TJ Davis Recreation Center renovation, the Canal Museum and Trail, Chockoyotte Park and the countless hours he devoted to the City of Roanoke Rapids for the betterment of all citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids that the Aquatic Center located at 500 E. 6th Street now be officially named the "Chris Wicker Aquatic Center" in honor of him so that the great contributions he has made will not be soon forgotten.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be spread upon the minutes of the City Council in testimony thereof and a copy be presented to Chris Wicker and the news media.

ADOPTED this 15th day of November, 2022.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Mr. Wicker said he was humbled. He was one of the fortunate people that got called to do something that he really loved in a very special place which was Roanoke Rapids. He got to work on a lot of great projects, but he never worked on a project by himself. They had remarkable teams. City Council, Parks & Recreation staff, Public Works staff, Fire crew, City Administration, City Finance; it was always a team thing. That is what he loved about his work. Groups of people to work with, commissions - he did not know how many years he and Julia Ann Fitts worked together and Vernon Bryant on the Recreation Advisory Committee years ago. God has blessed him and he felt called to recreation. He feels it's a better word to say "re-creation" because people recreate themselves when they swim or walk on the trail or go to a basketball game with the kids. He was very humbled by this.

Mr. Wicker said the first time he met John Simeon was when he was in high school and he took him on a ski trip. He thanked the community, City Council, Parks & Rec staff and all the people he has been blessed to work with.

Mayor Doughtie said on behalf of the City, they congratulate him and thanked him for the work he has done in the past and the work he continues to do in the community. The City owes him a debt of gratitude and thanked him for what he has done and continues to do.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon announced that after the holidays they would schedule a ribbon cutting ceremony and unveiling of the new sign at the Aquatic Center.

Consideration of Resolution Supporting Rural Transformation Grant Application

Main Street Director Hall presented Resolution 2022.07. He stated the City had submitted a parking grant on November 1, 2022 through the Rural Transformation Grant Funding program. The next step in this process is for City Council to consider and approve the resolution.

City Manager Traynham added this is the second round of funding through NC Department of Commerce Rural Transformation Grant program. When Main Street Director Hall came onboard with the City, one of his first requirements was to attend a Main Street Conference. He came back with a lot of information about the Rural Transformation Grant program and potential projects that were out there. She commended Main Street Director Hall for his hard work and other management staff including Human Resources Director Caudle and Public Works Director Chalker in coming up with a project that would help revitalize and be an immediate need of the City's downtown district area. One of the requirements of the grant is for the governing body to have supportive resolution as part of the application. She noted the project

would be 100% funded by the grant. There would be no City funds allocated towards the project.

RESOLUTION 2022.07

**CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS APPLICATION FOR
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE RURAL TRANSFORMATION GRANT FUND
RURAL ENGAGEMENT & INVESTMENT PROGRAM
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION | PARKING IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Roanoke Rapids City Council has previously indicated its desire to assist in community development efforts for downtown revitalization and public improvements within the City; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council fully supports the proposed project by “Roanoke Avenue Parking Project” which will result in the rehabilitation of up to four city-owned parking lots to provide adequate, accessible, and acceptable infrastructure that serves the downtown Main Street District and is necessary to meet the needs for residential and commercial uses; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes the City to pursue a formal application for Rural Transformation Grant Program funding to benefit downtown investment and revitalization efforts; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council certifies it will meet all federal regulatory and statutory requirements of the State of North Carolina Rural Transformation Grant Program;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Roanoke Rapids City Council:

That the City is authorized to submit a formal application to the North Carolina Department of Commerce, for approval of a Rural Transformation Grant Fund, Rural Engagement & Investment Program in order to provide assistance to benefit “The Avenue Parking Project.”

That this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Adopted this the 15th day of November, 2022 in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Stainback and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2022.07 supporting the Rural Transformation Grant Program application.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham announced several upcoming events and activities.

- Police Department will be hosting Coffee with a Cop from 8 a.m. – 10 a.m. at Dunkin Donuts.
- On Thursday, November 17th starting at 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. in the Lloyd Andrews Building, a Historic Tax Credit Workshop will be presented by Reid Thomas with the State Historic Preservation Office. The workshop is being put on in partnership with Main Street and the Planning Department. The workshop helps inform citizens of ways to obtain tax credits on older homes and commercial buildings within the Historic District.
- On Sunday, November 20th from 1-5 p.m., Main Street is holding a Shop & Stroll Holiday Open House. Many of the local businesses on the Avenue will be open.
- Thanksgiving is next week.
- Saturday, November 26th is Small Business Saturday. Many businesses on the Avenue will be participating. Remember to support small businesses all year round.
- Friday, December 2nd is Christmas on the Avenue from 6 – 9 p.m. with events happening at 1026 Roanoke Avenue and Centennial Park. This event is sponsored by Roseburg Forest Products and Halifax Linen Service.
- Saturday, December 3rd at 6 p.m., the Parks & Recreation Department will be having a family movie night at TJ Davis Recreation Center. The free event is sponsored by Tracy Story and Discount Automotive and Tire. The movie will be *The Polar Express*.
- Sunday, December 4th at 2 p.m. is the Christmas Parade sponsored by Halifax Linen Service and Roseburg Forest Products.

She stated they look forward to these holiday events to bring the community together. City staff works very hard and diligently to get the lights right and have things organized.

City Manager Traynham also announced a new business would be coming to Roanoke Avenue very soon. Niki's Italian Bistro will be located in the former David's Restaurant and O'Aetos Restaurant at 1011 Roanoke Avenue.

She reported the following:

- Youth sports are underway such as basketball and the school swim teams have started at the Aquatic Center.

- The end of this week the Thanksgiving gift cards will be distributed to employees which is part of the approved budget. She thanked City Council for continuing to fund the \$25 Walmart gift card to each City employee that can be used for a turkey or support their Thanksgiving meals.
- The City Hall elevator project remains underway and getting ready to kick off into construction mode. It will be approximately a six-week construction time frame.
- The new swing sets have been ordered for the Chaloner Recreation Park as well as restroom facility. Leaf season is underway with Public Works working diligently to get the leaves off the street. Starting tomorrow night, the Public Works Department will conduct a street light survey so crews will be out after 5:30 p.m. to identify any lights that may need attention from Dominion Energy.
- Earlier today she and Public Works Director Chalker met with some representatives with the NCDOT as well as WestRock to discuss some intersection proposals or improvements in conjunction with the funded bridge project to replace the Gaston Bridge in the near future.

Mayor Doughtie stated Ms. Kathleen Robinson left him a flyer she asked him to read aloud. She lives at 124 Washington Street and on November 22nd she will have free Thanksgiving meals starting at 4 p.m. until all the meals are gone. Meals may be ordered to be picked up or if they need one to be delivered to a shut-in that may be done as well. She is also collecting new or very gently used blankets to give away. The flyer states, "This is done from the heart. Love one another as God has loved us."

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Johnson presented the financial report for the period ending October 31, 2022. The General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$8,422,065.65 which is 42.8% of the adopted budget. For the prior year, it was 46.7%. She stated it was slightly above this year, but that is due to fiscal year 2022-2023 budget being higher.

She said General Fund year to date expenditures totaled \$6,240,696.47 which is 31.7% of the adopted budget. For the prior year, it was 33%. Spending is approximately \$1M more than last year due to the ARPA funds, the budget is larger and they are expending capital funds approved by City Council.

Finance Director stated the auditor is currently writing the City's audit report and should have it by the end of this week. Once it is approved, he will present the report to City Council.

She stated since the Powell Bill was brought up at the last meeting, she enclosed a few spreadsheets in their agenda packets. She explained in one spreadsheet, the City is scheduled to receive \$481,042.94. The first allocation was received in October for \$240,521.48. The second allocation will be received in January in that same amount. The second sheet is a Powell Bill History Report which shows how much the City received each year for the Powell Bill going back to 1982. The State uses a formula and it is calculated based on population and road mileage each year.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee noted the amount was up and down. Finance Director said it was based on population and mileage so as the population adjusts, the amount will adjust.

Public Works Director Chalker added depending on what the State allows to go into that fund, that amount changes with the budgetary situation every year. Depending what amount they put in there, the formula is calculated and the City finds out what the amounts will be. Historically they can see some really good amounts and even some low amounts. The City is in good shape with the amounts, but the population continues to decline and it affects us. The street mileage hasn't changed very much.

City Manager Traynham stated it is based on the gasoline tax that is collected so they could look at this report and see the relative increases and decreases in the yearly allocation fluctuate with the price per gallon of gas.

<p style="text-align: center;">Other Business/Closed Session</p>

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to go into closed session to discuss an Economic Development Matter as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(4); to discuss a Legal Matter with the City Attorney as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3); to discuss a Personnel Matter as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6).

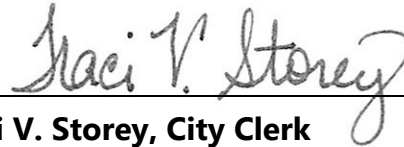
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Minute Book Pages 21007 - 21014 contain Minutes and General Account of a Closed Session which have been sealed until such time as public inspection of those minutes would not frustrate the purpose of the Closed Session.

Adjournment

City Council returned to Open Session.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: January 17, 2023