



# 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 8, 2023, 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)  
Wayne Smith)  
Rex Stainback)  
Curtis Strickland)

## Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager  
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney  
Traci Storey, City Clerk  
Carmen Johnson, Finance Director  
Shane Guyant, Police Chief  
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director  
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief  
Kristyn Anderson, City Planner  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director

**Absent:** John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director  
Tony Hall, Main Street Development Director

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order. He provided an invocation and then the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## 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.

With there being no conflicts, a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant to adopt the business agenda as presented.

Councilman Smith asked Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee if he would amend his motion to remove the Closed Session from the agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he requested the closed session to be on the agenda to discuss a personnel matter. He made a motion and there was a second and if they were requesting it be taken off, he wanted to know why because it has not been discussed.

Councilman Smith said he was against the closed session tonight and will not vote to approve the agenda with the closed session on it.

Mayor Doughtie called for a vote of Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee's motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and Councilwoman Bryant voted in favor; Councilman Smith, Councilman Stainback and Councilman Strickland voted against. Motion failed.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated it was the same old stuff every day. Next week he will do it in open session and take his three minutes and discuss what it's all about.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Stainback to approve the agenda with the removal of Other Business: Closed Session. Councilman Smith, Councilman Stainback, Councilman Strickland voted in favor; Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and Councilwoman Bryant voted against. Motion carried 3-2.

<b>Public Comment (Unscheduled)</b>
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**Alphonso Richardson**

Mr. Richardson said he resides at 223 Wyche Street. A fence was on his property when they had it surveyed. They asked the Housing Authority to remove the fence. They removed the fence but did not replace the fence. This fence runs down five properties and divides the residents from the Housing Authority's public housing. By removing the fence, they were thinking it would be reasonable to put the fence back on the City's property. They left their property open to the residents at the apartment building. They were asking for a fence to be put up between the residents and the apartment building.

Mr. Richardson said he spoke with the City Manager and went to City Hall last week and spoke with the Planning Department. He went back today and she said she was made aware of the issue and was going to work with the gentleman at the Housing Authority. He still wanted to speak tonight because as a resident he felt disappointed in the City that they would just take the fence down and leave the property wide open to the residents.

City Manager Traynham said she was just talking with Mr. Richardson before the

meeting. For clarification, the apartment property is owned and managed by the Housing Authority which is not the City of Roanoke Rapids. The City staff and personnel did not remove the fence; it would have been the Housing Authority staff or contractor.

Mr. Richardson said it makes sense if you have an apartment building you would want some separation from the other residents.

Mayor Doughtie asked Mr. Richardson if he understood that the City of Roanoke Rapids has no authority over the Roanoke Rapids Housing Authority and what they do.

Mr. Richardson replied he did understand that, but it is still within the city. City Manager Traynham added they still need to comply with the zoning ordinance. She said a fence is likely required for screening, but the Housing Authority relocated the fence that was on the resident's property (encroachment). The burden does fall on the Housing Authority to have the screening for their property.

Mayor Doughtie asked that City staff continue to follow up to make sure everyone complies with zoning.

### **Approval of City Council Minutes**

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Smith, and unanimously carried to approve the October 17, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting minutes as drafted.

### **Public Hearing**

#### **Community Development Block Grant – Neighborhood Revitalization Program**

Mayor Doughtie opened the public hearing and called upon City Manager Traynham to make a presentation.

City Manager Traynham summarized the following memorandum.

Date: November 2, 2023  
To: Mayor Doughtie and City Councilmembers  
From: Kelly Traynham, City Manager  
Re: **Public Hearing to Receive Public Comment and Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing Submission of an Application for the 2023 Community Development Block Grant - NC Neighborhood Revitalization Program**

**Background**

The primary purpose of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program is to provide grants to local governments for housing, housing- related activities, and public facilities. The North Carolina CDBG-NR program has a total of approximately \$12.5 million of which \$4.8 million is set aside for Tier 1 counties. The **maximum grant amount is \$950,000 per grantee** with some restrictions for activities. The NC Neighborhood Program does not have a matching fund requirement. The NC Neighborhood Revitalization application deadline is November 15, 2023.

The CDBG program requires that the applicant conduct two (2) public hearings to receive comment regarding the proposed application. The first public hearing was conducted on September 19, 2023 and no public comments were received. This will be the second public hearing to receive comments from citizens relative to the intention of the city to apply for funding. As required, notice of this public hearing was published on October 24, 2023 in the Roanoke Rapids Daily Herald.

**Proposed Application**

The City intends to submit an application for a grant of \$950,000 (maximum award amount) in CDBG NC Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds to undertake housing improvements to substandard housing conditions scattered throughout the City Limits.

The following is a tentative list of proposed activities and an estimated budget.

1. Rehabilitation	\$855,000
2. Program Administration	\$ 95,000
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET</b>	<b>\$950,000</b>

Grant consultant Chris Hilbert with Insight Planning gave an overview of the application period. In October they took applications from homeowners that were interested. They received eleven (11) applications. They are proposing to do seven (7) homes with this grant. Two (2) would be reconstructions because of the severity of the homes. One is a substantial rehabilitation which means it is over \$72,000. It is a historic home in the historic district so they were not proposing to tear it down, but they will need to spend more money. There were four (4) other rehabilitations. The homes are scattered throughout the city. There are two on Washington Street, one on Jefferson Street, Powell Street, Love Street, Southgate Drive and Charles Circle.

Mr. Hilbert stated the applications are rated based on income level (80% below the median income) and special population (elderly or disabled) and the housing needs. The grant application is due next week and should be in the mail tomorrow. He noted the budget for the application is \$855,000 for Rehabilitation and \$95,000 for Administration which is usually 10% of the overall total budget.

Mayor Doughtie asked if any of the grant monies were allowed to be used for demolition. Mr. Hilbert replied the reconstructions will have demolition to them on

site. The State does not allow clearance without a beneficiary. If there was a vacant home, they are not allowed to demolish it; it is not in the guidelines as they are now.

Mayor Doughtie asked what was the criteria once a person is deemed eligible for a repair or reconstruction; what is their responsibility. Mr. Hilbert replied they have to prove they are the owner/occupant of the home and a lien is also attached to the property for the amount that is spent on the home for a period of eight (8) years. If they sold the property within that period, they would have to pay the City back whatever portion is left. The intention is to benefit that particular beneficiary. They also have to maintain taxes and insurance for the home and they sign a maintenance agreement to say they will comply with local zoning. He stated there is no City dollars committed. This is HUD money from the federal government being funneled through the State.

Mayor Doughtie asked if there were any comments or questions from the public. There being no comments, he closed the public hearing.

City Manager Traynham presented Resolution No. 2023.17 for City Council's consideration and adoption.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023.17**  
**RESOLUTION FOR CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS APPLICATION FOR**  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT-NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION FUNDING**

**WHEREAS**, the Roanoke Rapids City Council has previously indicated its desire to assist in community development efforts for housing within the city; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Roanoke Rapids City Council has held two public hearings concerning the proposed application for Community Development Block Grant funding to benefit primarily low-to-moderate income individuals in the city by providing housing improvement activities; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Roanoke Rapids City Council wishes to pursue a formal application for Community Development Block Grant funding to benefit primarily low-to-moderate income individuals in the city by providing housing improvement activities; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Roanoke Rapids City Council certifies it will meet all federal regulatory and statutory requirements of the State of North Carolina Community Development Block 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 Community Development Block Grant-Neighborhood Revitalization Program in order to provide housing improvement activities benefitting primarily low-to-moderate income individuals in the city.

Adopted this the 8<sup>th</sup> day of November 2023, in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

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Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2023.17 authorizing submission of an application to the NC Department of Commerce for a Community Development Block Grant Neighborhood Revitalization funding program.

<b>New Business</b>
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**Resolution Honoring Gilbert Wilson Chichester and Naming the Library in His Memory**

Mayor Doughtie stated they still miss Mr. Chichester. He was a voice of wisdom on this Council. He did not say a lot, but when he opened his mouth, the things that came out of it said a lot in a few words. It was a sad day when they lost him. This is a chance to memorialize him for years to come.

He read and presented the following resolution to Mrs. Stacy Chichester and Ms. Terri Chichester.

*City of Roanoke Rapids*

**RESOLUTION HONORING GILBERT WILSON CHICHESTER  
AND NAMING THE LIBRARY IN HIS MEMORY**

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor, City Council, staff, and citizens were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Gilbert Wilson Chichester, who was born in Halifax County on January 5, 1947 and passed away on February 5, 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, Gilbert Wilson Chichester graduated from Aurelian Springs High School and served in the United States Air Force prior to earning his undergraduate degree at North Carolina Wesleyan University and furthering his education at University of Richmond T. C. Williams School of Law where he received his Juris Doctor Degree; and

**WHEREAS**, he served as City Attorney from January 2008 until December 2019 providing expert legal services to assist the City in many complex situations with commendable results and thereby gaining the respect and confidence of all the City's officials for his depth of knowledge, sound judgment and high ethical principles.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids that we honor the memory of Gilbert Wilson Chichester, reflecting fondly upon his superior performance as our City Attorney, and by this

resolution name the Roanoke Rapids public library located at 319 Roanoke Avenue the "Chichester Memorial Library" so that the contributions he 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 the family of Gilbert Wilson Chichester and the news media.

**ADOPTED** this 8<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023.

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*Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor*

ATTEST:

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*Traci V. Storey, City Clerk*

Mrs. Stacy Chichester thanked the City for this lasting memory of him. He loved being the City Attorney and loved serving the community here.

Ms. Terri Chichester stated of any building in this community, the library could not have been more appropriate. She thanked the City on behalf of all of the family.

City Manager Traynham reported she had one more resolution for Gilbert Chichester's service to the City that arrived last week from the NC League of Municipalities which was approved during the CityVision Conference last spring. She presented the resolution to Mrs. Chichester and family.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Stainback and unanimously carried to adopt memorial Resolution No. 2023.18 honoring Gilbert Wilson Chichester.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he and Gilbert had this thing. This thing was that he was a snazzy dresser. He always looked at what he was wearing. He wore his tie tonight to commemorate that. He missed him as well.

City Manager Traynham stated they miss him very much and are thankful to still have his family in the community. She hoped they would find the library as a place to remember him and all the research and time Mr. Chichester spent in legal libraries doing what he did best – practicing law. He was committed to everything he did whether at work or at home. She said a naming ceremony would be held at a later date that worked best for the family.

## City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham reminded City Council that this Friday, the City will be observing Veteran's Day and City offices will be closed.

She reported the following upcoming meetings and events:

- HCIA Meeting next week at the Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District. They will be discussing some of the 2024 Legislative Goals.
- The new Pizza Hut is scheduled to open next week on Premier Blvd.
- Christmas on the Avenue – Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>
- Christmas for Kids – Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Christmas Parade – Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2 p.m.

City Manager Traynham thanked Lowe's Home Improvement and Lowe's Distribution for the 25 volunteers, plants, mulch, and such for the landscaping project at the Kirkwood Adams Civic Center on October 27, 2023. She was pleased with the efforts that have gone into that project. She also thanked City staff who have put in hundreds of hours to make the Kirkwood Adams Civic Center look new again with power washing and painting.

She called upon Police Chief Guyant to give an update on a special program that is being initiated by the Police Department with some fundraising efforts.

Chief Guyant introduced a program called Project Lifesaver. The Police Department is working with the community to raise funds to pay for this program. Project Lifesaver is an international organization. There is large population that has autism, dementia, Alzheimer's, down's syndrome and PTSD along with other related physician diagnosed cognitive conditions. In February, there was an autistic juvenile that went missing from Madison Street. In July, on Webb Hill Street there was adult male with dementia that was missing for a good 24 hours before they found him. This past weekend they had an adult male with cognitive issues from Madison Street that went missing that was found about 8 hours later. There have been several incidents in the county involving adults and children. While he was with the Sheriff's Department, there was an individual from Enfield with dementia that went missing two days before Christmas and he has never been found. With these individuals the delay in finding or locating them, their chances of survival go down tremendously.

He stated when he came onboard with the City he was interested in trying to do something with Project Lifesaver. By chance, Sgt. Joey Spragins came to him about this idea. They have been talking and working on this. Sgt. Spragins is the head of



the Police Club, which is a non-profit organization. They have decided to try and seek private money from the community to raise funds to pay for Project Lifesaver that could help people in the Roanoke Valley, not just Roanoke Rapids.

Chief Guyant made a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation included photos of the bracelet they would wear called a transmitter. It can be worn on the wrist or ankle. There is a receiver that hones in on the signal from the transmitter that is on the individual. The sooner they find out about a missing individual, the sooner they can get to the location where they were last seen. From the ground it works within a one-mile radius. From the air/helicopter, it works from a 3 to 5-mile radius.

He said they were seeking funds to get their own Project Lifesaver kit for this area. He presented a map showing a large area where Project Lifesaver is not covered. Emporia, Virginia was the closest one to Roanoke Rapids. The purpose is to help communities in Halifax and Northampton counties to have a resource for locating people that have a tendency to wander due to having cognitive impairments, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, PTSD, autism and other mental health-related concerns. There are two goals to this program: to streamline search and rescue procedures and to save lives. This device has been around for 20 years and has countless examples of saving lives and it is time to bring it to this area.

Chief Guyant reported the costs for the program. The initial kit is \$4,500 as a one-time fee. It includes two receiver devices, two transmitters (bands), two-day basic operator training for seven officers, and an instructor course where they can have instructors within the agency to train other officers to use the devices. Additional costs associated include \$1,800 for someone from Project Lifesaver to come train the seven officers and instructors. Each additional transmitter (band) costs \$345. If they raise \$6,300, they would be able to purchase the kit and training. Then they need to raise funds to get the transmitters for the individuals.

He said East Tenth Street Christian Church had their Harvest Day Festival where they had a pie in the face competition to raise money. They were able to raise almost \$400 in an hour for Project Lifesaver. He has reached out to the Chamber of Commerce and he plans to reach out to another organization tomorrow night. The Police Department is strongly wanting the community to get involved in raising funds for this particular project. This is a community thing, not a city thing. It needs to involve Halifax and Northampton counties. They want to be the one that spearheads this and gets it going. He played a short video for City Council and the public on Project Lifesaver.

Chief Guyant stated there is a huge void in this area. This is an international organ-

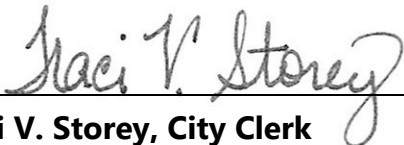
ization. The Police Department is pushing this fundraising effort through the Police Club. This is a community thing to raise funds for this equipment so they can save lives.

**Other Business/Adjournment**

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee recognized Warren Keith Bell who will be his replacement on City Council representing District 3. He believes he will be a great Councilman and will come in running.

Mayor Doughtie congratulated everyone who was successful in their bid to be elected or re-elected. He said they looked forward to Mr. Bell coming on in December. He stated Mr. Bell had some extremely large shoes to fill. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee has been here a long time and has been a real asset to the community. He is a good thinker, a good listener, and a good doer. City Council will miss him very much.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Smith, and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

  
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Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

**Approved by Council Action on: December 5, 2023**