



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, February 19, 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)
Carol H. Cowen)
Suetta S. Scarbrough)
Wayne Smith)

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
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

Absent: None

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 Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for February 19, 2019 as presented.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Cowen and unanimously carried to approve the February 5, 2019 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as written.

New Business

Roanoke Electric Authority Revolving Loan

Finance Director Etheridge reported the City has been selected to receive a \$167,000, 0.00% interest, 10 year loan from the Roanoke Electric Authority's Revolving Loan program. The proceeds received, once accepted, are slated for use on remaining public services equipment that has not been purchased year-to-date. This equipment includes two pickup trucks (for Public Works, Parks & Recreation), two police vehicles for PACE program, and a police radar trailer.

Councilman Smith asked City Manager Scherer if the budget amendment needed to be amended in reference to the purchase of equipment - one truck for Public Works and one truck for Parks & Recreation. City Manager Scherer replied first Council needs to approve the Roanoke Electric Authority loan and if so then they can make changes as needed without any amendments here.

Councilman Smith asked Attorney Chichester if Council approves the ordinance 2019.01 as written, can they change it later on. Attorney Chichester replied if Council approves it, it can be amended later, but it may require Council action.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if Councilman Smith was referring to what would be purchased for the budget ordinance itself. Councilman Smith replied yes, the purchases. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated a 0% interest loan was always good so that equates to approximately \$16,000 per year. Finance Director Etheridge confirmed that it would be an annual payment of \$16,000-\$17,000.

Councilman Smith asked Finance Director Etheridge if there was any issue in the budget with this. She replied no, the reason they were bringing this budget amendment to Council was because these are additional funds. This will amend the budget so they can continue with these purchases.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the attached budget amendment of \$167,000 (Ordinance No. 2019.01) to accept the Roanoke Electric Authority loan.

Land Donation by JAECO Properties, Inc.

City Manager Scherer said JAECO Properties, Inc. has offered to donate several pieces of property to the City. The largest parcel, #0911455, is adjacent to Ledgerwood Park and could be used for additional recreational facilities such as ball fields or playground areas. The other smaller parcels would be advantageous to the Public Works Department for such things as unrestricted access to City drainage ditches and Chockoyotte Creek, improving alley access, or an equipment storage site. Almost all of the smaller parcels are considered to be not suitable for building any housing or similar structures. The Recreation Advisory Committee reviewed the parcel #0911455 adjacent to Ledgerwood Field and unanimously voted to recommend acceptance of the parcel for use in future recreational opportunities on that site. JAECO Properties, in return for these parcel donations, is asking for the City to obtain an appraisal suitable to them for tax purposes, along with deed preparation.

Councilman Smith asked if all the parcels would be included in one deed. City Manager Scherer replied that was his understanding. He was waiting for an estimate from a local attorney for that.

Mayor Doughtie asked Attorney Chichester if the City could not get an appraisal that was satisfactory, do they have an out. Attorney Chichester replied yes and recommended that the motion include, "subject to proper evaluation of the property." He stated until the deed is transferred the City does not own the property and otherwise not obligated to accept the property. With a deed of gift, the grantee does not own the property until they actually accept the deed.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to accept seven (7) parcels of land being donated to the City of Roanoke Rapids by JAECO Properties, Inc. subject to proper appraisal.

Amendment to the Rules of Procedure of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

City Manager Scherer said a draft amendment to Section 5, Public Address to the Council of the Rules of Procedure of the Roanoke Rapids City Council has been prepared for your review and consideration. The primary purpose of this amendment is to limit the time per topic of the Public Comment Period for both "unscheduled" and "scheduled" comment as well as replacing the word "address" to "comment" reflecting what it is really called. He added Council can still allow for further discussion on the topic if they so choose.

Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt the amendment to Section 5 of the Rules of Procedures of the Roanoke Rapids City Council.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer stated since yesterday was President's Day, my report ties into the innovative way our administration continues to find ways to meet our mission statement of providing effective services to our citizens in an efficient and cost-effective manner and Abraham Lincoln.

He said Abraham Lincoln understood at the beginning of his presidency the country was not prepared for such a formidable threat as an armed insurrection. He knew that he would virtually have to rebuild and reorganize his government and its armed forces. Change was imminent and it needed to take place immediately.

He stated Lincoln facilitated this change by creating an atmosphere of entrepreneurship that fostered innovative techniques. In doing so, he not only got things moving, he also gained commitment from a wide array of individuals who were excited at the prospect of seeing their ideas implemented. He adopted a "more than one way to skin a cat" attitude.

City Manager Scherer said Lincoln showed that everyone, from the lowest ranking to the president, can contribute to the nation's success. And even during his most difficult times, he continued to call on his subordinates to implement new ideas and win while learning. Lincoln realized he needed to create a climate of risk-free entrepreneurship necessary to foster effective innovation.

He said our administration has continued to be innovative in finding ways to provide effective services while being frugal in our spending and use of resources. The department managers are always looking for "another way to skin that cat" in their operations and always soliciting new ideas from each other and their employees. As we begin to prepare our draft budget for City Council's review, I'm confident you will continue to see this spirit of entrepreneurship in what the departments request and how they intend to use those funds.

He reported he was working with department managers to revise the monthly data reports they provide them, to make them more relevant and begin tying them to performance measurement outcomes for the departments.

He highlighted a couple of important upcoming events are the 2nd Annual Child Abuse Awareness March on March 2nd, organized by Elijah Lee, and the Jo Story Senior Partnership Stew and Sandwich Dinner on February 28th at the Kirkwood Adams Community Center beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Councilman Smith said they had discussed in a previous meeting about changing the department reports to the first meeting of the month. He asked City Manager Scherer if he had talked with the department heads about that. He replied he had, but would rather let them get the most relevant report to provide Council and then they can determine when the best time was to present it to them. He was trying to cut those reports down which would allow them to give the reports at the first meeting of the month.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge gave the following financial report for the month ending January 31, 2019.

- During the month, the Finance Department issued 95 purchase orders, wrote 83 payroll checks, processed 322 direct deposit vouchers and 327 accounts payable checks.
- The operating statement for the month of January shows the General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$9,869,749. The percentage of actual monies collected of adopted budgeted figures total 54.7%. Year to date expenditures totaled \$9,860,894. The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures total 54.6%. After the month of January, 58.38% of the budget year has been completed. As a result, year to date revenues exceeded expenditures by \$8,854.70.
- Operating Cash and Investment reserves are still critical in offsetting revenue shortfalls at the beginning of the fiscal year; as well as continuing operations for the remainder of fiscal year 2018-2019.
- Tax Department staff completed the required annual 2018 Municipal Certification for Property Tax valuations report and submitted to the NC Department of Revenue during January.
- Finance Director completed and submitted the regulatory semi-annual LGC-203 cash and investments report to the Local Government Commission.
- The City Manager and the Finance Director are already discussing budget planning for FY19-20, and budget guidance will be forthcoming.

City Manager Scherer called Council's attention to the second page of the finance report. This demonstrates some of the new changes they are implementing. This report will begin to report prior year to date numbers. This will allow them to easily compare how the City is doing from year to year. Finance Director Etheridge added they would also see notes on variances of prior year over current year.

Councilman Smith noticed they had not had any surplus items and asked if the City had any. City Manager Scherer said they did have some surplus items that had been put on GovDeals.com but so far have not been purchased yet.

Mayor Doughtie stated he felt it was worthwhile to show in the report the ad valorem, sales tax and motor vehicle tax collections because that was monies that change a lot.

Departmental Reports

Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Kearney presented the Janaury report. She reported the department did not receive any applications because they did not have a lot of job openings.

She announced at the present time, they are advertising for the following:

- Police Officer
- Senior Equipment Operator at Public Works
- Code Enforcement Officer

She reported interviews have already been conducted for the Code Enforcement Officer. They are currently looking into what certifications he would be able to get with the experience he has now, before they make an offer. The Senior Equipment Operator is a vacancy due to an employee who has been with the City for 30 years that will be retiring the end of this month.

She encouraged Council and citizens to check Spectrum Channel 193, they will see a lot of upcoming events in the area including activities of the City's departments.

She has completed the NC League of Municipalities' Fringe Benefits survey this month and is currently working on the OPEB report which is what Cavanaugh McDonald used as part of the City's audit processing.

Councilman Smith asked what was the Assistant Chief of Logistics. She replied it was an Assistant Fire Chief position. It has been changed to Operations and that title was changed a long time ago, but they have changed it back to Assistant Chief of Operations. This position would handle scheduling, repairs on vehicles and training coordinator.

Police

Interim Police Chief Martin presented the department's January report. The department will be participating in the 2nd Annual Child Abuse Awareness March on March 2nd. He has reached out to Elijah Lee and the Roanoke Rapids Police Department would be part of this endeavor that this young man has taken upon his shoulders. They want to show him that they support his fight against child abuse.

He reported the department has posted a second position with the PACE Team this week. They have one position that has been filled by Joe Desare. He announced all five (5) of the department's new cars have come in. Captain Vaught will be taking care of getting them to Angier to have them outfitted later this week. He informed them that Roanoke Rapids High School will be hosting a statewide student council gathering next month. He does not have all the details on this as far as the date, but they were looking at 500 people to participate in the event. This number does not include parents and others coming along so this will be an opportunity for the City as well.

He stated officer activity has picked up tremendously in the department. They have been conducting talks at the elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. He noted along with that, morale has picked up. In the month of January, they answered 2,048 calls and the officers have stepped up their foot patrols. They are also taking more effort in patrolling the City's parks, especially Emry Park due to complaints; they are trying to stay on top of that.

Planning & Development

Planning & Development Director Lasky presented the report for January. Throughout the month of January the department was a little short staffed with the illness of Brian Duhadaway, but he is back now working full time and in good health. In the past two weeks he has done more inspections than the total for December and January. Inspection activity right now has been at one of the highest levels which is a good sign.

She reported the projects under construction are the new Sonic which will open in the next 30 days, the Rooney Ridge Apartment development next to El Tenapa and the new retail/restaurant building on Premier Boulevard that will house Jersey Mikes, a mattress store, Great Clips and one other store.

Planning & Development Director Lasky said the Dollar General that has been under site plan review has been appealed. That hearing will be held on Thursday, February 21, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. here in the Lloyd Andrews Building by the Board of Adjustment.

She said it will be a quasi-judicial hearing which is to be conducted much like a court case. She expects the board to render an outcome that evening.

She reported Mr. Shearin, who requested additional time to demolish his home on Monroe Street complied so she will be bringing an ordinance rescission to City Council during the March 5, 2019 meeting. No City funds were expended for the demolition of that home damaged by a fire.

Councilman Smith asked if the hole dug on Becker Drive for the Rooney Ridge Apartments would remain open or would something be put around it. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied it would be a storm water retention system, however right now the underground work is being placed there. It will not remain a very deep hole in the long-term; that is part of the development process. She added they may see a similar one on Premier Boulevard. It is intended to collect the storm water that would be coming off of the site. He asked if it was just during construction and if it will be covered up. She replied it would be to some extent but there will still be storm water facilities in place to continue to catch water; it will not remain a deep hole in the future.

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported crews made good headway on the Chaloner project site. Unfortunately, we are back in a rainy period for the next several days. He said he is still confident at this point that they are on schedule.

He stated he met with Public Works Director Chalker today to work on a plan for additional lighting at the picnic shelter and playground area at Emry Park. That is to go along with Interim Chief Martin's comments about more patrols over there. He said once that plan is in place he will report back to them with more details.

He informed them the Dectron unit which is the dehumidification system at the Aquatic Center will have some maintenance performed. The bearings to the assembly wheel need to be changed. The unit will be down until they can get them changed; this maintenance will not disrupt services at the Aquatic Center.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon announced they currently have youth soccer, softball, baseball and t-ball applications available at TJ Davis Recreation Center. Tryouts for girls' softball is March 9th and March 16th for boys' baseball. The new covered batting cages which is basically a metal building without the sides, will be delivered to Ledgerwood next week. With good weather, construction should take about three weeks for completion. The double batting cage will be located down the first base line of the senior field next to the playground parking lot area. This project

is being funded by the Youth Baseball Association and the construction is being donated by an anonymous donor.

He highlighted the Roanoke Canal Trail Half Marathon which is scheduled for March 30th. He thanked Lance Martin for the great story and coverage on the marathon.

Mayor Doughtie asked if he felt like the City was doing an adequate job in getting the information out to the public letting them know it was time to sign up for youth softball, baseball and t-ball. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied he did. Information is given to the media and it is put on Facebook. He said social media is the way to go and is being done on both the Recreation departments' sites as well as the youth organizations' sites. The department's quarterly program brochure that lists these dates are given to every student in the Roanoke Rapids School District. They also send some for announcements outside of Roanoke Rapids such as KIPP, Halifax Academy and others. He stated he feels they do everything they can. He said for football and baseball they call everybody that played last year to remind them. Marketing can always be a challenge but he thinks they do a good job of it.

Mayor Doughtie asked if every child that signs up gets put on a team. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied yes. Mayor Doughtie asked if they had more children than they could accommodate. He replied no. A lot goes on in putting youth athletics together. The baseball association does a very good job. They take as many kids as they can but once tryouts start there is a draft that goes on. Once that draft is set, the teams are set. From one year to the next, if a kid is 11 years old and in the 11-12 year old age group, then he stays with that same coach and team for that league age group. When new kids come in they are drafted and it's a very fair system. He stated once teams are set it is difficult to add players to any group because of numbers. If they get enough to have another team then they have to get another sponsor and coach. Unfortunately, finding coaches can be difficult; the coaches volunteer a lot of time with the kids.

Councilman Smith added as long as he has been associated with Youth Baseball Association, they have never turned a kid away. Even if they have to put more kids on a team. He said if they have enough for another ball team Todd, who is the president of the association, will not hesitate to put the money up if they don't have a sponsor. If a kid wants to play ball, he is going to make sure they can play. The little league's baseball board of directors are all for the kids. They both agreed it was a good program.

Public Works

Public Works Director Chalker gave the report for the month of January. He said every department in the City utilizes social media every day. They have found out that it is

an instantaneous link to the public. The Public Works department has been using it a lot during leaf season telling the citizens where they are picking leaves up and what they are doing. It has been a tremendous help to his department and he believes all the department heads would agree social media helps them communicate better than ever before.

He announced the new asphalt truck is supposed to be delivered tomorrow morning. This asphalt truck has a different type process that has ever been used in the city or many cities. It sprays an emulsive compound down on the asphalt, then sprays the aggregate on top of it and it is traffic ready in minutes; no cones or barricades needed. When they tested it, the engineer said it would not stay down for two hours, but it is still there. They tested several places in the city and those patches are still holding. They are excited about this and looking forward to putting the truck out there. Once they get insurance and license put on it along with the City logo, they will be putting out asphalt as soon as they can. The two new dump trucks that were approved in the budget are in and are having the dump beds put on the chassis. They should be receiving those in the next few weeks.

Public Works Director Chalker stated next week they will begin repairs to the radio tower behind City Hall. A contractor that was making an asphalt cut in the back alley accidentally damaged conduits to the radio tower. They have two radio vendors that will be doing approximately \$12,000 in repairs. The City is currently working on back-up systems; it has been a seamless back-up and that is how it should work.

He said leaf collection is winding down. They have collected over 150 full loads of leaves. There is a big pile of leaves at the City's leaf and limb site. Now that it is the end of the season, they will begin looking to find people to accept those leaves. One popular use for the leaves is to transport them to the farmers where they land apply them and plow into the soil.

He announced the Doug Love Operation Clean Up is up to 367, 55-gallon bags of trash collected since January 15th. He has noticed in his travels through the city that the streets are cleaner in some areas and some areas where they picked up trash will be back there the next day. He stated if they could get the public to change their habits, they could clean the city up, until then they will stay at it.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked how the cost for the radio tower repair was being taken care of financially. Public Works Director Chalker said the City bought the building from Dominion and the eight conduits hit were encapsulated in concrete and were not very deep at all; normally electrical lines are at least 18 inches deep. If the City's crew had located everything in the alley like this contractor did, they would have probably done the same thing. They could not see this, it could not be probed so they went on blind faith that it was 18 inches deep and it was not. Because of this, the

City did not feel it was the right thing to do to hold the contractor 100% responsible. The City has filed an insurance claim for the damages portion of the work. There are other utilities involved, they may or may not decide to take that same course of action. Depending on what the adjuster sees once they finish with the damages. A portion of that amount to repair the tower they are going to add a fall restraint device to this tower which it has never had that will bring it up to a more current standard. In the future when a guy is climbing the tower which is very difficult to climb, if he slips he will have a device attached to arrest his fall. The Public Works department will be paying for that exclusively out of their communications budget.

Fire

Fire Chief Patrick presented the report for January. They started the month out with a departmental meeting. With him coming on as the new Fire Chief they had some things they wanted to change with the operations. They brought forth some new direction within the department and set some new goals. Since then they held some promotions. The former Deputy Fire Marshal, Wes Hux was promoted to Deputy Chief. Former Battalion Chief Richard Cook was promoted to Assistant Chief of Operations (formally Logistics).

He reported the department responded to 164 emergency calls of service throughout the month with an average response time of 4.48 minutes. Firemen were engaged in a total of 515.50 man-hours of training. He said a lot of that training was conducted at the Hale Plumbing site by Manning Elementary School. They held some ventilation and hose advancements training. They also conducted 40 inspections in the month.

Fire Chief Patrick said some of the off duty firemen assisted Angel's Closet on a Saturday with their monthly bag sale. They usually split proceeds with them which enables them to hold their Christmas dinner every year. The Honor Guard participated in two of the department's retired firefighter's funeral services for Junior Jordan and Forest Carpenter. They also had their annual Firemen's Relief Board Meeting. He announced the department completed their annual physicals passing with 100%.

Main Street

Main Street Director Caudle presented her monthly report. She announced several upcoming events including a free NC Historic Tax Credits Workshop scheduled for Wednesday, February 27th sponsored by Main Street with the State Historic Preservation Office. There will be two sessions at 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. that will offer the same information regarding the federal and state income producing tax credits and the state non-income producing or residential tax credits. Both of the free workshops will be held at the Counsel-Rye Lodge (log cabin), 521 Roanoke Avenue.

The series is geared towards realtors, property investors, contractors and historic property owners. It can be a valuable marketing tool for realtors considering the city has over 1,100 properties within historic Roanoke Rapids that could be eligible for these credits. She encouraged everyone to attend.

She also announced on Saturday, March 16th they will be doing a new progressive dinner style event in uptown Roanoke Rapids called the Shamrock Supper Stroll. It is a ticketed event that will include two appetizers, an entree, and two desserts with drink pairings at five businesses along the 900 and 1000 block of Roanoke Avenue. Tickets are \$30 each or \$55 per couple. Tickets are available through Main Street Director Caudle or any of the participating locations. The event is limited to 100 people so she encouraged everyone to get their tickets early.

Main Street Director Caudle reported that Main Street Roanoke Rapids has earned National Accreditation for the 5th year. Less than 50% of the state Main Street programs earn this designation so it is a good reflection on the organization and its processes that are in place to revitalization downtown.

She informed them all thirteen wayfinding signs have been installed across the city the first week in February. They still have a little work to complete including removing some of the old wayfinding signage points of interest. They hope to have those removed in the next few weeks. They will work with the tourism authority to complete the coordinating signs to get people to those final points of interest. Chockoyotte Park would be an example. They have a new sign on Old Farm Road Extension signing them right to Chockoyotte Park but do not have a sign directing them left to the park itself so they are working on that now. They hope to have that completed in the next few months.

She updated Council of some changes on the Avenue streetscape and resurfacing project from the NCDOT District Office. They are letting a contract in March for concrete work that will include the mid-block crossing in the 1000 block of Roanoke Avenue and the ADA compliance updates at each crosswalk along Roanoke Avenue which is coming from federal funds. Once they get those bids in, they are hoping to hire one or multiple subcontractors to complete this work. It needs to be done before they mill and fill the asphalt with the resurfacing project. She said they did not have a definite timeline outside of them letting the contract in March. Once that is complete and they have a timeline in place, she will share that information with them. When the concrete work is complete that is when they will bring Rose Brothers in to do the mill and fill project which will occur at night. They will pull the asphalt up and immediately put the new asphalt down. She said she did not have a date for the resurfacing since they will be doing the concrete work first, but as these pieces fall

into place and NCDOT gives information to them, she will share it with them and the general public.

Main Street Director Caudle said they were fortunate that the City and its departments have a seamless and cohesive partnership with not only the state but the division DOT directors so it has made this process seamless to find out information. She asked for their patience as they continue to navigate through this project, but in the end it should be a great thing for the Avenue. She added the high visibility crosswalks should be the last piece of the resurfacing project. All of this should be completed by the end of this calendar year.

Other Business/Council Comments

Councilman Smith asked City Manager Scherer if he had heard about them starting on Premier Boulevard yet. He replied he has not heard anything new on that project and called on Public Works Director Chalker.

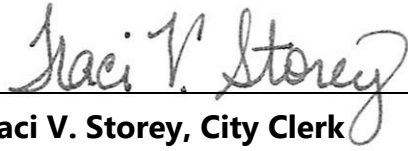
Public Works Director Chalker said if he was talking about the Premier Boulevard extension to Hwy. 125, there was equipment on the ground. He and Fire Chief Patrick were discussing prior to the meeting that they have achieved a permit to burn some of the materials they will clear out along the way. The biggest obstacle out there is the bridge that is going to be required to cross Chockoyotte Creek and is probably the largest expense of the project. Even though they will begin work on both sides, the bridge will be the benchmark on how well they are moving along.

Councilman Smith asked if they had to get a burning permit before they could start. Public Works Director Chalker said they did not have to, but there were several things they could do with the trees and brush they will clear. They have requested permission to burn it. This happens quite often in development when there is a large amount of trees or limbs; they would rather burn it on site and haul it somewhere else.

Councilman Smith asked if that was something the City approves. Public Works Director Chalker replied no, although they consulted with the City, the City does not hold the approval of that. It was up to the NC Forestry Service along with the Division of Environmental Quality.

Fire Chief Patrick added they have started clearing out there. He said NCDOT contacted him basically for a heads up about it. One of the biggest concerns was the possibility of smoke on the interstate so he believes it is still in the air whether they would burn it or not.

There being no further business, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: March 5, 2019