



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, December 5, 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 (*Outgoing*)
Wayne Smith, Mayor Pro Tem (*Newly Appointed by Council*)

Sandra W. Bryant)
Rex Stainback)
Curtis Strickland)
W. Keith Bell)

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, Interim Planning & Development Director
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. There being no conflicts, a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda as presented.

Installation of Newly Elected & Re-Elected Council Members

Mayor Doughtie called upon Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Brenda Branch to

administer the Oaths of Office for the newly elected and re-elected City Council members.

Judge Brenda Branch administered the Oaths of Office to re-elected Councilwoman Sandra W. Bryant and Councilman Rex Stainback as well as newly elected Councilman Warren Keith Bell.

Special Recognitions

Mayor Pro Tem Carl Ferebee

Mayor Doughtie read and presented the following resolution to former Mayor Pro Tem Carl Ferebee:

City of Roanoke Rapids

RESOLUTION HONORING CARL FEREBEE

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this City Council should pay tribute to those exceptional citizens who have distinguished themselves through their impeccable service to the citizens of Roanoke Rapids; and

WHEREAS, Carl Ferebee was born on August 1, 1953 in Moyock, North Carolina; he is a graduate of Joseph P. Knapp High School and Elizabeth City State University; he has resided in Roanoke Rapids since 1979; and

WHEREAS, with a great interest in the welfare of his community, Carl Ferebee began his public service with the City of Roanoke Rapids in 1988, serving on the Roanoke Rapids Area Planning Board for 10 years, six of those as Chairman, and he also served on numerous boards and committees; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, Carl Ferebee was elected to his first of six consecutive terms as a Roanoke Rapids City Council Member representing District 3, a minority district established in 1991. Carl served as Council-appointed Mayor Pro Tempore since February 2008. He was also the Council Liaison on the Roanoke Rapids Library Advisory Committee, the Council Representative on the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments Board, and the NC League of Municipalities' Board of Directors and Finance & Legislative Action Committee, and the League's affiliate group the North Carolina Black Elected Municipal Officials; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, Carl Ferebee announced he would not seek a new term as District 3 Councilmember after 24 years of service and now commemorated the longest-standing elected official in the city's history. Carl Ferebee's colleagues and fellow residents of the third district assure that he will not only be greatly missed, but will also leave behind a superior standard of service to the public that will be hard to equal; and

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Members of the Roanoke Rapids City Council, on behalf of themselves, the citizens, and City Employees, hereby express their deep gratitude and commendation to Carl Ferebee upon his retirement from Roanoke Rapids elected office and sincerely wish him, his wife Donna, and their family much happiness in the next phase of his life.*

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution be presented to Carl Ferebee and a copy of this resolution be spread upon the minutes of this meeting and to the news media.*

ADOPTED this 5th day of December, 2023.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilman Smith, and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2023.19.

Mayor Doughtie also presented former Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee with a clock plaque for his 24 years of service.

Mr. Ferebee said it had been a pleasure to serve the City of Roanoke Rapids. Sometimes you do some things and ask yourself if you would you do it again and his answer was yes. There have been some times that were tough. At the end of the day, he hopefully has been a voice for those that did not have a voice. He thanked them for working with him and has enjoyed working with them. He stated he was not totally finished yet.

Election of Mayor Pro Tempore

Mayor Doughtie opened the floor for nominations for Mayor Pro Tempore.

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Bell and unanimously carried to nominate Councilman Wayne Smith as Mayor Pro Tem.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilman Strickland, and unanimously carried to approve the November 8, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes as drafted.

New Business

Consideration of Budget Ordinance to Purchase Fire Equipment

Fire Chief Patrick reminded City Council about the new fire trucks the City ordered about a year ago. It looks like they will get one of the trucks sooner than anticipated. They have been notified that one of the trucks will be delivered in January. They need to move forward with purchasing the equipment to go on the truck because some of the items will take 20 weeks to receive. He noted that they would not have to order as much equipment for one of the trucks because they will be taking the equipment off the truck it will be replacing.

City Manager Traynham added they expect the \$150,000 to cover everything without any surprise increases. They do not believe all of it will be used but wanted to have a little contingency due to any price fluctuations.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith asked if this money was already in this year's budget. City Manager Traynham replied no. He asked where the funds would come from. She replied the unassigned fund balance. That has been the plan since they ordered the fire trucks. She recalled it was discussed back in 2022.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith asked what would this bring the City's fund balance to minus the \$2 million they plan to pay on the Theatre. City Manager Traynham said she did not know the exact figure, but they closed out the fiscal year with a 47% unassigned fund balance. He asked if that fund balance included the \$2 million. She replied no it did not.

Finance Director Johnson reminded City Council that one of the fire trucks was a grant so the City is due approximately \$300,000 back once they receive that truck. Fire Chief Patrick added they should receive \$357,000 upon the delivery of the second truck.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith confirmed that would be in the FY 2024-2025 budget. Fire Chief Patrick said that was correct unless the truck comes in earlier like this truck. The last he was told by the salesman was the second truck would be ready in August.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith asked what kind of items they anticipated purchasing for emergencies. Chief Patrick replied fire hose/nozzles, hand tools, power tools, radios, and thermal imaging cameras. Councilman Smith stated he saw those items listed and asked what items were included in the "other items which are needed to effectively respond to emergencies." Chief Patrick said whatever they normally put on the truck.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith asked if they were talking about rescue equipment. Chief Patrick replied there would be some rescue equipment.

Mayor Doughtie asked when he would need to spend this money. Chief Patrick replied the sooner the better to get the equipment ordered. The fire hose is one of the items that is expected to take the longest to get. He has heard there was a 20-week turnaround.

Councilman Bell asked if the fire truck was a stripped-down model and they add things to it as they get it. Chief Patrick said normally they order the fire truck in general which comes with the fire pump, lights, etc. Then they have to order all the equipment to be put on the fire truck separately. He said it could be done all in one package but normally some salespeople will sell equipment for different prices. They try to get the most bang for their buck and be as cost-effective as they can. They place orders with different vendors to do that.

Councilman Bell asked how soon would the City receive the reimbursement from FEMA for the second truck. Chief Patrick replied in the past when the City has received grants from FEMA, the turnaround has been a couple of weeks. Although he was not sure with this amount of money. City Manager Traynham assured City Council that Finance Director Johnson would be on top of it. She said it can depend on the federal timeline of submitting requisitions and their reimbursement process.

Chief Patrick stated the City has already received one draw from the second truck in the amount of \$119,000 when they placed the order for it.

Councilman Strickland asked Chief Patrick since the lead time for the fire hose is 20 weeks and the truck will be here in January, does that mean it will be four months before the truck would be operable. Chief Patrick said once they get in the equipment, they will have some things installed at the dealership which is in Rocky Mt. The rest will be installed/mounted by the fire department. They are hoping the fire hose will come in sooner so they can get the truck in service sooner than later.

City Manager Traynham added the adoption of the budget ordinance is necessary for them to place the order.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith asked if the emergency equipment included Hurst power tools. Chief Patrick replied there will be some power tools; not necessarily Hurst. Mayor Pro Tem Smith stated he was worried that they may be getting into heavy duty rescue.

City Manager Traynham stated that was not the intent, it is primarily for the responsiveness in emergencies.

Mayor Doughtie asked if the new truck was going to have any additional equipment that the old truck did not have. Chief Patrick replied no, it will have the same equipment that the current fire engine has at Station No. 2. It will be battery operated, not hydraulic.

**Ordinance No. 2023.16
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, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES

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| Fund Balance – Fire Department - Equipment for one (1) Fire Truck | <u>\$150,000.00</u> |
| Project Revenues – To Fund Increase to Fire Equipment Budget | \$150,000.00 |
| FUND PROJECT TOTAL | \$150,000.00 |

SECTION 2. The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES

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|--|---------------------|
| Funding to General Fund – Fire Department - Equipment for one (1) Fire Truck | <u>\$150,000.00</u> |
| Project Expenditures - To Fund Equipment Budget Expenditures | \$150,000.00 |
| FUND PROJECT TOTAL | \$150,000.00 |

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2023.16 in the amount of \$150,000 to purchase fire equipment for the new fire truck.

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| City Manager's Report |
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City Manager Traynham stated they were coming off a very busy weekend welcoming and preparing the city for the holidays. Both Christmas on the Avenue held Friday

evening and the parade on Sunday were well attended. She acknowledged and thanked City staff for their hard work and diligence because decorating and getting things ready takes a lot of team effort. Christmas lights bring a lot of joy to many in the community. She wished everyone a safe and blessed holiday season. She thanked staff for their dedication and in providing a safe Christmas parade with all the logistics and planning which starts months ahead of time.

She announced the BARC Christmas Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, December 13th from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. City facilities will be closed temporarily to allow all employees to participate in the service awards (based on years of service) and luncheon. City Council is also invited to attend the luncheon.

City Manager Traynham acknowledged Kristyn Anderson with the Planning Department. She has been with the City for ten years. She stated Ms. Anderson was her right hand in the Planning Department for a long time. She announced Ms. Anderson would be serving as the Interim Planning Director probably for the remainder of the fiscal year until they can assess the department's needs moving forward.

She stated the next City Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 19th. So far, the agenda will include a CDBG public hearing for the 2020 grant closeout and the presentation of FY 2022-2023 audit from the City's auditor Greg Redman.

City Manager Traynham reported she and Finance Director Johnson met with a few different financial advisors in the past month or so about what to do with the \$2 million from the sale of the Roanoke Rapids Theatre. All three of them advised the City was doing the right thing by keeping the money in the City's NC Cash Management investment account. They suggested in the spring to look at some other options as interest may begin to change at the federal level. The City is doing well revenue wise keeping the money in the NC Cash Management account earning interest as a revenue source for the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith asked if they had talked with the people that normally handle the Theatre debt with Bank of America. City Manager Traynham replied they have spoken with the advisors who have worked with the City since the financing package originated, not directly with Bank of America. They advised the money was in the right place to earn interest right now, but to look at it again in the spring. As interest rates come down, that would be a good time to negotiate with Bank of America. If the City were to refinance the current debt, the interest rate would exceed the 2.54% rate the City is locked in on.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith stated he was not suggesting refinancing the debt. He would like to see the money go towards the Theatre debt; he wants the debt on the Theatre to disappear. He did not want the money to be spent on something else. City Manager Traynham said with the current revenue income coming in from the interest earned by it being in the savings account is covering the City's quarterly obligation.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith said he did not mind it staying in the savings account earning the interest. If they start dropping the interest rates, he would be interested in paying on the debt. City Manager Traynham replied absolutely and staff will not take any action without City Council's involvement.

Mayor Doughtie recalled City Manager Traynham saying they would need to check and make sure there were no prepayment penalties or anything of that nature. City Manager Traynham said it has matured so the City could pay it off early without penalty at this point, but if the City were to send \$2 million to Bank of America tomorrow, the payment would be applied to the backend of the loan. They would rather responsibly have it apply to principal only, not interest.

Mayor Doughtie stated they had also discussed "pleading their case" about what good stewards the City has been in paying that money when it was so difficult in hopes Bank of America would shed some grace on them and give them some write-down on that money.

City Manager Traynham said they have discussed with one of the financial advisors who has been with them since the origination of the Theatre loan about possibly making a presentation to City Council in January.

Mayor Doughtie said regarding the change in the staging of the parade, it was an innovative move and had to be done quickly and on the spot. When he was informed the City could not use the mill parking area to stage a number of participants (35 units), he contacted the City Manager where she said it was a big problem but they would get it done. He did not know how they did it but everybody had a place to land, they had the parade and everything went on without a hitch. He was thankful to all the departments and how they came together and made it happen.

Mayor Doughtie also acknowledged Interim Planning Director Anderson and said he was proud to say that people tell him how much she helps them when they come into City Hall/Planning Department. That is some of the best advertisement they can get for the City, especially when they come to planning. A lot of people say she does a good job even if they can't do exactly what they want to do because she still tries to help them by suggesting another alternative. He thanked her for that.

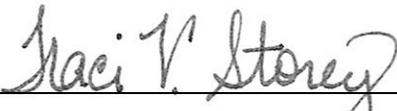
Mayor Doughtie said they had a lot of people in need in the community. There are people and churches willing to help. He suggested helping those in need, especially those with children during the holiday season. A child should not wake up on Christmas morning and not have something to look forward to.

City Manager Traynham said she wanted to clarify the issue with the WestPoint Stevens property for the parade staging. The City was not told they could not use the property. They found out on Saturday that the transfer of ownership occurred on Friday. They knew it would be highly unlikely the City would be able to get the new owner's permission to use that property within that short period of time. That was primarily the issue.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith thanked all the employees for the work they did on the parade. He received a lot of compliments.

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



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: December 19, 2023