



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

Present: Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

W. Keith Bell)
Sandra W. Bryant)
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
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director

Absent: Wayne Smith, Mayor Pro Tem
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief
Tony Hall, Main Street Development Director
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Kristyn Anderson, Interim Planning Director

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. 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, motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant, and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda as presented.

Special Recognitions

Public Works Department (Retirement of Walter Johnson)

Mr. Johnson was unable to attend, therefore the item was tabled until a later date.

Police Department

Police Chief Guyant recognized Ms. Danielle Donnelly for her heroic act of citizenship. He stated he had an interest in Theodore Roosevelt and speeches such as that. One of the main reasons was because he was the Police Commissioner for New York City. Mr. Roosevelt gave a speech on April 23, 1910 at Sorbonne University in France. The speech talked about getting involved, not letting evil happen, but to stand up and do something to squash evil. He was primarily talking about Hitler marching through Europe and asking European countries to stand up and put a stop to Hitler's reign of terror in WWI. The speech gave a poignant message and the name of the actual part of the speech was termed, "The Man in the Arena." In this case, it is the woman in the arena. What is so fascinating about this speech is the actual title of the speech was called "Citizenship in a Republic."

Chief Guyant reported on October 12, 2023, Ms. Donnelly who is a citizen of the city notified the Roanoke Rapids Police Department about a conversation she had with a person she knew from Napavine, Washington. During this conversation with an individual she once knew, this subject stated that he had "150 rounds of ammunition" and was going to do a "mass shooting" in Napavine. Captain Jeff Baggett notified the Chief of Police in Napavine, Washington. The Chief of Police, Chief John Brockmueller notified them back that they had made contact with the subject and had verified that he had the ammunition and the means to do what he said he was going to do. They also found some writings that supported what he said he was going to do which was to have a "mass shooting". Ms. Donnelly intervened and saved lives that day. She is a lifesaver and is the epitome of what Roosevelt was talking about the woman in the arena and about citizenship.

He said he was so proud of her for doing this because they talk all the time in his line of work about if you see something, say something, get involved, call Crimestoppers and how rarely that happens. Here they had someone in Roanoke Rapids, NC where one of their citizens stepped up and did the right thing and saved lives.

He thanked Ms. Donnelly for stepping up and doing what a citizen is supposed to do. He presented her with a framed copy of Roosevelt's speech, "The Man in the Arena."

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Jan Morgan

Ms. Morgan said she was here about buildings causing potential injury and safety concerns to the people of the city. The City is aware of this because there are traffic cones in the street and they shortened the Christmas parade so they would not have to go by there. The cones have been there for at least a couple of months. She asked how long do they leave up the cones and when do they step up to do what needs to be done for the city. She was not sure who was responsible, but she did know once the City put up cones to protect people from it and if someone was driving by and the building falls on them, guess who is going to get sued. It's not just who owns the building. Do they not have any responsibility and if they don't, why doesn't the City take possession of it and do something about what is a clear and demonstrated danger which the City has acknowledged because they put the cones out there. It basically says come out and sue me and we're not concerned if it falls on you.

Mayor Doughtie stated they normally do not have discussion for unscheduled public comment, but so many people have raised this issue. He asked if the City Manager or City Attorney would give some insight into the situation.

City Manager Traynham said the Planning Department has completed the notification process to the greatest extent possible with the property owner. Following the process guidelines for it, they could bring an order for demolition to City Council, possibly at the next meeting. The City is moving forward with some things, but the property owner has not tried to remedy the issue themselves. They would have to get the legal paperwork together and they are in that process.

Attorney Davis stated there is a process to this. They can expend City funds to demolish and clean up the property. He recalled a similar issue occurred during his tenure on Roanoke Avenue near the Union Mission. He said this is not something the City can do in every case. The result of the City expending funds for cleaning up a property is the City ends up with a lien for the money it expended to do those things. Many times, the cost of demolishing and hauling the debris away exceeds the value of the property itself. From a practical standpoint, how the City would satisfy that lien and recover the money is difficult to do. He added he did not see where the City would have liability for a condition on a piece of private property. The fact that the City put out cones, he did not see how that exposes them to extra legal liability. The alternative would be that they do not put the cones out. Private owners of property have to maintain their property. That is the case whether it is on Roanoke Avenue or in a residential area. He said there was a process and the City was in that process. The property Ms. Morgan was speaking of is a priority for the City.

Mayor Doughtie said Ms. Morgan asked the question about owners having responsibility. That seems to be an issue with some property owners not maintaining their property. As Attorney Davis said, costs can be extremely expensive due to hazardous materials. They could end up with a \$250,000 demolition bill for a piece of property that is worth much less than that. Some citizens may want their tax dollars spent on something like this while others do not. It is a dilemma that City Council struggles with.

Ms. Morgan said whether it is an absentee owner or local owner, is there any way legally they can take action against other property they may have.

Attorney Davis replied yes, that lien can go against any other property that they own within the municipality of Roanoke Rapids. The problem is that no court has the authority to order someone in a civil case like this to go out to basically indentured servitude or something to satisfy this civil judgement. The costs involved especially with some of these derelict properties creates a gulf that the idea that one of these property owners may be able to bridge that gulf and satisfy the City for the costs to clean it up will probably not happen. There are a lot of things the City has to spend money on in order to maintain the city, which are priorities. Whether a property gets bad enough that they have to do something about it even though they don't like it, that is a decision that has to be made. This is something that comes up and has come up several times in his tenure as City Attorney. He believed it was a good dialogue to have because a lot times people question why something hasn't been done about it.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to approve the January 2, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting minutes as drafted.

New Business

Consideration of Budget Amendment (Library)

Finance Director Johnson presented the following budget amendment:

**Ordinance No. 2024.01
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

Library – 2023-2024 State Aid to Public Libraries & Children’s Program Donations

Project Revenues – Library – State Aid	\$1,374.00
Children’s Program	\$ 612.50
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FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$1,986.50

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

Library – 2023-2024 State Aid to Public Libraries & Children’s Program Donations

Project Expenditures – Library – State Aid	\$1,374.00
Children’s Program	\$ 612.50
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FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$1,986.50

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Strickland and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2024.01 in the amount of \$1,986.50 for the increase in State Aid to Public Libraries and Children’s Program donations.

Consideration of Budget Amendment (Fire Department)

Finance Director Johnson presented the following budget amendment:

Ordinance No. 2024.02
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

Fire Dept. – Donations to the Fire Dept.

Project Revenues – Fire Dept.	\$12,624.00
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$12,624.00

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

Fire Dept. – Donations to the Fire Dept.

Project Expenditures – Fire Dept.	\$12,624.00
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$12,624.00

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilman Stainback and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2024.02 in the amount of \$12,624.00 for donations to the Fire Department.

Consideration of Budget Amendment (Police Department)

Finance Director Johnson presented the following budget amendment:

**Ordinance No. 2024.03
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

Police Dept. – Donations to the Police Dept.

Project Revenues – Police Dept.	\$8,524.80
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$8,524.80

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

Police Dept. – Donations to the Police Dept.

Project Expenditures – Police Dept.	\$8,524.80
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$8,524.80

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Strickland and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2024.03 in the amount of \$8,524.80 for donations to the Police Department.

Consideration of Budget Amendment (Federal Treasury Asset Forfeiture, OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax & Law Enforcement Block Grant)

Finance Director Johnson presented the following budget amendment:

**Ordinance No. 2024.04
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

Fund Balance – Police – Federal Treasury Asset Forfeiture - 16-DEA-624687, Law Enforcement Block Grant, and OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax

Project Revenues - Federal Treasury Asset Forfeiture	\$5,202.49
Law Enforcement Block Grant	\$1,832.62
OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax	\$2,874.65
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$9,909.76

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

Funding to General Fund – Police – Federal Treasury Asset Forfeiture - 16-DEA-624687, Law Enforcement Block Grant, and OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax

Project Expenditures - Federal Treasury Asset Forfeiture	\$5,202.49
Law Enforcement Block Grant	\$1,832.62
OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax	\$2,874.65
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$9,909.76

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilman Bell and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2024.04 in the amount of \$9,909.76 for funds received for Federal Treasury Asset Forfeiture, OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax and a Law Enforcement Block Grant.

Consideration of Resolution Approving Surplus Items

Public Works Director Chalker presented the following resolution requesting City Council to officially declare the items as surplus and authorize the sale by electronic auction which is GovDeals.com.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024.01
Resolution Approving Surplus Items
In accordance with NCGS 160A-270(c) – Electronic Auction

WHEREAS, the Roanoke Rapids City Council desires to dispose of certain surplus property of the City; and

WHEREAS, the following items have been identified as being surplus to the needs of the City:

<u>FLEET #</u>	<u>VIN NUMBER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
F-5	2GKEK18R7VG521748	97 GMC YUKON
P-153	6G1MK5U29CL640453	2012 CHEVY CAPRICE
P-156	2C3CDXAT9DH717716	2013 DODGE CHARGER
P-157	2C3CDXAT0DH717717	2013 DODGE CHARGER
P-158	2C3CDXAT2DH717718	2013 DODGE CHARGER
P-159	2C3CDXAT4DH717719	2013 DODGE CHARGER
P-169	2C3CDXAT7EH100140	2014 DODGE CHARGER
P-28	2B3CL1CT8BH539997	2011 DODGE CHARGER
P-4	2C3CDXAT7EH357850	2014 DODGE CHARGER
P-24	1Y1SK5287XZ444481	99 CHEVY PRISM
K-9 KENNEL PARTS WILL BE SOLD AS A LOT		

WHEREAS, the Roanoke Rapids City Council, at a Regular Meeting on December 13, 2011, adopted Resolution No. 2011.25 authorizing the use of electronic auction services to dispose of surplus property; and

WHEREAS, the necessary agreements with GovDeals, Inc. are in place to utilize the company's electronic auction service to dispose of surplus items;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Roanoke Rapids City Council hereby declares the foregoing list of property to be surplus to the needs of the City, and authorizes disposal of these items by electronic auction (specifically by website: www.govdeals.com) in accordance with NCGS 160A-270(c).

ADOPTED this 16th day of January 2024.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2024.01 to officially declare the items as surplus and authorize the sale by electronic auction.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham said the HCIA meeting will be held next Wednesday, January 24th at 6 p.m. at Scotfield Preserve.

She stated several Council members were registered for the upcoming elected officials training next Thursday and Friday in Rocky Mt. which is sponsored by the UNC School of Government.

She announced the Department Heads will have a mini-retreat next Thursday to discuss some of their goals and opportunities for the upcoming fiscal year. They plan to assess current conditions and look at some long-term goals to think more strategically as they move forward in the budget making. City Council plans to hold a retreat on Wednesday, February 7th. More details and an agenda will be coming soon. Some discussions will be about the Theatre debt and other community needs.

City Manager Traynham stated the City has most of its property insurance with the

NC League of Municipalities. They recently conducted a policy review with Public Works Director Chalker and some of his staff. They may have some additional requirements to ensure the City's liabilities such as with special events and other activities that are hosted throughout the community and on City property.

She announced the kickoff for the Halifax Resolves 250th anniversary will be coming up very soon. It may be part of the City Council's retreat discussions on what the City can do to support that effort.

She reported Stateside Landing, a family apartment complex, is moving in their planning and design with the Planning Department. They intend to develop three buildings consisting of 64 family units near the intersection of Hwy. 158 and Roanoke Avenue. That will be a tax-credit funded project.

Mayor Doughtie asked for an update on the McCrory Building. City Manager Traynham replied she received an email from the property owner yesterday. He is waiting for a Phase II approval with the State Historic Tax Credit Program. They are supposed to have a meeting with the State Preservation Officer for this region in the upcoming weeks. The project is still moving forward.

City Manager Traynham called upon Police Chief Guyant to present some statistics about the community and some of their accomplishments in 2023.

Chief Guyant said he was very proud of his staff; 2023 was a fantastic year. He reported the following:

- Answered 24,000 calls for service last year.
- Handled 1,020 automobile accidents.
- Wrote 400 ordinance violations and 1500+ citations.
- Arrested almost 1,000 people.
- Collected 49 firearms off the street taken from convicted felons.
- Took 800 different reports.
- Saw a 11.33% crime reduction in the city between 2022 and 2023.
- They did this with 17% less staff than they had in 2022.
- 8.5% increase in case closures by arrests and other types of means in 2023 compared to 2022.
- Clearance rate is 81.7%. The national average is 50%.
- Of the 24,038 calls for service, they only had 77 use of force incidences. That is .003% of them having an interaction that has a use of force.

He stated the police department is comprised of men and women that really have dedicated themselves to making this shortage work; they have worked a lot of overtime. They have done a superb job of bringing in some new people. He announced as of tonight, they have only two vacancies. The department is very diverse and inclusive. They are getting to a point where they almost make up the exact amount of population by race that they have in the department. He could not be prouder of the men and women in this department. Next meeting, he will be recognizing some of them for awards they have received. He hears from people that they are seeing their cars more around the city. They did not have the number of armed robberies like everywhere else at Christmas time. It is nothing but sheer professionalism. These men and women are outstanding human beings.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Johnson reported for the period ending December 31, 2023, general fund year-to-date receipts totaled \$10,808,552.99. Year-to-date expenditures totaled \$9,119,902.40. As a result, general fund year-to-date revenues exceeded expenditures by \$1,688,650.59. After the month of December, 47.3% of the budget year has been completed.

She stated the City was in good financial standing for December. The month of December is a higher expenditure month normally due to payment of Christmas and longevity bonuses. She thanked City Council for continuing to fund these payments for City staff.

Other Business/Closed Session

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Bell and unanimously carried to go into closed session to discuss a Personnel Matter as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6).

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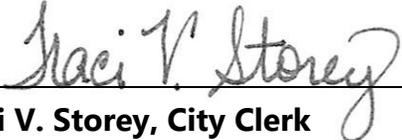
Minute Book Pages 21553 - 21556 contain Minutes and General Account of a Closed Session which have been sealed until such time as public inspection of those minutes would not frustrate the purpose of the Closed Session.

Adjournment

City Council reconvened in open session.

Motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Stainback and unanimously carried to grant a 7% cost-of-living raise to City Manager Traynham effective the next payroll.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Bell and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: February 6, 2024