



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

Present: Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor
Sandra W. Bryant, Mayor Pro Tem

Andy Jackson)
Rex Stainback)
W. Keith Bell)
Curtis Strickland)

Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Carmen Johnson, Finance Director
Harold Phillips, Captain CID
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director
Ashley Thomas, Main Street Director
Kristyn Anderson, Planning & Development Director
Kelly Daughtry, Parks & Recreation Director
Kenneth Hollowell, Fire Marshall

Absent: Lawrence Wiggins, Police Chief
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Doughtie provided the invocation. 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 Bell, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda as presented.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Sammy Dickens

Mr. Dickens stated he had been a resident of Roanoke Rapids for about 40 years. He said his wife was distributing information to City Council on what he was calling, “nightmare of 4th Street and Premier Blvd.” A family member had an automobile accident on August 7th. The first picture depicts eight cars at the intersection, the second picture depicts a car in the middle of the intersection, and the third picture depicts a car trying to get out of the Chick-Fil-A/Starbucks intersection where the accident with his car happened.

He said item 4 was the police report and he believes it is wrong in a couple of ways. Looking at page 5 they can see the damage to his automobile and in the police report they can see the car was hit on the left panel. He wondered how it looked like his car was hit horribly. It doesn't look like it was hit on the left panel so that police report was incorrect. Also, page 6 depicts his car off the road. The person that hit his car knocked it completely off the road. There's a 35-mph speed limit in that zone and he believes that person was speeding. He hasn't seen anything about a witness; he was not an insurance adjuster, and he did not expect them to be an insurance adjuster. He was just saying the police report again was wrong.

Mr. Dickens referred to page 7 and stated this was the real nightmare that is going on out there. The Mayor just said this area is not under the Roanoke Rapids jurisdiction, yet a Roanoke Rapids policeman was called to the accident. He asked why was a Halifax County officer or a NC State Trooper called. There are eighteen (18) ways a vehicle can go at this intersection. There are only two stop signs there; one at Chick-Fil-A and he was pretty sure they put that one up, but he was not sure if the city or county did. There is one on 4th Street. As mentioned earlier, it's a 35-mph zone.

Mayor Doughtie asked Mr. Dickens to wrap it up due to time. Mrs. Dickens said her husband to use her time to continue. Mayor Doughtie allowed it.

Mr. Dickens continued to say that there were two signs between the bridge and Hwy 158, the new road. There is no stoplight or caution light at the intersection and there are no speed bumps. He stated speed bumps were the answer to this or either a 4-way stop sign. Also, there are bushes blocking the view of traffic. They couldn't put a roundabout there; they would have to go back to 2004 when it was under construction. A four-way stop sign would be good there. There is one at Carolina and 5th Street and one at Hamilton and 5th Street. He bets there is more traffic at this intersection in 30 minutes than it is at those two four-way stop signs in 24 hours. Somebody has failed and he did not know if it was the city or the county.

He reported on Hwy. 158 coming around the curves by Logan's and it straightens out, there is a 25-mph sign but there is not another speed limits sign on that highway going out of town. On the opposite side of the highway coming from the bridge there is a 35-mph sign and another 35-mph sign after passing Chick-Fil-A. The same curve coming from the other way is 25 mph. He questioned what happened with that. Something needs to be done out there.

Mr. Dickens said he was not called as the owner of the vehicle. The towing bill was \$1,378 to tow his vehicle away. The towing bill is made out to the Roanoke Rapids Police Department and Bobby Martin who is no longer employed with the City. He reviewed the charges on the bill. He expressed his dismay about the different fees and the high prices of the fees. He thanked them for what they do for the city and appreciated them listening. He hopes he can get some satisfaction to what is going on out there and the city will help him pay this bill.

Mayor Doughtie asked if the street there was maintained by the State or the City. Police Captain Phillips replied it was maintained by the State.

Mayor Doughtie said although the street is maintained by the state, it is within the city limits. It is like Roanoke Avenue; the street is maintained by the state. Captain Phillips stated that area is in the city until the bridge going out of town to Hwy. 125; then it is the county. Mayor Doughtie said that is why a city police officer was called to accident, but since the city does not maintain the road, they do not put up stop signs or put in speed bumps.

Attorney Davis said what the Mayor said is correct and he realizes that area is frustrating. He personally goes through that intersection regularly and it is bad. The city has no control over that intersection. They cannot legally put up stop signs or put in speed bumps; nor is the county empowered to do that because it is a state-maintained road. He believes this issue has come to City Council before and he knows there has been discussions with the state over that intersection, especially since it has expanded down Premier Blvd. Now people are coming in off Exit 171 at higher speeds than they should be. Unfortunately, the city does not have the authority to do that other than asking the state, which has been done before, to reconsider the organization of the intersection. He hates that and understands he was the one harmed by it and that is it frustrating to hear there's nothing they can do. He explained that on state-maintained roads within the city limits, law enforcement's jurisdiction exists as it does at that intersection and issue traffic citations and file police reports. He added if Mr. Dickens has an issue with the police report, he can speak to his insurance company and also speak with the officer. He appreciates Mr.

Dickens bringing this up because it matters to create a record that there is an issue out there.

City Manager Traynham added that after Mr. and Mrs. Dickens met with her at City Hall a week or so ago, she reached out the NCDOT to express the concerns about speed and lowering it and inquired about the process in making that request with NCDOT. Local engineer, Gray Keeter responded that he sent it over to the traffic division and they would get back to her. They are looking at some proactive measures to make some improvements there.

Ruthie Hasty

Ms. Hasty stated she lived on Ransome Street. She moved here 44 years ago when she got married. Her neighborhood was clean and quiet; people worked hard for what they had and took care of it. There is an issue under new business about the house 1407 Forest Street. She reported that for about 15 years there has been no power or water. There's a lot of activity there and a lot of people who live there. There's a lot of foot traffic, cars and trucks, bicycles, skateboards and if people can hang out there, they can. She was sure the police had been called multiple times. To her it's a safety issue for the neighbors. It's a public health issue when you see grown men go out there, drop their pants and do what they need to do. She has a 12-year-old granddaughter that lives with her and her bus stop at the corner of that street, so she has to walk that way to get home. She did not think any of them would want that in your neighborhood and she did not think they would want their children or grandchildren to see that. She wishes something could be done as soon as possible. There is also a house adjoining the property that's been empty for about two years. Mr. Brown's visitors are camping out in the backyard of the empty lot. She believes they are running electricity from another house because the window unit was on this morning, and it has not been on. There have been different window coverings that were off the home when the tenants moved about two years ago so feels someone is going in and out of the house. She spoke to the City Manager two years ago about this and was told the City could not evict the owners. She asked why the City could not make them have water and electricity and clean that filth up. People are just laying on the ground on piles of clothes and hanging out sleeping. She was sure there was a lot of illegal activity going on there, but she does not know that for sure. As a resident, taxpayer and grandmother, she would like to see it bulldozed. Unless something is done these people are going to continue to hang out and get anything they can free and not take care of it. When she has called Public Works to say it is time for a cleanup, they are usually right on it and do a good job with that, but it is a continuous cycle that needs to be cleaned up. She encouraged them to ride by and look at it.

Mayor Doughtie asked Ms. Hasty if she stays in conversation with Code Enforcement and the Police Department to let them know the things she was telling them. Ms. Hasty replied she hasn't lately, but she has in the past. One person would say it was a state issue, the state would say it is the county, and the county would say it was the city.

Mayor Doughtie said he sympathizes with Ms. Hasty; nobody should have to deal with that living in a community.

Ms. Hasty stated they never know if they would break out into a brawl and what would happen after that. They do not care about anything.

Attorney Davis asked Ms. Hasty to stay tuned and not go anywhere. They will get to that agenda item soon and will get some answers.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, and unanimously carried to approve the August 5, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting minutes as drafted.

New Business

Consideration of Budget Amendment (ECU Health AED Grant)

Finance Director Johnson stated the Police Department received an ECU Health AED grant in the amount of \$4,000.00. She presented the following budget amendment for their consideration:

Ordinance No. 2025.26 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 the City Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES

Police Dept. Grant – ECU Health AED Grant
Project Revenues – Police Dept.

\$4,000.00

FUND PROJECT TOTAL

\$4,000.00

SECTION 2. The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES

Police Dept. Grant – ECU Health AED Grant	
Project Expenditures – Police Dept.	<u>\$4,000.00</u>
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	<u>\$4,000.00</u>

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Bell, and unanimously carried to adopt Budget Amendment (Ordinance No. 2025.26) in the amount of \$4,000.00 for an ECU Health AED Grant.

Consideration of SRO Agreement with the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District

Attorney Davis said the draft agreement was placed on the agenda tonight to give City Council an opportunity to review it and circulate it between him as City Attorney and the attorney for the RRGSD regarding School Resource Officers. It is time for them to review the agreement, and they have revised it substantially. He has already received some feedback from Council. The RRGSD board has the draft agreement on their agenda in their meeting tonight to consider. He has spoken with a few of the Council members and believes there may be motion as far as potentially deferring action until the next City Council meeting to what the RRGSD Board's comments are, and he supports that. He stated that this is the legalese of the background agreement between the school and the city regarding the resource officers. Currently, the resource officers are employees of the school district. Their certifications are held by the Roanoke Rapids police department which is functionally how they are able to operate on school premises as law enforcement officers. With school starting next week, this background agreement will have no effect that matters with respect to whether the kids have protection or any kind of liability. It is planning for the future. They would continue on with the language of the old agreement for now so it will not change anything if City Council defers it tonight.

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Jackson, and unanimously carried since the matter is on the agenda of the RRGSD Board meeting tonight, to table the matter until the September 2, 2025, City Council meeting in order to hear what the RRGSD Board decides first.

Consideration of Minimum Housing Order (1407 Forest Street)

Attorney Davis acknowledged Ms. Hasty's comments from earlier. He reported the city has a problem at 1407 Forest Street and it is time for something to happen. He referred to Ordinance 2025.27 enclosed in their meeting packet. The city has discovered this property has not had water and electricity for a while. There are corroborating circumstances based on what the other residents have observed about folks using the restroom outside. There are some other issues that are not addressed in this ordinance. He stated this is the legal avenue the city could use to address it as quickly as possible. There are other legal avenues available to the city for those other issues, but those are more in the civil realm.

He said that based on the minimum housing code violations and if City Council approves the ordinance as drafted, the Code Enforcement Officer will be authorized to order this dwelling vacated effective 12 p.m. on Thursday, August 21, 2025. Until such time, the dwelling is repaired, altered and improved to be able to fully comply with minimum housing code and other aspects such as getting electricity and water on. It does not mean the owner can call and say they have done it. City code inspectors would have to go out and verify that. If they fail to do it again, then the city will deal with that. Until such time it is repaired, if someone goes inside the house that is unfit for human habitation, the ordinance states, "Further occupation or failure to vacate the dwelling shall constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor." The police department will have the authority to arrest and prosecute anyone found there.

Attorney Davis stated he wished in situations like this there was something that was more instant; this is about as close as it comes. He asked City Council to consider the following ordinance.

ORDINANCE 2025.27

ORDINANCE DIRECTING THE CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER TO ORDER THE FOLLOWING DWELLING CLOSED AND VACATED AS IT IS UNFIT FOR HUMAN HABITATION AND THUS INMINICAL TO THE WELFARE AND DANGEROUS AND INJURIOUS TO HEALTH AND SAFETY:

1407 Forest Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC Halifax County PIN: 0902933

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids finds that the dwelling herein described is unfit for human habitation and thereby inimical to the welfare and dangerous and injurious to the health and safety of City residents, and that all of the procedures of the Code of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, have been complied with;

WHEREAS, the owner of this structure has failed to comply with a lawful Order of the Code Enforcement Official to repair, alter or improve the condition of the property within the time therein prescribed; and,

WHEREAS, G. S. §160D-1203 and Sections 152.27 and 152.28 of the Code of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, empowers the City of Roanoke Rapids to seek enforcement when an Order of the Code Enforcement Official is not complied with;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids that:

Section 1. The Code Enforcement Officer is hereby authorized and directed as authorized by §160D-1203 to close and order vacated the unfit dwelling owned by Phillip Dale Brown and located at 1407 Forest Street in the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, until such time as the dwelling is repaired, altered, or improved so as to as to comply fully with the Order of the Code Enforcement Official issued pursuant to the Minimum Housing Ordinance contained in Chapter 152 of the Code of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

Section 2: Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §160D-1203(4), the Code Enforcement Official shall cause to be posted on the main entrance of the dwelling a placard with the following words:

This building is unfit for human habitation; the use or occupation of this building for human habitation is prohibited and unlawful.

Further occupation or failure to vacate the dwelling shall constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor under N.C. Gen. Stat. §160D-1203(4).

Section 3. This Ordinance shall become effective **at 12:00 PM on the first Thursday** after its adoption.

On motion of _____, seconded by _____, the foregoing Ordinance was adopted the 19th day of August 2025.

City of Roanoke Rapids

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Bell, and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2025.27 directing the Code Enforcement Officer to order the dwelling located at 1407 Forest Street to be unfit for human habitation.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham announced on Wednesday, August 20th, City Council will participate in a Strategic Planning Retreat with the Hayes Group that will start at 9 a.m. at the Roanoke Canal Museum on Jackson Street. On Friday, August 22nd, from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m., the Fire Department will host its annual Fire Safety Fair at Kirkwood Adams. There will several community activities and incentives for students. They filled over 100 backpacks with school supplies for students going back to school.

She said community input for strategic planning is being sought right now. She referred to a flyer with link and QR code to complete a survey which is scheduled to close on August 22nd. Earlier today she and staff participated in a technical assistance webinar introduction to the Halifax Horizons Local Economic Development Grant Program. Halifax Horizons has funding available to support projects that spur economic development in various categories. Grant applications are due by October 1, 2025, and awards announced October 9th. The minimum request amount is \$15,000 and maximum award is \$50,000.

City Manager Traynham stated the Main Street Program is again under renewal and kicking off. She referred to the handout created by Main Street Director Thomas who is taking them door to door and starting to meet the main street district merchants and property owners. She has also developed an online tool to help get that registration and contact information. They are asking folks that are interested in locating to the Avenue or have any interest in participating in those functions to complete the form available.

She reported the Parks & Rec department stays busy year-round and athletics continue throughout the year. Schools are returning so they are seeing full use of the fields as well as local soccer and football practices. The tennis season for RRHS has begun and their matches are held on the courts behind TJ Davis Rec Center. As long as the weather remains warm, the splash pad will remain open likely until the end of September. The indoor pool has resumed its Saturday hours now that the outdoor pool has closed. Swimming lessons will held in September along with scuba classes coordinated with the community college.

She reported the following upcoming recreational activities:

- Senior Center will host Happy Hour on August 20th
- Coffee with the Director on August 25th.
- The annual Aging Expo will be held on October 9th at Kirkwood Adams.
- In the upcoming weeks, appointments will be scheduled for Medicare Part D Open Enrollment.
- The Roanoke Canal 5k will be held on September 13th.

City Manager Traynham said for the September 2, 2025, City Council meeting, the Planning & Development Department is drafting revisions to the ordinance to comply with changes in the floodplain mapping and ordinance implementation that comes down from FEMA. Those need to be adopted by September 19, 2025.

She called attention to the list of special event permits in her report. This past Friday, the Carolina Crossroads Amphitheatre held its first show with Jamey Johnson. It was reported they sold over 3,000 tickets and the event went fairly well. City staff coordinated with emergency action plans, so they were very well prepared in advance. Staff will have an after-action review meeting with the owners ahead of their next concert. She stated the anticipation of potential problems went a long way in helping with a successful event.

She reported the Fire Department is conducting its annual CPR and First Aid courses with the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District.

City Manager Traynham announced there are two candidates completing the final hiring process for the Crossing Guard positions. They will be ready to serve for back to school on Monday, August 25th. The school crossing guards will serve at Chaloner Middle School as well as Belmont and Manning Elementary School. She reminded City Council that last year there were a few hiccups about crossing guards where some citizens came to a Council meeting. The City understands there could be some potential changes at Belmont for traffic circulation. With school starting soon, they want nothing but safety for the students and residents as well as facilitate that safe ingress and egress. The Public Works Department recently painted the crosswalks and school crossings around the school. With some pending potential changes coming from a NCDOT traffic study that was completed in September 2024 for Belmont, staff reached out to the school to offer assistance with joint messaging. At this point, they do not know when those changes will be implemented, but they want to try to facilitate them in the safest method possible.

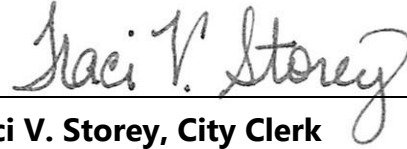
Finance Report

Finance Director Johnson presented the financial report for the month of July 2025. She stated it did not look great, but it is typical for the month of July. She reported the General Fund year-to-date receipts totaled \$97,682.86 and General Fund year-to-date expenditures totaled \$1,824,519.10. She said this is because the City pays all of the insurances upfront and all the one-time annual costs. Typically, in September the City receives the first allotment of Ad Valorem Tax, Sales & Use Tax, Utility Franchise Use Tax and first allocation of Powell Bill.

Mayor Doughtie confirmed the small amount collected is in-line with what it normally is. Finance Director Johnson replied yes and noted they just received the June Sales & Use Tax on Monday.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Traci V. Storey", written over a horizontal line.

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: September 2, 2025