



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 4:00 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)

Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Kristyn Anderson, Planning & Development Director
Kenneth Hollowell, Interim Fire Chief
Richard Cook, Interim Fire Chief
Kelly Daughtry, Parks & Recreation Director
Morgan Worrell, Lt CID

Absent: Councilman Curtis Strickland
Councilman W. Keith Bell
City Attorney Geoffrey Davis
Police Chief Lawrence Wiggins

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Mayor Doughtie stated the purpose of the Special Meeting was to receive a presentation of the draft 2030 Strategic Plan for the City of Roanoke Rapids by Hayes Group Consulting.

Presentation of 2030 Strategic Plan

City Manager Traynham introduced Mr. Dan Parks with Hayes Group Consulting. She thanked him as well as Charles and Jan Hayes for working with the City for a good part of this year.

Mr. Parks stated they had worked for about seven months on this plan to bring it into shape, so they are very excited to talk it through. He said they would like to cover the following information in their presentation: (*Presentation on file in Clerk's Office*)

- 1. What got us here?**
 - Funding
 - Expectations for the Project
 - The Strategy Process
- 2. The Strategic Plan (engaging Stakeholders)**
 - The Strategic "Snapshot"
 - The EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- 3. Managing the Plan**
 - The Plan Capsule
- 4. Implementing the Plan**
 - The Action Matrix
- 5. Next Steps**

Mr. Parks called upon his colleague, Charles Hayes to talk about how this particular plan was funded and who the parties were that were involved in funding this initiative.

Funding

- **Grant: The NC Department of Commerce/Southeast Crescent Regional Commission**
- **Under the Rural Community Capacity Building (RC2) Program**
- **The goal of RC2 is to strengthen rural communities by enhancing their capacity for economic growth.**
- **East Carolina University (ECU)**
- **The Hayes Group**

Mr. Hayes stated Southeast Crescent Regional Commission gave a grant to the NC Department of Commerce to help cities and counties move forward with what they could be. Without enough money for everyone in the state, they asked for proposals. The City of Roanoke Rapids staff applied and were accepted. There was a total of thirteen local governmental units accepted varying in size. They had a series of meetings they went through over a six-month period and after that, they said they would give them a grant if they could tell them how they would spend the funds. Many said they needed a strategic plan on how to implement what they were trying to do in their town which is what the City of Roanoke Rapids did. He stated Hayes Group Consulting was selected by the City to do this plan.

He and Jan Hayes first met with City Manager Traynham and Planning & Development Director Anderson on December 2, 2024. Since then, they have met with

the department heads, the Mayor and City Council.

Mr. Parks added East Carolina University is also a champion of eastern North Carolina. They started an economic development academy a few years ago and Mr. Hayes is very involved with that. Today, they both teach there. They will be there next month teaching a strategy course and an organization development course for economic development.

Project Scope

- **Engage City officials, thought leaders, and stakeholders across the community.**
- **Develop a new Mission Statement**
- **Develop the first Vision Statement**
- **Address core issues/opportunities including Economic Vitality, Parks & Recreation, Downtown Development, Crime, and Schools/Education**
- **Develop “Champions” for the City of Roanoke Rapids (now and for the future)**
- **Understand what Strategic Planning is, why it is important for Roanoke Rapids, and how to make it actionable.**

Mr. Parks said when they started designing this project, they met with the City Manager and others and asked what their objectives were. They wanted to understand what was important to the City. The first thing said was that they wanted to engage people. They wanted to interview people, survey people and reach out to people across the community. They designed those methodologies to do that.

He continued to say the City wanted to develop a new Mission Statement. There was one created 25 years ago. The City also wanted to create its first Vision Statement. They also wanted to address core issues that were important to the community from economic vitality, parks and recreation, entertainment, downtown and uptown development, crime, neighborhoods, schools and education. Finally, what they really aim for is to develop champions not for just the plan, but for Roanoke Rapids. The strategic plan can be a strong catalyst to develop champions for Roanoke Rapids.

He said back in March they held a 4-hour strategy seminar, and they looked at strategic planning in terms of leaders of a local government. They asked what leaders of a local government like Roanoke Rapids should be concerned with in terms of a strategic plan. That has a lot to do with determining what their place intends to be or aspires to be and how they would get there. The strategic plan could be a road map where priorities are spelled out, and the direction of efforts and resources all come together. They discovered there was a lot going on in Roanoke Rapids already. There are initiatives on the part of the City government and the private sector that have to do with entertainment, amenities and infrastructure. The strategic plan helps

organize all of that. It serves as an organizing document they can all look at. He explained the following phases in the strategy process:

Phase I: Discovery

This is when they interview folks, survey folks and do research and compile data. This phase poses the question of what do they need to know that they don't know.

Phase II: Strategy Development

This phase asks the question, how can they develop high return strategies and how do they have capacity (staff, organization and resources), to actually implement the plan.

He noted they have completed Phase I and II. Tonight, they were at Phase III.

Phase III: Strategy Execution

To execute or deploy the plan.

Phase IV: Metrics & Results

What results are they achieving? How can they keep the process relevant?

Mr. Parks reported they did the following activities in Phase I: Discovery:

[Strategy process](#)

1. Interviewed the Mayor and City Council Members
2. Interviewed Department Heads
3. Interviewed Business & Community Leaders
4. Halifax County Intergovernmental Association
5. Department Heads Work Session
6. Community Survey
7. City Council Strategic Work Session

He stated they compiled a great deal of research from the following sources, much of which turned into strategies in the strategic plan.

- a. Socio-Economic Factors
- b. Main Street Revitalization
- c. I-95 Corridor Economic Development
- d. Current and Emerging projects
- e. Commercial and Industrial Investments
- f. Entertainment; Carolina Crossroads
- g. Funding Mechanisms and Economic Incentives
- h. Strategic Opportunities for Sustainable Growth

Mr. Parks stated they went from discovery through strategy development and have completed it and next they would share the results of the strategy development phase. Now they want to talk about how they deploy or implement the plan. This is a call to action. They have the opportunity to adopt the plan, deploy the plan and take it on the road.

He referred to the Strategic Plan documents which were enclosed in their packets. (On file in Clerk's Office).

The Plan Documents:

- *Strategic Snapshot*
- *Executive Summary*
- *Plan Capsule*
- *Action Matrix*

Mr. Parks said when they engaged folks across the community, they heard that they had been through a lot; they have a lot of challenges; wish things could be better in these kinds of ways. What became clear to them was the word "resilience", this a "resilient city." The way they define resilience is:

The ability... the capacity to:

- Adapt
- Recover from challenges, setbacks, and change
- Not be defeated by them
- "Bounce back" – and even grow stronger through adversity, rather than just being tough

He said when they interviewed everyone, worked with the department heads and interacted with the City Council, they asked for key words or phrases that could describe the vision for Roanoke Rapids. It was about resilience; there is something distinctive about that.

Mr. Parks presented their suggested Vision Statement. The vision is what you aspire to be.

Our Vision

To be known as the "City of Resilience" - The hub and destination for opportunity, the quality of life, and the pursuit of happiness.

He also presented the recommended Mission Statement. A lot of the terminology came from the people they interviewed and the research they did.

Our Mission

To champion a vibrant community with excellent city services, economic vitality, entertainment, and a beautiful quality of place.

Mr. Parks reviewed the snapshot, which is the Strategic Plan in a glance or the 1-pager to give the public. He called attention to the sidenote, “Invest in the FUTURE of Roanoke Rapids....” Also, Mr. Hayes picked up the Latin phrase on the City seal that translates to “From possibility to actuality.” It lists the five (5) strategic priorities for Roanoke Rapids.

GOAL 1:

OUR LEADERSHIP & CITY MANAGEMENT

Lead by example; provide visionary and collaborative leadership in order to guide Roanoke Rapids from possibility to actuality.

GOAL 2:

OUR CITY SERVICES

Achieve “customer-service excellence” in the delivery of all Roanoke Rapids city services.

GOAL 3:

OUR ECONOMIC VITALITY

Strengthen and leverage our economic and cultural assets; diversify the Roanoke Rapids economy in order to thrive.

GOAL 4:

TELLING OUR STORY

Engage, educate & inspire all Stakeholders (internally & externally)

GOAL 5:

OUR QUALITY OF LIFE; QUALITY OF PLACE

Transform Roanoke Rapids; focus on the revitalization of our PLACE, and the joy of LIFE for all our CITIZENS

Mr. Parks said they had a couple versions of the snapshot and presented a suggested version with an arch shape logo. They’ve had other cities, counties revisit their logo in the process of having a strategic plan. Mr. Hayes had someone he knows at the University of Chapel Hill work on creating a logo for the City.

Mr. Hayes stated during research on Roanoke Rapids they found out that in the early 1900s, Roanoke Rapids produced its own electricity. Many people didn’t have

electricity at that time, so Roanoke Rapids was innovative. As for the logo, they went to the Hussman School of Journalism at UNC-Chapel Hill and asked several students that were majoring in marketing, advertising and public relations to design a logo for Roanoke Rapids. This logo is what they came up with.

Mr. Parks reviewed the Plan Capsule document. Under each Strategic Priority, it shows a series of suggested strategies. He reminded City Council that this is a 2030 Strategic Plan. They are recommending an update or refresh every 12 months. If adopted, between now and 2030, it is unlikely that the strategic priority and goal statement will change. These strategies are fluid; some will be accomplished while some will be delayed. These strategies are a result of information gathered from City Council, department heads, other leaders in the community and a lot of research. Also, remember that this aligns to a great extent to what they are already doing. This is a way to organize it and look for ways to work together. He said they see the use of this document in meetings working together with departments or a strategic steering committee in how they are moving forward with these strategies.

He said next they come to the Action Matrix which is basically the Plan Capsule converted into an action document. When they delivered the document, it was in a Word document using a table. Planning & Development Director Anderson and City Manager Traynham working together have already converted it to an Excel document and put it on Microsoft Teams. So now it is a live environment, they can work on it in ways they couldn't in a Word document.

Mr. Parks reviewed the following best practices:

- This Action Plan is provided as the core management tool for plan deployment over time.
- Plan Implementation will be monitored by designated LEADS.
- The 12-month planning timeline is divided into quarters. Takes that carry over, or take place in subsequent years, should be noted in the Status column.
- As a planning "best practice," this 12-month Action Plan should be refreshed annually as it supports the multi-year 2030 strategic plan.

Mr. Parks asked City Manager Traynham or Planning & Development Director Anderson if they had any comments concerning the Action Matrix.

City Manager Traynham added they had reviewed it with the City Council members one-on-one and the management team. It will be the accountability tool to help move this along and guide their progress and be able to report what they are doing as well as how they align with the goals and priorities set forth in the plan. They want to be

able to use this as not just a checklist but something to share and expand upon amongst each other.

Mr. Parks stated the City of Roanoke Rapids is already further ahead than many of their other clients at this stage in terms of assigning leads, thinking about leads and how to organize around that.

Mr. Parks said City Council plans to consider adoption of the plan in their regular meeting following this one and asked for a level of consensus from the City Council for adopting the plan and moving forward.

Levels of Consensus: Adopting the Plan

1. I can say an unqualified "yes!"
2. I can accept the decision.
3. I can live with the decision.
4. I do not fully agree with the decision however I will not block it and will support it.

Councilman Jackson replied, he can support the decision.

Councilman Stainback replied, he can accept the decision.

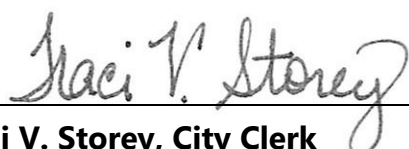
Mayor Pro Tem Bryant replied, she can say an unqualified yes. She feels it is important that they are looking towards, and they have it written out.

Mr. Parks stated he realizes there are a couple of Council members absent this afternoon and asked if there were any questions or comments that would make it an unqualified yes for everyone.

Councilman Jackson said he would like to work on the logo and get the community involved.

Mr. Parks said they have spent a lot of time here in Roanoke Rapids in the past seven months. The future depends on what they do in the present.

There being no further business, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: October 21, 2025