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**Roanoke Rapids City Council**

**December 17, 2013**

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on the above date at 7:00 p.m. at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

 Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

 Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem

 Ernest C. Bobbitt)

 Carol H. Cowen)

 Wayne Smith)

 Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager

 Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, City Clerk

 Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney

 Suetta S. Scarbrough, Council Member

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer.

Mayor Doughtie stated we all wish Councilwoman Scarbrough safe travels as she spends the holiday with family.

Mayor Doughtie called Council’s attention to the Conflict of Interest statement in the agenda packet.

With no one indicating a conflict of interest with any of the items on the agenda, motion was made by ­­­­­­­­­­­Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by ­­­­Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for December 17, 2013.

Mayor Doughtie called on Emma to come forward along with her father Bill Blackwell. He stated it gives him great pleasure to read and present the following Proclamation to Emma in recognition of her scholastic achievements:

**City of Roanoke Rapids**

**Proclamation Honoring Emma G. Blackwell**

**WHEREAS,**Emma G. Blackwell, a native of Roanoke Rapids, NC was born on March 14, 1995 to Deborah and William Blackwell; and

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**WHEREAS,**Emma was home schooled through the tenth grade and then attended Roanoke Rapids High School her junior and senior years; graduating as Salutatorian with a 5.0 GPA; and

 **WHEREAS,**Emma, during her two years at Roanoke Rapids High School, was very active in school activities as Founder and President of the Ultimate Frisbee Organization (UFO); Senate Member of the Student Council; Student Representative on the Gifted Education Advisory Committee; President and Snow Court Representative of the French Club; Vice President of the Book Club; Piano Accompanist for the Concert Choir and member of the National Honor Society, French Honor Society and Tri-M Music Honor Society; and

**WHEREAS,** Emma has also been very active in community activities and especially the arts, and also very active in volunteer and leadership activities too numerous to mention; and

 **WHEREAS,**Emma is a member of the **Class of 2017 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**; and was invited to join *Honors Carolina at Kenan-Flagler Business School-Undergraduate Business Assured Admission Program and Carolina Research Scholars Program*; awarded *Carolina Summer Research* *Fellowship* and was a *Morehead-Cain Scholarship Semifinalist*. She was also a **Duke University** *Benjamin N. Duke Scholarship Finalist*, a **North Carolina State** **University** *Park Scholarship Semifinalist* and awarded a **Smith College** *STRIDE: Student Research in Departments* *Scholar* scholarship and was a *Mathematics Student* at the **North Carolina Governor’s School, Class of 2012**; and

 **WHEREAS,**Emma was awarded the *Buick Achievers National Scholarship* ($25,000/year for four years), the *State Employees’ Credit Union “People Helping People” Scholarship* ($2,500/year for four years) and a one-time *Ronald McDonald House Scholarship* for $1,000;

 **NOW, THEREFORE, I,**Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, do hereby recognize and honor Emma G. Blackwell for her exceptional abilities, her tenacity and her vision that enabled her to attain these prestigious scholarships to further her education.

 **IN WITNESS WHEREOF,**I have herein set my hand and caused to be affixed the great seal of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, this 17th day of December, 2013.

 **Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor**

Miss Blackwell thanked the Mayor for this recognition, and stated she also wants to thank her family and all of her great teachers.

Mayor Doughtie stated Emma was home schooled through the 10th grade and you can tell by these accomplishments that Mr. and Mrs. Blackwell did a great job.

City Manager Scherer stated Jeff Watson, Head Librarian, would like to say a few words.

Mr. Watson stated that Emma has been a tremendous asset to the Library. He stated she started in the 9th grade volunteering week after week during the Library’s story time program. He stated another thing that impressed him was that even after she graduated from high school, she

asked if she could read during story time before she left for college. Mr. Watson stated Emma represents a great quality in the youth of Roanoke Rapids.

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Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to approve the December 3, 2013 Council Minutes.

City Manager Scherer stated the Council has before them the proposed calendar for planning and executing the budget for the next fiscal year. He stated this calendar allows Department Heads enough time to put together information for us to present a proposed budget to Council that provides the needed services to the citizens of Roanoke Rapids.

Councilman Bobbitt asked if we could go back to the previous procedure of Council meeting with Department Heads to discuss their budget requests.

City Manager Scherer stated we can coordinate some meetings to do that.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the following FY 2014 – 2015 Budget Calendar:

**City of Roanoke Rapids**

**Budget Calendar**

**FY 2014 – 2015**

**Date Budget Procedures Action By**

January 6th Provides on-line operational and capital budget forms Finance Director

 and instructions to Department Heads

January – February Departments prepare budget requests including all Department Heads

 departmental and capital expenditure (with the

 exception of salaries and benefits and debt payments)

January – February City Manager and Finance Director prepare City Manager

 departmental salaries and benefits and debt payments Finance Director

January – February City Manager and Finance Director prepare General City Manager

 Fund revenue estimates Finance Director

March 7th Department Budget Requests due to the City Manager Department Heads

 and Finance Director

March 17th – 21st Departmental Budget Conferences with City Manager City Manager

 and Finance Director Finance Director

 Department Heads

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March 26th City Manager and Finance Director make revisions City Manager

 to the budget and prepare the proposed budget Finance Director

 for submittal to Mayor and City Council

April 15th Presentation of recommended budget and budget City Manager

 message to City Council

 Copy filed with City Clerk

May 6th Public Hearing on budget by Mayor and City Mayor and City Council

 Council Citizens

June 20th FY 2014 – 2015 Budget Ordinance presented to City Manager

 City Council for final review and adoption

City Manager Scherer reported that he and Public Works Director Chalker are working on submitting two grants for a recycling program. He explained that the State offers a grant to assist with the purchase of recycling containers and another grant to assist with the operation of a recycling program. City Manager Scherer stated they will get back with Council regarding what it would cost the City to operate the program, and then determine whether or not to move forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated we tried this once in the past, and it was not successful but it will be mandated at some point in the future.

City Manager Scherer stated the EPA will require at some point that every city and town implement a recycling program. He stated it would be good to do this now since there are some grant funds available.

City Manager Scherer recognized the Police Department and all of the City administration involved in the “Shop with a Cop” program. He stated this is an outstanding program and it was very heartwarming to see the children’s faces. He also thanked Chick-fil-A and Walmart for assisting with the program.

Finance Director Hite reported that as we close the books on November 30, 2013, year-to-date revenues are $6,315,047.57 (42.0% of budgeted revenues) and year-to-date expenses are $6,986,575.15 (47.0% of budgeted expenses). She stated total expenditures exceed revenues by $671,527.58. Ms. Hite reminded Council to keep in mind that we have addressed our capital needs, and that grant funds are down this year. She also reported that the sales and use tax

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receipts year-to-date are $473,597.12 (flat compared to the same time last year).

Finance Director Hite reported that options to refinance the debt on the 2007 Series Bonds have been fully exhausted. She quoted a phone conversation with Bob High of the Davenport Group in which he stated “efforts to secure refinancing with non-traditional lenders were unsuccessful”. Ms. Hite indicated that if the status of the theatre changes, staff recommends that the City re-evaluate the restructuring of this debt.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if it is standard at this time of the year for expenditures to exceed revenues.

Finance Director Hite stated yes.

Councilman Bobbitt asked if our chances to refinance the debt would be better if the theatre is sold.

City Manager Scherer stated yes. He stated financial institutions would be much more willing to talk with us about refinancing the balance after it is sold.

Mayor Doughtie stated this is the first time this year that the sales tax has been flat. He stated it has been lagging behind.

Finance Director Hite stated that is correct.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the State is planning to do anything different with the revenues we usually receive.

Finance Director Hite stated no.

 Police Chief Hathaway thanked the community for supporting the “Christmas for Kids” program. He stated it was very heartwarming to see the reactions from the kids. He stated he also appreciates the media, Walmart and Chick-fil-A for their participation.

 Police Chief Hathaway reported that they will again have the Citizens Police Academy and hope to have 15 to 20 people involved.

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 Planning & Development Director Lasky reported that four new businesses opened last month: (1) Herbal Life at 1443 Georgia Avenue; (2) Smallwood Tire and Auto at 512 Julian Allsbrook Highway; (3) The Classy Closet at 1109 Roanoke Avenue; (4) Destined for Greatness Worship at 1042 E. 10th Street. She also reported that they have reviewed site plans for a new Little Caesars Pizza which will be a stand-alone, drive-thru structure in the same shopping center. Ms. Lasky also reported that the River Towne Apartment Complex received a C.O. and plans are to move in residents in January. She stated Popeyes is moving forward very quickly, and plans have been approved for a Petsense store in the former Blockbuster building.

 Planning & Development Director Lasky stated there have been rumors about Sheetz and their plans to build here. She stated she spoke with the project engineer and plans will be submitted within the next couple of weeks. She stated she has been told that Sheetz has no intentions of letting this project get away.

 Planning & Development Director Lasky reported that the next Comprehensive Land Use/Health Care Plan Steering Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 23 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.

 Human Resources Manager Kearney reported that we currently have three positions open at this time: Code Enforcement Officer; Police Officer and Main Street / Development Director. She stated we hired two new employees last month: Greg Colson (Police Officer) and Ethan Johnson (Property Maintenance Worker).

 Human Resources Manager Kearney thanked everyone for attending the BARC Christmas Luncheon and also thanked Finance Director Hite for coming up with money for door prizes.

 Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Manning reported that the Christmas Parade was held on December 8. She stated we had less people participate due to the rain but she appreciates the people that did participate and the citizens that attended. She stated they had a good showing under the circumstances.

 Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Manning also reported on the “Swim with Santa” event held this past Saturday at the Aquatic Center. She stated they had about 60 participants that came out and had photos made with Santa dressed in a Hawaiian shirt.

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 Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Manning also reported that the Senior Center was able to help around 130 seniors with their Medicare Part D. She reported that there was about a $700 savings per senior and some saved over $10,000.

 Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Manning indicated that the Ledgerwood playground equipment has been installed and they are in the process of landscaping and erecting signage. She stated they plan to have a grand opening in the spring.

 Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Manning reported that they are busy with basketball, and getting out the recreation brochures to the three school systems in the area.

 Fire Chief Coggins congratulated Miss Blackwell on her awesome accomplishments. He also thanked the City Council for the Christmas bonus and for attending the Fire Department’s Christmas party.

 Fire Chief Coggins reported that his department helped the Police Department with the “Christmas for Kids” program.

 Fire Chief Coggins reported that the department answered 89 calls for service last month. He stated more statistical information is included in the written report.

 Before concluding his report, Fire Chief Coggins continued from last month’s holiday fire prevention tips.

 Public Works Director Chalker reported that his department is finally ahead of the curve with leaf collection. He also reported that he is proud of the Street and Property Maintenance Departments for the work they did in constructing a salt storage area. He stated they saved the City tons of money.

 Public Works Director Chalker reported that they are still working on getting a protective covering over the murals at City Hall. He stated a very large piece of plexiglass is needed, and they will be coming back to this project very soon.

 Public Works Director Chalker stated there has been some concern about the lights on the new lamp posts not working. He explained that the bulbs on some are too close to the sensor causing the lights not to work but hopefully this has been corrected.

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Mayor Doughtie thanked all those involved in the Christmas parade. He stated he feels we made the right decision to hold it despite the weather as many people wanted to see it. Mayor Doughtie also thanked Human Resources Manager Kearney and the members of BARC for the Christmas luncheon. He stated it was very good. He stated he also enjoyed the Fire Department’s Christmas dinner and looks forward to next year.

Mayor Doughtie again congratulated Miss Emma Blackwell and wished her much success. He stated with her numerous credentials, she is sure to be successful and represent our community well.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adjourn.

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 January 7, 2014