



# Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A Special Meeting (Budget Work Session) of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Thursday, March 24, 2022** at **1:00 p.m.** at Fire Station No. 2.

**Present:** Carl Ferebee)  
Sandra Bryant)  
Suetta Scarbrough  
Wayne Smith)  
Rex Stainback)

## **Council Members**

Kelly Traynham, City Manager  
Traci Storey, City Clerk  
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief

**Absent:** Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

The meeting was called to order.

## **Fire Department**

Fire Chief Patrick welcomed City Council to Fire Station No. 2. He said he would like City Council to step out into the truck bay so the guys working today could show them each of the trucks. As they know the hot topic for the Fire Department has been the fire truck. He encouraged them to take a ride in Truck 142 after the tour. He explained the guys work a 24 hour shift and then they are off for 48 hours. He said C-shift was working today and introduced Lt. Brandon Shearin and the two drivers, Patrick Pegram and Ben Sloan and Firefighter Jeff Brown.

City Council went out into the truck bay and shown the features and differences of each of the fire trucks.

City Council returned to the meeting room.

City Manager Traynham stated just like at Public Works this morning, they wanted to bring City Council to the Fire Station in order to see the conditions and the way things were kept.

Chief Patrick reviewed his operating budget.

He asked for an increase in the overtime budget line to offset the raises they were given last year. The employees in his department get 4 hours of overtime every pay cycle which is 28 days. They work 218 hours in a 28 day pay cycle so anything over 212 they get overtime. Whether it's paid at straight time or at time and one half depends on whether they took off any time off in that pay period. He asked for an increase in on-call pay as well.

He requested increases in the following:

- Training to help with CPR and they are trying to get AED trainers. Need to upgrade their literature library for their training; most of the books they have are from the 1980s and 1990s.
- Building Maintenance
- Contract Services - The fire alarm systems at both stations, the elevator at Station 1 and air testing are some examples of what falls under the contract services line.
- HVAC Repair - Last year they only received \$3,000 so they were asking for the \$6,000 again this year. They need to replace the units at Station 1.
- Maintenance & Repairs-Equipment – Need a new lawn mower for Station 2
- Radio System Upgrade – If they receive the County Firefighter Association grant, they will get some mobile radios (mounted on the vehicle). The installation costs is not included in the grant.
- Maintenance & Repairs – Apparatus Vehicle – since vehicles are getting older.
- Automotive Supplies – 3110 (Fuel)
- Automotive Supplies – 3120 (Tires) - \$3,800 – 4,000 to put tires on new vehicle. (6 tires on each vehicle).
- Equipment (everything on the fire truck) – They were seeing an average 25% increase overall in fire equipment. Nozzles need to be replaced which costs \$600-800 each.
- Turn-out Gear – They are on a rotation and try to buy 5 sets of gear per year. Due to COVID and the budget cuts, they fell behind in rotation. Also includes helmets and gloves.
- Career Development – They have a program in place where firefighters can step up through ranks. They have pre-qualified testing for positions. This allows firefighters to step in to be the acting officer for that day if someone is out.

City Council discussed applying for grants. It appears to be many grants available right now. May need to hire a grant writer. Chief Patrick said they constantly look for and apply for grants. He reported since 2016, the Fire Department has received \$250,000 in grants.

City Manager Traynham stated the Fire Department is very structured and organized. They have a program for obtaining higher levels of pay.

Councilman Smith asked what was the starting salary for a firefighter. Chief Patrick replied \$33,102. Councilwoman Bryant asked how that compared to other fire departments. Chief Patrick said Tarboro and Smithfield were about \$37,000. City Council discussed hiring certified firefighters at the starting pay. Chief Patrick stated his fear was hiring a new person at salary higher than a firefighter that had been in department for a few years.

Chief Patrick explained the process for hiring firefighters with and without certifications. He also reported the way they receive their training appears to be changing. He believes they will now have to send them to an academy (closest is Nash Community College) because the State changed the way they offered the classes (block scheduling).

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the department had any vacancies. Chief Patrick replied they had one right now, but they have been about 1 short for the past year. They hire one, then one leaves. They are not receiving applications like they used to. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated if they are rotating the bottom half, then there is a reason for that.

Chief Patrick reviewed the following Capital Budget requests:

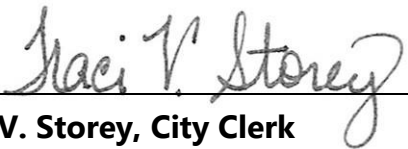
- Need 2 new Fire Trucks – Short 1 right now. (\$650,000-750,000 each including equipment to be completely outfitted).
- F-250 to pull Fire Safety House – Will replace 1997 Yukon (\$40,000)
- Viper Radios – Applied for joint regional grant through Halifax County. If the association is awarded the grant. County has agreed to pay 10% match of \$100,000. This would allow them to get half the radios they need. (\$78,650 will allow them to get the rest of the radios.) They would have a 2-year extended warranty on the radios. As of right now they understand there would not be any fees associated with the radios.
- Generator Upgrade at Station 1 (\$85,000)
- HVAC Replacements – Need to replace 5 of 8 units at \$7,000 each (\$35,000)
- Parking Lot Repair at Station 1 (\$20,000). Have not priced using concrete for repair.

City Council discussed the conversion to the Viper radio system and the pros and cons of the radios.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked Chief Patrick for the total of his budget requests and the total budget. City Manager Traynham reported the total salaries and benefits for the Fire Department is \$2,039, 071. Chief Patrick said it was approximately a

\$60,000 increase in this year's budget compared with last year's budget excluding salaries and capital requests.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

  
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Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

**Approved by Council Action on: April 19, 2022**