



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

Present: Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor
Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem
Sandra W. Bryant)
Tommy Daughtry)
Wayne Smith)
Rex Stainback)

Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Carmen Johnson, Finance Director
Bobby Martin, Police Chief
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief
David Wise, Planning & Development Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Tony Hall, Main Street Development Director

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order and opened with an invocation.

Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie stated he had been informed that the public hearing (Item 5b) needed to be removed from the agenda and tabled until the next City Council Meeting. He 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 Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to amend the agenda by removing Item 5b) and tabling the Special Use Permit request from Carolyn Gore until the March 7, 2023 City Council meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to approve the January 17, 2023 City Council Regular Meeting and February 7, 2023 Work Session minutes as drafted.

Public Hearings

Zoning Map Amendment Request from Rural Health Group

Planning & Development Director Wise presented and reviewed the following report with City Council.

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

From: David Wise, Planning Director

Re: **Rezoning Request (map attached) – Amendment to the Roanoke Rapids Zoning Map to rezone Halifax Co. Parcel 1203756 (a 15.442 ± acre property) from B-4 Commercial District to B-3 Commercial District. The property is adjacent to the east right-of-way of Old Farm Rd. S.**

Date: February 21st, 2023

Summary Overview

<i>Subject Property</i>	<i>15.442 acres with 842.7 +/- feet of frontage located along Old Farm Road S.</i>
<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Rezone from B-4 Commercial District to B-3, Commercial District</i>
<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Rural Health Group, Inc – Contact: Andrew Pernesky, CFO</i>
<i>Property Owner</i>	<i>Same as applicant</i>
<i>Present Use</i>	<i>Undeveloped land</i>
<i>Proposed Use</i>	<i>Multi-Family housing</i>
<i>Staff Recommendation</i>	<i>Approve.</i>

WHEN EVALUATING A REZONING REQUEST, IT IS APPROPRIATE TO **CONSIDER ALL PERMISSIBLE USES WITHIN THE REQUESTED ZONING DISTRICT**. CITY COUNCIL CANNOT SPECIFICALLY LIMIT WHICH USES ARE ALLOWED (OR NOT) AS A RESULT OF ANY REZONING CONSIDERATION.

CONSIDER IMPACTS ON/FROM:

- POTENTIAL USES
- NEIGHBORS
- GENERAL PUBLIC
- TRAFFIC
- UTILITIES
- NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER
- SCHOOLS



OMIT FROM CONSIDERATION:

- ETHNICITY
- RELIGION
- INCOME
- RENT OR OWN

Analysis and Detail:

1. Applicant and Property Owner

The applicant is Rural Health Group, Inc, Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870; (252) 536-5827; contact: Andrew Pernesky. According to the application and Halifax County tax listing, the property owner is Andrew Pernesky, 717 Old Farm Rd. S, Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870. (*Application for Rezoning and Supplemental Information Attached*)

2. Location/Area Description

The site proposed for rezoning is located east of Old Farm Rd S. (*See Figure 1: Aerial Photo on Previous Page*)

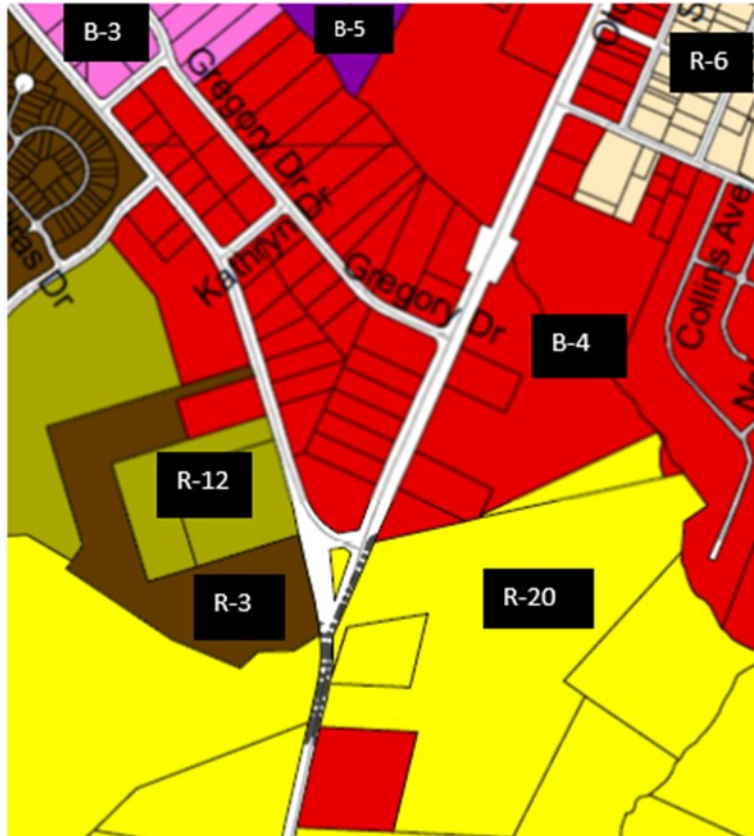
The property requested for rezoning is 15.442 acres with 842 +/- feet of frontage on Old Farm Rd S. The property is undeveloped with trees or shrubbery, along the east side of the property. The primary development pattern existing along this portion of Old Farm Rd S. Street on both sides are commercial.

3. Existing and Proposed Zoning

The Roanoke Rapids Zoning Map identifies the existing zoning classifications of the lot being considered for rezoning as B-4 Commercial. This area of Old Farm Rd S. has B-4 Commercial designation on both sides of the street. Property adjacent and west of the subject rezoning site has some B-3 Commercial District and R-20 to the east of proposed rezoning.

The requested rezoning change is from B-4, Commercial District to B-3, Commercial District.

The uses allowed in each zoning district are identified in Section 151-149 Table of Permitted Uses of the City of Roanoke Rapids Land Use Ordinance. (*Ordinance Excerpts Attached*)



The following provides general descriptions of the existing and proposed zoning districts. The commercial districts are created to accomplish the purposes and serve the objectives within each classification:

B-5: designed to accommodate the offices and clinics of physicians and those uses customarily associated with hospital patients and visitors.

B-4: designed to accommodate the widest range of commercial activities, with larger scale developments attracting customers within the region a common feature.

(requested) B-3: designed to accommodate a mixture of residential uses, excluding single-family homes, and uses that fall primarily in the within the 3.000 classification in the Table of Permissible Uses (office, clerical, research services, etc.)

R-20: designed to accommodate single family dwelling units and differ primarily in the density allowed as determined by the minimum lot size requirements set forth within Section 151-181.

R-12: designed to accommodate single family dwelling units and differ primarily in the density allowed as determined by the minimum lot size requirements set forth within Section 151-181.

R-6: designed to accommodate single-family and two-family dwelling units.

R-3: designed to accommodate two-family residences (duplexes) and multi-family dwelling units (apartments & townhomes).

ANY PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND SITE PLANS ARE EVALUATED BY CITY STAFF AND THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE TO ENSURE A PROPER DESIGN. THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE INCLUDES THE SANITARY DISTRICT, NCDOT, PUBLIC WORKS, NC DOMINION ENERGY, FIRE DEPARTMENT AND CODE ENFORCEMENT.

4. Traffic Considerations

Traffic is expected to increase during peak travel times. All traffic considerations will be evaluated when a proposed use and a preliminary site development plan are officially submitted for review by a future developer. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) regulates placement of access and driveway permitting for properties on state roads. NCDOT Highway Division 4, District 1 District Engineer will review any proposed development plans and would be responsible for approving Old Farm Rd. S.

5. Utility Considerations

There are no specific utility considerations that should negatively impact this property, at the present time. The area is served by Dominion Energy and the Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District. All connections, extensions and responsibilities for services will be the responsibility of the developer.

6. Other Considerations

Future development of the site will be evaluated for appropriate **screening, drainage, stormwater retention/detention** and other items during the site plan and/or construction plan review process by the Development Review Committee. Opaque screening between potential commercial uses and existing residential uses will be required at the burden of the commercial developer. The ordinance may require opaque screening from the ground to a height of at least eight feet, which may be a wall, fence, landscaped earth berm, planted vegetation or existing vegetation. The extent is determined by use.

Future development of the site will be evaluated for adequate water supply for firefighting operations and that driveways meet the requirements for apparatus ingress/egress.

7. Comprehensive Development Plan

The property is located inside City Limits and within the Planning & Zoning Jurisdiction. The following implementing strategies may be considered from the City of Roanoke Rapids Comprehensive Plan, adopted by City Council on June 17, 2014:

I.1 Support infill development. Infill development is development or redevelopment of land that has been bypassed, remained vacant, undervalued and/ or is underused as a result of the continuing urban development process. Generally, the areas and/ or sites are not particularly of prime quality; however, they are usually served by or are readily accessible to the infrastructure (services and facilities). Use of such lands for new housing and/ or other urban development is considered a more desirable alternative than to continue to extend the outer development pattern. The use of infill development, among others, promotes the best use of resources and will tend to have a positive impact upon the tax and other fiscal policies.

I.7 Provide effective buffering and/ or landscaping where commercial development adjoins existing or planned residential uses.

I.18 Utilize the mixed-use areas as a tool to aid in regulating/ reducing strip commercialization, stimulate compact development, encourage infill development, reduce trip generation, provide flexible development options, and utilize existing infrastructure.

I.20 Encourage developers to utilize thoroughfares and natural topographic features to define the boundaries of a neighborhood and concentrate higher intensity uses at the outer boundaries of the neighborhood.

I.32 Protect, enhance, and encourage a high quality of life, image, and cultural amenities as an effective approach to economic development.

I.33 Economic development efforts should encourage the revitalization and reuse of currently unused or underutilized structures, sites, and infrastructure in appropriately located areas.

I.39 Actively recruit and retain a younger workforce to the City by supporting diverse affordable workforce housing.

8. Public Response to Notice

The notice of request and City Council review meeting was advertised in the *Daily Herald* on February 10th, 2023.

9. Staff Recommendation

The proposed request for rezoning is considered reasonable. Reasonableness is determined by considering the size and nature of the tract, any special conditions or factors regarding the area, the consistency of the zoning with the land use plan, the degree of the change in the zoning, the degree it allows uses different from the surrounding area, and the relative benefits and/ or detriments for the owner, the neighbors, and the surrounding community.

The Planning and Development Staff recommends in favor of the petitioner's request. The staff finds the proposed rezoning request to be consistent with the area land uses and supported by the Comprehensive Plan.

The courts have established the following factors to determine the reasonableness of spot zoning:

- 1. The size and nature of the tract.** Planning Staff has determined that the characteristics of the site, and the existing development and zoning surrounding the site, makes the requested zoning change reasonable, and certainly not out of context in this neighborhood. The site has access to utilities and a relatively flat topography.

2. ***Compatibility with existing plans.*** The Land Use Ordinance sets forth the requirements for the various zoning districts. The Comprehensive Plan adopted by the City Council June 17, 2014, proposes, and supports mixed uses in the subject area. Buffering or separation between uses is encouraged to minimize impact and provide a transition between lower and higher density land uses.
3. ***The impact of the zoning decision on the landowner, the immediate neighbors, and the surrounding community.*** Planning staff recognizes that change from B-4 to B-3 represents a degree of difference, but several existing surrounding commercial and residential lots with many similarities in permissible uses.

10. City Council Action

Following the public hearing, the City Council is requested to make a motion concerning the Statement of Consistency and a motion concerning approval or denial of the rezoning requests.

Statement of Consistency – if City Council concurs with the approval of the Statement, the following motion is appropriate.

Requested Motion & Vote: Motion to approve and adopt the presented Statement of Consistency to amend the Zoning Map to a commercial district for Halifax Co. Parcel 1203756, described in the staff report dated February 21st, 2023.

Final Decision – if City Council concurs with approval of the rezoning request, the following motion is appropriate.

Requested Motion & Vote: Motion to approve an amendment to the Roanoke Rapids Zoning Map to change the zoning classification of Halifax Co. Parcel 1203756 to B-3, Commercial District; the property is located Old Farm Road S. as described in the staff report dated February 21st. 2023.

Questions/Comments

Mayor Doughtie confirmed that in the report, the Planning Board voted for a no recommendation, but staff made the recommendation for approval. Planning & Development Director Wise replied that was correct. There were several things at the Planning Board meeting piled on top of each other. They did not have audio that evening so it was hard to hear. The motion that was made did not follow the text of the staff handout. It got rushed through a second and they took a vote without any discussion. Then there was some confusion. He reported there are a series of things that staff is rectifying for the next meeting on March 16th. Some of the topics of concern during that meeting was building height, quality etc. which is not what they were there for. It was just to address the rezoning from B-4 to B-3 so they could build some housing to fit their needs.

City Manager Traynham added they've had this occur at times before where the Planning Board did not give a recommendation. That should not impact City Council's decision because the City Council makes the final decision and it does not always follow the Planning Board's recommendation. Sometimes this will occur when there

is some indecision or conflict. She reviewed the rezoning request and was in support of the Planning staff's recommendation for approval.

Mayor Doughtie opened the public hearing and asked for anyone wishing to speak to come forward.

Applicant – Rural Health Group

Andrew Pernesky, CFO with Rural Health Group stated they were trying to develop a residency program in conjunction with ECU. They are currently having issues finding enough housing for the residents so they want to put condos there to house the residents. They hope the residency program will be up and running in 2024.

Mayor Doughtie confirmed with City Manager Traynham that this is the rezoning from B-4 to B-3. She replied that was correct. B-3 allows for multi-family housing along with other uses, primarily non-retail uses such as medical offices and services that are less intense.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked City Manager Traynham how this would tie to the former Gregory properties a little further down the highway. She replied they were in the same general vicinity if he was referring to the property that was formally owned by Masuki. This is a separate application and property. They do not have any updates on that potential development. That was for a R-3 zoning. This property has been purchased by Rural Health Group and the requested B-3 zoning would accommodate medical offices and multi-family dwellings. She added the purpose of a rezoning was to consider all the potential uses and not as much of the site design; that is where the plan reviews come in.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked Mr. Pernesky if this was housing for the residency program. He replied yes, that was their main intention and for their students coming in. They also have doctors fill in and would need temporary housing for them.

Mayor Doughtie asked if this would be for employees at the hospital or for just Rural Health Group. Mr. Pernesky replied currently it would be only for Rural Health Group, but the residents would probably be residents at ECU North so it would be a little of both in a way.

Councilwoman Bryant asked how many units were they planning to construct. Mr. Pernesky replied they were looking at building two units of 10 condos in each.

Mayor Doughtie reminded City Council that they were looking at a rezoning and not what somebody was going to put on the property.

City Manager Traynham agreed and said they needed to consider all the potential uses that were allowed in the particular zoning district. Although it is okay to talk a little about what may be developed, it is important to focus on everything it could be. In any rezoning decision, they cannot attach any conditions or make any special requests as part of that final decision and outcome.

Attorney Davis stated if City Council sees fit for the rezoning to be approved, that does not mean it will be the last of the City's involvement before something is built. It still needs to go through the normal planning and permitting process that any other construction project is required to go through. The focus needs to be on all possible uses in that zoning classification.

Councilman Wayne Smith noted this was happening across the nation now where professionals were needing somewhere to stay for 2-3 weeks and then move out. It is not something that just happens overnight. A lot of people across the country are having to build units for people to come into. If the City wants professional people in town, they need to think about it.

City Manager Traynham stated housing is a significant need, especially for temporary housing because there is not much stock available. There are not many options, especially for multi-family. Local employers are experiencing the hardships in trying to recruit employees with limited options. The City is experiencing it themselves in recruiting employees. Companies are looking at options. A lot of them are saying they are going to provide housing. This is a model that is being used. In City Council's consideration, they want to think about potential uses. They cannot base it on who would be renting it, would they own it or limit it to housing choice whether it is for their need or community need.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated the reason for his question was because of the various zoning classifications and he wanted to make sure they were not considering spot zoning. Planning & Development Director Wise replied this was a down zoning from B-4 to B-3 and this would not be spot zoning.

Yvonne Long-Gee, CEO of Rural Health Group added they have been able to attract providers they normally would not be able to attract to this area through offering housing assistance. It is imperative for City Council to consider this rezoning because this is a serious issue for them. There is an employment issue in the area. The only way they have been able to get providers of choice position is by offering this option. They have been doing it in other manners, but now see the need to actually have additional housing. It is quite an attraction to providers as they recruit them to have the ability to provide them temporary housing because often times they do not live in the community, but they want to serve this kind of community.

With no further questions or comment, Mayor Doughtie closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Doughtie called for City Council to make a motion concerning the Statement of Consistency.

Recommendation of Consistency with Plans to Amend the Official Zoning Map

Reference: Amendment to the Roanoke Rapids Zoning Map to rezone Halifax Co. Parcel 123756 (a 15.442 ± acre property) from B-4 Commercial District to B-3 Commercial District. The property is east of right-of-way of Old Farm Rd. S.

The City Council met on Tuesday, February 21st, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. and determined that the above-mentioned request is consistent with the Roanoke Rapids Comprehensive Plan, adopted by City Council June 17, 2014, and with the Roanoke Rapids Land Use Ordinance. Comprehensive Development Plan Policies:

ADOPTED BY THE ROANOKE RAPIDS CITY COUNCIL ON THE 21ST OF FEBRUARY, 2023.

***I.1** Support infill development. Infill development is development or redevelopment of land that has been bypassed, remained vacant, undervalued and/or is underused as a result of the continuing urban development process. Generally, the areas and/or sites are not particularly of prime quality; however, they are usually served by or are readily accessible to the infrastructure (services and facilities). Use of such lands for new housing and/or other urban development is considered a more desirable alternative than to continue to extend the outer development pattern. The use of infill development, among others, promotes the best use of resources and also will tend to have a positive impact upon the tax and other fiscal policies.*

***I.7** Provide effective buffering and/or landscaping where commercial development adjoins existing or planned residential uses.*

***I.18** Utilize the mixed-use areas as a tool to aid in regulating/reducing strip commercialization, stimulate compact development, encourage infill development, reduce trip generation, provide flexible development options, and utilize existing infrastructure.*

***I.20** Encourage developers to utilize thoroughfares and natural topographic features to define the boundaries of a neighborhood and concentrate higher intensity uses at the outer boundaries of the neighborhood.*

***I.32** Protect, enhance, and encourage a high quality of life, image, and cultural amenities as an effective approach to economic development.*

***I.33** Economic development efforts should encourage the revitalization and reuse of currently unused or underutilized structures, sites, and infrastructure in appropriately located areas.*

***I.39-** Actively recruit and retain a younger workforce to the City by supporting diverse affordable workforce housing.*

Upon review of the request, it is the City Council determination that the above-mentioned request is reasonable and in the public interest of the City of Roanoke Rapids in that it provides for the organized commercial growth that will help to ensure the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Roanoke Rapids.

Adopted: February 21st, 2023

Roanoke Rapids Mayor
Emery Doughtie

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to approve and adopt the presented Statement of Consistency to amend the Zoning Map to a commercial district for Halifax Co. Parcel 1203756, described in the staff report dated February 21st, 2023.

Final Decision

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to approve an amendment to the Roanoke Rapids Zoning Map to change the zoning classification of Halifax Co. Parcel 1203756 to B-3, Commercial District; the property is located Old Farm Road S. as described in the staff report dated February 21st. 2023.

New Business

Consideration of Joint Resolution for Halifax-Northampton Regional Airport

Mr. Ralph Johnson, Chairman of the Airport Authority stated when the airport first got started by legislation, certain rules were set out for them. One was the amount of time they could lease the property or hangar. Right now it is set at 25 years. As the airport grows, they have an individual who would come here to set up a maintenance shop for aircraft, a paint shop and avionics shop. That is a big investment, close to \$250,000 for a building he would like to have plus invest in the community. Twenty-five (25) years is a short time for that type of investment. The FAA says an airport should have 50 years. The Airport Authority as well as that individual was looking at a lease agreement they could have for forty (40) years with maybe a ten year extension at the end. They were looking for a resolution from the City to have the legislature change some of the rules they have to follow. He stepped aside for Ms. Wells to explain more about it to City Council.

Christina Wells, Assistant Halifax County Manager said they presented a similar resolution last night at the Halifax County Board of Commissioners meeting. They will also be seeking support from the Northampton County Commissioners. She referred to the resolution (On File in Clerk's Office). She stated they will see the enabling legislation for what was the Halifax-Roanoke Rapids Airport Authority that was completed in 1997. They have gone through a few iterations, not only of the actual Airport Authority, but of the airport itself since 1997. It has grown into a much more modern facility. Clearly, the way that the airport is able to grow and develop is primarily through the use of hangar leases and land leases. As Chairman Johnson said they have on the table a potential lease for their first commercial land lease. They currently have three land leases that are for private hangers that are larger than the hangers the airport has constructed itself. This will be their first commercial endeavor. As he also stated the investment on such an endeavor is quite significant.

A lease of a longer period of time as compared to what they had in 1997 is definitely warranted so this individual feels that he has more time for return on his investment.

She stated they were really asking for three items. One is to allow the Airport Authority's leasing to not have to follow Article 12 of Chapter 160A which treats longer term leases more like sales of property. That really doesn't work for a model like the Airport Authority. The other considerations are that they want to be able to extend leases to at least up to 40 years. As Chairman Johnson also referred, the FAA is comfortable with leases as long as up to 50 years. They have checked with airport regulations as well to make sure they are complying and moving in the correct direction. They did do some research prior to their request in that other airports such as the Raleigh Executive Jetport and Lee County have recently undergone the same situation. Therefore, this is not an unusual request. They have also asked their legislators, Representative Michael Wray and Senator Bobby Hanig and made them aware of the request. They would like to present a united joint resolution so that they know the three sponsoring governments were on board with the Airport Authority in making these changes.

Councilman Smith asked if the sponsorship the City has with them now going to increase. Chairman Johnson replied nothing financially will change.

Mayor Doughtie asked who will own the building, the man who wants the business or is the County going to build it and lease to him. Chairman Johnson replied the individual will build the building, his name is Michael Overton. He already had a hangar there he built for his own use. He wanted to start painting airplanes, but in that type of lease agreement, they cannot do commercial work. He then decided to build a maintenance hangar. They do not have a lease agreement that addresses businesses. The only thing they do have is a 25-year lease which is not acceptable for that type of investment he wants to do.

Mayor Doughtie asked if Mr. Overton was going to be leasing the land from the County. Chairman Johnson stated it would be the Airport Authority who he would be leasing it from. He named others who have individual hangars and stated they lease the footprint of the building which is \$0.25 a square foot. A business is going to be \$0.30 a square foot. It will be \$2,400 per year. The Airport Authority owns the property and that is part of their income, leasing the property and hangar rent. Hangars the Airport Authority owns that house private planes, they own the hangars, but they lease the property so they can build on it.

Councilman Smith asked if at the end of the 40 years, does the hangar become the property of the Airport Authority. Chairman Johnson replied yes. Councilman Smith

asked if the individual could tear it down and take it away. Chairman Johnson replied he could tear it down and restore the land like it was before or the hangar converts over to the airport and if they wanted to they could lease it to that individual or someone else.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee clarified the resolution was supporting changing the land lease from 25 years to 40 years. Ms. Wells replied that was correct. They were staying shy of FAA recommendation.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to adopt the joint resolution supporting amending the enabling legislation of the Halifax-Northampton Regional Airport Authority to better accommodate longer term leases.

Consideration to Accept Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Audit Report

Finance Director Johnson stated Greg Redman, CPA presented the FY 2021-2022 audit report during the February 7, 2023, City Council Work Session. She requested City Council consider a motion to adopt the audit report.

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to accept the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Audit Report.

Consideration of City Ordinance Amending Chapter 30, Section 30.16 – Time & Place

City Manager Traynham said during the Work Session earlier this month it was the general consensus of the City Council members to go back to a schedule of having two regular meetings a month in lieu of having a work session on the first Tuesday and a regular meeting on the third Tuesday. In order to have the two regular meetings, an amendment to the City's Code of Ordinances is required. She asked for City Council to consider adoption of the following ordinance.

ORDINANCE NO. 2023.01

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 30 "CITY COUNCIL" OF THE ROANOKE RAPIDS CITY CODE.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS, NORTH CAROLINA that:

SECTION 1. Section 30.16 be amended to read as follows:

§ 30.16 TIME AND PLACE.

Regular meetings of the Roanoke Rapids City Council shall be held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall at 700 Jackson Street.

SECTION 2. 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. 2023.01 amending Chapter 30, Section 30.16 of the City of Roanoke Rapids Code of Ordinances.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham reported the City of Roanoke Rapids is a participating jurisdiction in a recently established Choanoke Area Housing Consortium along with most all of the jurisdictions within Bertie County, Halifax, Hertford, Martin and Northampton counties. The City Council adopted a resolution to be a part of that initial conception. She explained this consortium was approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development or HUD. It is a federally funded home investment partnership program and a multi-year endeavor. There is a public input or a community input session scheduled for Tuesday, February 28th at the Cooperative Extension Auditorium in Halifax from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. There is a flyer in your packet that advertises this community input meeting.

She added there is a public survey online that area residents are invited to share and to take the short survey. The site is at www.surveymonkey.com/r/Choanoke-Community. Public input is a critical component of this. The HOME Consortium program is about improving housing, existing housing and revitalizing neighborhoods. She reported this program has been very successful in the westside area of Greenville between East Carolina University and the hospital. This opportunity does allow for rental homes and not just owner-occupied homes to take advantage of the federal funds. The public input session is one of the first steps in this consolidated plan process that will eventually detail the strategies and funding opportunities for home improvements.

City Manager Traynham said the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget planning is underway. Finance Director Johnson, who missed out on this part of it last year prior to her employment, and her staff have been conducting the individual departmental meetings so she can gain some knowledge on their specific needs. They are discussing

the needs, revenue sources and identifying some cost conservation measures that would apply across all departments. They will have the departmental budgeting presentations with City Council. During the next meeting she will propose a calendar with the schedule of those meetings so City Council can have the benefit of hearing from the department heads on what their needs are. The projections for State collected local government revenues are expected to be published by the NCLM in April.

City Manager Traynham stated the Rural Partners Network or RPN program that the City has been selected to be a part of with Halifax and Northampton County had a kickoff meeting earlier this month via Zoom. Last week she participated in a meeting at Halifax Community College. Their next meeting is Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at HCC. She reported last week they learned the Rural Partners Network is looking for very specific projects to be recommended from participating jurisdictions. They want them to have a lot of impact and they recommend using the SMART approach which is the Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic and Timely proposals for specific projects. They want to see cost estimates and construction timelines. In developing project proposals, the questions that they want to have addressed are:

- Identify the community or economic development need.
- What are the results they would like to see?
- Who are the beneficiaries of it?
- What are the expected outcomes?
- What resources do they need? (money, staff, information or materials)
- Is there anything being done right now that is similar?
- Who else may be working on this?
- Who are the potential partners involved?

She said as they are working on the budgets and knowing the needs of the City, they are asking for any information on potential projects the City could submit.

City Manager Traynham announced registration opened today for the NCLM CityVision 2023 Conference. It will be in Concord NC this year from April 25-27, 2023. The early bird registration fee is available through March 6, 2023. She will send a reminder of this opportunity out to them and if they are interested in it, staff can help them register. She noted she, Mayor Doughtie and Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee attended the conference last year which was held in Wilmington. It was very beneficial hearing from other leaders in other communities and the things that are going on as well as their successes and challenges. It was a good learning experience, and they should consider attending the conference if their schedule allows.

She stated Mayor Doughtie asked that Department Heads give brief reports tonight.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Johnson presented the financial report for the period ending January 31, 2023. The General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$12,203,703.25 which is about 60% of the budget. Prior year it was at 68.4%. The General Fund year to date expenditures totaled \$10,311,429.02 which is 50.9% of the adopted budget. Prior year was \$9.6M which was at 57.9%.

She reported the Ad Valorem Tax collections were higher in January as a result of taxpayers remitting payments before penalties were assessed for late payment.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the City was on track. Finance Director Johnson replied she feels they are on track. She looked at it today and as they know, sales tax collections are two months behind, so they just received the December sales tax. She and Ms. Tammy Fahey looked at the Utility Franchise Tax, they will get another payment in March and another payment in June.

Finance Director Johnson reported they were in the beginning stages of the budget. She started meeting with department heads so she could learn and understand more of what their capital needs were.

Other Business / Departmental Reports

Planning & Development

Planning & Development Director Wise announced OpenGov (online permitting), a project that has been underway for the last eight months, will be going live on March 1st. This is something City Council approved last year to fund. They are very excited about this change of service delivery. The response has been positive. They held a workshop last week on that topic and they have advertised it on social media pages. Staff will tell people that come in for permitting that they have converted the permit room which will house a laptop and another workstation. Staff will assist them to type the permit in and help them create an account. They will be able to track their permit through the entire process and they can pay online. They are very excited about that and it will enable them to be more competitive with other communities.

He reported they were providing inspection services to the Town of Weldon while they were still going through their transition. The City has billed them \$663 for staff time so they are not providing a free service, but rather assisting them where they need help.

Planning & Development Director Wise said the shell building of the four-bay strip

mall on Premier Blvd. has gone up. There are four retail spaces which will have Chipotle, Aspen Dental and AT&T. The 4th retailer is unknown at this time.

He said they have eleven (11) single family dwellings being built on Appleberry Court and Winterberry Lane in the Cross Creek subdivision. They are in various stages of construction, and they have one that is just about ready to receive its certificate of occupancy.

Public Works

Public Works Director Chalker said they are just about finished with leaf season. The engineer they chose to do the Southgate project, Mack Gay Associates from Rocky Mount, have negotiated with Halifax County to administer the entire project. They will handle the bid process, grant items and close the grant out at the end of the project. He reminded them that the funds were allotted to Halifax County for the City to make use of so Halifax County was writing the check. The City will get the invoice, approve it and sent it to Halifax County and they pay it. They may have public advertisements for bids in this Sunday's newspaper.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if he knew a timeframe on starting the project and completion. Public Works Director Chalker replied as soon as possible and hopes it will be completed in 3-4 months, but it depends on what the larger firms are doing now. Once they start taking bids and awarding the bid, they will be able to better answer that question.

Public Works Director Chalker reported they sold 18 units on GovDeals.com this time. Some of them had to go back up for auction twice because the bid either defaulted or didn't get a bid or get the minimum bid on something. He announced they collected \$37,000 total for 18 units. Those funds go back to the general fund. One vehicle was a drug seizure from the Police Department so they will get those funds back.

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported the restrooms were currently in the design phase. They were quickly moving out of the design phase and moving into construction phase. The current time frame for installation is scheduled for mid to late May. He will keep them abreast of any changes. The swing set should be delivered any day. They are prepped and waiting for them. He anticipates installation within the next week or two.

He announced the Aquatic Center is closed this week. They are addressing several maintenance issues and items there. They are painting the locker rooms, upgrading the locker room lights to LED and have some heater repair work that needs to be

done. He worked with the Wicker family to select a date for the unveiling of the new sign renaming the Aquatic Center in honor of Chris Wicker. The unveiling has been scheduled for May 13, 2023. It is Mother's Day weekend which makes Jan Wicker a very happy mother because her whole family will be here for Mother's Day and to see the unveiling for Chris.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported the Kirkwood Adams Community Center restrooms have been completed and they have received several compliments. Unfortunately, over the weekend one of the hot water heaters broke here in the Lloyd Andrews building; they had water on the floor. He anticipates that may be some of the reasons the screens are not working properly tonight. He will continue to look into that. He announced they have switched from Zoom to YouTube to broadcast City Council meetings. He asked for their patience as they work through some of those issues with the audio.

Mayor Doughtie asked about the scope of work for restrooms at Kirkwood Adams. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied they replaced sinks, toilets, light fixtures, partitions, backsplash, mirrors, painted and redid all of the flooring. Mayor Doughtie asked if they replaced the urinals in the men's room. He replied no, they were not replaced due to their age. When the urinals were removed there was a lot of plumbing that would need to be done to accommodate a newer urinal.

Councilman Smith asked if the foundation had been laid for the restrooms at Chaloner. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied the foundation will be a rock base. The foundation of the restrooms will be a solid cement slab that they will lay down on top of the rock base. The cement slab is still there and they will not take that up too soon due to the possibility of erosion.

Police Department

Chief Martin said since the first of this year (January) they have answered over 2,100 calls. Compared to last year this time they were at 1,800. They have implemented foot patrols with their new PACE officer that they got through the COPS grant. Last year at this time they were at 69. Since the first of this year there have been almost 200 foot patrols. He explained foot patrol means they get out of the vehicle, go in and visit the citizens in the neighborhoods and the businesses. They check the front and the back of businesses. Foot patrols give officers a better chance to get to know the public and the business owners in the community.

He stated they have also ramped up their training. He feels that having well trained officers will better serve the citizens of Roanoke Rapids. Last year this time they were only at 164 training hours; this year so far they are at 368. They are getting ready to

start their annual in-service training this month which will be conducted over the next three weeks. He contributes that to his admin staff: Mike Mosley, Gorton Williams and Jamie Hardy. They are making sure that the officers are getting trained and that they have well trained officers for the citizens.

Chief Martin reported last year they were at 81 vehicle collisions; this year they are at 75 which means they have responded to 75 collisions since the first of the year. They contribute that to more enforcement and other things the officers are doing such as more checking stations and incorporating speed and other violations. Thus far this year, there have been 42 cases assigned to the criminal investigations division; last year they were at 20. They contribute that to the uptick of some of the crimes that have been occurring. They have probably read about the major crimes that just occurred in reference to two of the local businesses and heavy equipment being damaged severely by a juvenile.

Mayor Doughtie stated Chief Martin mentioned that the Police Department has been putting more hours in training. He knows this Council, as a community and as a country, the police have had a lot of negative comments made about them in the last few years. He asked if the training they are doing was as much geared towards teaching the officers about how to deal with difficult situations as it is to protecting themselves. Chief Martin replied everything that they are doing has been brought out into the public eye in regard to the different types of training that officers receive. A lot of it came through under Senate Bill 300. They have geared their training to better prepare the officers for what has been laid out before them so they do not run into situations that have happened across the United States. He feels the officers receive this training to make them better equipped to handle certain situations. They have really geared it up to help with diversity training and de-escalation training.

Fire Department

Chief Patrick stated like other departments, they have been experiencing shortages with people leaving to go to other jobs. In January, they held testing and had four applicants. One was able to get everything done in time because they had a very short window to get them into the Fire Academy. Another applicant they offered a job to took a job with another fire department north of Roanoke Rapids before they could get him confirmed. They are currently helping the two others get what they need to be able attend a future academy. Of course, they are accepting applications all year round. He invited anyone interested in being a firefighter to get an application online or from Human Resources Director Caudle.

He said they were doing their annual testing of fire trucks. Every year they have to be serviced, tested and certified for ISO purposes to make sure they are safe for the fire-

men and the citizens. In March, they will start with their hose testing and then roll into testing hydrants which will likely be in April. They will inform the citizens through the media/social media.

Chief Patrick reported Chief Hux has been working on their 2nd Annual Veteran's Breakfast. The veterans really enjoyed it last year. It is scheduled for May 5th at the Kirkwood Adams Civic Center.

He invited City Council to their training facility/grounds on Hinson Street for the next three days. They will be there from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. conducting their annual live burn training. They will be glad to show them inside the containers and what the firefighters and Public Works have done to allow them to have this facility. It saved the City a tremendous amount of money.

Councilman Smith asked if he had heard anything about the fire trucks. Chief Patrick replied he talked to the salesman at the Chiefs Conference a few weeks ago. He told him they were still looking at 18 months (August/September 2024). He talked to another salesman with a different manufacturer and they are telling people it would be 30-36 months to receive a new fire truck.

Chief Patrick said the radios they ordered will be shipped on March 17th.

Main Street

Main Street Development Director Hall reported the items they ordered for the 1026 space is finally coming in. They still expect more to come in any day. The self-watering planters came in Friday. He added the artists seem to be on track with the murals.

He stated the Uptown Historic Building Rehabilitation incentive program will begin on March 1st; there will be an application process. They felt this would be the fairest way to disburse the funds. It will be a matching grant up to a certain percentage.

Main Street Development Director Hall announced a fundraiser has been set for March 17th. It is their annual Shamrock Supper Box. This year they are working in conjunction with the Halifax County Arts Council.

Mayor Doughtie asked what was the match for the Uptown Historic Building Rehabilitation grant. Main Street Development Director Hall replied it was going to be a 75% match from the grant fund and 25% match from the business owner which will stretch those dollars further. There are guidelines in reference to historic rehabilitation and the City's streetscape plan. This should allow for some good exterior projects. They do have a lot of struggling business owners and he believes this will be

a huge help to them.

Mayor Doughtie asked what was the maximum the City would put in for a project. He replied the maximum grant award would be \$10,000. He encouraged businesses not do half projects so it would be a good exterior project that they can carry to completion.

Mayor Doughtie confirmed these were the funds that came from the legislature. He replied yes, that is correct.

Human Resources

Human Resources Director Caudle reported as of today the City currently has 151 full-time employees. That was a net gain of 3 since she spoke to them in December. Even though they have a net gain and are better positioned as far as filling vacancies compared to this time last year, they are experiencing a slightly higher turnover rate over the last 60 days. For example, since January 1st they have hired 7 full-time people but they have lost 6. That is not great, especially when they lose people in that 3-5 year mark because these are experienced people the City has invested into.

She announced the following advertised vacancies:

- Athletic Fields Maintenance (Parks & Rec)
- Certified Police Officer
- Firefighter
- Recreation Supervisor (Parks & Rec)
- Street Maintenance Worker (Public Works)

She said the majority of these positions have been advertised externally and internally for over 90 days. They do receive applications. What happens after that depends on the situation. They are looking into it and trying to figure out what they can and cannot do to fill these positions.

Human Resources Director said since December when she last spoke to City Council, she mentioned for the last calendar year the department has been collecting exit interviews. They now have a full 12-months of data. They will continue to collect that data. As part of the budget process, they will be using their findings to formulate better decisions about what they can do for the City's current employees. Other things they need to look at in the budget process is the information they have been receiving from the City's current valued employees. Their feedback is invaluable to the decisions the Human Resources department makes, what the City Administration does and especially what City Council does. She wants to make sure they are aware of these

things.

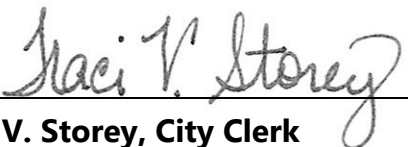
She said the NCLM puts out a great deal of information the City should be using regularly to make informed decisions. Two things the Human Resources department will use as part of their budget recommendations will be the annual salary survey which was released about four weeks ago. Any responding municipality provides salary information for all full-time positions. Every other year they do a fringe benefits survey, and those results should be released by the end of this month. Information includes all benefits and COLA and things like that. Once they have all that data together, her hope is the information she presents to them will help them to make good, informed decisions for the current employees to help retain them and to better recruit new employees.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked in reference to the 151 full-time employees, how many would be considered a full house. She replied 164.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there was a particular trend with the hiring 7 and losing 6 employees. She replied they have some underlying trends. The ones they have lost since the beginning of the year have been a mix. They always hear pay is the number one problem, but that is not always the number one reason why people are leaving. There are a mix of reasons, but there are some common themes.

Adjournment

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



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: March 7, 2023