



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 15, 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)
Wayne Smith)
Rex Stainback)

Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Carmen Johnson, Finance Director
Shane Guyant, Police Chief
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Tony Hall, Main Street Development Director
Kristyn Anderson, Planner

Absent: David Wise, Planning & Development Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order.

Mayor Doughtie provided an invocation and then the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Doughtie announced Tommy Daughtry was not in attendance tonight because he was in the process of moving outside the city limits, therefore he has submitted his resignation. He stated City Council will miss him. He was a valuable asset to City Council . He wished the best for Mr. Daughtry and his family as they move into a new residence.

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. Mayor Doughtie stated there

was one matter, the public hearing, that he may need to be excused from being involved in. In that case, Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee would handle that agenda item. Councilman Stainback stated under New Business, Item 8 d) he would offer City Council his recusal from that agenda item as it directly affects him as a school employee.

Attorney Davis advised the appropriate time to take those issues up would be when they reach that point on the agenda.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt the agenda as presented.

Special Recognitions

Police Department – Retirement of Captain Michael Moseley

Police Chief Guyant recognized Captain Mike Moseley for his retirement on July 31, 2023, after serving the City of Roanoke Rapids and the citizens for 21 years. He noted Captain Moseley would be taking another job after this as a school resource officer at Roanoke Rapids High School.

He was presented with his badge and firearm per NCGS20-187.2.

Mayor Doughtie stated on behalf of the City Council and the citizens of Roanoke Rapids, they appreciate his service to them and the surrounding community. He wished him all the happiness, success, and fulfillment in the years ahead as he moves forward to another stage in his life.

Chief Guyant also presented Captain Moseley with a plaque in appreciation of his distinguished and dedicated service from October 20, 2002, to July 31, 2023.

Motion was made Councilman Stainback, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, and unanimously carried to award Captain Michael Edward Moseley his service side arm and badge for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar (\$1.00) received from him and upon his securing a permit as required by NCGS 14-402.

City Manager Traynham reported the sum of \$1.00 has been paid by retired Captain Andy Bryant.

Fire Department – Promotions

Fire Chief Patrick recognized Johnathan Woodall who was hired in March 2016. He was promoted to Engineer on C-Shift in 2018 and served in that capacity until August

2022 when he was promoted to the Lieutenant position on B-shift. His wife was unable to attend so his son Grant pinned his Lieutenant's badge.

Fire Department – New Hires

Chief Patrick recognized Jacob Felhauer who was hired in August 2023. He graduated from the Nash Community College Fire Academy in December 2022 and has served as Firefighter on C-Shift. His grandfather, James Kaetzel pinned his Firefighter's badge.

Fire Department – Life Saving Awards

Chief Patrick recognized William (Will) Harris and Jarred Wood for their response to a call on April 22, 2023. They were able to resuscitate and revive an unresponsive citizen that had gone into cardiac arrest. A pulse was regained and the patient was transported by EMS to a local medical facility for further care. He presented each of them with a certificate of commendation for an Act of Heroism and Life Saving.

Chief Patrick reported a by-stander was driving down the road and noticed a young lady who was exercising that passed out on the sidewalk. He and his wife turned around and went back to assist the patient. The patient went into cardiac arrest at that time. The gentleman called 911 and his wife ran down to the fire station which was roughly a block away. In the meantime, another citizen who was a volunteer firefighter with the Gaston Fire Department was riding by, stopped and started performing CPR on the patient. When the firefighters responded to the scene with more equipment, they administered AED shock along with supplemental oxygen. They continued to perform CPR and the patient was successfully brought back.

He recognized the citizens/callers, Mr. Tim Hux and his wife, Judy. They were the citizens riding down the street and noticed the young lady. If it had not been for their quick action, they do not know if the outcome would have been the same. He called for Hunter Whitmire and Jacob Felhauer to come forward. He stated there were two other individuals that could not make it tonight who assisted them that day: Lt. Chad Turner and the young man from the Gaston Fire Department, Jarvis Horne. They had commendation certificates for them as well and would present it to them later. He read: For an act of Heroism and Life Saving on January 18, 2023 while serving as a firefighter for the City of Roanoke Rapids, they responded to a call of a citizen that had collapsed and was not breathing. Along with a passing volunteer firefighter, they were able render aid to the patient. After performing lifesaving AED shock and CPR, the victim was resuscitated and transported by EMS to a local medical facility. He presented each of them with a certificate of commendation for an Act of Heroism and Life Saving.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Jane Morgan

Ms. Morgan stated she had two questions concerning the Theatre which has sold. She asked what the interest rates they were paying on the outstanding loans related to the Theatre. Also, she understood the cost to the City for just maintaining the building was approximately \$10,000 per month. Assuming the City had paid two months' worth of that in this budget year, leaving about \$100,000, she asked would those funds go to paying down the principal or did they have plans for that money.

Mayor Doughtie stated they do not normally have conversation related to comments, but asked City Manager Traynham if she wanted the Finance Director to respond or would she want to send her something back.

City Manager Traynham said staff could get some information to Ms. Morgan and replied the current interest rate is at 2.54%. There were two financing instruments. One was paid off early, about a year ago. The City only budgeted for about six months so they did not budget maintenance for a full year. Once the accounting comes out, they would be able to provide her with a report.

Mayor Doughtie added several years ago, City Council was able to get a much better rate than what they previously had which was over 5% before they refinanced. It was also a variable rate, but now they have a fixed rate.

Clint Jones

Mr. Jones stated he moved to this town in 1980, 43 years ago. The paper mills and cotton mills were here, there were jobs here. Over the 43 years he has seen a lot of jobs leave. Very few come back except restaurants with low paying jobs. At one time he started his own business and found the City was not very business friendly. If they are going to survive, they are going to have to start making some concessions for the people building the town.

Ginny Lewis

Ms. Lewis said she was the President/CEO of the Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce. She had no intention of speaking tonight, but as she looked out over the audience, she wanted to commend the business owners that are in the room tonight. She asked for those who were business owners to raise their hand. (Many raised their hands). She stated this is what makes up the community and this is what she is proud of when she says she is the president of the chamber. Some of them may not be members and that is fine. She asked if they can make it out tonight to this City Council meeting, come out more often and get engaged with this council and make

sure the council knows who they are. If there are problems or concerns, let's get them addressed before they go too far. She was all about the business world and has been a business owner. She supports them highly in their day-to-day jobs. She thanked them for making a point to come out and support businesses. Let's support all businesses in this community.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant, and unanimously carried to approve the July 18, 2023, City Council Regular Meeting and July 24, 2023 Special Meeting minutes as drafted.

Public Hearing

Special Use Permit Request from Anthony Floyd (Crickets)

Attorney Davis thanked everyone for their level of engagement. Being here and understanding this result is an important part of being a citizen.

He said this situation regarding Crickets' accessory use has had a pretty quick turnaround time. It developed when he was out of town for almost two weeks. He became aware of it towards the end of last week. In brief, the issue under the City's zoning code for performing live music is an accessory use and it requires a special use permit in most circumstances for a property in this district. Normally, it would have to go through a quasi-judicial hearing as everyone was noticed to be here tonight. Between yesterday and today, he and City Manager Traynham along with City Planner Kristyn Anderson had several discussions about this matter. They have received a lot of commentary and evidence that they believe is important and should be considered in this matter. He noted Planning & Development Director Wise could not attend tonight because he was at a conference.

Attorney Davis stated after speaking with City Manager Traynham, she and Planner Anderson walked across the street and spoke with the owner, Tony Floyd yesterday who provided more information. He believes some of the information Mr. Floyd provided was important in the determination that has been made today by the three of them. That evidence is as follows: The prior business at this location (Eagles Club) operated primarily as a private club, which is the same type of use that Crickets and Mr. Floyd was asking for. They had an accessory use that they operated which was live music. That is an important distinction between the primary use (main use) and the accessory use. Basically, what is the main use of a piece of property and what occasionally happens is an accessory.

He stated it was clear to them after what has been shared with them over the last 36-48 hours, that the prior owner operated this property in the same fashion as Mr. Floyd was asking to operate now. The Eagles Club operated for a long period even prior to the current architecture of the City's zoning ordinance.

He said the primary use is a private club with authorization to serve food and in some ways act as a restaurant. Their accessory use is live music. There has been no change in the use, meaning there has not been any other owner that has come into this property and operated it in a different fashion. It is the same piece of real property; there has been no expansion. Mr. Floyd has done some renovations, but that is normal when acquiring a new piece of property. Prior to Mr. Floyd's acquisition, the Eagles Club was closed for a time, but that was due to COVID.

Attorney Davis said based on this information, City Planner Anderson and City Manager Traynham, who had 10 years' experience as the Director of Planning & Development for the City prior to becoming the city manager, and himself have come to the decision and are 100% convinced that the use that Mr. Floyd (Cricket) is asking now is grandfathered in. The Eagles Club had the same kind of use and there has been no break in continuity. That is what their discussion is and it was not where they were 36-48 hours ago until they started receiving all this information. They have been confirming this information behind the scenes.

He said the result is that all three of them agree that the Planning & Development Department can authorize this use administratively forth with. That obviates the need for the quasi-judicial hearing that was scheduled today. His feeling was if City Council were to have the hearing and they made a decision where Mr. Floyd's requested use was not authorized, he believed he had grounds for a lawsuit and would prevail on that. He believes it is clear and that it is a grandfathered use.

Attorney Davis stated if it was not such a quick turnaround time and if he and City staff had this information to consider in a more timely fashion, they probably would not have had this on the agenda. He apologized to everyone and hoped they did not feel their time was wasted. He said based on this information, it would be appropriate for City Council to determine that this issue is mute and move on to the next agenda item.

City Manager Traynham added this interpretation is based upon the proposed use that has been presented in the application. The live music is not the primary use of the facility. The application states it would primarily be one night per week for live music and concluding that music by midnight. Should the live music aspect of it increase beyond that or to a higher frequency, then they would be back here.

Mayor Doughtie asked if they needed a motion. Attorney Davis replied no, they did not.

Councilman Smith asked Attorney Davis why he did not advise the mayor of this situation prior to the meeting and they could have removed it off the agenda all together. Attorney Davis replied the problem was given the short turnaround. If they had two weeks, they probably could have done that, but they had sent notices out to attend tonight. That was the basis of the email he sent to City Council this afternoon and he stated in that email that he did not believe the public hearing would go forward. There are a lot of people here tonight and there was no good way to notify people that would not be more chaotic than having it said here.

Councilman Smith stated he believes the three of them made the right decision, but he felt they should have notified the mayor. Attorney Davis said he sent an email out this afternoon about 1:30 or 2 p.m.

City Manager Traynham said with it being a scheduled quasi-judicial hearing they could not simply take it off the agenda. They had to come out and say something about it. A lot of it has been moment to moment throughout the day up until the City Council meeting started, discussing it with the property owner, Mr. Floyd to ensure the understanding was the same and he would be consistent with his application and the frequency that has been explained.

Councilman Smith stated he again believed they made the right decision and asked that in the future they would notify the mayor to what was going on so City Council would be aware of things.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to move on to Item 8 and hearing the evidence presented that Item 7 was grandfathered in and it goes forward.

Mayor asked for a brief recess.

New Business

Proposal to Repurpose Emry Park Tennis Courts

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated the last several years they have discussed the Emry Park tennis courts in their budget sessions. Staff got some figures to repurpose them and also to remove them. Currently, there is a group of over 400 Facebook members that want to talk to City Council this evening about repurposing the tennis courts into a family-oriented skate park. It is different from the skate park

at TJ Davis Recreation Center. He would allow them to speak with City Council about their vision and what they would like to see done. He reported they were in the infancy stage. He and City Manager Traynham have met with this group twice and it was very productive. He spoke to those in the audience who were there on behalf of the group and stated he applauded their efforts and the way they were going about this. He appreciates that because it makes the staff's job easier to communicate with them. He noted he worked with some of them on the original skate park. He introduced Brandon Woodard and Justin Kerr who were spear heading this project.

Justin Kerr said he had been skateboarding for the last year with his daughter. He said they enjoy the skate park. The skate park can be a little aggressive. His daughter is 4 years old and even he cannot skate everything that is at the skate park. They went to Williamston a few weeks ago and saw the one that had been built about a year ago. It is very mellow and beginner friendly. There were folks from all over such as Greenville and Raleigh on a 100 degree day hanging out, skating and having a good time. He saw the Emry Park tennis courts were in disarray and thought it might be a good spot. He talked to Parks & Recreation Director Simeon and here they are now. He said Brandon Woodard had more to say about it.

Brandon Woodard said he wanted to say a few things on behalf of the group. (Written presentation on file in Clerk's Office). He stated he wanted to share an innovative proposal and request City Council's support for a vital and exciting community project that would positively impact the city's youth and residents, the establishment of a beginner skate park at Emry Park. He noted the benefits of a beginner skate park in the city:

- **Youth Development** – A skate park offers an outlet for physical activity, creativity, and personal growth. Positive alternative for young people. Future location for skate camps and competitions.
- **Community Gathering** – A skate park will revitalize an unused space with the goal of drawing more families to enjoy the multifaceted park.
- **Tourism and Economic Impact** – A well-designed park has the potential to attract visitors from neighboring areas.
- **Safety and Accessibility** – By providing a designated space for skateboarding, it can reduce the risks associated with skating in inappropriate areas.

He requested City Council's support in the following ways:

- **Advocacy** – vocal support during City Council meetings and public forums.

- **Funding Allocation** – group pledges to diligently seek grants and investments from the community, along with their own investments. Request City consider advocating for allocation of resources if ever available within the budget.
- **Community Engagement** – sustainable communities not only demand citizen engagement, but leadership involvement as well. Their participation in community meetings, workshops, and events related to the skate park project.
- **Strategic Planning** – they believe that Emry Park is a valuable and versatile space and the DIY skate park is one activity that can draw the community together. They envision this can be a space for food trucks, farmer’s market and general gathering. A multi-use park could be a valuable space for families and the community.

Mr. Woodard stated that he was confident that with City Council’s leadership and support, the City could establish a vibrant beginner skate park that enriches the lives of residents and gives new life to Emry Park. He said he would like to discuss the initiative further or provide additional information. He appreciates their time, consideration and dedication to the city’s overall growth and development. The group looks forward to the possibility of working together to make this project a reality.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon re-stated this project was in its infancy. Tonight, staff would like City Council to give a consensus to approve continuing to work with this group and gather more information and quotes for the project.

City Manager Traynham said when they first met some of the group on site they started talking about costs and how to acquire those. Also, the options of whether to put concrete on top of the existing courts or having to do full demolition. Before too much level of effort was put into it, such as looking for grants and other resources, they felt it was important to get City Council involved from the beginning. If City Council does not have that vision for the park, then it would not be worth the effort. In the near future, they would like to bring back more detailed information for City Council. Again, they were seeking a consensus from City Council before doing so.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said they definitely needed to do something with the property. They also want to look at the cost to the City. If the group is interested in doing it, he would like them to continue to work on collecting the information. He would like to see additional proposals for that piece of property as well. It looks nice from the picture that was given. He did not have a problem with the skate park.

Councilman Stainback stated he also liked the idea. The first skate park at TJ Davis Recreation Center is sort of an advanced skate park. He believes it was a very affordable sport. Sports such as soccer that involve traveling can be expensive and a

lot of kids cannot afford the travel ball that is prevalent in this area. With skating, all you need is a skateboard; there is other equipment, but it's an affordable sport they could do for life. He likes the idea of looking into it and exploring the possibilities.

Mayor Doughtie said when they were doing the budget, they talked about needing more people to come to City Council meetings to tell them what they wanted. He thinks this is a very good example of what they were looking for. When the concept of skate park at TJ Davis came about, originally it was going to cost about \$25,000. He believed the community raised that money. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said the overall project was roughly \$250,000; part of that was a grant. He worked with a group that involved some of the same people here tonight who raised \$30,000 whether it was in-kind or financial backing for the skate park.

Mayor Doughtie said they had a good concept and the community behind it. Somebody also could write a grant. He thinks Mr. Woodard would be a good one to write it.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said with the first skate park, they met for about three months. They had 15-20 people that were there to help design the park and give input on what they wanted to see. The contractor came and looked at it and made some changes. The group was good about getting out into the community to get support of their vision.

Mayor Doughtie said he would also support it.

Councilman Smith said he thought it was a good idea, especially at Emry Park. He asked if it was all going to be concrete or asphalt. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied that has to do with moving forward. They do not have any prices and have not seen a contractor. When they first talked about it, they discussed using 3 out of the 6 courts as the skate park. Councilman Smith said he thought it was a good idea.

Councilwoman Bryant said she was not opposed to a skate park. There have been some other suggestions for use at Emry Park. One was to include some pickleball courts which is the fastest growing sport in the US right now. Another was for a dog park for that part of town. She was excited that people were interested and wanted to go on and build something and hopefully finance it. It won't be something the City is trying to bear. She agrees that it sounds like a good idea, but they want to make sure that it is going to be open and everybody feels like they can participate and have opportunities to use it. Maybe one or two of those other ideas can be considered. She has walked over there; it is a great park for walking. It may be a good park for people to walk with their pets. It needs to be utilized more so she was not opposed to it.

Mayor Doughtie confirmed with City Council that they had a consensus for staff and the group to move on to the next step. All Council members agreed.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated they would return with any data they have before moving forward with it.

Consideration of FY2022-2023 Audit Contract

Finance Director Johnson stated in accordance with NCGS 159-34(a), City Council must approve a contract for the audit of the City's financial statements. She presented a copy of the engagement letter and contract with Gregory T. Redman, CPA to conduct the audit.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith, and unanimously carried to approve the Letter of Engagement and Contract with Gregory T. Redman, CPA to conduct the audit of the City's financial statements for FY2022-2023 and to authorize the Mayor to execute the Engagement Letter and Contract.

Consideration of Mutual Aid Agreement for Halifax Regional Drug Task Force

Police Chief Guyant presented a mutual aid agreement and Memorandum of Understanding between the Halifax County Sheriff's Office and the Roanoke Rapids Police Department. He said they may recall in the past there was a narcotics task force between the municipalities and the Sheriff's Office. There is a new partnership between the Police Department and the Sheriff's Office. They are both strapped for resources, specifically when it comes with fighting narcotics sales in the city. Sheriff Davis gave a presentation to the County Board of Commissioners last week concerning a situation they had come across in the past couple of weeks. It was a huge collaboration between the Sheriff's Office and the Police Department.

He stated the purpose of this agreement was to foster the inner agency cooperation between the Police Department and Sheriff's Office by providing an individual or individuals to participate in the re-creation of the Halifax Regional Drug Task Force. This would be a wonderful opportunity for partnership and collaboration. They share a lot of intel on different types of narcotics sales and transactions in the city and county. A lot of times they are duplicating their efforts. By forming this task force, they would be able to combine their efforts, resources and have a better bite for their process.

Chief Guyant said by joining with the task force, they are able to share asset funds that come about. Presently, the Roanoke Rapids Police Department would only be providing a third of the resources to the task force versus the Sheriff's Office supplying two-thirds. The asset forfeiture part is stated in the Memorandum of Understanding,

depending upon what kind of case it was. If it was a Department of Revenue case, they would be looking at a 75% forfeiture amount. Based off the two-thirds, one-third calculation, that would mean the Sheriff's Office would get 43% of the 75% and Police Department would get 32% of that. It would be the same percentage if it involved the Department of Justice & Drug Enforcement Agency. When Homeland Security is involved, it would be a 70% split versus 75% with other federal agencies. The asset forfeitures supplement their budgets very good. They are the driving force that provides them with the finances they need to fight narcotics sales in the city.

He said the Sheriff's Department currently has five narcotics agents and the Police Department has one. The Police Department has one vacancy they are trying to fill. The Sheriff's Department will be losing one of their agents to a DEA task force so that will take them down to four. By joining forces by providing the ability to have the Police Department's asset officer join the task force, they would also be duly sworn. With narcotics work, they never work alone; they must always have a partner.

Chief Guyant said he sees nothing but wonderful things that could come out of this. The memorandum of understanding and the agreement is similar to what other county and city organizations are doing.

Attorney Davis added that he had reviewed the agreement and they made a couple of changes to it. He liked the agreement and having these issues written down. Police Chiefs and Sheriffs under their own authority may enter into temporary agreements for mutual aid. Narcotics is relatively unique from other crimes because of the way it moves around in commerce and because of the monetary aspect of it. This is why they may want something more than just a temporary agreement. It is nice to have the different aspects of asset forfeiture spelled out in writing. He noted in the last fiscal year, the City recovered around \$200,000 in asset forfeiture. That is not an insignificant amount.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Councilman Smith, and unanimously carried to authorize the City Manager and Police Chief to enter into a mutual aid agreement between the City of Roanoke Rapids and the Halifax County Sheriff's Office.

Consideration of Mutual Aid Agreement for School Resource Officer Program

Councilman Stainback requested to be recused due to a conflict of interest.

Councilman Smith stated he did not see that it would be a conflict for Councilman Stainback. Attorney Davis said he did not think lawfully that Councilman Stainback

could vote on the matter since he is receiving pay from the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Bryant and unanimously carried to recuse Councilman Stainback from voting on Item 8 d).

Chief Guyant stated he invited Jeff Hinton who is a School Resource Officer if they had any questions of him.

Chief Guyant presented the agreement between the Roanoke Rapids Police Department and Roanoke Rapids Graded School District Board. He stated this particular Memorandum of Understanding was presented to them by the school board. This MOU is putting things in writing similar to the last agenda item they just discussed. The duties of the SROs are detailed in this agreement along with authority of RRGSD administrators and goes into detail about the release of student information. He continued to summarize the agreement.

He reported the assignment of the SROs in this situation is unique. In a lot of jurisdictions, the SROs are employees of the city or county. In this situation, the SROs are employees of the RRGSD. The Roanoke Rapids Police Department does provide certification for these officers and makes sure they get the training they need to maintain their certifications, but they do not provide the pay for them.

Councilman Smith asked if this has been going on between the City and the SROs for years. Chief Guyant replied yes.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, and unanimously carried to authorize the City Manager and Police Chief to enter into a mutual aid agreement between the City of Roanoke Rapids and the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District Board of Trustees.

Consideration of Revised NCDOT Sweeping Agreement

City Manager Traynham stated in a recent meeting the street sweeping reimbursement agreement with the NCDOT was presented and approved by City Council. When staff submitted it to NCDOT, a new agreement was presented. After some back and forth between the City Attorney, staff and NCDOT, a new agreement to replace the one previously approved was completed. This agreement authorizes the City to maintain the bridges with the street sweeper and other Public Works activities and in turn NCDOT reimburses the City for those efforts. It is approximately \$800 per month.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Bryant, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, and unanimously carried to approve the revised Sweeping Agreement (Agreement No. 11587) with the NC Department of Transportation and to authorize Mayor Doughtie to execute the agreement.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham announced the restroom facility at Chaloner Recreation Park is open. There are a few items remaining to be completed, but they should be completed by the upcoming weekend. Those items include partition walls within the interior of the restrooms as well as the water fountain. The contractor will then come back to complete the stabilization of the ground where it was disturbed from utilities. That project was funded by the CDBG program.

She said the outdoor pool is officially closed for the summer season. The City employs many college students as certified lifeguards so they typically close this time of year when they go back to school.

She reported this past Saturday the observance of Sarah Keys Evans Day was held at the Sarah Keys Evans Plaza within Martin Luther King Park. It was very well attended. Over twenty individuals were recognized for their work in advocating for civil rights in Halifax County. In addition to those twenty individuals, the 2023 Young Trailblazer was awarded to Halifax County Sheriff, Tyree Davis.

City Manager Traynham stated the City's street resurfacing project is moving along from Linwood Drive to Virginia Avenue behind Manning School. Contractors have now mobilized to Hunting Ridge Road. Some may question why it takes some time, especially with Hunting Ridge Road. It was the perfect opportunity for the Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District to update the water meters and so forth. Sometimes when roads are being resurfaced other issues are uncovered. As the City moves forward with the budget of \$500,000, they will make the best use of the funds while staying within the budget.

She said tomorrow Public Works Director Chalker and Parks & Recreation Director Simeon will be meeting with Lori Medlin with the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau about additional wayfinding signage. This is part of the wayfinding signage program that was initiated several years ago, but it costs a lot to do all the signs at once. They are trying to do a few as the budget allows using tourism dollars. There will be some signage out towards the Exit 171 area.

She said the Southgate Flood Abatement Project is possible through grant funds to Halifax County for flood projects in the City of Roanoke Rapids that have to do with Chockoyotte Creek. The Southgate neighborhood whose residents have experienced significant erosion and building loss over the years. That project is in the construction phase now. The contractor has begun clearing the access path and set to begin widening and deepening the ditch to allow water to flow more efficiently to Chockoyotte Creek. Unfortunately, \$1M sounds like a lot, but when you do brick and mortar or storm drain projects, it goes very quickly.

She reminded City Council that some area schools have gone back to school. The RRGSD will start on Monday, August 28th. She advised there would probably be some heavy traffic congestion the first week or so of school during drop off and pick up times.

City Manager Traynham announced this Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Roanoke Rapids Police Department and COP will host a Fun Day with First Responders at Chaloner Recreation Center. On Friday, August 25th in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce's Summer Concert series, the Fire Department will host its Annual Fire Safety Fair. There will be some vendors set up in the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall as well as outside in Centennial Park with public safety information.

She reported some agenda items for upcoming meetings in September. She has received contact from the office of Congressman Don Davis. His local director, Kim Mack will present an update to City Council. They were looking at some funding applications for grants so resolutions for those may come forward at one of the meetings. The temporary road closure resolution for the Christmas parade will also be considered at one of the meetings as NCDOT needs several months' notice for the request.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee thanked all those who had anything to do with the Chaloner Recreation restroom facility. It is opened as planned and there has been a lot of activity at the splash pad.

Councilwoman Bryant stated she had mentioned to City Manager Traynham about the dedication of two homes. She asked if they had started working on a date for that yet. City Manager Traynham replied the CDBG program itself typically doesn't do anything; it would have to be something the homeowner would request. For a public facility such as the restroom building, the City will have a press release soon once the final touches are completed. If the resident desires dedication, it would certainly be appropriate. The certificates of occupancy/final inspections should be any time now.

She will reach out to the homeowners to see if they are interested in doing that and then try to schedule that.

Councilwoman Bryant said she knew at least one of the homeowners would be interested. City Manager Traynham agreed it would be great and was excited for both of the homeowners.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Johnson reported for the period ending July 31, 2023, general fund year to date receipts totaled \$224,319.84. General fund year to date expenditures totaled \$1,636,376.76. This is due to paying annual contracts and insurance. She announced the City just received \$2.1M in sales tax.

She stated during the month of July City received the following revenues:

- **Commercial Solid Waste Fees**
- **Interest Revenue**
- **Grants & Donation Funds**
- **Other Revenues** – *includes \$100,000 deposit for sale of Theatre*

Councilman Smith asked if they were negotiating with Bank of America on the money received from the sale of the Theatre. Finance Director Johnson replied no, they had not discussed that. City Manager Traynham added she has reached out to the City's financial advisors with Davenport. They plan to have a meeting in the upcoming weeks about that. Right now, if they were to take the \$2M revenue and send it to Bank of America, it would be expected to be applied to the end of the loan. They want to make sure any funds the City applies goes towards the principal and not interest. Staff will reach out to City Council for their input and direction. With interest rates as they are right now, any renegotiation is expected to have a higher interest rate. Financial advisors said the City is doing the right thing right now keeping the funds in the Cash Management reserve account with interest rates what they are now.

Councilman Smith asked what rate they were getting. Finance Director Johnson said if they look at the financial report, the City made \$35,000 for the month of July off the funds in the Cash Management account. When they receive the money for the Theatre, she directly put it in that account so they could start earning money off of it. She believed the interest rate was 4 point something; she was not sure of the exact rate which is about the same you would get from a CD. Councilman Smith questioned that some banks were offering over 5%. Finance Director Johnson said since they were local government, they were restricted on where they can invest their money. NC

Capital Management is the best place to put their money and they have been getting high returns on those funds.

Mayor Doughtie said the bank was only getting 2.54% on the loan. At some point they may be able to make an agreement with them that if the City makes a large payment down on that loan, they may be willing to forgive some of it.

Councilman Smith asked City Manager Traynham when she talks to Davenport, would she ask about them renegotiating with Bank of America about writing some of this loan off. City Manager Traynham replied yes, they will get a meeting scheduled and try to include as many Council members as possible unless they advertise to having a quorum. She and staff are not authorized to make those final decisions on the repurposing of funds plus making sure everything is okay with the Local Government Commission as well. Any forgiveness the City could get from Bank of America, they would be forever grateful.

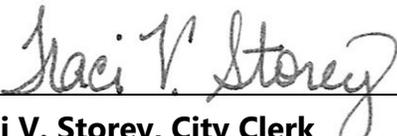
Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee reported he had a summer conference a couple of weeks ago and there is a group called NC Class that also helps cities make money on the monies they have in reserve. He would like to introduce him to Finance Director Johnson and City Manager Traynham and to have a conversation with him at some point in the future.

City Manager Traynham stated there were a lot of options to consider without making an immediate decision today. They need to look at all options and do so very soon.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said there was a local business utilizing this group as well. Finance Director Johnson stated she knows there is a general statute that restricts how local governments can invest their money; she can get that for him. He said they were already working with many cities so he will put them in touch with this group.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.


Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: September 19, 2023