



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A Budget Work Session of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.**
at Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall

Present: Sandra Bryant, Mayor Pro Tem

W. Keith Bell)

Council Members

Andy Jackson)

Rex Stainback)

Curt Strickland)

Kelly Traynham, City Manager

Traci Storey, City Clerk

Carmen Johnson, Finance Director

Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director

Lawrence Wiggins, Police Chief

Larry Chalker, Public Works Director

Kelly Daughtry, Parks & Recreation Director

Jason Patrick, Fire Chief

Kristyn Anderson, Planning & Development Director

Absent: Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

In Mayor Doughtie's absence, Mayor Pro Tem Bryant presided. She called the meeting to order and provided an invocation.

City Manager Traynham stated this is a budget work session, so no motions or business is expected in the meeting. She reminded everyone that the meeting was being streamed on YouTube and asked City Council to make sure their microphones were on when speaking.

She said the department heads and their staff have worked to develop their budget requests. The City is transitioning to new financial software so when they receive the balanced budget proposal it will be in a new system so the output will look different than what they have now. She also called their attention to the information provided and stated the comprehensive salary and benefits were not included in each department. Those are being calculated in a different spreadsheet. She asked

City Council to focus on the needs of each department. They may have some data about previous years and the increases in the cost of things. They will always have more requests than the City can carry. They did not get behind overnight so they will not be able to catch up overnight. They try to do a little better every day and with every decision they make and make things better for the future.

FY2025-2026 Departmental Budget Requests

Public Works

Public Works Director Chalker stated the department's budget is essentially going to be the same as last year with some adjustments in areas where they are running short in the expense budget.

- Vehicle Maintenance (1700) - They increased those amounts in some of the departments where they had to transfer monies where they ran short.
- Tires (3120) – The cost of tires have gone up quite a bit. Some are passenger tires, and some are big truck tires. They increased those line items.
- Street Department
 - Maintenance (3400 & 3430) – Increased due to increased cost for maintenance.
 - Road Resurfacing (7540) – Increased to \$500,000. They have committed to spending Powell Bill funding on the streets. This year the allotment was \$565,000, but they do not have the figure for the upcoming year.

He presented the following capital requests for equipment they need with two highlighted as priorities:

- Kubota Excavator
- Godwin Snow Plow
- Heil Trash Truck with Freightliner Chassis
- Pac Mac Knuckle Boom with Mac MD7 Chassis
- John Deere 320P Backhoe
- John Deere 444G Loader
- John Deere 544G Loader

He noted the Backhoe and loader were priorities and they did not need to be John Deere, but that is the brand they priced.

Councilman Bell stated he sees that Public Works Director Chalker provided the price of purchasing outright and also different financing options including a lease. He asked which would be his best recommendation. Public Works Director Chalker replied he would defer that at that time to the Finance Department because Finance Director Johnson has the most experience with leases. Currently, when they leased some of their other equipment they went with the best term for however many months or years.

Finance Director Johnson added she was looking for a 0% financing option to buy it outright so they would own that equipment. She stated it is hard to lease a backhoe or loader as opposed to a garbage truck. She suggests they purchase it.

Councilman Bell agreed that would be the most frugal way to handle this and he confirmed she would determine which term would be best as well as warranty. Finance Director Johnson replied yes.

Councilman Stainback asked if a 0% financing option was fairly standard. Finance Director Johnson replied she knows Kubota offers it. She had not looked at John Deere, but she was sure they offered it too. Right now, it seems to be offered with equipment but not vehicles.

Councilman Bell asked if they would work with the local John Deere dealer. Finance Director Johnson replied they would definitely try to use a local dealer.

Public Works Director Chalker said they expect a backhoe and wheel loader to last a long time. They've had the ones now for a while and have gotten their money's worth out of them.

Councilman Strickland asked Public Works Director Chalker to explain the finance payment of \$1.00 purchase option. He replied in some of the leases when they get to the end of the lease, they have the option to purchase the equipment for \$1.00. Basically, they would make payments on it, and it transfers the title over for \$1.00 at the end of the lease. Depending on how the lease is structured, it could depend how much tax they would have to pay on that through the middle of the financing.

Councilman Strickland asked if the equipment is leased, is there a limit on how many hours they can use it. Public Works Director Chalker replied it depends on the terms of the lease. They would try to get it unlimited.

City Manager Traynham added administration asked department staff to provide

different financing options for consideration. The need is for a backhoe and a loader, but they have to look at different alternatives. No commitments have been made; these are just options that have been provided and are available.

Planning & Development

Planning & Development Director Anderson presented the following increases requested in the upcoming budget:

Technology Upgrades:

- Tablet Upgrade for Inspectors – They use tablets on a day-to-day basis for inspections, communicate with contractors and engineers. Requesting to upgrade to larger tablets. Increase from \$10,000 to \$13,500.

Training & Continuing Education:

- Code Enforcement and Zoning Officials – Continuous education is vital for maintaining professional standards and legal compliance. Requesting an increase from \$6,000 to \$6,500.

Vehicle Replacement:

- 2018 Truck Replacement surplus to Enterprise – This is to allocate those funds to help with transition of trade-in of vehicle. Increase from \$8,000 to \$12,500.

Operational Costs:

- Fuel Cost Increases – Fuel prices rising. Increase from \$2,500 to \$3,000.
- Uniforms – To maintain professional appearance and easily identify inspectors when out in the field. Increase from \$300 - \$450.

Equipment Purchases

- Computers for Staff and Code Books for Inspectors – increased need for digital resources and purchase of required Code Books for newly enforced code changes. Requesting reallocation of \$8,500.
- Drone for Code Enforcement – Purchase of drone to aid code enforcement and inspectors to capture footage in unsafe conditions. Staff is actively pursuing a remote pilot license to operate the drone safely and effectively per FAA requirements. Requesting \$5,000.

Demolition Funds

- Key Infrastructure Demolitions – Requesting allocation of \$500,000 to address demolition of hazardous commercial structures. The strategic reduction of

unsafe buildings is critical to protecting public safety and facilitating future development.

Planning & Development Director Anderson noted they have a lot of commercial structures under demolition order now, however \$500,000 would not take down all of them.

Addressing Budget Shortfalls

- Miscellaneous Shortfalls – Requesting an additional \$600 for dues. Increase from \$600 to \$1,200.

She stated these budgetary adjustments are strategically aimed at sustaining and enhancing the quality of services provided by the Planning & Development Department. The requested demolition funds are particularly critical due to the associated safety risks of delayed action. Their approval of these increases is instrumental in ensuring the well-being of the community and the continuation of professional standards in their operation.

Human Resources

Human Resources Director Caudle stated the Human Resources department expense budget has been “spot-on” this year. With the exception of one line item, the budget requests will be the same for this fiscal year. She called their attention to the line item entitled Employee Drug Screening Expense. She stated it actually encompasses all the pre-employment screening items. She requested to increase it to \$13,000 which is only an increase of \$500 from the current year budget. This is to account for the announced rate hikes of the FRMT Group that conducts the required police candidate psychological evaluations. She added they were essentially the only vendor throughout the state the City can utilize for that service.

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Daughtry explained the materials she provided in their packets will have explanations and pictures behind each facility or park budget. She hopes they all took time to look through that because she was going to concentrate on the Top 10 Departmental Needs as noted on the first page of the material which sums up the entire package. If there were increases in the budget line items, it was mostly due to cost increases.

She presented the following top 10 needs:

Rochelle Park Playground

- Current playground was installed over 30 years ago. It is rusted, out of date and out of compliance with today's playground standards.
Est. Cost: \$75,000

Emry Skatepark and parking lot

- The City allocated \$15,000 this fiscal year to go towards the project. A citizens group has raised approximately \$30,000. They are requesting the City rollover the \$15,000 and add \$15,000 so the City can match what the citizens group raised. In addition to that funding, the City has secured \$15,000 from Brightspeed and they are still waiting to hear from tourism concerning the \$5,000 grant. Also, MJ Price is donating in-kind work to demo and prep the area of the tennis courts which is estimated at \$20,000. This project would end up costing approximately \$100,000. The project would still leave two tennis courts, and the department feels the best use of that space would be to create additional parking. This would also prevent the department from having something to constantly maintain in the park. She added during the summer there are four T-ball or coach pitch games going on which fill up the entire parking area, overflow parking at the water tower and both 9th and Cleveland Streets are full of cars during that time. The proposed new parking area will create approximately 50 new parking spaces with an area to turn around. They are requesting \$70,000 for the parking area with a combined additional request of \$95,000 to complete the project.

Rochelle Park Restrooms

- Restrooms are currently locked and not in use. The drain system needs total replacement. Request to remove restrooms and replace them with two single stall restrooms that would be located closer to the pickleball court and proposed playground. This would help complete the park.
Est. Cost: \$80,000

Parks & Recreation Director Daughtry stated they try to do what they can with money here and there. But she would like to see them complete some projects so that one park can look really nice and they can move on to the next park. This is why the department is concentrating on Rochelle and Emry Parks so they can make those parks look as good as possible for the citizens.

Roanoke Canal Museum & Trail/Kirkwood Supervisor

- She requested to unfreeze the position which was frozen in 2020. They reduced operating hours and relied on part-time in order to handle tours, deposits,

payroll, etc. They also have not been able to participate in a lot of outreach activities to draw patrons to that facility. She believes the museum holds a rich history on how the city was formed. She feels it is important for the history of Roanoke Rapids to continue through the museum and request it open full time. She added Kirkwood Adams Community Center has been rented through TJ Davis Recreation Center for some time. TJ Davis Recreation Center is the department's largest facility and is very busy. It is overwhelming for the supervisor there to manage Kirkwood Adams with all the questions, payments and weekend activities along with supervising TJ Davis. They request combining the Canal Museum and Kirkwood Adams supervisor position so both facilities could be served better. She reported TJ Davis facilitates 25% of their contacts with an additional 9% from Kirkwood so that is over a third of the department's contacts coming through one supervisor. This request would help to better disburse the workload equally. The TJ Davis Recreation supervisor needs to focus their time on programming for youth, promoting positive health benefits, self-esteem, sense of community and helping shape young people into independent and productive citizens. Est. Cost: \$50,000

TJ Recreation Software

- This software is something that has been needed for several years. It would help in all their facilities to better serve the citizens. Data shows an average of 30% revenue increase from having online registrations with this software. It would not only be used at TJ Davis, but it would also be used to schedule fields, reserve shelters, sports leagues, camps, class registrations, room reservations, swimming lessons and facility admissions. They would use it at TJ Davis, Canal Museum, Aquatic Center, Senior Center (for reserving Centennial Park). Est. Cost \$6,000/year

TJ Davis Roof Leaks

- There have been discussions about painting inside TJ Davis. Staff feels they need to repair some roof leaks because when it rains heavily there is water that comes in. They've had different contractors to try and identify where the water is coming in because it is a metal roof and slanted. It has been difficult for them to identify exactly where the leaks are so they have a contractor that would come in and replace all the screws on the roof which is approximately 4,000 screws. The contractor will replace the screws and reseal the roof to try to eliminate the leaks.

Kirkwood Adams Community Center Windows

- Half of the foggy windows were replaced in this year's budget, so this request is to complete that project. The foggy windows appear dirty. They would like to

make the facility look inviting especially with people in the community renting the facility and having people coming from out of town to participate in activities and events there.

TJ Davis Painting

- There are beams inside TJ Davis gyms that are rusting, and they do not want them to have permanent damage. The lobby and exterior of the building are faded and have chipped paint. This facility was renovated in 2000. There have been attempts to repaint scuffed and damaged areas, but it does not match. This is the largest recreation facility with the largest number of patrons as well as the face of the Parks & Recreation Department.

Library Computers

- There are seventeen (17) computers at the library which are 10-12 years old. A lot of them are for the public with some for staff. The computers will freeze up and require rebooting a lot throughout the day. People in the community depend on the library to complete job applications, work on resumes, students do reports, etc. The computers are used a lot by the community and provide a service to them. Request to replace computers.

Emry Park Restrooms

- Request to remodel the restrooms. This park hosts T-ball so a lot of kids use these restrooms. There are also birthday parties and family reunions held at Emry Park on weekends. The proposed Skatepark will also be located there. These restrooms will be used frequently. Currently there are rusted out areas and damage to walls.

Parks & Recreation Director Daughtry stated this was their top ten and listed under that on the sheet were the additional requests with explanations throughout the department budget packet.

Mayor Pro Tem Bryant asked if the Canal Museum/Kirkwood Adams Supervisor position would be housed at the museum. Parks & Recreation Director Daughtry replied yes.

Mayor Pro Tem Bryant asked who would be responsible for setting up for events at Kirkwood Adams. Parks & Recreation Director Daughtry replied Kirkwood Adams is set up through their maintenance department at this time and will continue to be. The proposed position would supervise the facility, take reservations, show the facility, arrange part-time help to work, and notify maintenance when to set up.

They would also manage the Canal Museum. They would contact schools to schedule tours, work with the Canal Commission and Friends of the Canal to help promote the facility.

Fire

Fire Chief Patrick reviewed the following increases in the department's operational budget.

- Utilities
- Fuel
- Training
 - Increased \$4,000 because they have a young department. This will help train and prepare them for when seasoned firefighters retire.
- Contracted Services
 - Going to an updated Knox Box system which helps the department track when the key is used (commercial buildings) plus safeguards the department so the key does not get lost. It implements a PIN number for each firefighter to remove the key.
- Equipment Maintenance
 - Repairs to any loose equipment. (Lawn mowers, weed eaters, chainsaws, fans, etc.)
- Radio Upgrade
 - Request increase to purchase a spare VIPER radio. They are three (3) short, but plan to ask for one per year to catch up.
- Apparatus Vehicle Maintenance/Repairs
 - Repairs for fire engines, ladder truck, equipment truck and F-550. Increase \$3,000.
- Tire expense
 - Increase \$1,000. A set of tires for one of those big apparatus is \$6,000.
- Annual Physical
 - Price increased. Every year each firefighter receives a full physical, bloodwork. They perform physicals onsite.
- Uniforms
- Dues & Subscriptions
- Capital Outlay – Equipment
 - Large equipment purchases. This ties into the Knox Box system. They purchased some items in this year's budget so this will finish that out.

Chief Patrick stated before reviewing the capital requests submitted on his handout, one of his big requests is to unfreeze two frozen positions. During COVID

and when some people were leaving, the department was struggling to maintain people. They froze two positions and took that funding to adjust salaries to keep people. They have some part-time people helping to fill those two positions, but originally, they were full-time and are missed. He stated the positions are office staff.

He presented the following additional Capital Requests:

HVAC at Station 1 Living Quarters

- HVAC to replace a split unit that was previously installed to save money years back. They are in the process of enclosing the sleeping cubicles for more privacy so they will need to install the original style HVAC unit. This will have each cubicle with a HVAC vent for proper ventilation. Est. \$8,000

Cab & Chassis to Replace F-550

- This cab and chassis would replace the Ford F-550 which currently has the equipment body on it. The body would be removed and placed on the new cab & chassis. The current cab and chassis were donated years ago by Dominion Energy. It is a 1999 Ford F-550 4x4 Diesel which currently has 205,053 miles on it. This truck carries an assortment of equipment on it from firefighting, first responder, spill control, along with basic extrication tools. This truck is used by Fire Station 2 to respond to first responder calls in the area which keeps the larger Engines off the road. This price does not include basic upfitting of this vehicle. May be able to work this through the Enterprise lease program. Est. \$75,000

4 Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

- They need four (4) air packs for the newest truck which should be delivered in the coming months. When ordering this apparatus, they had planned to use 4 older packs to try and save money, but over the last year and half these 20-year-old packs have had some major issues with the pass device system. With the air pack being that old it is difficult to find the parts or in some cases can't be found to make repairs. Est. \$40,000

Generator Replacement Station 1

- Replace the generator at Station 1 with a unit that will be capable of running the entire building during power failure. The current generator will only run portions of the building with the Air Conditioners not being part of it. So, if power is lost during summer months the air conditioners will not operate. Est. \$105,000

Mayor Pro Tem Bryant asked for further explanation on the four contained breathing apparatus. Chief Patrick replied the air packs are tested every year by a third party just like the fire trucks. The air packs are their lifelines when they are fighting fires in the smoky environment and super-heated gases. If the air packs are not working correctly, they cannot function. Again, every year someone comes in to test and service the air packs. Staff perform regular maintenance and cleaning. Testing and servicing the air packs must be performed by a licensed professional. It also takes some of the liability off of the City by having that licensed third party. He noted the gentleman was here yesterday testing them and he believed they lost one air pack.

Councilman Bell asked if the third party was certified and bonded per state and federal regulations. Chief Patrick replied yes.

Police

Police Chief Wiggins called attention to the memorandum included in the Police Department's budget packet. He stated he would not read it, but it does go into detail of the expenses, changes or increases with more explanation.

He reviewed the following in the operational budget:

Phone/postage

- Required internet lines and the department issued supervisors on each shift a cell phone. In case of emergencies, they have a direct line with supervisors across the agency.

Ammunition

- Requesting an increase. They are working on a quarterly training plan for firearms. He has seen some things at the range that need to be addressed, and training is the only way to do it. He has instructed the Professional Standards Captain to come up with an annual training plan to address firearms proficiency to ensure officers are trained to respond to situations if necessary.

Proposed New Line Items

- Prior to his arrival, the department entered into a lease agreement with Axon for body cameras and tasers. The annual operating costs is moving from seizure funds to the operational budget.

Chief Wiggins moved on to the following Capital Requests:

Radio Equipment Expense

- The department has four (4) vehicles including his vehicle that do not have radios in the vehicle. This presents problems when using portable radios because they do not always have the best reception. Especially in Area 3, which is the commercial district near Walmart. Numerous officers report issues with getting out on the radios.

Toughbooks

This is the department's most pressing need. In working with the Finance Director and City Manager, they started looking at outside the box ways to address the need. The previous quotes were a heavy lift. Panasonic does a Toughbook as a Service program which takes it from a capital expenditure to an operating cost. They were able to get a quote for better laptops and actually more equipment for the laptops for about the same cost over a five-year period. There is a small increase in costs over the five years compared to buying outright and it is one of the better options he has seen. Currently, several officers whose computers are not operational or continuously need to be restarted or they have to come to the office to complete reports. Mobile computing is a critical need, especially for officers on patrol and the investigators responding to crime scenes. He noted there is a second quote for a lease option with another company. Both of are enclosed in their packets for their review.

Councilman Jackson asked Chief Wiggins which one he would consider the best between the two options. He replied the one from Panasonic Toughbook as a Service to be the best option. Currently the docking stations the department utilizes are "one-size fits all" not to mention they are much older. Many officers have taken to creative ways of securing the laptops to the docking stations. The Panasonic Toughbook as a Service would give them the vehicle docking cradle which locks and secures the laptop so it cannot be stolen out of the car. To purchase those cradles, they would be \$1,200 each. Panasonic is giving the cradles to them over the life of the five years for about \$700. The other quote does not provide the docking stations. It has desktop docking stations which the Panasonic quote does as well. They asked for thirteen (13) desktop docking stations so in case officers have to come in and bring their laptop, they are able to plug into the setup in the office and continue their work.

Councilman Jackson clarified that the computers the department is currently using are laptops like one can purchase at Walmart. Chief Wiggins replied yes, when those computers were purchased, he believed they were from Staples. They are more akin to a computer one would give a high school student. They are not

designed to be in a vehicle in extreme weather conditions and the vibrations of the vehicle. Over time they begin to break down.

Councilman Jackson stated he believed Toughbooks are used in the military. Chief Wiggins replied there are versions, fully-rugged and semi-rugged. The ones the department is looking at are semi-rugged. The version they quoted on Toughbook as a Service addresses a myriad of needs. As technology continues to grow these laptops will be in service for 5-7 years. With this leasing option, in 5 years if they continue with the program, it will turn over the laptops to the newest and latest.

Chief Wiggins presented a quote from L-TRON Corporation for a forensic digital collection kit. Essentially, the department has one officer dedicated to processing crime scenes when there is a major crime. The presentations they see in the courtrooms are becoming more advanced, especially when dealing with evidence. This is a camera system and software that can be placed in various locations of a crime scene, and it does a 360 in each location to provide a 3D rendering of the crime scene. Measurements can be added as well. It lends itself to the best practices that higher end agencies operate. This would also cut down on time documenting crime scenes.

Councilman Bell asked since it captures the whole area of a crime scene, would that decrease user error such as missing things. Chief Wiggins replied once they leave a crime scene they cannot go back; lose the chain of custody on it. When photographing a scene there are a number of things that could cause someone to miss something. It does happen, but it usually doesn't. With one person documenting, there is that chance unlike larger agencies that work in two- or three-man teams. It gives them a second bite at the apple when they would do the 3D scans. He has personally seen them, one of his former agencies had a version of this from another company. Once the prosecutors get it, they expect it all the time. It provides that much more information with respect to the crime scene.

Chief Wiggins stated they were in the process of re-constituting their special response team. For an organization this size and since his time here, they've had officers engaging and serving high risk warrants for narcotics investigations or wanted individuals. It is hard to get that done safely when they do not have the personnel who have the time training together in that capacity. Most people are familiar with the term SWAT team. They are seeing an uptick in activities, and they are getting more prevalent. The time is coming for them to have in place the people to address certain situations. He requested their consideration in the budget for funding rifles for the special response team.

He said the Criminal Investigations Division has been utilizing a secondary camera system in addition to Flock. They own a couple of the cameras which are mobile, and they have been able to deploy them in locations where thefts have been occurring or in situations where a lot of activity is going on. The last quote is from Champion Systems to acquire another camera which has served them well in the CID and narcotics unit in building cases.

Mayor Pro Tem Bryant stated they appreciated the department heads sharing their needs. They would like to do what they can, and they want to make sure the employees have the equipment they need to be safe and do their jobs properly. They will work with what they have.

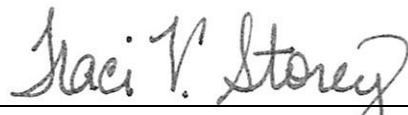
Finance

Finance Director Johnson stated the only real increases were in the General Government department for General Liability Insurance and the Legal Settlement line.

City Manager Traynham stated there was a lot of information before them in their packets to digest and for staff to see what can be afforded this year and make the best use of taxpayer funds. She expected the meeting to take a little longer, but hitting the highlights has gotten them through it more quickly. At the next meeting, she intends to have a first pass at a balanced budget. As far as the revenue outlook, most things will be relatively flat, no substantial increases, but hopefully no substantial decreases. The revenue projections memo they receive from the NCLM requires some analysis of looking at prior data and trying to anticipate their local situation would resolve in that. Looking for some stability and to make the best use of funds to impact the greatest amount of people within the community.

She said to come up with the needs and costs is very time consuming and working with vendors to obtain that information does require a level of effort, so they were grateful for that. She asked City Council to address any questions with her and bring their needs, and they will do their best to respond.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: May 20, 2025