



# Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

**Present:** Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor  
Sandra W. Bryant, Mayor Pro Tem

Andy Jackson)  
Curtis Strickland)  
Rex Stainback)  
W. Keith Bell)

## Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager  
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney  
Carmen Johnson, Finance Director  
Lawrence Wiggins, Police Chief  
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director  
Kristyn Anderson, Planning & Development Director  
Kelly Daughtry, Parks & Recreation Director  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director  
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief  
Krista Rourk, Purchasing Agent (In for City Clerk)

**Absent:** Traci Storey, City Clerk

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Doughtie provided an invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie stated there is one item to remove from the agenda, Item 7 d) and one item to add, a budget amendment, under New Business. He called for a motion to adopt the agenda as amended.

There being no conflicts, motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Bell, and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda with the deletion of item d) under New Business and replace it with a budget amendment, Ordinance No. 2025.15.

## Special Recognitions

### **Swearing In Police Chief Lawrence Wiggins**

Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Brenda Branch administered the oath to Police Chief Lawrence Wiggins.

Chief Wiggins thanked everyone for being in attendance. He stated he was overwhelmed with the amount of support he has received from staff, the community, department heads, the City Manager and City Council. He felt welcome and received help navigating the change moving from South Carolina to North Carolina; it has made it so much easier. He understands this may be a first and feels the weight of that. He was here for the community, nothing more, nothing less. Everything he has is for the community and he intends to show it in his actions and commitment to make sure this community is a community they can all be proud of.

### **Police Department**

Chief Wiggins stated he truly believes in professionalism and in being a master of your craft. They have a number of officers at the Roanoke Rapids Police Department that do not just settle for their basic certification, but who have pursued training and education in pursuit of their intermediate certification and their advanced certification. When he began his duties as Chief, he found out how many officers had done that work and it made him feel proud because when the community sees them, they expect excellence.

He added that several officers have come to him with ideas about grants. The other day, Officer Stephenson said he had found a grant for some equipment. He told him you found it, write it up, pursue it, and we will support you in any way. Officer Stephenson did that on his own and he is not the only one, there have been others, but he took it upon himself and that's what he wants for the police department, ownership.

Chief Wiggins said this isn't his department; it is our department. This isn't his city; it's our city. The same goes with the citizens so when something happens it's our collective responsibility to ensure they do whatever they can to make sure this city is safe.

Chief Wiggins recognized and congratulated Officer Todd Stephenson on obtaining his Intermediate Law Enforcement Certificate from the North Carolina Department of Justice Education and Training Standards.

**Approval of City Council Minutes**

Motion was made by Councilman Strickland, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to approve the April 15, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting and May 6, 2025 Budget Work Session minutes as drafted.

**New Business**

**Consideration of Budget Amendment (Library Children’s Program)**

Finance Director Johnson reported the library received a donation of \$500 for the Children’s program. She presented the following budget amendment for their consideration:

**Ordinance No. 2025.13  
CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS  
BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS:**

**SECTION 1.** The following additional amounts are hereby appropriated for the operation of the City Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025, according to the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES**

Fund Balance – Children’s Program	
<b>Project Revenues – Children’s Program</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<b>FUND PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>

**SECTION 2.** The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES**

Funding to General Fund – Children’s Program	
<b>Project Expenditures – Children’s Program</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<b>FUND PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>

**SECTION 3.** This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

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Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Bell and unanimously carried to adopt Budget Amendment (Ordinance No. 2025.13) in the amount of \$500.00 for the Children's Program at the library.

**Consideration of Budget Amendment (Emry Park Skatepark)**

Finance Director Johnson stated Mr. Justin Kerr along with a local citizen group solicited donations and held fundraisers to help fund a skatepark at Emry Park. The group raised \$31,492.50. She presented the following budget amendment for their consideration:

**Ordinance No. 2025.14  
CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS  
BUDGET AMENDMENT**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS:**

**SECTION 1.** The following additional amounts are hereby appropriated for the operation of City Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, according to the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES**

Fund Balance – P&R – Skate Park Donations	
<b>Project Revenues - P&amp;R – Skate Park Donations</b>	<b>\$31,492.50</b>
	<hr/>
<b>FUND PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$31,492.50</b>

**SECTION 2.** The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES**

Funding to General Fund – P&R – Skate Park Donations	
<b>Project Expenditures - P&amp;R – Skate Park Donations</b>	<b>\$31,492.50</b>
	<hr/>
<b>FUND PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$31,492.50</b>

**SECTION 3.** This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

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Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Jackson, and unanimously carried to adopt Budget Amendment (Ordinance No. 2025.14) in the amount of \$31,492.50 for the Emry Park Skatepark.

### **Consideration of NCDOT Sweeping Agreement**

Public Works Director Chalker said in the past, City Council has authorized Mayor Doughtie to execute an agreement with NCDOT for the City to perform routine sweeping of various streets and bridges, most specifically the Roanoke River bridge.

He said one-year extensions have been requested and granted each year and NCDOT is again requesting that the City Council extend this agreement for an additional period of one year (through June 1, 2026).

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, seconded by Councilman Bell and unanimously carried to extend the Sweeping Agreement (Agreement No. 11587) with the NC Department of Transportation for a period of one year (through June 1, 2026) and to authorize Mayor Doughtie to execute the attached letter.

### **Consideration of Budget Amendment (May 16, 2025 Storm Expenses)**

Public Works Director Chalker stated he was requesting City Council's consideration for a budget amendment in the amount of \$250,000 for the most recent emergency response, debris collection and removal for the storm on Friday evening, May 16, 2025. They do not currently have specific budgeted funds for an event of this size. He said he did not know if they would spend the entire \$250,000, but they are requesting to place the amount into an amendment to prepare to deal with this storm. They have already collected a mountain of debris, so this is going to cost a little bit of money. Their hope is to receive a declaration by the State of North Carolina through their Emergency Management Program that would reimburse the City. He presented Ordinance No. 2025.15 for their consideration.

## **Ordinance No. 2025.15 CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS BUDGET AMENDMENT**

### **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS:**

**SECTION 1.** The following additional amounts are hereby appropriated for the operation of City Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, according to the following schedule:

#### **SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES**

Fund Balance – Storm Response & Recovery -5-16-25	
<b>Project Revenues – Storm Response &amp; Recovery -5-16-25</b>	<b>\$250,000.00</b>
<b>FUND PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$250,000.00</b>

**SECTION 2.** The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES**

Funding to General Fund – Storm Response & Recovery -5-16-25	
<b>Project Expenditures – Storm Response &amp; Recovery -5-16-25</b>	<b>\$250,000.00</b>
<b>FUND PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$250,000.00</b>

**SECTION 3.** This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

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Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

City Manager Traynham stated they were going to provide City Council with an update as part of the City Manager's report so if there were some questions about what happened and the extent of it, they will address that in a few minutes.

Motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, and unanimously carried to adopt Budget Amendment (Ordinance No. 2025.15) in the amount of \$250,000 for recovery funds for the storm.

<p><b>City Manager's Report</b></p>
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City Manager Traynham acknowledged Item 7 d) was removed from the agenda tonight for the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and Budget Message and a Special Meeting has been scheduled for next Thursday, May 29, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall where they will focus strictly on the budget and provide the budget and meet those obligations.

She reported the community is in the wake of a storm that occurred Friday night, May 16, 2025. Most of the City staff and other individuals in the community have not had a chance to take a break and reflect on what happened yet; they went straight into response mode. She wanted to take a minute to reflect on that and acknowledge the resilience and commitment that was demonstrated by City staff, the team of professionals and partners throughout the community as well as the citizens themselves. People really stood up and looked out for neighbors and each other. It is a reminder that they are a community. She expressed gratitude for those unparalleled efforts of the City employees, first responders, utility providers, various state and local agencies, Halifax County Emergency Management and the volunteers. Their swift action and unwavering dedication in the aftermath of the storm not only mitigated potential impacts but also showcased the strength and solidarity that define this great community. The City employees worked tirelessly throughout the event. Many were here Friday evening into Saturday morning until about 2 a.m. then back here just a

few hours later to continue their efforts when the sunlight was there for better and safer conditions. The employees worked to ensure the public's safety to maintain order and help restore some normalcy. Today riding around, the public may not have known something happened other than some leaning trees or cut trees on the ground. The City employees embody the spirit of public service and do so with every task they undertake. There is a lot of invisible work that exists, and she is very proud to be a part of this organization and the team that supports this community and the City Council as well.

She said the first responders had a lot of courage that night. It was very dangerous Friday night and Saturday too with power outages, internet outages and with everyone curious to know what was going on or what happened in the aftermath of these events. Public safety was their most important priority at that time. They appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as restrictions had to be put in place and were done so to help keep people safe. She reported cars were driving through intersections without stopping, children were out on scooters and bikes and there were electrical wires hanging. They were able to get through the event without any personal injuries. They do understand there are some houses that experienced damage, some more substantial than others. As the trees are being pulled away, they are still getting reports of some damage, so the damage assessment efforts continue.

City Manager Traynham stated the actions of all have really been critical in safeguarding the well-being of the citizens. She thanked everyone, especially the utility providers. They showed up on scene and called in extra help. If you take away electricity, communications and internet, you will see some panic set in. They highlighted their efforts and disposable role during the times of crisis. She expressed her gratitude for the cooperation and recognized City staff, first responders and utility providers. Some may say it is just their job, but those essential services help to resume things back to normal. Their teams learn how to work best together, and they came together and performed. Even some of the City's leadership teams have new faces so it was a first-time experience for them. They learned on the go and did the best they could. She was proud of everyone's efforts, and everyone had a part in it.

City Manager Traynham said they still have the state of emergency open at this time to help collect data for their records, but they will be ending that shortly; there are no restrictions right now. She asked Public Works Director Chalker to share a few things about the storm event.

Public Works Director Chalker stated on Monday morning, they very quickly tried to pull together some stats because they had the media and some staff requesting some information. When they came in Friday evening and into Saturday, they received

approximately 33 reports of trees down, damaged power lines, and blocked streets. They also had 16 alleys blocked. They spent between Friday and Saturday about 397 personnel hours (everybody's hours together) working on what seemed to be an insurmountable task. It looked like Armageddon in some of the neighborhoods. He was very proud of all the employees and all of the City's departments. He cannot say that enough. They were out in the beginning of it and they saw firemen joining them and policemen there with them as well as the Sheriff's Office and the Roanoke Valley Rescue Squad. It felt really good to see that on the ground. He announced that now they only have two alleys remaining blocked. All streets have been cleared for at least partial traffic. They have two streets that are just partially blocked, but that will be ratified first thing tomorrow morning.

He said it was a tremendous effort. As mentioned in his presentation of the budget amendment, there is a pile of trees, limbs and leaves at public works in the field. Every time he comes down Hinson Street it is taller and wider. They did get that piece of property permitted Monday morning with an emergency request to DEQ. He explained they cannot go piling up a bunch of storm debris where they want to because if they do, they might have to move it. They have learned that over the years. They do plan to grind the debris where it sits on site and to immediately haul it away so it will not be hanging around once they start processing it.

Public Works Director Chalker thanked Dominion Energy and the crews they sent in to help them because they have trees down with power lines in them and they have power lines down with trees in them. They have to work together to disassemble that safely without getting someone electrocuted.

Mayor Doughtie added the City received a call from Halifax County offering support and they were very appreciative of that. He also believed the City received some hours of service from the NC Forestry Service. Public Works Director said they sent several crews here at the request of the Fire Chief through emergency management and they were very helpful. Mayor Doughtie stated it makes them feel good when that many people come to help when they are in a bind. They were very appreciative.

<b>Finance Report</b>
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Finance Director Johnson reported for the month of April 2025, General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$17,300,009.53. General Fund year to date expenditures totaled \$15,801,810.25. As a result, year to date revenues exceeded expenditures by \$1,498,199.28. After the month of April, 76.7% of the budget year has been completed.



She said the City has the following revenues to collect for FY2024-2025:

- **Ad Valorem** Tax for May & June
- **Motor Vehicle** Tax for May & June
- **Sales & Use** Tax for March – June
- **Hold Harmless** Tax for March – June
- **Utility Franchise** Tax Quarterly Payment in June
- **Beer & Wine** Tax Payment in May
- **Residential and Commercial Solid Waste Fees** for May & June

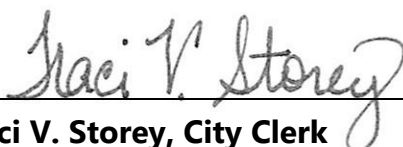
Finance Director Johnson stated she feels comfortable they will be in budget for this current year.

### Other Business/Adjournment

Mayor Doughtie stated in reference to the Emry Park Skatepark, it was a herculean effort to raise all that money. Mr. Kerr came before them about a year or so ago and said he wanted to get a skateboard park. They told him how much money it was going to cost, and he said he was going to raise it. He did not raise it all, but he told him if he put forth a strong effort, he felt like he would be able to get some help from different resources. He and some other people obviously put in a lot of time and effort to raise \$31,000. Mayor Doughtie stated he was appreciative of the other people that have put money into that too and it looks like it is going to become a reality.

Mayor Doughtie also said in reference to Chief Wiggins' comment about his officers. It makes you proud because they know that the police department is not in it to get rich and they are not making a ton of money so they are obviously interested in making this a career so they can help the communities they live in. When they take time away from their family to get more education to receive these certificates and diplomas, it makes them feel better and makes the police department look more professional. They are very fortunate to have a police department like they have in a town the size of Roanoke Rapids.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Strickland, and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

  
Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: June 3, 2025