



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, December 2, 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

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

Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Ashley Thomas, Main Street Director
Kristyn Anderson, Planning & Development Director
Richard Cook, Fire Chief
Adam Salmon, Police Captain

Absent: Carmen Johnson, Finance Director
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director
Kelly Daughtry, Parks & Recreation Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
Lawrence Wiggins, Police Chief

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

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

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.

There being no conflicts, motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda as presented.

Installation of Newly Elected Council Members

Mayor Doughtie called upon Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Brenda Branch to administer the Oaths of Office for the newly re-elected Mayor and elected City Council members.

Judge Branch administered the Oaths of Office to Mayor Emery Doughtie, Councilman Andrew Jackson and Councilman Curtis Strickland.

Election of Mayor Pro Tempore

Mayor Doughtie opened the floor for nominations for Mayor Pro Tem.

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Bell and unanimously carried to nominate Sandra Bryant as Mayor Pro Tem.

Mayor Pro Tem Bryant thanked her fellow Councilmembers for their support for another term.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Jerry McDaniel

Mr. McDaniel congratulated all those who were elected and re-elected. He wanted to bring up something that he believed was being brought up in the County meeting this evening, but he could not make it because he didn't want to miss this. Is anyone going to be surprised when they find out that Roanoke Rapids has nothing to do with the Roanoke River and that every drop of water in it belongs to Northampton County? They are trying to get an environmental project going in the county and he was wondering if that was going to surprise anybody if the river floods Roanoke Rapids. It's something he wants them to entertain and if they had an answer for it, he would certainly like to hear it.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilman Strickland, seconded by Councilman Jackson, and unanimously carried to approve the November 18, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting minutes as drafted.

New Business

Consideration of Budget Ordinance No. 2025.39 (Police Dept. Donations)

In Finance Director Johnson's absence, City Manager Traynham presented the following budget amendment for two (2) \$500 donations to the Police Department for a total of \$1,000.

Ordinance No. 2025.39 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, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES

Police Dept. – Donations to the Police Dept.	
Project Revenues – Police Dept.	\$500.00
	<u>\$500.00</u>
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$1,000.00

SECTION 2. The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES

Police Dept. – Donations to the Police Dept.	
Project Expenditures – Police Dept.	\$500.00
	<u>\$500.00</u>
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$1,000.00

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, and unanimously carried to adopt Budget Ordinance No. 2025.39 in the amount of \$1,000 for two donations to the Roanoke Rapids Police Department.

Consideration of Budget Ordinance No. 2025.40 (OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax)

City Manager Traynham presented the following budget amendment for funds received for OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax in the amount of \$2,566.02.

**Ordinance No. 2025.40
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, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES

Police – OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax	
Project Revenues - OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax	\$2,566.02
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$2,566.02

SECTION 2. The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES

Police – OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax	
Project Expenditures - OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax	\$2,566.02
FUND PROJECT TOTAL	\$2,566.02

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, seconded by Councilman Bell, and unanimously carried to adopt Budget Ordinance No. 2025.40 in the amount of \$2,566.02 for OSC Unauthorized Substance Tax.

Discussion and Consideration of 2026 HCIA Legislative Goals for the City of Roanoke Rapids

City Manager Traynham requested discussion and consideration of the 2026 Halifax County Intergovernmental Association (HCIA) Legislative Goals for the City of Roanoke Rapids. Each year, they are asked to present some legislative goals that represent some of the needs of the City. Typically, they have been more aspirational or high level. She referred to the copy of last year's goals for the City in their packets. She called attention to the one page of Legislative Common Goals that applies to Halifax County and the municipalities as a whole so they do not want to duplicate these in the City's goals.

She stated the City's goals in the past have focused on revitalization, transportation, housing, some revenue flexibility, and economic development support. After review, she recommends they give more specific considerations to their local needs rather than generic as they have been. She thinks they are good goals, but they don't quite capture the needs of Roanoke Rapids specifically. She recommended the following:

- Fiscal responsibility and sustainability - Ask for support from the State for unfunded mandates. To ask them to consider the requirement of a mandate if they are going to take away the funding source.
- Disaster Relief – These minor storms that may not be a declared a state of emergency, but storms that can knock out power for hours or more. The recovery efforts and costs to haul away vegetative debris can be expensive. It is not sustainable in the long run.
- Support legislation that could revise SB382 that prohibits downzoning residential property. The Senate Bill became law about a year ago and it places some restrictions on the City's ability to process and approve rezonings without some significant steps involved.
- Protecting the City's Exterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Over the years it has come up frequently where the General Assembly talks about doing away with ETJ all together. The City recommends retaining it.
- Local Government Employee Retirement System Pension reform. Between FY 2013 and FY 2025, the employer's contribution rate more than doubled over that time period. As they prepare for annual budgeting, staff looks to the State to tell them what to budget for in the employer's retirement rate. There are some proposals out there that could significantly increase the City's burden of that contribution. She suggests some statements that would encourage some sustainability and limit the annual increases to something more manageable.

City Manager Traynham said these were some of her recommendations and opened the discussion up to Council for direction and any thoughts or ideas they may have.

Councilman Bell stated he could definitely see the one about the retirement system. He explained that looking at the retirement system in the last 12 years, the employee put in 6% and the employer contribution was only around 7%. Every year, the State increases the employer rate by around half of a percent or so. The employee still puts in 6%, but the employer rate is probably up to around 16%. As the City Manager said, they are going to have to take a serious look at this and put it in their plan to start talking to the State about stopping or freezing it. When the federal government gets a cold, the towns/cities get pneumonia. The City is going to have to start looking at these things seriously. He added as far as the storms, the City saw that this past year all the man hours they had to put in and that was a minor one. The one back in

1988 was a serious one. They had places in the outlying area that did not get electricity back for over a week due to cleaning up all the debris. He agrees with the City Manager and feels she was on point with those recommendations.

City Manager Traynham said if there were no questions or additional input, she would send them a copy of updated goals to review prior to submittal to make sure they captured the essence of what City Council would like to see.

Attorney Davis added if City Council had any other priorities they would like to see the City Manager incorporate, now is the time so she can include them in the initial drafting process.

City Manager Traynham said when she added specifics for community revitalization, she would like to include demolition of unsafe buildings. That is a critical need for the City to get support for that. Roanoke Rapids is not the only municipality that is experiencing the situation of having decaying older buildings, and owners who are unable to follow through with making them safer. She thinks they will need to get specific on the properties the City has orders on at this point and ask the State for support.

Mayor Pro Tem Bryant agreed and stated that definitely needs to be addressed.

Motion was made by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Bell and unanimously carried to direct the City Manager to draft and submit the City's HCIA legislative goals.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham stated City offices will be closed in observance of Christmas Wednesday, December 24 – Friday, December 26th. Staff are busy preparing for several holiday events coming up this weekend.

- Christmas on the Avenue – Friday, December 5th, 6-9 pm
- Christmas on the Canal – Saturday, December 6th, 10 am – 2 pm
- Christmas Parade – Sunday, December 7th at 2 pm
- Grinchy Christmas Party at Library – Tuesday, December 16th, 4 – 5:30 p.m.

She said the BARC (Benevolent Awards Recognition Committee), employee funded annual Christmas luncheon and service awards will be held on Wednesday, December 10th at Kirkwood Adams Community Center.

City Manager Traynham said the Christmas Parade Grand Marshal was announced on November 20th on the radio. Ms. Lori Medlin, President/CEO of the Halifax County Convention and Visitor's Bureau has been recognized as this year's Grand Marshal and will represent tourism along with all the special activities and events coming up next year to kick off the America and Halifax 250th.

She stated in the last meeting that Public Works would be conducting a streetlight outage survey throughout the city on November 19th. They found approximately 200 issues to report to Dominion Energy and Roanoke Electric. Citizens can also report issues to the Public Works Department, and they will convey them to the electrical provider. Public Works will also participate in a pavement conditions survey with the vendor who will be doing an analysis of all the streets, grade and rank them, and set forth a schedule for repaving. This will be a good thing to have in place so when funding for street repaving can be established, the City will have a list of streets that is ready to go.

Mayor Doughtie asked if they did a survey a few years back last time the City was doing some paving because he thought they were picking the streets that were in most dire need.

City Manager Traynham replied the City has never had a formal engineered plan done. They may have talked about it during budgeting, and they are now kicking off that project now.

Main Street Director Thomas shared information about the Christmas on the Avenue which is scheduled for Friday, December 5th. There are many activities planned for the 1026 Roanoke Avenue space. From 5:30 – 9 p.m. there will be a hot cocoa bar, snow machine, give-a-ways, music and performances by a pianist, high school band, choir as well as a dance school. She reported there has been some preparation beforehand by young people in the community. The Halifax County 4-H under the tutelage of Stephanie Proctor who works with the County Extension Office, had 20 students and parents who came out to do a mini refresh of the planters on Roanoke Avenue. They were able to cut back some of the dead plants and remove litter. They consulted with Master Gardener, Kathy Reynolds and Doug Love about planting, but were advised to get through the season and do a full refresh in the spring, tentatively scheduled for Earth Day. She said KIPP Middle School students also came out and did some artwork on windows of vacant storefronts on Roanoke Avenue.

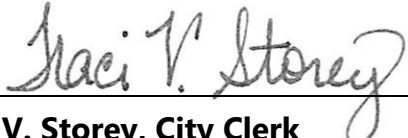
She said the preparations and community support have been very strong. The Main Street Advisory Committee as part of the City-run program is not allowed to accept money, but they are allowed to accept donations of things. Walmart supplied soil that

went into some of the planters, McDonald's helped with some squeegees to help the kids clean off the windows, poinsettias were given and the hot cocoa bar is courtesy of the Lake Gaston Regional Chamber, the snow machines are courtesy of ServPro. She feels it is important to mention these organizations because out of their own desire, they have stepped up to assist. Roanoke Valley Rescue Squad will be providing a light tower at the 1026 space to make sure it is safe and well-lit. There will be a hayride that will transport folks back and forth from Centennial Park to 1026 Roanoke Avenue. She invited everyone to come out.

City Manager Traynham added that the weather is not looking very favorable on Friday, but they are planning to have the events rain or shine at this point. Any decision made will be in the best interest of public safety.

Other Business/Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: December 16, 2025