**17113**

**Roanoke Rapids City Council**

**October 15, 2013**

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on the above date at 7:00 p.m. at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem

Ernest C. Bobbitt)

Greg Lawson)

Suetta S. Scarbrough)

Carol H. Cowen)

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager

Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, City Clerk

Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer.

Mayor Doughtie called Council’s attention to the Conflict of Interest statement in the agenda packet.

With no one indicating a conflict of interest with any of the items on the agenda, motion was made by ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by ­­­­­­Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for October 15, 2013.

Fire Chief Coggins conducted the Fire Department Promotion & New Hire Ceremony for the following individuals:

* Mr. Matt Glenn promoted to **Lieutenant.**
* Mr. Chad Turner promoted to **Engineer**.
* Mr. Jeremy Wells hired as **Firefighter**.
* Mr. Lee Vandeventer hired as **Firefighter**.

Mayor Doughtie stated he appreciates Jeremy and Lee for selecting the Roanoke Rapids Fire Department as their place of work. He thanked Chad and Matt for their years of service, and indicated that the City looks forward to having them for many more years.

Mayor Doughtie also thanked Parks & Recreation Director Simeon and his staff for the wonderful improvements made to the Andrews Building which sustained water damage several months ago. He also thanked the other City employees that participated to make this become a reality.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the October 1, 2013 Council Minutes.

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Ms. Cathy Scott, Executive Director of the Halifax County Economic Development Commission, stated a lot of good things are happening in Roanoke Rapids and Halifax County. She stated as Frank Avent would say “working together works”. Ms. Scott stated the Economic Development Commission is comprised of 12 members and Roanoke Rapids has 2 members—Rick Gilstrap and Joe Scherer. She stated Roanoke Rapids plays a significant role in economic development, and is the center of commerce for Halifax County and Northampton County. She stated Roanoke Rapids draws workers and shoppers from a wide area. Ms. Scott reported that the Secretary of Commerce was very impressed with Roanoke Rapids when she visited last week. She stated Main Street Roanoke Rapids is an important economic engine, and the City’s designation as a Main Street Community is an important designation. She stated they drove the Secretary through the Main Street area and she pledged her support of Roanoke Rapids in making the Main Street designation work for the City. Ms. Scott stated there are significant positive signs that the economy is continuing to get better.

Ms. Scott presented a PowerPoint presentation on the economic development activities in the City and County *(a copy of which is on file in the Clerk’s Office)*.

Following the presentation, Ms. Scott stated the City of Roanoke Rapids is a tremendous economic development partner and the Commission wants to help Roanoke Rapids grow. She stated she appreciates the collaborative partnership offered to the Commission and looks forward to it continuing.

Mayor Doughtie thanked Ms. Scott for the excellent report.

Ms. Scott stated the City has a great staff. She stated there is never anything asked that they do not know or anything that is asked of them that they do not do.

City Manager Scherer pointed out that the Secretary was also impressed that a lot of the areas here, such as Carolina Crossroads and the area around Premier Boulevard, already have infrastructure in place.

Ms. Scott stated that is one reason we have been so successful. She stated we market our assets. She stated we need to keep our relationship strong with the Department of Commerce.

City Manager Scherer stated the November 5 Council meeting falls on Election Day, and the Andrews Building is a polling precinct. He stated as of this time, we are not aware of any agenda items for this meeting. He stated Council is requested to consider a motion to cancel the November 5 Regular Council Meeting. City Manager Scherer pointed out that the next meeting would be Tuesday, November 19.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to cancel the November 5, 2013 Regular Council Meeting.

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City Manager Scherer reported that he and Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee just returned from attending the NCLM Annual Conference in Hickory, North Carolina. He provided highlights from the conference indicating that they were able to review the City of Hickory’s redevelopment program of empty and primarily industrial buildings and how Hickory managed to turn things around with the use of grants and tax credits. City Manager Scherer also indicated that the Retiring Executive Director stressed the need to continue to work with the League and our neighboring cities and towns to identify concerns and priorities to be presented to the Governor and legislators. He stated they were told that in the past, there have been two “Carolinas”—major cities and rural areas, and we need to make sure our voice is heard in Raleigh. He pointed out that the League was instrumental in ensuring that municipal revenue was not decreased by the legislators in their tax reform plan. City Manager Scherer announced that the NCLM will be hosting “District Day” on June 4 for city and town officials to visit with their legislators.

City Manager Scherer recognized Parks & Recreation Director Simeon and his staff for the improvements made to this facility *(referring to the Andrews Building)*.

City Manager Scherer stated some may be aware of a recent on-line article that listed Roanoke Rapids as the third poorest city in the nation. He reported that he responded to that article with an article pointing out fallacies in the report.

City Manager Scherer reported that a lecturer from UNC was at the Canal Museum this past Thursday, and Councilwoman Scarbrough and Councilwoman Cowen attended. He stated a total of around 50 people attended. He commended Rodney Pierce, Jeff Watson and John Simeon for making the Canal Museum more visible and viable.

City Manager Scherer reported that RABA will be conducting training with the State Main Street Director tomorrow and Thursday.

City Manager Scherer reported that the County agreed to recommend our Golden LEAF Foundation Project for funding. He stated we hope to hear something next month regarding our storm water project.

Finance Director Hite provided an update on the refinancing of the 2007 Series Bonds indicating that she received an email from Ted Cole with the Davenport Group stating “that there are no ongoing discussions with potential lenders at this time”. She stated the Davenport Group will meet with her and the City Manager on October 29 at 10:00 a.m. to assess any additional options that may be available going forward.

Finance Director Hite reported that Greg Redman, CPA, is scheduled to present the Audit Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013 at the November 19meeting. She indicated that the City’s financial statements have been submitted to the Local Government Commission for their approval.

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Finance Director Hite reported that as we close the books on September 30, year-to-date revenues are $4,798,158.51 (representing 32.2% of budgeted revenues) and year-to-date expenses are $5,068,809.71 (representing 34.0% of budgeted expenses). She stated total expenditures exceed revenues by $270,651.20.

Finance Director Hite reported that Sales and Use Tax receipts year-to-date are $144,623.05 (15.25% decrease from this time last year).

Finance Director Hite pointed out that included in Council’s packet is an update from the Tax Department which outlines the collections for the month of September (total collections: $4,039,588.00). She stated a first quarter Financial Summary report is also included for Council’s review. She stated she is happy to answer any questions.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there were any worries with the decrease in revenues or if this was normal for this time of the year.

Finance Director Hite stated it is normal for this time of the year.

City Manager Scherer pointed out that the government shutdown has not affected any of our finances.

Finance Director Hite stated that is correct.

Mayor Doughtie stated the Sales and Use Tax we received in September was for July.

Finance Director Hite stated the Department of Revenue is two months behind.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if it is unusual for the Department of Revenue to be two months behind.

Finance Director Hite stated no.

City Manager Scherer stated the revenue stream is behind but we know it will be more in the next few months.

Mayor Doughtie asked Finance Director Hite if she means Sales and Use Tax or Ad Valorem when she refers to revenues.

Finance Director Hite stated both.

Police Chief Hathaway reported that during the month of September, the Criminal Investigations Division had 118 active cases with 75 of them cleared for a total of 135 charges.

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Police Chief Hathaway reported that the Narcotics Investigations Division worked 23 cases with 17 charges and the Uniform Patrol Division had 150 incidents with a total of 274 charges. He stated the Uniform Patrol Division also served 305 papers and investigated 56 accidents. Police Chief Hathaway reported that the Animal Control Officer answered 80 calls for service and acquired 93 different animals including an escaped iguana. He stated the Department collected a total of $6,697.80 in revenues. Police Chief Hathaway also reported that they have hit the $1 million limit of what they can get from the Law Enforcement Support Operations.

Police Chief Hathaway reported that Trick-or-Treating on Halloween will be observed from 5:30 – 8:00 p.m., and they will increase traffic enforcement during this time.

Police Chief Hathaway reported that there will be a Fish Fry on November 22 to support the “Shop with a Hero” program.

Police Chief Hathaway also reported that on Saturday, October 18, Nissan of Roanoke Rapids will be holding an “All About Kids Day” event and the Police Department will have vehicles there, and will be doing fingerprinting and IDs for the children.

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported that a detailed report is included in the Council’s agenda packet.

Planning & Development Director Lasky also reported that they completed site plan review and issued permits for Popeyes. She stated they anticipate opening before the end of this year. She reported that Dunham’s Sports received their CO compliance and anticipate opening on November 15.

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported that all funds for the CDBG-SBEA grant project for White Motors have been expended and we plan to schedule a public hearing to close out the grant for the November 19 Council meeting.

Planning & Development Director Lasky also reported that the Land Use/Health Care Plan Steering Committee will meet on November 14 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.

Human Resources Manager Kearney reported that the City is currently advertising for three positions: *Property Maintenance Worker (Public Works Department); Police Officer* and *Part-Time Library Assistant.* She also reported that she received 33 applications with 13 being for the Firefighter Applicant Pool. She stated the Fire Department will begin testing in November. Human Resources Manager Kearney stated the following individuals were hired during the month of September:

**Name** **Position**

Kristen Bowden Historic Interpreter at Roanoke Canal Museum (Part-Time)

Richard (Greg) Carter Sanitation Worker

Lee Vandeventer Firefighter

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Human Resources Manager Kearney reported that we held a flu shot clinic on October 2 and 70 employees participated. She stated this is an increase of about 20 from last year. She commended Angela Coggins of DrugCo for administering 49 shots in 55 minutes.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated he is pleased to announce that Mr. Bill Mueller has been appointed to the State Library Commission by Governor McCroy. He stated Mr. Mueller’s service to the Library Advisory Committee, Canal Museum and the Senior Center Advisory Committee is invaluable. He stated he knows that Mr. Mueller will represent us well at the State level.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that open enrollment for Medicare Part D will begin October 21 and run through December 7, and representatives will be available by appointment at the Jo Story Senior Center. He asked for help in getting the word out.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that his department has been awarded a $2,500 grant from North Carolina Amateur Sports for dugouts at Chockoyotte Park.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon also reported that the Haunted Trail at the Canal Museum will be held on October 24 and 25 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. He stated when this event was first held a few years ago, it drew between 800 and 900 people over two nights. He stated they received a lot of compliments about this event and decided to bring it back.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that on October 31, the Annual Haunted House and Carnival will be held at the T. J. Davis Recreation Center. He stated also on this evening, Roanoke Rapids High School Project Graduation will hold a fundraiser at Doyle Field. He stated they will be showing a movie to give kids a safe place to go on Halloween. He stated this event will be well supervised by Project Graduation representatives.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reminded everyone that the Christmas Parade is scheduled for Sunday, December 8 at 2:00 p.m. He reported that Will Hawkins will be the Grand Marshall.

Fire Chief Coggins reported that October is “Fire Prevention Month” and the department will be busy with station visits and going out to various schools.

Fire Chief Coggins reported on the various schools and training that some of the men have attended.

Fire Chief Coggins reported that with the help of Parks & Recreation Director Simeon and Finance Director Hite, they have been able to get an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for every building in the City. He stated there will also be one on each fire apparatus.

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Fire Chief Coggins reported that on October 25, he will be in jail for the Project Graduation fundraiser. He asked that people help him raise $250.00 to get out of jail.

Public Works Director Chalker stated his son is a senior this year so he appreciates Chief Coggins’ participation in the Project Graduation event.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that Public Works received 156 calls for service this past month, and a majority were concerning limbs, junk and loose materials. He stated they have decided to back leaf season up to November 1.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that the Cemetery collected $15,665.00 during the month of September. He stated they are completing the paving of the last section of roadway in the Cemetery.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that they sent out 54 letters for City Code Ordinance violations for lot cutting. He stated 22 lots were cut by City forces in the amount of $7,225.00

Public Works Director Chalker stated Garner Landscaping did a wonderful job of trimming the trees uptown. He stated our forces will be trimming the ones downtown to match.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that the Property Maintenance Division sprayed every inch of curb and gutter with herbicide.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that the Smoot Drive pipe is in and they are waiting for the ground to settle before putting down soil and grass. He stated it looks nice and it is a lot safer for the residents.

Public Works Director Chalker stated he would like to report on an event that has nothing to do with his department. He stated on Saturday, November 9 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., there will be an event at The Royal Palace Theatre called “Stand Up! Anti-Bullying Festival”. He stated organizers are expecting over 2,500 students. He stated this will be a big event which will be free. He stated several musical groups will be performing.

There being no further business in open session, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to go into closed session as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with the City Attorney.

**Minute Book Pages 17120 through 17124 contain Minutes and General Account of a Closed Session which have been sealed until such time as public inspection of those minutes would not frustrate the purpose of the Closed Session.**

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Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to return to open session.

City Council consulted with the City Attorney regarding property and legal matters in closed session. No action was taken.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Lawson, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adjourn.

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11/19/13