



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on Tuesday, November 17, 2015 at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

Present: Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor
Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem
Ernest C. Bobbitt)
Suetta S. Scarbrough) **Council Members**
Carol H. Cowen)
Wayne Smith)
Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager
Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney
Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, NCCMC, City Clerk
Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director
Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief
Chuck Hasty, Police Chief

Absent: Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

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

Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie announced that the agenda needs to be amended to remove Item 4 a) at the request of Ms. Byrum, the applicant for scheduled public comment.

There being no conflict of interest with any of the items on the agenda, motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Cowen and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for November 17, 2015 with the amendment to remove Item 4 a).

Special Recognitions

Retirement of Eakie Boone

Following remarks by Public Works Director Chalker, Mr. Eakie Boone was presented a retirement clock/plaque in recognition of his 32 years of distinguished service to the City of Roanoke Rapids.

Mr. Boone thanked God for the opportunity to serve the City. He stated 32 years has been a long time but everyone that works hard can get one of these plaques. He also thanked Councilwoman Scarbrough for her wonderful treats.

2015 Christmas Parade Grand Marshal

Following a short video presentation and remarks by Parks & Recreation Director Simeon, Ms. Kim Taresco, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club, was recognized as Grand Marshal for this year's Christmas Parade. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated this year's choice was pretty easy.

Mayor Doughtie stated he knows the children of the Boys & Girls Club are very proud of Ms. Taresco and will want to join her in the parade. He thanked Ms. Taresco for what she does for the children and our community.

Boy Scouts

Mayor Doughtie recognized the Boy Scouts in attendance that are working on their Citizenship in the Community Badge and toward becoming an Eagle Scout. He invited them to continue to attend Council meetings.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Ms. Kathleen Robinson

Ms. Kathleen Robinson of 812 Vance Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC stated she was sent here for a purpose and that is to make sure no one is hungry on Thanksgiving. She stated she will be serving two meals at 812 Vance Street. She stated she will be cooking and there will be a lot of love in the food.

Ms. Robinson stated she will also be conducting free camps entitled "Taking it Back" which will include sports, dance, reading, arts & craft, etc. She stated everyone is always complaining that no one is doing anything. She stated this is something she wants to do to help. She stated she will be back later with more information on the camps.

Ms. Robinson encouraged all those public servants working on Thanksgiving Day to stop by for a free meal.

Mayor Doughtie thanked Ms. Robinson for the efforts she is putting forth for our community.

Ms. Stacey Harrell

Ms. Stacey Harrell of S & L Pet Shop stated she approached the City Council at the October 6 meeting regarding changing the current ordinance to allow swine (Juliana and pot-bellied pigs) in the City limits. She stated she is bringing this back up again as she has customers that have inquired about the pigs they have already purchased. She stated she sold these pigs without knowing the current ordinance and her customers want to know if they will have to get rid of a member of their family. She stated these pigs are like babies. Ms. Harrell stated she has lots of concerns and no answers.

Ms. Harrell stated she did not know she was in violation of the City ordinance and wants to get the changes made to the ordinance so she can make this right for her customers. She explained that this business has been her life-long dream. She stated she is not looking to get rich but wanted something to leave to her children. She explained further that she is very particular when selling animals. She stated she asks a series of questions and looks into the situation to make sure the animal is a perfect fit for the customer. Ms. Harrell stated for the pot-bellied pigs, they could do screening and require a permit. She stated her store would only carry the pigs at certain times of the year. She stated she would keep a record of the owners so she could help the Police Department and Animal Control with enforcement of the ordinance. Ms. Harrell stated she is not trying to hurt anyone and just wants to be a part of the City Council's decision. She stated she hopes the Council will not make a rash decision.

Mr. Terry Buffaloe

Mr. Terry Buffaloe of 316 Chockoyotte Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC stated that at the last Council meeting, a bill was passed that he did not believe would be beneficial to Roanoke Rapids. He stated it was mentioned during that meeting that the legislation from the NC General Assembly was sent to the City with the City's best interest in mind. Mr. Buffaloe stated he has not seen anything done by the Republicans to benefit Roanoke Rapids or Halifax County. He stated at the meeting, he asked that this not be a rubber stamp of action by the General Assembly. He stated maybe the City Council members in all of their infinite wisdom sees something he cannot see.

Mr. Buffaloe stated we are still one of the poorest counties in the United States. He stated we need to look at the agenda and the things brought to the City Council. He stated we need to be doing something to further the City. He stated this City Council is in a position to make motions, propose and write legislation. Mr. Buffaloe stated he hopes there will be more thought put into decisions and not just believe in something because the State sent it down and said it was beneficial. He stated some meetings have lasted only 14 minutes. He stated we need to be putting forth agendas to change that.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the October 20, 2015 Council Minutes.

City Council Appointments/Reappointments

Recreation Advisory Committee

A ballot vote was taken and City Clerk Vincent announced that Ms. Megan Rogerson received the unanimous vote for appointment to the Recreation Advisory Committee.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to appoint Ms. Megan Rogerson to the Recreation Advisory Committee.

New Business

Presentation of FY 2014 - 2015 Audit Report

Mr. Gregory T. Redman, CPA, presented the Audit Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2015. He indicated that there were no modifications or findings. He reported on an undesignated fund balance of \$4.3 million (28% of total general fund expenditures). He also reported that a new requirement this year was the audit of the City pension funds of which there were no modifications or findings. Mr. Redman also reported on the strong tax collection rate of 98.57%. He indicated the statewide average is 98.4%. He also reported on an unmodified audit of the City's State and Federal grants.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked how the City is doing in comparison to other cities and towns.

Mr. Redman indicated that the statewide average of fund balance percentages is 44% and the City is at 47%. He pointed out that most towns' fund balance does not support their operations. Mr. Redman indicated that the Local Government Commission (LGC) has had the City's Audit Report for three weeks and they still have not looked at it. He stated the numbers will not change but we will need to get the copies of the audits back and they cannot be given to the news media until we get approval from the LGC.

Mayor Doughtie commended the administration and department heads for staying within budget and spending what they have wisely.

Note: Once the Audit Report has been approved by the LGC, the report will be back on the agenda for official acceptance by the City Council.

Consideration of Amendments to Chapter 91 "Animals" of the Roanoke Rapids Code of Ordinances

Police Chief Hasty reviewed the following highlights of the proposed ordinance to allow miniature pigs as domestic animals with restrictions:

- Amendment to Section 91.01 replaces the definition of "Animal" with "Domestic Animal".
- Amendment to Section 91.10 allows the exception to the current ordinance prohibiting the keeping of swine for a person to keep one pot-bellied pig, as defined in the newly proposed Section 91.60, provided they comply with the requirements of the newly proposed Sections 91.61 through 91.64.
- New Section 91.61 provides for the keeping and raising of pot-bellied pigs as household pets to be kept in all residential districts subject to limitations placed thereon by the subsections of the section:
 - Restriction on weight (cannot exceed 100 lbs.); only 1 pig per household; such pig to be kept in a restrained area and not permitted to run at large; no such pig shall be allowed to be outside of the premises of its owner except on a leash or duly restrained in a vehicle.
 - Breeding and raising of such pigs is not allowed in the City limits; permitted pigs shall be neutered or spayed or when any such pig shall give birth to piglets, the mother pig and piglets shall be immediately removed from the City for weaning and raising.

- Requires an Application and registration fee of \$25 to keep and maintain such pig within the City limits.
 - Requires such pigs to be routinely vaccinated and requires owners of any such pigs growing tusks to have them surgically removed by a veterinarian.
 - Requires that any outside area occupied by such pigs shall be regularly sanitized and kept free of waste and that no such area shall be allowed to become muddy or unsanitary.
- New Section 91.62 regulates the lots and outside enclosures for such pigs:
- Pigs to be enclosed or fenced so as to retain such animals at all times.
 - Requires proper building permits before locating or erecting any enclosure or fence.
 - Enclosures are to comply with all local zoning ordinances and requirements of the County Health Department.
 - Enclosures must be kept in a clean and sanitary condition in order to protect public health, includes how often the enclosures are to be cleaned and sprayed with suitable disinfectants and that no enclosure shall create offensive odors or a breeding place for flies.
 - Requires all enclosures to be high and thoroughly drained so that no pools of water can accumulate.
- New Section 91.63 addresses violations of the ordinance and the requirement of notices to property owners.
- New Section 91.64 addresses the penalties for violation of this ordinance.

Councilman Smith asked what they would do if the pig weighed more than 100 pounds. He asked who would weigh the pig.

Police Chief Hasty stated Animal Control would administer this ordinance.

Councilman Smith asked if the pigs would be required to be neutered or spayed.

Police Chief Hasty stated yes, the pet owner would be required to have this done.

Councilman Smith asked if the \$25 registration fee would cover the costs of the Animal Control Officer to go around every two weeks and inspect pens. He stated the Animal Control Officer already has enough to do dealing with dogs

and cats.

Police Chief Hasty stated he would follow up on complaints as we currently do with other animals. He stated it all boils down to responsible pet ownership.

Councilman Smith asked who would enforce the pigs being fenced in. He stated you cannot keep some dogs fenced in. He asked if the Planning & Development Department would issue building permits for the fences and pens.

Police Chief Hasty stated they do not currently issue building permits for pens.

Councilman Smith stated according to the proposed ordinance, you cannot do anything about violations until the owner has violated the provisions of the ordinance five times within one year.

Police Chief Hasty explained that they can be fined after the first violation. He stated they are considered a habitual offender if they violate the provisions five times within a one-year period.

Councilman Smith stated when it rains, these pens will be a mess. He asked if a concrete pad is required for the pen.

Police Chief Hasty stated no.

Councilman Smith stated he does not see how we can enforce the proposed ordinance. He stated he believes we need to keep the current ordinance as it is. He stated pigs are not allowed in the City limits and he is for keeping the current ordinance as written. Councilman Smith stated there are just too many questions that will come up and it will be a headache for the Police Department and the citizens.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he does not disagree with Councilman Smith but does feel that if we are entertaining such an ordinance at all that it be rewritten for the pigs to be kept as house pets. He stated it is too wide open at this point. He stated we do have some other business to take care of if we do not move forward with this ordinance. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated we need to decide what we are going to do about the pigs already purchased.

Mayor Doughtie asked Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee if he is saying that he feels the

ordinance needs some adjustments.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he is saying that at this point, he will not go along with the ordinance as it is written now.

Councilwoman Cowen stated, in reference to the sanitary conditions of the pens, what is clean to one person may not be clean to another. She stated the proposed ordinance is very vague. She stated she does not feel the ordinance is good enough as written and would be against it.

City Attorney Chichester stated the Council has the option of accepting the ordinance, rejecting the ordinance or tabling the ordinance for a redraft.

Mayor Doughtie stated he has made one visit to S & L Pet Shop on Roanoke Avenue and noticed that it is attractively displayed. He stated it looks like the business owner is interested in being successful. He stated this Council could very well be speaking about dogs and cats instead of pigs. Mayor Doughtie stated even though he does not have a vote, he feels before this proposed ordinance is approved or disapproved, there should be more definitive terms. He stated he would like to see us study this further. He stated he realizes some people criticize us about not having anything more to do than study pigs but different people have different interests. Mayor Doughtie stated he feels if we are going to deny someone something, we need to feel like we have done our due diligence on it.

Councilman Smith stated he appreciates the Mayor's comments and appreciates the fact that Ms. Harrell has a business in the City but feels like we have carried this on long enough. He stated he has received a lot of calls about this. He stated just because Raleigh is looking at the opportunity for people to have pigs does not mean that the City of Roanoke Rapids has to do it. Councilman Smith stated he is against this. He stated he feels it will bring up something else. He stated we have already had someone that wanted chickens and we turned that down. He stated we need to go ahead and make a decision. He stated Ms. Harrell said earlier that people that have the pigs need to know what to do.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith and seconded by Councilman Bobbitt to not approve the proposed ordinance to amend Chapter 91 of the Code of Ordinances to allow miniature and pot-bellied pigs and to keep the current ordinance relating to swine.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there were any other ordinances we could look at that would work better for us.

Councilman Smith stated as far as he is concerned, there is no need to change the current ordinance regarding swine. He stated that is his personal opinion.

Upon being put to a vote, the motion on the floor carried unanimously.

Recommendation to County Commissioners for Appointment of City Representative to the Halifax-Northampton Regional Airport Authority

City Manager Scherer indicated that Mr. David King, one of the two City representatives on the Halifax-Northampton Regional Airport Authority, has submitted his resignation to become effective December 31, 2015. He stated Deputy County Manager Dia Denton has advised that Mr. Chris Canady, a City resident and local State Farm Insurance Agent, has expressed interest in serving on the Airport Authority. He stated a copy of Mr. Canady's volunteer application was provided to Council for review.

Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to recommend to the County Commissioners the appointment of Mr. Chris Canady to serve as a City Representative on the Halifax-Northampton Regional Airport Authority.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer reported that we have changed some of our policies for the rental of the Theatre in order to attempt to increase the activity of entertainment shows there. He stated we will work with promoters to establish an agreement for the City to be provided a fee of \$5 per ticket sold for a show, or similar arrangements, instead of requiring a set rental fee to be paid up front. He stated we anticipate that will make the rental of the Theatre more "user friendly" to promoters and help lessen their financial risk of poor advance ticket sales. City Manager Scherer stated the cleaning fee has been reduced to a non-refundable \$500 charge, with those duties being performed by both the Parks & Recreation and Public Works Departments. He stated the concession services will be provided by the Parks & Recreation Department, with no alcohol sales. He stated if the renter wishes to provide alcohol sales at their event, they must go through the same procedures in place as before, including providing all permits, attendants and a liability insurance policy. City Manager Scherer reported that

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon has reached out to a promoter who has put on shows here in the past to see if these terms are more favorable to him. Public Works Director Chalker is working with Mr. Michael Dunlow to see about having the large electronic sign near the highway to be utilized by us to advertise events. He pointed out that some repairs may be needed to put the sign back into operation.

City Manager Scherer reminder everyone that all City administrative offices will be closed next Thursday and Friday, the 26th and 27th, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Councilwoman Cowen asked the City Manager if she could get a hard copy of his report.

City Manager Scherer stated yes.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge reported that during the month of October, the Finance Department issued 92 purchase orders, wrote 76 payroll checks, 310 direct deposit vouchers and 331 accounts payable checks.

Finance Director Etheridge pointed out that, as you can see from the operating statement enclosed in the agenda packet, October is a month where we typically see less revenues coming in.

Finance Director Etheridge reported that the General Fund year-to-date receipts totaled \$5,412,453.97 (percentage of actual money collected of adopted budget figures: 34.5%) and the General Fund year-to-date expenditures totaled \$5,650,172.66 (percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budget figures: 36.0%). She stated the year-to-date expenditures exceeded revenues by \$237,718.69.

Finance Director Etheridge reported that during the month of October, the City paid the following required expenditures, as outlined in the FY 2015 - 2016 Budget Ordinance, during a month when lower revenue collections are recognized:

- **\$96,852.87 Installment Note Payment - Fire Station No. 2, Financed by First Citizens Bank**

- \$56,347.50 Quarterly E-911 Payment
- Disbursements were made for street maintenance, professional services, vector control, computer and server replacement, and required workers compensation disbursements - all totaling \$80,050.00.

Finance Director Etheridge reported that our cash and investment positions are all favorable.

Councilman Smith asked if there is any money left of the \$50,000.00 for the Theatre.

City Manager Scherer indicated that there is about \$5,000.00 left.

Councilman Smith asked if we have spent any money out of the Parks & Recreation Department and Public Works Department budgets for the Theatre.

City Manager Scherer stated just the money already budgeted in the Public Works Department budget for Theatre maintenance.

Departmental Reports

Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Kearney reported that we are advertising for two positions: ***Part-Time Library Assistant*** and ***Recreation Program Supervisor for Aquatic Center***. She stated we hired a new Firefighter that started work on November 9. She reported that 42 applications were received for the Administrative Assistant position in the Police Department. She stated they interviewed 13 and called back 4 for a second interview. Human Resources Manager Kearney indicated that the new Administrative Assistant will begin on Monday.

Human Resources Manager Kearney reported that BARC is having a raffle tomorrow. She stated this is a fundraiser to help pay for the Employee Christmas Luncheon. She stated tickets are \$1 each and she will have them available for purchase after the meeting.

Police

Chief Hasty reported on the following from his written report:

Uniform Patrol Division served the following papers: *Warrants - 37; Orders for Arrest - 21; Criminal Summons - 6; Subpoenas - 43; Citations - 128; Municipal Ordinance Tickets - 43.*

Incident Reports: 90
Security Checks: 392
Total Arrests: 117

Motor Vehicle Collisions: 89
Juvenile Arrests: 2
Total Charges: 232

Criminal Investigation Division

Cases Assigned: 18
Subjects Arrested: 8

Cases Cleared: 24
Total Charges: 45

City-County Drug Task Force

Total Charges: 93
Currency Seized: \$6,998.00
Search Warrants Served: 4
Narcotics Seized:

Federal Hours Worked: 46
Subjects Arrested: 28

- ▶ *98 grams of Marijuana*
- ▶ *26.5 grams of Cocaine*
- ▶ *12.5 grams and 35 dosage units Heroin*
- ▶ *4 dosage units Prescription Medication*

K-9 Unit

Deployments: 5
▶ *3 Tracking*
▶ *1 Building Search*
▶ *0 Narcotic Search*
▶ *1 Other*

Narcotics Seized:
▶ *Marijuana*
▶ *Cocaine*
▶ *Heroin*
▶ *Prescription Medication*

Demonstrations: 0

Training Hours: 15

Animal Control

Calls for Service: 44
Total Pick Ups: 39
▶ *12 Dogs*
▶ *27 Cats*
▶ *3 Other*

Animal Bites: 0

C.O.P. Volunteers

Citizen on Patrol Hours: 200

Police Volunteer Hours: 162

Community Projects

Total: 12

- 1. October 4: Littleton's C.O.P. Graduation***
- 2. October 10: Esquires for Education "Know your Rights" Program***
- 3. October 10: Lowe's Home Improvement Safety Fair***
- 4. October 12: Safety Program with Girl Scout Troop 4908***
- 5. October 22: Community Helper Day at Ginger Bread House***
- 6. October 23: Project Graduation "Jail or Bail" Fundraiser***
- 7. October 23: 5th Quarter at First Christian Church***
- 8. October 26 & 27: Teen Spectacular at Victory Baptist Church***
- 9. October 28: Halloween Safety, Sexting and Texting While Driving Program at Calvary Baptist Church***
- 10. October 29: Domestic Violence Program***
- 11. October 29: Drug Summit***
- 12. October 30: Driver ED-Distracted Driving/Drinking & Driving at RRHS***

Miscellaneous Items

Total Number of Calls for October 2015: 2,463

Foot Patrols: 351

In-Serving Training Hours: 464

Police Chief Hasty invited everyone to come out to the Prayer Vigil for the drug epidemic to be held on Tuesday, November 24th at 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Rapids Theatre.

Councilman Smith asked how much of the \$6,998 seized would the City get to keep.

Police Chief Hasty stated it is split three ways between the three agencies. He explained that this money comes back to us from the State to be used for programs and equipment to fight crime. He pointed out that it can take up to three or four months to get it back.

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that the Akers Park renovation should start sometime next week and will probably go quickly.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated he is excited about the concept design plans for the skate park project. He stated two of the men here tonight were at the site all day today for site work preparation. He stated we have posted information on social media and have received a lot of good positive comments.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported that youth basketball and swim team practices have started.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reminded Council members to let City Clerk Vincent know before they leave tonight if they plan to participate in the Christmas Parade.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reminded everyone of the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony to be held here at the Andrews Building on Thursday, December 3. He stated we will have refreshments inside the building at 6:00 p.m. with the tree lighting in the parking lot at 6:30 p.m. He also reminded everyone of the Christmas Parade on Sunday, December 6 at 2:00 p.m.

Public Works

Public Works Director Chalker stated he would like for the two gentlemen Parks & Recreation Director Simeon mentioned to stand up. He stated Jeff Elks and Nick Rightmyer were at the T. J. Davis Recreation Center all day with the exception of attending a meeting in his office, and they stayed until they had to come to this meeting. He stated he appreciates what they are doing on the skate park project.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that during the month of October, the Cemetery collected \$5,096.00 for services with a total year-to-date collection amount of \$46,305.00. He stated during the month of October, 24 lots were cut by City forces in the amount of \$8,518.50 with a total year-to-date assessment of \$29,386.50.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that our street sweeper is a very active machine and it is back up and operational.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that leaf season started November 2 and is in full swing right now. He stated they are picking up the leaves as quick as they can. He stated it is a long and arduous process.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that they have created additional storage for the salt at the new brine plant.

Public Works Director Chalker reported that the new Christmas lights are up and ready to go.

Public Works Director Chalker stated it took all summer but the fountain at the Cemetery has been repaired. He stated everyone likes to see it lit up at night.

Fire

Fire Chief Coggins reported that the Fire Department had 210 responses during the month of October with an average response time of 4.51 minutes. He stated the firemen engaged in 634.50 man-hours of training and the Fire Marshal conducted 34 fire prevention inspections and/or re-inspections, and completed 3 plan reviews for proposed new businesses within our fire district.

Fire Chief Coggins reported that they were busy last month with Fire Prevention Month and made contact with 2,200 people.

Fire Chief Coggins stated they will be conducting bi-annual physical agility tests this week behind the Jo Story Senior Center. He stated this is the same test administered to applicants.

Fire Chief Coggins reported that he completed the Executive Development Program in Charlotte.

Fire Chief Coggins thanked the Council members for attending the first annual awards banquet and reminded them of the Fire Department Christmas Dinner on Tuesday, December 1. He stated the dinner will be held at the Kirkwood Adams Community Center following the Council meeting.

Fire Chief Coggins reported on the Centennial Park gazebo project and the work with Angel's Closet to restore bicycles for less fortunate children.

Councilman Smith stated he appreciates what the Fire Department does with the first responder program but questioned Fire Chief Coggins about the use of a fire truck for first responder calls when the SUV was purchased for that purpose. He stated it is expensive to run the fire trucks up and down the road.

Fire Chief Coggins explained that it depends on the number of people working shifts and the NFPA standards they have to follow.

A much spirited conversation between Fire Chief Coggins and Councilman Smith continued until Mayor Doughtie requested that this matter be discussed in a meeting outside of a Council meeting.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adjourn.

Lisa B. Vincent

Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, NCCMC City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: 12/1/2015