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**Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council**

A special meeting (Budget Prioritization Discussions) of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. in the first floor conference room of the J. Reuben Daniel City Hall & Police Station.

**Present:** Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem

Ernest C. Bobbitt)

**Council Members**

Suetta S. Scarbrough)

Carol H. Cowen)

Wayne Smith)

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager

Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, NCCMC, City Clerk

Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director

Kathy Kearney, Human Resources Manager

John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director

**Administrative/General Government (Human Resources)**

Human Resources Manager Kearney reviewed the following handout she distributed to Council:

**2016-2017 Budget Notes from Human Resources**

**10-4150-0600 Retiree Group Insurance: $144,697.00**

This account is the amount that is paid annually by the City for retired employees. Employees are covered only until age 65. Although employees turning 65 come off….. employees (especially Baby Boomers) are retiring at an earlier age. This causes our numbers to fluctuate year to year. At the present time, we have 27 retired employees on our insurance.

**10-4150-0601 HRA (Health Reimbursement Account): $60,000.00**

This account is the amount set aside for deductible reimbursement. The City’s deductible is $2,500. The employee is only responsible for $500. The City will reimburse up to $2,000 per family/employee per fiscal year. This amount varies from year to year depending on the health insurance plan we select and the health issues of employees.

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**10-4150-0715 401k (3%) Employer Match: $81,885.00**

This account is the amount set aside for the 3% employer match for 401k. This is a benefit that employees (especially those nearing retirement age) are very grateful for and fortunate to have. As you know, your regular local government retirement is not enough to live on. When employees are enrolled, I stress that this is the best time to enroll. If you sign up then and it comes out of your first check, you never miss it. This benefit is a great selling point for retention and recruitment of employees.

**10-4150-0920 Holiday – Merit Bonus: $43,300.00**

This account is the amount set aside for the $25.00 Thanksgiving Gift Cards and the $250.00 Christmas Bonus (including FICA). In years past, these two items were never alloted in the budget, so each year right before Thanksgiving and Christmas, these were brought before Council for approval. By including these in the budget during the budgeting process, this is no longer necessary. Also, it allows us to tell employees that we will be giving these again this year so they can plan their holiday spending without the stress of wondering if they will receive these benefits. Employees are greatly appreciative of Council recognizing them through this method.

**10-4150-5400 Insurance & Bonds (Unemployment): $34,800.00**

This account is the amount set aside for bonds for the Finance Director and Tax Collector. This also includes unemployment. This is just an estimate based on the prior year.

***Note: We did bid our General Liability Insurance for the upcoming year. We had three interested brokers but only one submitted a proposal. Our current broker Wayne Brown with BB&T has been our broker for many years and provides us (especially me) with expert advice and prompt service. I am recommending that we accept his proposal for the upcoming year and according to the RFP we submitted, we will continue coverage with this broker for the next three years.***

**10-4150-5410 General Liablity Insurance: $175,298.00**

This account is the amount set aside for general liability insurance. This insurance covers a variety of items such as: vehicles, property, equipment and liability claims. This year was a good year for us liability-wise.

**10-4150-5421 Workers Compensation: $246,417.00**

This account is the amount set aside for the City’s workers compensation coverage. The monthly Public Works Safety Trainings, with the assistance of Safety Coordinator Walter Johnson, has been a great tool for employee awareness. Also, the willingness of Department Heads to find LIGHT DUTY work and get employees back to work without lost time due to on-the-job injuries greatly reduces our workers compensation rates.

**10-4150-5710 Employee Assistance Program (EAP): $3,616.00**

This account is the amount set aside for the City’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP provides support for employees when they are going through a difficult time. It may be a problem that has been building over time, or it may be a sudden personal crisis. We all know that as hard as we try, sometimes personal issues affect our work performance. The EAP is a valuable resource that is available 24 hours/7 days a week. Employees may access it through a phone call or by their website.

**10-4150-5722 Safety & Employee Recognition: $3,000.00**

This account is the amount set aside for the City’s Service Awards program and for the past couple of years the City has donated money to BARC towards the Annual BARC Employee Christmas Luncheon for the purchase of door prizes. These two programs have been great tools for motivation and recognition. BARC

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normally hosts the Annual Christmas Luncheon and a Social for Service Awards that are presented at the first City Council meeting in February. BARC, along with the City Manager, would like to incorporate the Service Awards recognition with the Annual Employee Christmas Luncheon. The luncheon is usually well attended by employees and this will allow employees to be recognized in the presence of their co-workers along with City Council members who are also in attendance. We will continue to present the pins for years of service along with the Certificate of Appreciation.

City Manager Scherer pointed out that we have calculated a 2% COLA based on Council feedback at the recent retreat. He stated the amount for this would be $275,520.00.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee questioned the line item for copiers under the Administrative/General Government account.

City Manager Scherer explained that our copier leases are now included under one contract.

Councilman Smith asked about the $323,390.00 for the E-911 System.

City Manager Scherer stated that is the amount the County is telling us it would cost this year. He pointed out that we do have the room in the basement to run our own E-911 System.

Councilman Smith asked how many employees we would need to run our own system.

City Manager Scherer stated we have estimated 5 or 6.

Councilman Smith asked about the estimated salary for each employee.

City Manager Scherer stated about $50,000.00.

Councilman Smith asked the percentage of calls that come from Roanoke Rapids.

City Manager Scherer stated he is not sure. He stated he has not seen the numbers.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if we know the formula they use to calculate the cost.

City Manager Scherer stated no.

Mayor Doughtie asked if we could provide better service.

City Manager Scherer stated he believes we can do better.

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Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated it sounds like the County’s equipment has not been updated.

City Manager Scherer stated the main issue is with the radio traffic. He stated there are some dead areas. He reminded Council to keep in mind that we do have to give the County a one-year notice (per the agreement) if we decide to leave their E-911 system.

**Parks & Recreation Department**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reviewed the following handout he distributed to Council:

**6200 – T.J. Davis Recreation**

***10-6200-1500 Maintenance & Repairs - Building – this includes the following:***

1. $19,500 to replace HVAC Control Panel. Currently, we have no control over thermostats in our building making us **totally inefficient** and creating an uncomfortable environment for patrons and employees. Either we are running this system at maximum capacity for heat and cooling or we have to shut it off completely, putting a lot of stress on the unit.
2. $6,000 to repair the lower front roof covering the offices. Currently, this roof leaks at such a point that the walls and carpeting are wet when we have heavy rains. Roof is 16 years old.

***10-6200-1600 Maintenance & Repairs – Equipment***

1. $18,000 to replace the **1957** basketball goal assemblies that have failed and are in dire need of replacement. This includes replacement and removal of existing goal assemblies. Please understand that if these fail, we could have the possibility of severely injuring a child and/or an employee. These assemblies are used daily to support, and raise and lower the backboards.

Councilman Smith asked if the roof at the T. J. Davis Center is a flat roof.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated yes.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated 60 years of using the basketball goal assemblies is a long time. He stated it is time to replace them.

**6201 – Aquatic Center – (basically hold the line)**

***10-6201-1300 Utilities – Electricity***

1. This is an adjustment to cover actual electricity expenses.

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***10-6201-3400 Other Supplies & Materials***

1. This is another adjustment to cover actual expenses as chemical prices have risen over the last couple of years.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon pointed out that they have to hyper-chlorinate when they have swim meets.

Councilman Smith asked about the line item for the pool heater.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated the heater was replaced in this year’s budget.

**6202 – T. J. Outdoor Pools – (basically hold the line)**

***10-6202-3401 Other Supplies & Materials***

1. Requesting slight increase to cover the rising cost of pool chemicals.

**6210 – Parks**

***10-6210-1100 Telephones & Postage***

1. Increase to cover actual expenses of telephones (cell phones, etc.).

***10-6210-1300 Utilities – Electricity***

1. Increase to cover actual electricity expenses at our parks (major source of expenses are ballfields).

***10-6210-1500 Maintenance & Repairs***

This line item was originally $35,000 from the previous year.

1. Requesting $14,000 to add back to the budget that was previously cut for routine maintenance needed.
2. Requesting $15,000 for replacement of bleachers and picnic tables needed at parks that we have not been able to replace over the last several years.

***⬩Picnic tables generally cost $2,000 and bleachers generally cost $5,000.***

***⬩We currently need 5 sets of bleachers and 15 picnic tables but this will be a start to replace these items.***

1. Requesting $16,000 to replace the failed roof at Doyle softball field restroom which is shared with the wading pool at T. J. Davis. This restroom is used by the wading pool, girls’ softball, T. J. Davis tennis courts, and youth girls’ cheerleading.

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Parks and Recreation Director Simeon stated this is a flat roof that needs to be replaced to be functional.

***10-6210-1600 Equipment Maintenance***

1. This request is to cover actual expenses for routine park maintenance equipment such as our tractor, mowers, ballfield drags, John Deere gator, weed eaters, shovels, rakes, and other equipment items.

***10-6210-3330 OSHA/ADA Compliance and Safety Supplies***

1. This request is to re-fund this item that has been cut in previous years.
2. These funds are needed to adhere to all OSHA and ADA compliance mandates of the State of North Carolina.

***10-6210-3400 Chemicals***

1. Increase to cover actual expenses of chemicals for buildings and athletic fields such as weed killer and fertilizer.

***10-6210-3600 Uniforms***

1. This request is to fund appropriate professional uniform services for all maintenance staff that was previously cut. We are the only maintenance staff in the City not funded for professional uniform services.

Councilman Smith asked how many parks we have that are not used.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated we have a total of 13 parks. He stated Wheeler Park is used some and will also be a part of the grant we will talk about later. He stated C.W. Davis and Melody Park are not used. He stated those parks were donated to the City. He stated he does not believe they are buildable pieces of property and they have constant maintenance issues. He also mentioned the Edward George Park on Virginia Avenue.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked how many people are in the Parks Department.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated 7 people.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked what the uniforms would entail.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated shirts, hats, safety shoes, etc.

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**6220 – Chaloner Recreation Center**

***10-6220-1330 Utilities – Water***

1. Increase to cover actual water utility expenses.

**6240 – Jo Story Senior Center**

***10-6240-1500 Maintenance & Repairs – Building***

1. Increase to cover actual routine maintenance and repair expenses for the Jo Story Senior Center.

***10-6240-1600 Maintenance & Repairs – Equipment***

1. Increased slightly to cover maintenance and repairs to equipment.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon explained that equipment is generally identified as anything not attached to the building.

**6241 – Transportation Grant**

***10-6241-0600 Group Insurance***

1. Finance Director Etheridge to help explain.

Finance Director Etheridge stated we fund one part-time position (transportation employee) in the amount of $12,000.00 at the Jo Story Senior Center. She explained that per FLSA, based on the number of hours this individual works, we had to bring the individual onto our group insurance.

Councilman Smith asked the difference between the 3110 and 3120 automotive supplies line items.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated one is for fuel and the other is for repairs, tires, oil, etc.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated Rose Massey is retiring from the Senior Center.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated unfortunately Rose is retiring. He stated she has been a great asset and her shoes will be some tough shoes to fill.

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**6245 – Andrews Building – (hold the line budget)**

**6246 – Miscellaneous Grants**

***10-6246-9990 KB Reynolds 158 Corridor Project***

1. We have received funding for the Master Plan for the 158 Corridor Project which includes Chaloner Recreation Center, Wheeler Park and Martin Luther King Park.
2. This Master Plan will allow us to seek grants from the KB Reynolds Foundation and also the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund for this project. You can apply with KB Reynolds Foundation for a maximum of $150,000 and $500,000 for the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon explained that we will be using Site Solutions, the same company that developed Halifax County’s Recreation Master Plan. He stated they will have the public meetings to seek input about what people would like to see at these parks. He stated KB Reynolds asked us to get this Master Plan in place before we applied for grants. He stated KB Reynolds has been very positive about this project.

Councilman Smith asked how far along we are with this process.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated we are just getting started with the Master Plan. He stated the public meetings will be held the last of May and first of June. He stated they would then put together the information from those meetings and hopefully the Master Plan will be ready for us to seek grant funding in the fall grant cycle.

Councilman Smith asked why it takes so long for us to get things going. He stated we have been talking about this for a year.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon explained that part of the reason was because he was seeking additional funding. He did point out that developing a master plan is a long and tedious process. He stated it is very detailed and we need to get public input about what people would like to see at these parks.

Councilman Bobbitt asked what some of the improvements would be to the parks.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated during the public input process, the parks will be on boards and people will be able to put dots, which represent different amenities, on the parks. He stated the Martin Luther King Park would be different as we do not want to disturb the integrity of the park.

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Councilman Bobbitt asked if there is a sidewalk at the Martin Luther King Park.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated there is a sidewalk on the Wilkins Street side and the Virginia Avenue side.

**6250 – Kirkwood Adams Community Center – (hold the line budget)**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon pointed out that improvements have been made to the sound system and we now have sound in the wings of the building.

**6300 – Library**

***10-6300-1500 Maintenance & Repairs – Building***

1. Requesting $14,500 to replace dated **1989** Carpeting.
2. Requesting $6,000 to replace and add additional shelving.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon explained that three years ago, we replaced half of the carpeting at the Library—the area in the children’s section.

City Clerk Vincent mentioned that Dr. Ketoff, Chairman of the Library Advisory Committee, has requested to speak at the May 3 Council meeting about the carpet at the Library.

***10-6300-1600 Maintenance & Repairs – Equipment***

1. Requesting $8,000 for the TLC (The Library Corporation) service contract which includes a computer server that handles the circulation and cataloging system for the Library. This contract ends this year so we must fund this in order to continue our circulation and cataloging system.
2. Requesting $9,000 to replace 7 of the 13 public computers recommended by Bob Agoglia. Last year. We replaced 6 of the 13 so this will keep us on a systematic schedule as recommended by Bob Agoglia.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked what we do with the old computers.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated we declare them as surplus and sell them on GovDeals.com.

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**6300 – Canal Museum – (hold the line budget)**

Councilman Smith asked how much Tourism gives us for the Canal Museum.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated $11,000.00. He stated we used to get $25,000.00 that helped to offset the cost of personnel.

Councilman Smith asked Parks & Recreation Director Simeon if he thought we should request more funding.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated yes. He stated it was originally set up so that Tourism managed the personnel. He stated that changed after about two years and it was turned over to us. He pointed out that this was a decision of the Tourism Board—not Ms. Medlin.

Councilman Bobbitt asked if they sell hats and trinkets at the Canal Museum.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated yes. He stated there are things that were left over from the Theatre gift shop but they are not a real revenue generator.

Councilman Smith stated the Parks & Recreation Department does a good job.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated he has one other item to discuss. He requested that the T. J. Davis Supervisor position that has been frozen for the last three or four years be funded. He stated the total cost for salary and benefits is $51,477.00. He explained that we currently have the Assistant Director performing some of the duties and the Parks Maintenance Supervisor covering some of the duties, and it is taking away from both of their regular duties. He stated the Parks Maintenance Supervisor is now the contact for sports. He stated T. J. Davis has “zero” programming for children and adults. He stated they are the only facility with no programming. He stated they have had to scale back special events for Easter, Halloween and Christmas. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated his department has taken over the Christmas Parade and now the Theatre. He stated this is stretching their resources even further so that they are not able to follow their Mission Statement.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated if anyone has questions regarding the operation of the Theatre, he will be happy to answer them.

Councilwoman Cowen stated she was there last week and everything was great.

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Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated they do have a full slate coming up:

* April 30 – Progressions Dance Recital
* May 6 – Saving Abel (heavy rock & roll show)
* May 7 – Cruising for a Cure Bike & Car Show
* May 13 – Travis Tritt
* May 16 – Law Enforcement Drug Awareness
* May 21 & 28 – Family Reunions

Councilman Smith asked if Mr. George Sadler has anything booked for the Theatre.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated he will be doing some gospel shows in June and July.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked about any long-range plans for shows.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated they are working on a lot of things and the promoters will tell us when we can advertise.

Councilman Smith stated he worries that the Theatre is going to burn both John and Larry out. He stated it is taking away from their jobs. He stated it is the City Council’s responsibility to get the Theatre sold. He stated we need to get on the ball.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated it is good to see some activity out there.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked if the lady that works out at the Theatre is a City employee.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated yes. He stated Mr. Marion Moore is also a part-time employee out there.

Councilman Smith asked how much we made on the last show.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated $2,500.00.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned.



**Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, NCCMC City Clerk**

5/3/2016

**Approved by Council Action on:**