



# **Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council**

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 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)  
Wayne Smith)  
Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager  
Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney  
Traci Storey, City Clerk  
Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager  
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director  
Chuck Hasty, Police Chief  
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director  
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director  
Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief

## **Council Members**

**Absent:** Carol Cowen, Council Member  
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

Prior to the meeting, the Roanoke Rapids High School Army JROTC posted the colors.

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

## **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 Bobbitt, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for March 21, 2017 as written.

## **Special Recognition**

### **Recognition of Roanoke Rapids High School Army JROTC Cadets**

Mayor Doughtie recognized the Roanoke Rapids High School Army JROTC cadets and presented each of them with a City Seal lapel pin. He acknowledged the leaders for giving their time and offering their talents to these young men and women. He stated he was grateful to see the cadets have the experience to stand before people and share their professionalism and knew they would become future leaders of the community.

### **Recognition of Police Officers**

Police Chief Hasty recognized Master Officer Jonathan Benthall for recently completing the Management Program at Coastal Plains Law Enforcement Center which was part of Wilson Community College. He stated it was approximately an eight (8) month process where they receive over 200 hours of training in management/leadership. He acknowledged Investigator Jeff Davis and Lt. Charles Vaught for completing the program as well.

## **Public Comment (Unscheduled)**

### **Gary Danek**

Mr. Danek stated he was here to follow up regarding the City providing curb-side recycling. He asked for a status update. City Manager Scherer replied he did not have anything new to report.

Mr. Danek said he spoke with Unity earlier in the day and they said the City had not contacted them. City Manager Scherer replied that would be true because he had not contacted them; he had only solicited draft proposals.

Mr. Danek stated it would be nice for the City to negotiate more aggressively.

## **Approval of Council Minutes**

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to approve the March 21, 2017 Regular Meeting Council Minutes as drafted.

## City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer acknowledged the efforts of Mr. Phil Hux in helping raise funds for the renovation of the Chaloner Pool facility. He helped persuade the board of the Angel's Closet ministries to agree to donate \$10,000 for the project, and is working with other individuals and local organizations to encourage them to donate monies for the project as well. He said Mr. Hux has been very involved with other charitable activities in the City over the years and he feels he should be recognized for his voluntary actions to help improve the water recreation opportunities for the Chaloner community.

City Manager Scherer reported that they continue to work through the State's Local Government Commission to negotiate a new loan package with Bank of America/Merrill Lynch. He said they were making progress with both organizations to establish new loan terms agreeable to all parties, along with establishing a game plan to define and execute the numerous legal and financial actions necessary with the complex loan package the City was currently under with Bank of America/Merrill Lynch. He said he anticipates they should have an agreement in place in the next few weeks.

## Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge presented the financial statement for the month ending February 2017. She reported the YTD receipts total \$11,268,215.17 with the percentage of actual monies collected of adopted budgeted figures at 67.8%.

She said General Fund YTD expenditures total \$11,346,727.06 with the percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures at 68.3%.

Finance Director Etheridge stated the City is awaiting reimbursement from BB&T Governmental Finance for expenditures already incurred for installment financing, which accounts for some of the revenue to expenditure variance YTD.

She said the February costs associated with the 2007 Series Bonds totaled \$57,612.64. This includes \$48,249.35 Swap Payment, \$9,218.29 Interest Payment and \$145.00 Wire Fee.

She said all required reporting was submitted to US Bank for the City's Compliance Certificate and Sales & Use tax review for the current theatre bond requirements.

Councilman Smith asked if the money the City actually collected so far was only 67%, what did she anticipate it would be at the end of June; it was mighty low.

Finance Director Etheridge replied they were flat with the revenue YTD but they did anticipate additional collections. She said a piece of this too was the installment financing that has just come in during the month of March. She said they expected March to look better than February.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked Finance Director Etheridge if she projected the revenues budgeted would be taken care of. She replied at this point, it was too early to tell, but they have put financial operations into place. She said the City Manager has initiated a spending freeze on any non-emergency purchases and services. She said that will help in addition to receiving all the installment financing.

Councilman Smith asked City Manager Scherer if he anticipates having to spend the \$500,000 that they allocated to go into the budget. City Manager Scherer replied no, unless some emergency comes up or something major happens, he did not anticipate they will need all the \$500,000. He added that was what he was trying to avoid if at all possible.

Mayor Doughtie stated reflecting back on a comment by a citizen during unscheduled public comment on the recycling, the City Council will start talking about the budget for next year real soon. He said the City Manager was not at liberty to be doing anything during a budget year. He said when they learn a little more about what their revenues might be for next year that would be a topic that Council can discuss during the budget process.

## **Departmental Reports**

### **Human Resources**

Human Resources Manager Kearney reported during the month of February, they received 17 applications. She said they were currently advertising for a Part Time Library Assistant and a Police Officer. She stated during the month of February they were also advertising for the Fire Fighter Applicant Pool, but have stop advertising for those. She added they should be setting up the physical agility test shortly.

She announced the BARC Annual Fish Fry would be held Friday, April 21, 2017 at ProBuild from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. She said tickets can be purchased from

her or any BARC committee member. She reported the monies raised from this fundraiser help fund the BARC scholarships and last year they were able to give three (3) scholarships.

Councilman Smith asked Human Resource Manager Kearney if they had started working on the employee's health insurance benefits yet this year. She replied she had completed a spreadsheet and sent it to the person the City has insurance with now. She said she was not sure if they would send it to anyone else, but it looks like it would not be much of an increase this year, less than 10%.

City Manager Scherer added they have had some preliminary discussions with Mr. Hux and he has indicated the increase would be in the single digits and they were looking at some options that may reduce that even further.

Human Resources Manager Kearney stated they were also looking into changing some of the benefits that may be more beneficial to the employees if it was not going to be a big increase.

Councilman Smith asked if that included the families too and if it would be a big increase for them. Human Resources Manager Kearney replied it would also include the families and they look at that each year and try to control the amount the City pays and what comes out of the employee's check.

### **Police**

Police Chief Hasty presented his February report. He reported the department continues to engage the community and they have several events coming up. Job Shadowing and Interview Days with the Chamber of Commerce and some officers will be participating in the Womanless Beauty Pageant on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 7:00 p.m. at Kirkwood Adams to raise money for Relay for Life.

Police Chief Hasty said by working together with other law enforcement agencies in the county and outside the county with the State and on a Federal level, they had a nice arrest with a large amount of heroine that was going out to Halifax, Edgecombe and Nash Counties by a main supplier. He stated working together works. He added by sharing information, equipment and people, it was making a dent in what is poisoning our society.

He reported the department helped out Saturday night in Enfield with the attempted robbery. He said they are helping out the other guy when they need help by providing equipment and manpower.

### **Planning & Development**

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported the department has continued with the new construction projects that were underway within the city. She said during the month of February they completed a lot of year-end reporting to various agencies as well as continued with the Main Street Roanoke Rapids Streetscape Development Plan and the future plans for 1026 Roanoke Avenue. She stated Rivers & Associates were currently reviewing the comments from the last meeting and preparing a final draft for review in the upcoming weeks.

She reported the Ollie's retail store was finishing up and they expected them to be opening up sooner than later. She said the department had also received construction plans for the solar farm on American Legion Road and plans for renovations at Sheetz.

Councilman Smith asked Planning & Development Director Lasky how far along the City was with the building beside Signature Hotdogs in the 1300 block of Roanoke Avenue. He said the owner of Signature Hotdogs had asked him a number of times and when he rode by the other day, some of the concrete was falling off in front of the wall. She replied that was one they had started the process on but there were some legal issues that had to be cleared up. She said she would check with Donald Tart who is in charge of that enforcement action.

### **Parks & Recreation**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported the project engineer for the Chaloner Pool was currently gathering data and working on drawings which is required by the Halifax County Health Department. He said once the drawings are approved, the engineer will move forward with the RFPs.

He reported the Aquatic Center's pool heater was down right now. He said they were working on getting the replacement parts which were covered under warranty and hoped to have it operational again within a week.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said he had several dates for the Council and said they would get a copy of them in their next packet and by email from the City Clerk. He announced scheduled dates for the Theatre:

- ◆ April 7<sup>th</sup> – Ella Baker Honors Gala
- ◆ April 26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> – Progressions Dance Recital
- ◆ May 6<sup>th</sup> – Cruzin for a Cancer Cure Car and Bike Show
- ◆ May 20<sup>th</sup> – Veterans Hero Benefit Concert featuring Colton James

- ◆ June 2<sup>nd</sup> – 38 Special Concert
- ◆ June 17<sup>th</sup> – Blues Tribute Concert

He announced that due to the weather this past weekend, the Skate Jam event was rescheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon announced on April 8<sup>th</sup> the department will host the annual Easter Egg Hunt at 9 a.m. at T.J. Davis Recreation Center and 10:00 a.m. at Chaloner Recreation Center with carnival and games to follow. He said on May 6<sup>th</sup>, the Canal Museum will host a Canal Festival and 5k Fun Run.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee thanked them for moving forward with the pool and asked if the parts that were broken at the Aquatic Center were under warranty. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied yes, the heater was replaced last April and they were under warranty.

### **Public Works**

Public Works Director Chalker reported during the month of February the department received 103 calls for service; 27 calls were concerning limbs, junk, and loose materials collection, 33 calls were for property maintenance, 10 calls for street maintenance, 32 calls for solid waste and 1 call for lot/grass issues. He added they fielded many calls for street issues that involve the Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District and the numerous cuts and connections that were going on in the city. He said these cuts were necessary, the RRSD was reconditioning and replacing many pipes and there had been frequent connections with new buildings and businesses.

He reported for the month of February, cemetery staff performed twelve (12) opening and closings and sold five (5) lots. He said the total collected for these services for the month were \$14,730 with a total year to date of \$86,019. He added the department was at the beginning of a small expansion in the cemetery; they were running out of companion lots which was a two grave lot and the most popular. He said the department would be clearing some land and doing a very small expansion which should give approximately 175 more lots for sale.

Public Works Director Chalker stated that leaf season had ended and the department got all the leaves up that were put out for collection with machines and now they were in the part of the season that the leaves must be bagged or boxed to be collected.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked how to get in touch with NCDOT concerning fixing pot holes on state-maintained roads. Public Works Director Chalker replied the department had an excellent relationship with NCDOT and had many telephone numbers for them and talked to them almost daily. He said to call the department with any concerns they may have and staff will help route those concerns to NCDOT.

### **Fire**

Fire Chief Coggins reported the department responded to 130 calls for service in the month of February with an average response time just under five (5) minutes. He said in an effort to reduce unnecessary calls, the department deferred twelve (12) calls and remained in standby status.

He reported firefighters were engaged in a total of 841 man-hours of training covering various topics including preventive maintenance, equipment inspections, safety training and specialized training. He said the inspections division conducted 29 fire inspections and 5 plan reviews.

He thanked Chief Hasty for acquiring an ATV that will be utilized for hydrant testing, answering calls on the Canal Trail and assisting with community events.

He announced Battalion Chief Cook and his shift were able to put together an effective pre-fire plan for Becker Manor. He said three months ago, there was a loss of life at the facility and the department has been training extensively to try to keep that from happening in the future.

He reported the firefighters completed their annual physicals and all were fit for duty. He announced the department hired a new employee, Sean Marshall and the department was now fully staffed.

Chief Coggins announced Lt. Horvath and Lt. Hollowell completed Fire Officer I Certification and Chief Clements has completed Fire Officer III Certification.

He said the department recently administered the engineer practical exam with two (2) passing grades and they would be making an Engineer promotion in the near future.

He stated in the month of February, the department installed two (2) child safety seats.



Chief Coggins announced he and two other firefighters would be participating in the Womanless Beauty Pageant scheduled for next Friday. He invited everyone to come out.

Chief Coggins reported the department responded to a house fire on Raleigh Drive believed to be caused by a space heater or over-loaded extension cord. He said a mother was able to get the two children out of the house, but in an effort to go back into the house to get personal belongings, the woman was overcome by smoke and heat. He said she was in the hospital in Greenville and was not sure of her condition, but they did not believe her injuries were life-threatening. He reported 25 out of the 30 firefighters responded to the fire because the fire started at shift change. He said it was an impressive fire; when they arrived the fire was coming out of four to five windows.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other Business</b></p>
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Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to go into Closed Session as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5) to consult with the city attorney on a legal matter involving a contract.

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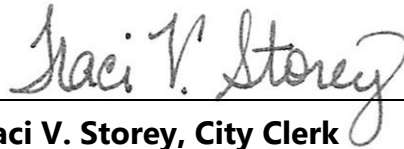
*Minute Book Pages 18658-18663 contain Minutes and General Account of a Closed Session which have been sealed until such time as public inspection of those minutes would not frustrate the purpose of the Closed Session.*

**Open Session**

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order in open session.

The Council consulted with the City Attorney on a legal matter involving a contract. No action was taken.

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



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

**Approved by Council Action on: April 4, 2017**