



# Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, October 16, 2018 at 5:15 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

**Present:** Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem  
Ernest C. Bobbitt)  
Carol H. Cowen)  
Suetta S. Scarbrough)  
Wayne Smith)

**Council Members**

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager  
Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney  
Traci Storey, City Clerk  
Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager  
Chuck Hasty, Police Chief  
Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director  
John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director  
Larry Chalker, Public Works Director  
Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief  
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

**Absent:** Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor  
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director

In the absence of Mayor Doughtie, Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer.

## Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated there was one item that needed to be added to the agenda; a proposed contract with the Halifax County Board of Elections needs to be presented to Council for consideration. He said the item could be added as New Business as 6 a). He asked Council members if there were any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening and called for a motion to adopt the agenda with the aforementioned amendment.

There being no conflicts, a motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilman Smith to adopt the business agenda for October 16, 2018 as amended.

## Special Recognitions

### **Girl Scout Troop 3023**

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee recognized Girl Scout Troop 3023 who recently built and installed a food pantry at the Chaloner Recreation Center. He asked for one of the girls to tell the Council and citizens about their project. Satasia Harvey explained they built a Community Pantry at the Chaloner Recreation Center and filled it with non-perishable items.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee presented Miss Harvey, Troop Leader Charlotte Bradley and the other girl scouts, Akiara Moody and Madison Collier with a City pin. He thanked the girls for taking their time to do such a good deed, especially in a time of need. Ms. Bradley announced the community was welcome to add items to the pantry at any time.

## Public Comment (Scheduled)

### **Sarah Harris**

Ms. Harris stated she grew up here and has been here her whole life. She resides in the city with her husband and two children, who attend Manning School. She and a group of citizens have concerns about the City's tennis courts. Out of twelve courts in town there was not really one court that was actually in good playing condition and that was a big concern for them. A lot of youth are becoming more interested in tennis and they have the tennis teams at school. There are a lot of retirees that meet in the morning and play tennis as well as families using the courts. She stated the courts were really not in an acceptable condition right now. Some of the courts have cracks, deep crevices and broken pavement. The courts at Emry Park are locked because they are in such poor condition. She said if they have not seen the courts, she had pictures which she showed to Council. She did not think anyone here would disagree that the courts definitely need some repair. The issue lies in that the courts have not been a priority for quite some time and that is why they are in this condition. She hopes once they see the pictures and hear their concerns, they will see they do need to be repaired and should be priority when it comes time to do the City's budget. They do realize there are larger issues as well, but like Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said, we need to invest in the youth. She asked Council to make the tennis courts a priority. If they drive by the Rec tennis courts in the afternoon or at night, they will see young and old citizens trying to make the best of what they have to play on. She presented a list of 179 signatures of tax paying citizens pleading that something be done about the current tennis courts. Our youth, sports teams and retirees all deserve better and they need to invest now in order to return to the glory days that tennis once had in this town

Empty courts mean less physical activity and an unhealthy community. Empty courts mean opportunities for loitering, illegal activities and crime, none of which our city needs more of. Empty courts mean no chance to ignite or nurture a passion for tennis in our youth. It means less opportunity for team sports, summer tennis clinics and playoff matches. Empty courts mean yet another example of something that people can complain that has died in the city. She asked Council to take their concerns seriously and help make the courts a priority. Our group is committed to seeing this project be successful and are willing to do whatever it takes, whether it be fundraising, volunteering, helping with grants, but our efforts would be in vain if they did not have the City's support. They propose a committee be formed with not only City officials but also concerned citizens so the lines of communication can be kept open and we can help form a positive partnership.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked Parks & Recreation Director Simeon if his department have a maintenance crew that looks after this type of thing. He replied they do. He reported the Emry Park tennis courts were built in 1977 and at TJ Davis, the top courts were renovated around 1985. The standard for tennis courts are about twenty years. Obviously, they are well past that date. About eight years ago was the last time repairs were made at Emry Park where the City spent \$13,000 filling cracks and repainting lines (in house). By the end of the year, the cracks came back. One of the problems they have at Emry Park is the tennis poles are in the center of the tennis courts and there is cement around them and cement and asphalt do not mix together. There is also cement around all the tennis posts at all of our courts, but the cracks are now beyond repair. He stated if they looked at the pictures, they are past renovating at this point, they have tried to do that and the last time they tried they were unsuccessful to repair the tennis courts because they are that deteriorated. Councilwoman Scarbrough asked then what was the plan. He replied he had a professional contractor come out this past week to take a look at the tennis courts and is going to give prices on what it would take to fully renovate them. The contractor who is from Halifax County said they were beyond repair and is familiar with the age of the courts. She asked when he says renovate, is he saying to tear them up and start from scratch. He replied that is what the contractor recommends. She asked if he had any idea what it would cost per court. He replied he did not know at this time. Councilwoman Scarbrough stated they went through this with the Chaloner pool; they did not know about it several years ago until it got to a point where it was too expensive to repair the pool. Her question was about the maintenance. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said he discussed the courts at Emry Park three years ago at the budget meeting and said if they were not budgeted for some of the repairs, they would have to be shut down for safety purposes.

Councilman Smith said he received a call this week about the tennis courts and it

was his understanding from the call that there was a business person in town who was willing to fix the tennis courts. He was told this person wanted to build tennis courts at Manning School and would pay for it. He wondered if this person was willing to help the City fix the tennis courts and he would agree to allow this person to put their name on any tennis court if that was what they wanted to do.

City Manager Scherer said he had a meeting with Dr. Butler last week and tennis courts were part of their discussions and the possibility of a private donor offering to build courts around Manning or somewhere else. Dr. Butler said he would approach that person and see if they were still interested and go from there if they wanted to pursue that option.

Councilman Smith stated one thing he has found out being on Council, was it takes forever for them to find out anything. He asked Parks & Recreation Director Simeon how long was it going to take for them find out how much it would cost to repair the courts. He replied the contractor would be putting together some figures next weekend. Councilman Smith said he expected figures back at the next Council meeting.

Councilwoman Cowen stated that would be fine if someone gave money to fix the courts, but you have to have the money to continue maintaining them. As a principal for schools, you cannot just put equipment out there and leave it; it has to be kept up. The City has to be sure we have the money and staff to do that. She would like that to be considered. Someone could give a million dollars to buy all these things, but if they do not have people and money to keep them going, it is not going to be successful.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he appreciated the answers to the questions and Council would look for a summary and figures at a later time.

### **Mary Duncan**

Ms. Duncan thanked Council for recognizing the Roanoke Valley All-Stars at the August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Roanoke Valley Girls Softball League was started in 1997 to transition from slow pitch to fast pitch. The board is made up of fifteen members, some who are in attendance tonight. The League serves about 250 girls, five different age groups and three different counties. They have won numerous district titles as well as five State Championships and one Southeast Regional title. She displayed the 2018 U15 State trophy.

She said she was here to ask for Council's support in expanding Chockoyotte Park. They would like to add a small field at the left of field 1. She has spoken with Lori

Medlin with the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau and Cathy Scott with the Halifax County Economic Development Commission and have their support. There is a grant sponsored by Major League Baseball that will develop and build new fields. They would like to be able to apply for that grant; they were too late to do so for the October deadline but there is one coming up in April. It does require a cash match and they will work on that. In order to apply, they need to have a schematic, some statistics and support of the City. They need a 180 foot fence and it would fit in that space and doesn't necessarily need lighting. She announced it was the Roanoke Valley's turn to host the District tournament this coming summer and with only two fields at Chockoyotte, they would not be able to do it there. They would have to split the divisions, multiple locations and there is only fifteen of the board members so with multiple locations, multiple concession stands and multiple gates, they would depend upon volunteers. It would be very stressful to try and spread out over multiple areas. Chockoyotte is a busy park. Soccer has two seasons – Spring and Summer; softball starts in April and goes through July. This year they had a church league that began in July and ended just a few weeks ago. The U15 had to rush their season this year in order to qualify for All-Stars. They have to have ten games. With the delayed seasons because of the weather, the U8, U10 and U12 had to play a compacted season. They played double headers, Monday through Friday, two weeks in a row to make the qualifying games. Had they had an extra field there when they did the makeup seasons, the U8 could have played on a smaller field which would have lowered the games there and they could have started earlier and had a longer season. They were also asking for space for batting cages. There is sufficient space for that to the right of field 2 in between the field and walking trail. She said she believed the expense of that could be covered through sponsorships, donations and the league. She said tournaments bring a considerable amount of revenue into the area. The hotels with the occupancy tax, sales tax from food and retail shopping. There are about 20-25 teams in a district tournament so that adds up to quite a bit of money. She said what they were requesting was the study of the addition of a third field at Chockoyotte with 180 foot fence and the assistance of City staff in completing the grant application with Major League Baseball. She announced they would be having their annual meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at the Visitor's Center. She said it is open to the public and invited everyone to attend.

Councilman Smith stated he has been involved in Little League baseball, he did not know a lot about softball. He asked Parks & Recreation Director Simeon if there was any way he could get an aerial photo of the field at Chockoyotte Park and bring it to Council so they could see it and whether there was room to do this. He replied he would like to give a presentation with some slides so Council can take a look at it with dimensions of the field and what a proposed 180 foot fence looked like. He could do that either the next Council meeting or the one following. Councilman Smith asked

to also bring what it would cost to do the field, fencing and backstop and Ms. Duncan said it would not require any lighting. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said he would do that; it may be a possibility that the playground equipment would have to be moved. Councilman Smith asked for Parks & Recreation Director Simeon to work on this, not to assign it to anyone else.

### **Public Comment (Unscheduled)**

#### **Terry Buffaloe**

Mr. Buffaloe thanked City Council for allowing him ask a few questions of Ms. Medlin when she gave her annual report of the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau. It reminded him of the Economic Development presentation. In a way he was surprised that none of the Council had questions of them, but maybe they already had them answered. He knew there were a lot of questions he did not know, let alone the answers. He did not hear or see a correlation between any revenue increase here in Halifax County that could be directly linked to tourism. There was no line items to say this is how much better they were doing. With the Economic Development piece, he still has not found anybody that is working those manufacturing jobs that pay \$944.70 a week. That was the exact figure that was stated by Ms. Scott. They were in the position to do some valuable work for the community. He has not seen the direct links to say this is a product of tourism or economic development efforts. Until he raised his hand, there was not an opportunity for anyone in the community to ask any questions on either one of these events. He stated he was glad to see Halifax County Board Chairman Vernon Bryant here tonight because when they give their reports on the county level, the citizenry does not have the opportunity to ask any questions either unless he missed something. He thanked them again for the opportunity to ask Ms. Medlin those questions although he was not particularly satisfied with the answers, but at least he got a chance to ask.

#### **Shaniqua Harvey**

Ms. Harvey said she was the co-coordinator for the Roanoke Valley Community Tennis Association. Ms. Harris came before them earlier and gave a powerful statement of the condition of the courts that are inside the city limits. As for our organization, they actually partner with different sites, different churches and schools who would like to bring tennis to their area. They have funds that are available or they can link them with the funds that are available to assist with getting the nets that they need or balls or tennis rackets. They are looking for additional sites that are willing to do that. We come in and support them with linking them to a trainer with anyone in their church, school or community that wants to become a trainer. They also have certified instructors that will come to assist. She wanted to come up and speak in support of Ms. Harris because right now they will work within the Halifax and Northampton

County area. They have several different sites, but they have none inside the city limits of Roanoke Rapids. The condition of the courts is why they are unable to put a program there. Whether is it a community or a church, they need the facility and the courts. They have done several programs here. For the Roanoke Valley Community Tennis Association, they have the backing of the RV-CHI, the Arthur Ashe Foundation and the NC Junior Tennis Association. And through them we have funds that can support fixing any courts, not so much to build a brand new court, but if there are some in need of repair or beyond repair. However, if there is an area where there is a need and interest that wants tennis in that area, there are funds available and they match a portion of the proceeds and the town or program will do the other. She knew it would be a large burden that will come across the town to actually rebuild these courts like they need in Roanoke Rapids. They have grant money available and can link them with the resources through those foundations that will support them. They do not have programs within the city limits of Roanoke Rapids and it is something that is needed. The love of tennis was here before and it is here now and it is really important to get the children started up young. If our organization can be of any support to the City or need additional information, just let her know.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked Ms. Harvey if she would communicate with Parks & Recreation Director Simeon.

### **Approval of Council Minutes**

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the October 2, 2018 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as written.

### **New Business**

#### **Consideration of Halifax County Board of Elections Contract**

City Manager Scherer stated he recently received a proposed contract from the Board of Elections for the use of the space at the New Resources building as a voting precinct. He asked for Council to authorize him to sign and execute the said contract.

Councilman Smith made a motion to authorize the City Manager to sign and execute the Halifax County Board of Elections contract for the use of the space located at the New Resources Building, with a one year term only, renewable each year, as a voting precinct; seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated that was with changing the item in the contract. City Manager Scherer replied that was correct and he had spoken with Director Kristin

Scott about changing it to an annual agreement and he has not heard back from her whether the board would approve that or not. Once he hears back from her, he will let Council know.

With no further discussion, City Council unanimously voted to approve the motion.

Councilman Smith asked the City Manager to write a letter to the Board of Elections. This was the second time Roanoke Rapids has been left out of early voting. We are one of the largest voting precincts in the county and the largest population. The Board of Elections, for some reason, will not authorize us to have early voting in our city and he would like to know why they keep turning us down. They say it is for the money, but the City does not charge them a penny for the use of our buildings. City Manager Scherer said he would write a letter to the Board of Elections asking for their consideration of using the New Resources Building for One-Stop voting.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he was thinking this time wasn't going to be an issue as far as the building being available. City Manager Scherer replied the Board of Elections has indicated that if they had the utilization of this space, they would consider using it for One-Stop voting next time, but that was not a guarantee they were going use it.

Councilman Smith said he attended the Board of Elections meeting and they had considered to do it this year and then they voted not to do it. He feels it is important for the candidates to have the largest population a chance to vote and not do away with what the City has to offer for them.

### **City Manager's Report**

City Manager Scherer stated the City Administration continues to work towards our mission of providing our citizens with effective services in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. To do so requires a dedicated workforce that sees value in the labor they do. Many of our positions require working conditions outside of the norm for the vast majority of our citizens. Riding on the back of a refuse truck on a cold and wet morning, responding to someone who has overdosed on drugs, mowing large expanses of grass in 98-degree weather, sitting down to talk to a senior citizens who is lonely when you've got a million other things to do or getting called out late at night to clear fallen trees from the streets during a major storm, are just a few examples of what our employees get to do on a daily basis.

I think one of the main reasons our workforce performs its arduous tasks well without complaining is the fact that they see themselves making a difference in peoples' lives.



They say we all live to serve. That by helping others we fulfill our own destiny. I don't know if that is correct, but I do know the feeling one gets when they help someone and see that they made a difference; something happens in that moment and one gets a sense of fulfillment, happiness and a sense of purpose, a surge of energy.

Our employees don't come to work every day looking for praise and honors; in fact, no one in the local government profession does. But just knowing that by doing those things that few others are willing to do, they help someone else in their community to maybe have a better day or have less complications in their lives or maybe allow a small child to enjoy playing a game or sport the brings some joy to both them and their family.

As you review the information contained in the department reports tonight and hear the department manager's commentaries, please keep in mind the efforts of our workforce and managers who help make our city a good place to work and live. In ways both large and small, they help to make a difference in the lives of our citizens.

### **Finance Director's Report**

In the absence of Finance Director Etheridge, City Manager Scherer gave the following financial report for the month of September. He reported for the month of September, they have received a total of 30.1% of projected revenue and have spent 23.0% of the projected budget so for the month, the City has a budget surplus of \$1,283,306. The General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$5,429,208. Year to date revenues exceeded expenditures by \$1,283,306. One of the things that helped was the cash flow improved during the month of September with the first allotment of Ad Valorem Tax, Utility Franchise Tax, Sales & Use Tax and Powell Bill funding.

City Manager Scherer said Greg Redman, CPA, is in the process of completing the City's Fiscal Year 2017-2018 audit. He will return for an exit interview with management staff during the week of October 22<sup>nd</sup>. They plan to schedule Mr. Redman to present an out brief with Council, hopefully in one of the meetings in November.

### **Departmental Reports**

#### **Human Resources**

Human Resources Manager Kearney presented the September report. She reported during the month of September, the City had the following vacancies: Code Enforcement Officer, Police Officer and PT Public Works Worker. The City hired one

Street Maintenance Worker, one Intern, three Police Officers and one Sanitation Worker.

She announced she read to the children at the Public Library and encouraged others to participate because it is one of the most fulfilling things you can do. She is setting up a Flu Shot clinic tomorrow for City employees in the Human Resources office at City Hall. She told Council if any of them were interested in getting a flu shot, they just needed to bring their insurance card with them.

### **Police**

Police Chief Hasty presented his September report. He announced on October 31<sup>st</sup> they will hold their annual Trunk or Treat at Doyle Field behind the TJ Davis Recreation Center from 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. He invited everyone to come out to see the kids, they have a big crowd. If anyone would like to donate candy they can drop it off at the Police Department with Tina May.

He said they had been taking their in-service classes and there was one he was interested in and that he actually teaches. It is called Leadership through Community Partnerships. He shared the following information on this topic:

In essence, for the criminal justice professional or agency to be successful in developing community policing strategies, it must foster, build, and maintain partnerships that both support and assist them in the coordination of their responses to criminal justice-related issues.

Community engagement consists of proactive inclusion of the community in the strategic planning process to break down trust barriers. Community engagement works when a positive relationship is formed between the citizens and the criminal justice agency. Achieving this outcome entails creating and forming partnerships with stakeholders, who work, do business, attend schools, or live within the communities served by the criminal justice agency.

Trust is earned through a sincere and genuine interest in inclusion and commitment to justice. It is the culmination of transparency and collaboration.

In effect, transparency and open communication in many instances can reduce negative perceptions many citizens carry about criminal justice professionals. In addition, these attributes can bring down the psychological and physical barriers that often impede community relations efforts.

Some keys to breaking down barriers:

- Be open and honest in good or bad situations.
- Avoid face-saving statements such as, “We are working on it” or “I’ll get back to you on it.”
- Use community-based platforms to communicate with the public. This allows for greater transparency and improves the public’s perception of procedural fairness.
- Criminal justice managers should make themselves accessible to speak on behalf of the agency at community relations meetings.
- Use social media and public media outlets to keep the community informed and aware of upcoming meetings to encourage consistent and continual interaction.
- Recognize that communication barriers, as they relate to excessive force, rudeness, authoritarianism, and corruption, must not be tolerated.
- Use a non-confrontational tone and listen attentively during interactions with citizens.
- Be tactful and non-argumentative when explaining answers to their questions or concerns.
- Allow as much time as necessary to address their concerns without taking an overly critical tone in your message.

One could easily argue that the field of law enforcement is currently experiencing a legitimacy crisis in the United States. Gallup Poll data, the most reliable source of data we have, has shown that for the last several years, citizen confidence in the local police has been rather low. In the first quarter of 2016, only 58% of persons surveyed indicated that they had confidence in their local police. When asking only African-Americans, only 28% indicated that they had confidence in their local police.

In a study on citizen satisfaction with police, every one of the 27 studies found that having a recent negative contact with police significantly reduced overall satisfaction with police. 100% of these studies found that having a friend or family member with a recent negative contact with the police decreased overall satisfaction with the police.

To summarize, negative contacts between an officer and a citizen not only decreases citizen’s respect and support for the police, but it also diminishes respect and satisfaction for the police among that person’s relatives, friends, and any other bystanders who witnessed it.

What can we do about it?

- Be transparent with all information and data (as appropriate by law), particularly arrest and demographic data.

- Communicate consistently and honestly with the community.
- Ensure that the message is truthful, even if the truth is perceived as negative, or places the department in a negative light.
- Transparency mitigates the perception of deception or secrecy.
- Decisions should be based on relevant evidence or data rather than a personal opinion, speculation, or guesswork.
- Say no, when certain expectations cannot be met.
- Say yes, whenever possible and try to find legitimate ways to say yes, before saying no.
- Admit mistakes as a way of creating respect and building trust.
- Accept responsibility when it is warranted to enhance procedural legitimacy.
- Transparency increases the potential for the public to assist the criminal justice agency and its crime prevention efforts, such as providing information, serving as witnesses, etc.

#### Ways to Increase Perceptions of Fairness and Legitimacy:

- Hold an open forum to allow the stakeholders to discuss any concerns.
- Through a positive exchange with people, they may be willing to be more forthcoming with information in the future.
- The object of these meetings is to develop a long-term relationship with the stakeholders.
- Have a clearly defined agenda and ask stakeholders for input.
- Explain options for handling tickets, warrants, and summonses.
- Be fair in administering enforcement action.
- Be willing to listen, explain, and be courteous to victims as well as violators.
- Address both victims and violators as sir or ma'am and as Mr. or Mrs.
- Be willing to give advice to help prevent future incidents of victimization.
- Explain causes or solutions to the problem.
- Explain insurance options for non-reportable accidents, if applicable.
- Follow-up with victims after obtaining contact information.

#### Procedural justice is based on four central principles:

- Treating people with dignity and respect by using the proper tone, body language, and employing active listening skills.
- Giving individuals 'voice' during encounters. Allow people to tell their side of the story.

- Being neutral and transparent in decision-making. Decisions should be based on facts, and not personal biases.
- Conveying trustworthy motives by demonstrating a fair and impartial approach in the quality of treatment to those you serve.

Community engagement works best where it is an ongoing cumulative process enabling relationships and trust to build and strengthen over time.

### **Planning & Development**

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported in the month of September with the two hurricanes/weather threats, the department did go into somewhat of a preparation mode. They did prepare themselves to do damage assessment if they were called upon to do so. As a result, it did slightly delay some construction projects, but they are still moving forward. She reported last week ground had been broken at the new retail/restaurant development on Premier Boulevard. The Rooney Ridge Apartments on Hunting Ridge Road and Becker Drive are set for development as soon as possible.

They have seen a lot of activity with general inquiries that come through the office but are not referenced in the report. Code Enforcement for minimum housing and junked cars with the addition of the new full time employee has generated a lot of activity through the training. They have found the more proactive efforts were leading to great results.

Councilman Smith asked about the status of the Forest Hills parking lot. Planning & Development Director Lasky deferred the question to Attorney Chichester.

Attorney Chichester replied it was mess at this point. He reminded Council there was a lawsuit that was filed by Halifax County, who owns the parking lot, where the City was named as a defendant. The end result, on behalf of the City, he was able to get Judge Alma Hinton to enter an order requiring the property owners there to form a property owners association. That has been done. The association has been formed and they have enacted by-laws. The thought process was with an association it would be easier for the City to hold the association responsible for the upkeep of the property rather than having to pursue each individual member. The problem that has been generated is that at least two property owners have been unwilling to contribute their pro-rata portion of the money toward the upkeep and eventual paving of the parking lot. The City's objective was to get the parking lot paved and get the lighting fixtures up to date and operational. It is his understanding from talking to two of the property owners that are willing to move forward as well as the attorney for the association, that the association is in the process of filing a foreclosure action against the two

property owners that were not willing to pay their pro-rata portion. A proposal for paving the parking lot was given by Rightmyer but the money had to be put up to move forward. The County had offered to deed the property to the association and to contribute some money toward the paving of the parking lot and to extend an interest free loan for some additional money to help pave the parking lot. With the association not being able to move forward the paving season for this year is quickly moving away from us; paving is basically not done in the colder months. He stated it was frustrating. The parking lot remains to be owned by Halifax County, the County has offered to deed it to the association, the association has not been willing to accept it and the problem is if the association accepts it, it becomes taxable property for ad valorem tax purposes. The association has not been willing to accept it and being responsible for ad valorem taxes. He said previously the ice house was a major problem, but Planning & Development Director Lasky and her department along with City Manager Scherer helped to alleviate that problem with the water drainage across the parking lot so there should not be anything to complain about with that. He stated City Manager Scherer has asked him to look at the lawsuit and see if there is a way they can get it back in front of the judge to get some further orders of the court and to require the owners to pay that portion of the paving. If they could get the court to order the association to take over the parking lot that would be a tremendous step forward, but he was not sure if the court had the authority to do that.

Councilman Smith asked Planning & Development Director Lasky what they were going to do about the cars sitting beside the DrugCo Express. She replied that was all part of the overall shopping center ownership. She said they were informed at one time that the business was going to be closing and now it has extended beyond that and the cars are parked on private property. They would have to site them as abandoned vehicles in order to legally have them removed since they are in front of a vehicle repair shop. There has been some discussion about obtaining some extra property but again it is all part of a very complicated ownership in that shopping center area.

Councilman Smith asked about the cars on the lot off of Julian Allbrook. He stated what he was getting at was the town was a mess. He has been in this town for 75 years and it looks worse than he has ever seen it. It is time to open up the ordinance books and get something done. The City Council sits here two times a month and does nothing; all we do is take care of what is in the agenda book and go home and forget about everything. It is time for Council, time for him, to open that ordinance book and start doing what they say they are going to do. We are going to clean up this town one way or another. He said it can't all go on Planning & Development Director Lasky's shoulders, but it's on the Council and City Manager's shoulders.

City Manager Scherer stated he has drafts ready to be reviewed on revising the Code Enforcement Ordinance so he will be providing that to them in the near future when he has some legal questions resolved on it.

### **Parks & Recreation**

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon announced the Library was hosting a Job Fair on Thursday, October 25<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. He was proud of the library staff, they have done a really good job with this job fair. They have a lot of local companies participating: AAA Carolinas, NC Works, Reser's Fine Foods, Halifax Regional Hospital, Holden Temporaries, Chowan Public Transit Authority, Verizon Wireless, McDonalds and Food Lion.

He said they were hosting a reception at the Chaloner Recreation Center this Thursday at 6 p.m. to recognize the grants received and to answer any questions before they close the building and start construction on November 5<sup>th</sup>. He and staff will be there with site plans to go over any questions citizens may have. Refreshments will be served and he invited everyone to attend.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon stated the Halloween events at TJ Davis and Chaloner on October 31<sup>st</sup> will begin at 6 p.m. He said the Christmas Tree Lighting will be held on Thursday, November 29<sup>th</sup> at the Lloyd Andrews building at 6 p.m. He announced the young girl turning the lights on the tree is City employee Roger Bell's daughter. The Christmas Parade planning is going well. This year in place of a Grand Marshal, they are going to do something different. They are going to recognize firefighter Kevin Hawkins and his battle for cancer. They will have more of a Hometown Hero Christmas parade rather than an actual grand marshal. It will be held on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2 p.m. He asked City Council to contact City Clerk Storey if they plan to participate in the parade. He and Fire Chief Coggins will be at the radio station on Thursday morning to talk about the Christmas parade and Kevin and his cancer.

Lastly, he announced Medicare Part D Open Enrollment appointments at the Jo Story Senior Center start Monday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be every Monday and Thursday until December 7<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged anyone or anyone with relatives that are part of the Medicare Part D, to take the time to get enrolled. They can answer a lot of questions, look at the plans and save them money.

### **Public Works**

Public Works Director Chalker presented the September report. He said he wanted to talk about Hurricane Michael. They thought the city was good, but then at the last

minute the wind picked up and a bunch of trees came down. He cannot say enough about the Public Works employees. He said Doug Love, Wayne Medlin and many others were out on the streets as quickly as he had seen them do that. They had a very quick response. Several trees were lost throughout town that caused some issues, but he believed their turnaround time was probably a record. Kudos to Kelly Lasky who serves as the City's Public Information Officer (PIO). She was right on top of sending information out to the public via social media.

He announced leaf season was about to begin; it starts November 1<sup>st</sup>. The department has received calls from citizens about seeing the leaf trucks on the street, but they are just testing them so they will be ready for November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Public Works Director Chalker reported purchase orders have been issued for the following vehicles and equipment: a street sweeper, an asphalt truck, two dump trucks and a knuckle-boom trailer. The street sweeper should be the first item they receive which should be sometime the end of this month. He said the other items have to be built so it will be after the first of the year when they would get those.

He reported the department is working on some street improvements. They have \$112,379 worth of street resurfacing work they plan to do. There are more streets that need to be resurfaced but they are resurfacing what they can afford and will get to the next ones when they get the money to do so.

## **Fire**

Fire Chief Coggins presented the report for September. He reported the department responded to 147 calls of service throughout the month of September. Firefighters were engaged in 751.5 man-hours of training.

He said last month they had the 911 Ceremony at Centennial Park and thanked all who attended. The department has been extremely busy the last couple of weeks with Fire Prevention at the local schools. He reminded everyone with the cold weather approaching, to check their smoke detectors. This past month they cooked breakfast for the retirees at the Fireman's Clubhouse and had ten retirees to attend. The department also took part in a flag burning ceremony with the Sons of the American Revolution and JROTC at Veterans Park where they burned 150 flags. They held a fire extinguishing training class with students at Roanoke Rapids High School. He announced the Kasey Tyndall concert to benefit Chief Hawkins was a success. Chief Hawkins just finished his fourth round of chemo. He is doing well and getting his strength up. He will be getting his PET scan this week and the next thing they will be doing is a bone marrow transplant which requires him to be in isolation for an entire month afterwards.



## **Main Street**

Main Street Director Caudle presented her monthly report. She thanked all who donated to the Main Street Hurricane Relief Drive. Main Street Roanoke Rapids collected over 3,000 items during this short drive. They have already taken one very large load to both New Bern and Morehead City. The next round will be going to Columbus County where there are some small Main Street communities that had extensive damage but don't get quite the support as some of the larger communities receive. That donation effort has come to an end, but they were pleased with community's support.

She reported the signs for the wayfinding signage program have been fabricated and are now in house. The Public Works department is working with a third party sign vendor to determine how to best install the signs. They may install the poles first and put the signs up last. This will happen over the next few weeks so within the month she expects all thirteen signs will be installed and in operation throughout the community. As for the Roanoke Avenue resurfacing project, they will not be resurfacing the Avenue in 2018 because they are approaching colder months. They have announced they will start this project in mid-March 2019 and it should take four to five weeks to complete. This is going to be a large undertaking for NCDOT and it will impact several small businesses within historic Roanoke Rapids. Starting in November, Main Street will have direct communication with all the property and business owners helping them determine how best to continue to service their customers during the resurfacing project. The biggest thing to remember is that for a short period of time they will be impacted by this project, but the final result will be a major improvement for them.

Main Street Director Caudle announced Rivertown Consignments located at 935 Roanoke Avenue opened on Friday. This was an exciting opening; she has been working with these individuals for about two years so that puts into perspective how long some of these efforts take for them to go from a business concept to a business opening. It was a successful grand opening and received a lot of support from neighboring businesses. Rest E-Z at Shell Furniture will be having their final business use inspections this week. They will be having a soft opening immediately and will have a grand opening/ribbon cutting at a later date. Hannah's Closet will be moving from the 200 block of Roanoke Avenue to 1034 Roanoke Avenue. They will hopefully be getting their certificate of occupancy this week as well.

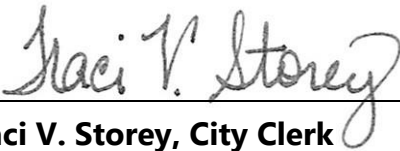
She reminded City Council that the Main Street Roanoke Rapids annual dinner was moved from this month to January 31, 2019. It will still take place at the Arts Council Gallery. They will be doing an eighteen month outlook on what they have achieved, what they expect to see in the coming years and they will still continue their annual

awards. They will have a lot to celebrate between the completion of 1026 Roanoke Avenue, the resurfacing project, wayfinding signage and Main Street's new website.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked what was happening at the old train station. Main Street Director Caudle replied it has been under construction for some time with plans to open a restaurant called the Copper Spike. She was not aware of an opening date at this time. The renovation is being done by the owners who are a local family.

<b>Other Business/Council Comments</b>
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There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilwoman Cowen and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

  
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**Traci V. Storey, City Clerk**

**Approved by Council Action on: November 7, 2018**