



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, December 18, 2018 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)
Carol H. Cowen)
Wayne Smith)

Council Members

Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director
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
Jason Patrick, Fire Chief
Christina Caudle, Main Street Director

Absent: Councilwoman Suetta S. Scarbrough
Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager

Prior to the meeting Glory, Eden and Bliss Scott performed Christmas music on their violins. Mayor Doughtie thanked them for sharing their gift with those in attendance and recognized their mother Michelle Scott and Katie Ammann of the Music School.

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

Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie asked Council members about any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening.

There being no conflicts, a motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for December 18, 2018 as presented.

Special Recognitions

Police Department

Police Chief Hasty recognized Investigator Jeff Davis, Public Works Director Chalker and Public Works staff: Assistant Public Works Director Doug Love, Mike Manning, Kaid Moody, Cody Hurdle, Linwood Bowser, Alvin Rivers, Edward Brown and Antonio Richardson for their quick response in locating cremated remains stolen from a vehicle B&E which occurred on December 3, 2018 in the 500 block of Roanoke Avenue. They searched the neighborhood where they located some of the stolen property and the cremated remains. He said this shows that the City employees go above and beyond when they are called on and do so every day. He presented each with a Certificate of Merit.

The victim, Ms. Gaston was in attendance and came forward to thank each of the employees for finding her mother's remains. She expressed her deep gratitude for the work of the Police and Public Works Departments and the community for pulling together.

Mayor Doughtie added the Public Works staff were good public ambassadors for the City.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the December 4, 2018 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as written.

New Business

Order to Demolish and Remove Dwelling at 125 Monroe Street

Planning & Development Director Lasky and Code Enforcement Officer Roger Bell gave the following report:

MEMORANDUM

To: Joseph Scherer, City Manager

From: Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director

Re: **Order to Demolish and Remove Dwelling at 125 Monroe Street (Halifax Co. Parcel 0907601)**

Date: December 18, 2018

Code Enforcement Officials are requesting City Council's adoption of Ordinance 2018.07 to Order the **demolition and removal of the substantially dilapidated single-family dwelling located at 125 Monroe Street**, Roanoke Rapids. Code Enforcement Staff has given the property owner reasonable opportunity to bring the dwelling up to standards, pursuant to the October 10, 2018 lawful Order of the Code Enforcement Official to repair or demolish the property. This request is the Final Action in the formal process timeline for compliance with the provisions of the City Code. A detailed timeline of events, correspondence, and actions is attached. The Planning & Development Department's demolition line item within the FY 2018-2019 budget will be used to fund the demolition and clearance activities.

Ordinance 2018.07 includes the following:

- City Council finds that the dwelling is dilapidated and unfit for human habitation under the provisions of the Housing Code and that all procedures have been complied with; and
- The dwelling should be demolished; and
- The owner of the dwelling has been given a reasonable opportunity to bring the dwelling up to the standards of the Housing Code; and
- North Carolina General Statute 160A-443(5) and Chapter 152 of the Roanoke Rapids City Code of Ordinances empowers the City to demolish a dwelling when the Order for repair has not been complied with; and
- Directs the Code Enforcement Officer to demolish and remove the property as unfit for human habitation; and
- All costs incurred by the City to demolish and remove the dwelling shall constitute a lien against the real property; and
- If the owner should either demolish and remove the dwelling or make the required repairs prior to the time of scheduled demolition, then the City Manager is authorized to rescind this demolition order without further action; and
- The Ordinance shall become effective immediately after its adoption.

Requested Action

Consider a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2018.07 Ordering the Code Enforcement Officer to demolish and remove the substantially dilapidated dwelling at 125 Monroe Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC with a lien to be placed against the real property upon which the costs of removal are incurred.

Timeline of Code Enforcement Actions

The following is provided as a chronological order of events concerning the above referenced property:

- **April 17, 2018** - Residence was damaged by fire. Damage was so extensive the dwelling could not be secured. Planning obtained a fire report on the incident.
- **August 30, 2018** - Property owner's 135-day deadline passed with no action from owner on the condition of the property.
- **September 19, 2018** - Letter notifying property owners Samuel and Janice Shearin of the beginning of formal process sent. Planning filed Notice of Lis Pendens with Halifax County Clerk of Superior Court's office. Research reveals the property owners to be Samuel Wesley and Janice Stallings Shearin as listed in Book 1987, Page 583 of the Halifax County Public Registry. A Deed of Trust is also found on the property, listing the Vernon T. Bradley Living Trust, the Vernon T. Bradley Jr. Living Trust, and the late attorney Wendell Moseley as parties of interest in Book 1987, Page 587.

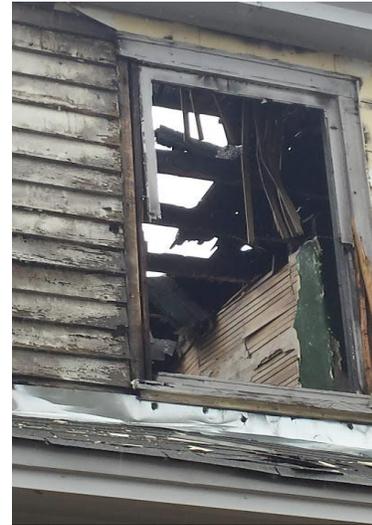
- **September 26, 2018** - Detective Gorton Williams informs Planning he has closed the investigation of the fire that extensively damaged the residence.
- **September 27, 2018** - Contractor Carlton Belfield informs Planning he has been hired to demolish the residence by the property owners. Days later he indicates the owners have told him to stop action.
- **October 10, 2018** - Notice of hearing sent to the property owners and all parties of interest via registered mail and regular mail. Hearing Notice posted on the dwelling. Hearing was set for 11 a.m. on November 9, 2018.
- **October 15, 2018** - ***Certified mail to party of interest Wendell Moseley, c/o Bradley Elliott, is recorded as delivered.***
- **October 16, 2018** - Samuel and Janice Shearin applied for a demolition permit for 125 Monroe Street, listing themselves as contractor. The \$100 fee is paid, water and power have been released as of Oct. 30, but no action has been taken by the owners since.
- **October 18, 2018** - ***Hearing Notice mailed to the Vernon T. Bradley Jr. Living Trust by Certified and Regular Mail is recorded as delivered. Notice to Vernon Bradley Living Trust by Certified Mail is recorded as delivered.***
- **November 7, 2018** - ***Hearing Notice mailed via Certified Mail to Samuel and Janice Stallings Shearin is returned as unclaimed. Regular mail has not returned as undelivered, so by statute hearing notice is recorded as delivered.***
- **November 8, 2018** - Janice Stallings Shearin was contacted by Minimum Housing Code Enforcement Officer Donald Tart by phone and indicated she would be attending the next day's hearing at the dwelling. Shearin added she was planning on bringing her attorney.
- **November 9, 2018** - Hearing was held at 11 a.m. with Minimum Housing Code Enforcement Officer Donald Tart, Minimum Housing Code Enforcement Officer Roger Bell and Planning and Development Director Kelly Lasky in attendance. Owner does not attend. A list of all observed Minimum Housing violations is made at the property. Due to the unsafe conditions, no interior inspection was performed. After inspection a determination is made that the costs of repairing the dwelling and bringing it up to code is **\$38,500**, which is greater than 50 percent of the current tax value of the dwelling, **\$14,200**.
- **November 13, 2018** - The Findings of Fact document was sent with an Order that the owner shall bring the dwelling into compliance with the Minimum Housing Code by demolishing and removing the dwelling from the property or by repairing, altering or by improving the structure to correct all of the conditions and deficiencies noted in the attached Exhibit A by a date not later than the **13th day of December, 2018**. Mailing is by Certified and Regular mail to the owner. The notice was posted to the dwelling.
- **November 15, 2018** - ***The Findings of Fact notices delivered to the Vernon T. Bradley Jr. Living Trust and Vernon T. Bradley Living Trust are recorded as delivered. Notice delivered to Wendell Moseley c/o Bradley Elliott is recorded as delivered.***
- **December 3, 2018** - A letter was sent reminding owner of the upcoming deadline of **December 13, 2018** to have the dwelling repaired or demolished and removed. ***Notice of Findings of Fact shown as undelivered to Samuel Wesley and Janice Stallings Shearin via Certified Mail. Regular mail has not returned as undelivered.***
- **December 5, 2018** - Notice sent to owners and parties of interest to advise them of the City Council meeting to be held at 5:15 p.m. December 18, 2018 at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall, 700 Jackson Street, ***at which Council will consider an order to demolish and remove the dwelling located at 125 Monroe Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870.***
- The 2018 assessed tax value for this dwelling is \$14,200.
- Taxes in the amount of \$551.60 are owed for the tax year 2018.

Planning & Development Department Recommendation

Code Enforcement Officials have determined the dwelling at 125 Monroe Street to be in a **dilapidated** condition as defined by the Minimum Housing Code of the City of Roanoke Rapids. Staff has properly accomplished the required procedures and the owner has failed to comply with Official's Order; therefore, demolition is requested to remove the uninhabitable conditions.

Photos of Dwelling





Mayor Doughtie asked if they had an estimate for the demolition of the house. Code Enforcement Officer Bell replied they had spoken with a contractor informally about it and he gave an estimate of approximately \$10,000. Mayor Doughtie asked if they knew if the home had asbestos in it. Code Enforcement Officer Bell said that was being investigated. Mayor Doughtie also asked if they had considered burning it since it was on the corner and there was not a house next to it. Planning & Development Director replied they had not yet and asked Fire Chief Patrick if he would like to comment. Chief Patrick stated that for the Fire Department to consider using it for training, they have to first make sure there is no asbestos in it. Once the structure was cleared of asbestos, they could look into it. Planning & Development Director Lasky added that with the age of the structure there is more than likely asbestos involved whether in the roof shingles or siding; it was typical for the mill village housing to have asbestos containing materials. Since the dwelling was already burned, it would be more unsafe to remove the asbestos prior to demolition because it is in such bad shape. It all depends on the analysis that comes back from the lab.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked once the bid goes out, what would be the timeframe when the structure would come down. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied depending on how long it takes to get the lab results back and then getting the contractor bids. If the Fire Department burns it for training, then that could take some additional time with the State permits that would have to be obtained. The goal would be to use the most physically and responsible method as possible. Her concern was for this time of year with the weather getting cold, some people may seek shelter in the space that cannot be secured. She requested prior to Council taking any action the Mayor call upon the audience to see if anyone wanted to speak on the matter.

Sammy Shearin, owner of the property, came forward to speak. He stated unlike what many people think, he was not a rich man. He was struggling to get by like most people in this town. He admitted he has drug his feet with tearing the house down and he had a very good reason why – because he did not have the money. He said he anticipated having some money available come the first of the year. He came down some time ago and filed for a demolition permit. The environmental man came today and he said he would have his report ready in about a week. He asked City Council for some time like others have been given in the past.

Mayor Doughtie asked Mr. Shearin how much time was his asking for. He replied he was hoping to have some money after the first of the year and with the environmental report expected in about a week so, 30-45 days. Mayor Doughtie asked if one month would be some advantage for him and the City would then reassess. Mr. Shearin agreed. Mayor Doughtie suggested Council consider giving Mr. Shearin 30 days.

Councilman Smith stated he was willing to do that if they could put in the motion if it is not demolished in 30 days, the City could automatically go tear it down. Planning & Development Director Lasky said in the Council packet, Ordinance 2018.07 under Section 6, there is a sentence that currently states the ordinance shall become effective immediately upon its adoption, but they could change the wording from immediately to a specific date. Once that date expires, the City would have the authority to move forward to do so. Prior to the City taking any action, they would see where the Shearin's are with the demolition and move forward as needed.

Mayor Doughtie asked Mr. Shearin if it was his intent to demolish the property. Mr. Shearin replied absolutely because he did not believe the house could be repaired.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said he believed 30 days was reasonable but anything longer with an open house could pose an issue.

Planning & Development Director Lasky recommended Council amend the ordinance under Section 6 in their motion to state the ordinance would become effective immediately after January 18th, 2019. On Monday, January 21st, the Planning Department would contact Mr. Shearin and if the house was demolished by then, they would rescind the ordinance.

Mr. Shearin said he asked the Fire Chief when they put the fire out, why didn't they let it burn all the way down. The Fire Chief told him they were in the business of putting out fires. Mr. Shearin asked why because the house was no good and it would have done him a favor if they would have let it burn to the ground. He added the police report states they believe it was arson because nobody was there at the time.

Mayor Doughtie said right now, they were concentrating on the safety. He asked Attorney Chichester if there was anything else he would like to add. Attorney Chichester said if Council was considering approving the ordinance, that whoever makes the motion amend Section 6 to instead of becoming effective immediately to have it read to become effective January 18, 2019, which is 30 days from today's date. This would allow the owner to proceed with demolition and if not, everything is in place so the Planning Department can move forward. He directed Council that Section 6 was on page 2 of the ordinance.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if that change would allow Mr. Shearin the requested 30 days. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied yes, it would give him 30 days to complete the demolition but if it is not demolished in 30 days then the City would move forward. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked since Mr. Shearin stated he would be getting some money in January, was the 30 days from January 1st or December 18th. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied it was from December 18th, but it was Council's choice of the date.

Councilman Smith asked Attorney Chichester if the ordinance should be changed first before it is approved. Attorney Chichester replied it could be done either way. The ordinance could be amended in the motion making the effective date January 18th or another date rather than now.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance 2018.07 ordering the Code Enforcement Officer to demolish and remove the substantially dilapidated dwelling at 125 Monroe Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC with a lien to be placed against the real property upon which the costs of removal are incurred with an effective date of January 18, 2019.

ORDINANCE 2018.07

ORDINANCE DIRECTING THE CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER TO DEMOLISH AND REMOVE PROPERTY AS UNFIT FOR HUMAN HABITATION AND DIRECTING THAT A NOTICE BE PLACED THEREON THAT THE SAME MAY NOT BE OCCUPIED:

125 Monroe Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC Halifax County PIN: 0907601

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids finds that the dwelling described herein is dilapidated and unfit for human habitation under the provisions of the Housing Code, and that all of the procedures of the Code of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, have been complied with; and

WHEREAS, this dwelling should be removed or demolished, as directed by the Code Enforcement Official, and should be placarded by placing thereon a notice prohibiting the use for

human habitation, in that the costs of repairs needed to bring it into compliance with the minimum housing code exceeds **50%** of the current value of the dwelling; and

WHEREAS, the owner of this dwelling has been given a reasonable opportunity to bring the dwelling up to the standards of the Housing Code pursuant to an Order issued by the Code Enforcement Official and the owner has failed to comply with the lawful Order of the Code Enforcement Official to repair or demolish the property within the time therein described; and

WHEREAS, G. S. 160A-443 (5) and Chapter 152 of the Code of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, empowers the City of Roanoke Rapids to have its Code Enforcement Official to remove or demolish a dwelling when an Order of the Code Enforcement Official has not been complied with;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids that:

Section 1. The Code Enforcement Official is hereby authorized and directed to place a placard containing the legend:

“This building is unfit for human habitation; the use or occupation of this building for human habitation is prohibited and unlawful.”

on the building located at **125 Monroe Street**, in the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

Section 2. The Code Enforcement Official is hereby authorized and directed to vacate the dwelling of all occupants and to remove or demolish the dwelling, said dwelling being located at **125 Monroe Street** in the City of Roanoke Rapids North Carolina, and owned by **Samuel Wesley Shearin and Janice Stallings Shearin**. In accordance with the Order of the Code Enforcement Official issued pursuant to the Minimum Housing Ordinance contained in Chapter 152 of the Code of the City of Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

Section 3. (a) The cost of removal or demolition shall constitute a lien against the real property upon which the cost was incurred. The lien shall be filed in the office of the City Tax Collector, and shall have the same priority and be collected in the same manner as the lien for special assessments in Article 10 of G. S. Chapter 160A.

(b) Upon completion of the required removal or demolition, the Building Inspector shall sell the materials of the dwelling and credit the proceeds against the cost of removal or demolition. The Code Enforcement Official shall certify the remaining balance to the Tax Collector. If a surplus remains after sale of the materials and satisfaction of the cost of removal or demolition, the Code Enforcement Official shall deposit the surplus in the Superior Court where it shall be secured and disbursed in the manner provided by G. S. 160A-443 (6).

Section 4. It shall be unlawful for any person to remove or cause to be removed the placard from any building to which it is affixed. It shall likewise be unlawful for any person to occupy or to permit the occupancy of any building therein declared to be unfit for human habitation.

Section 5. If the owner of the property should either demolish the dwelling at his own expense, or if, in the opinion of the code enforcement officer, the owner has rehabilitated the dwelling to the extent that it meets or exceeds the requirements of the minimum housing code prior to the time scheduled

for demolition under this ordinance, then the City Manager is authorized to rescind this demolition order without further action by the City Council.

Section 6. This Ordinance shall become effective immediately January 18, 2019.

City of Roanoke Rapids

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Proposal for Monument in Veterans Park

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reminded Council that Ms. Toni Outland spoke before them on September 18, 2018 regarding a donation of a veteran's memorial monument for Iraq-Afghanistan soldiers to be placed in Veterans Park. He reported Ms. Outland has notified the City that she has raised the funds for the monument and is ready to move forward with the project. He presented a photo of the monument as well as a photo showing the proposed placement for the monument and asked for Council's approval. He noted the monument was approximately 5 feet wide by 5 feet tall which is similar in size of the existing moment in the park.

Councilman Smith asked if this would then fill up the amount of monuments to be placed in Veterans Park. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied it was starting to get full and it would depend on the size of the monument if someone requested to place another one there. It would definitely need to be brought before Council for discussion.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the placement of a veteran's memorial monument for Iraq-Afghanistan soldiers in Veterans Park.

Concealed Carry Ordinance Amendment

Police Chief Hasty presented the following ordinance and stated the amendment would bring this section of the Roanoke Rapids Code of Ordinances in compliance with new changes in the State's conceal carry laws in North Carolina.

ORDINANCE NO. 2018.08

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 98 "STREETS AND SIDEWALKS" OF THE ROANOKE RAPIDS CITY CODE.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS that:

SECTION 1. Chapter 98, Section § 98.55 to read as follows:

§ 98.55 CERTAIN ACTIVITIES PROHIBITED.

The following acts or activities when performed or undertaken in conjunction with or as a part of any parade, picket line or group demonstration are hereby prohibited and declared unlawful:

~~(A) The carrying on or about the person of any firearm, or any weapon or article, including but not limited to blackjacks, nightsticks or flashlights which by their use might constitute a deadly weapon;~~

(A) The carrying on or about the person of any firearm, except by those persons granted a concealed carry permit pursuant to G.S. Chapter 14, Article 54B or as otherwise authorized;

(B) The taking or keeping of any dog or other vicious animal, whether leashed or unleashed. ('75 Code, § 18-3) *Penalty, see § 10.99*

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2018.08 amending Chapter 98 "Streets and Sidewalks" Section 98.55 of the Roanoke Rapids Code of Ordinances.

Resolution of Support for One-Cent Sales Tax Increase Referendum

In the absence of City Manager Scherer, Mayor Doughtie presented the Resolution of Support for the One-Cent Sales Tax Increase Referendum. He read the following letter submitted by Councilwoman Scarbrough due to her absence from the meeting:

Dear Mayor Doughtie:

I am writing this letter to express my support of the motion on the part of the Roanoke Rapids City Council on the Resolution in Support of a One-Cent Sales & Use Tax Increase Referendum.

I will be unable to attend the December 18, 2018 City Council meeting when the resolution will be considered. I respectfully request that my support be known and included in the meeting minutes.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Suetta S. Scarbrough
Councilwoman

Mayor Doughtie stated most of those in attendance have heard about the sales tax for some time. It has been looming out there for a long time. There has been a lot of conversation and meetings about it. They had been told years back, they had to have support from Halifax County to have any idea of trying to get it done. They have also had conversations with the County representatives. He presented and read the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 2018.08

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF
ONE-CENT SALES & USE TAX INCREASE REFERENDUM
TO ADDRESS CRITICAL NEEDS FOR THE
CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS, NORTH CAROLINA**

WHEREAS, the City of Roanoke Rapids has not raised property taxes in over 12 years or sales and use taxes in 16 years and in the last 10 years the inflation rate has increased 16.63%; and

WHEREAS, the City of Roanoke Rapids has been extremely frugal in its spending and received perfect external audits for the past four years; and

WHEREAS, the City's primary need is to offset the renegotiated loan payment on the Roanoke Rapids Theatre, which is approximately \$980,000 per year. The expense offset would greatly assist the City with funding availability for such critical needs as economic development funding, capital needs, infrastructure repairs and upgrades and blight removal; and

WHEREAS, the City of Roanoke Rapids has no other income sources as most other cities do, such as utilities revenue, and the continued inflationary rise in operating expenses necessitates we consider a 1 cent sales tax increase option; and

WHEREAS, the additional revenue will allow the City to improve the quality of life for our citizens by helping to meet many of our budgetary needs, such as infrastructure repairs and upgrades, critical capital needs and public safety protection; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated the City of Roanoke Rapids would generate an additional approximately \$1M in revenue and Halifax County would also receive a proportionate increase in sales tax income, based upon statute tax ratios; and

WHEREAS, the sales tax increase option would spread the burden among all citizens and regional consumers including I-95 travelers, as opposed to an increase in property taxes on a minority of property owners; and

WHEREAS, the sales tax would not include such basics as automobiles, gasoline, medicine and grocery foods; and

WHEREAS, legislation would have a “sunset” date of when the Theatre loan is paid off.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT BE RESOLVED, that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids do hereby fully support legislation that would authorize a 1 cent local option sales tax increase voter referendum issue for the November 2019 election.

ADOPTED this 18th day of December, 2018.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Mayor Doughtie stated if Council votes to approve this resolution, they need to get information out to the community about what the sales tax is and why the City needs it and what they will do with the money. He believed it was pretty easy to explain to people if they have 6-8 bullet points. He said it was easy to talk to people about it and if they give a push back, his comment to people was to ask what they would do differently. He stated most of the time, they may have an answer, but in government there are things they have to abide by to run the City and as noted in the resolution, the City is extremely limited in how to raise money. They do not operate the enterprise parts of government like many cities do such as water, utilities and gas. After a lot of study and research, he believes this is a way the City can make a big difference in the community. They would be making some trips to the General Assembly to try to reach out to people that may not know a whole lot about their situation so they can explain it before it gets to them for a vote.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 2018.08 supporting a one-cent sales tax increase referendum.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer was absent. No report was given.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Etheridge gave the following financial report for the month of November. She reported during the month, the Finance Department issued 78 purchase orders, wrote 123 payroll checks, and processed 480 direct deposit vouchers and 289 accounts payable checks. She noted three payrolls were processed during the month of November. After review of the operating statement, the month of November shows the General Fund year to date receipts totaled \$6,898,179. The percentage of actual monies collected of adopted budgeted figures total 38.2%. Year to date expenditures totaled \$6,920,899. The percentage of actual monies expended of adopted budgeted figures total 38.3%. After the month of November, 41.66% of the budget year has been completed. As a result, year to date expenditures exceeded revenues by (\$22,720.34).

She stated the operating cash and investment reserves are still critical in offsetting revenue shortfalls at the beginning of the fiscal year and in November; as well as continuing operations for the remainder of fiscal year 2018-2019. During the month of November, \$263,293 was paid on behalf of the Series 2017A and 2017B theatre bonds.

Finance Director Etheridge reported historically November operations yield lower revenue collections for the City. The City typically receives additional quarterly revenues in the month of December.

She announced the Local Government Commission has approved the City's 2017-2018 financial audit. Greg Redman, CPA, will present the audit to Council in January, 2019.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if the City was where they should be or where they usually are for this time of year. Finance Director Etheridge replied the City was a little bit better even though they were seeing a slight deficit. At this same time last year, the year-to-date deficit was \$171,874. That was a combination of spending 3% less than this particular time last year even though revenues were coming in 2% under budget. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked for the Fund Balance percentage. She replied 21%.

Departmental Reports

Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Kearney presented the November report. She reported the department received four applications and the following open positions are: Police Officer, Code Enforcement Officer and they are starting to advertise for the firefighter applicant pool. The firefighter applicant pool is where they choose applicants who are tested and are eligible to be hired when positions become available. The pool was getting low so that is why they are advertising for applications now.

She announced she was working on the BARC Employee Christmas Luncheon which will be held tomorrow at Kirkwood Adams. Service Awards start at 11:00 a.m. followed by lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Councilman Smith asked how many Code Enforcement Officers was the City down. She replied one. He also asked how many Police Officers were they down. She replied they had three that were graduating on Thursday. Chief Hasty added the three graduating already had positions; he still had four openings due to retirements. Councilman Smith asked if the City were able to get officers that did not have to go to school. Chief Hasty replied none were applying.

Police

Police Chief Hasty presented the department's November report. He announced on December 7th & 8th the department worked with other law enforcement agencies to hold a Toy Drive at Walmart. He reported the drive was successful; some gave toys while others gave money which they took inside Walmart to purchase more toys. The toys would be distributed to various departments in the county including Weldon, Littleton, Enfield and Scotland Neck. He noted he took another load to Littleton today that Walmart donated.

He announced December 15th they held the Christmas for the Kids which was also a great success. They took over 30 kids Christmas shopping. They are taking three more tomorrow that were unable to get there on the 15th.

Chief Hasty said they had three graduating from the BLET program on Thursday night. They were already filling some of the positions; they are just waiting for their State test results. Once those results are received, they will send in their paperwork to be certified by the State and hopefully will start working on the squads in January.

Planning & Development

Planning & Development Director Lasky presented the report for November. She stated during the month, the department has focused on minimum housing and housing conditions within the community. Early in the month, she participated in a meeting and a couple of different grant webinars concerning various funding opportunities to assist property owners who live in the dwellings as a primary residence. The funding would help with some of the conditions to improve them, reduce risk of fire and life safety. It usually is something they receive a lot of criticism for because things don't happen quickly enough. They have to follow certain procedures allowing time to take place that is required. Sometimes, like the instance this evening, they have to keep moving the City's process forward in order to site some action by the property owner.

She informed Council that during the first week of December, the Halifax County Commissioners approved the sale of a couple of small pieces of property in the Forrest Hills shopping center. One was the area between DrugCo Express and the automotive business. It was purchased by the adjacent property owner. Once they can move forward with surveying and closing on the property, the new owner intends to fence and screen the area along the front and side of the property. That will resolve the ongoing issue there.

She said the proposed Dollar General at 8th and Jackson Streets continue to try to address the department's concerns. They have recently received a Traffic Impact Analysis from them and they are just beginning to review that. Staff and the Development Review Committee have been bringing their concerns and also taking into consideration those expressed by neighboring property owners. Especially with the high school nearby and the amount of traffic that could be potentially generated by vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Planning & Development Director Lasky reported they have reached some resolution with the Patterson Mansion *Airbnb*. In the past week, the department received a letter from engineer Jim Miller. He looked at it and they have authorized the one bedroom unit to be used as an *Airbnb* or for overnight accommodations in a mixed occupancy of commercial and residential. At this point, the department still needs to do something with the zoning code to make that type of use more specifically permissible, but they were willing to work with them and allow that one to proceed there.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked whether allowing the *Airbnb* with someone living there with a business would open up other requests. She replied it could potentially, but they look at each situation on a case by case basis because in reality they rarely find a situation that is identical. The Patterson Mansion has been used as a commercial

property for about 50 years even though it was originally built to be a dwelling. When you have a commercial existence and then add a residential occupancy to a particular part, the state building and fire codes require certain fire wall ratings and protection to be in place for safety. The engineering analysis was something that was required in order for the use of one particular room on the exterior that has its own ingress and egress to be used. State planners are looking how to interpret the issue of *Airbnb* because there are a lot of benefits with tourism.

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon presented his report for November. He thanked all the City departments for working together to help with the Christmas parade. He also congratulated his staff for doing a fantastic job with the parade because it is a big undertaking.

He announced the next event was the Half Marathon on the Canal Trail scheduled for March 30th. It is a very large event; they bring a lot of people in from the community for this. The last time they did this they had representation from 12 states and 3 countries. It is very good for the community because it brings people into the area for the weekend to stay in the hotels and eat at the restaurants.

He reported demolition was still going on at the Chaloner Recreation Center and the project is moving along as planned. The library hosted a job fair on October 25th with seven companies participating. The results were fantastic, they had 42 individuals attend the job fair and 13 were hired. He was very pleased with staff reaching out to the community with another great program and helping people in the community by getting those 13 people hired.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon said all facilities were busy with Christmas programs and day to day operations and will remain that way well into the new year.

Public Works

Public Works Director Chalker thanked Chief Hasty, Captain Martin and the Police Department for recognizing the Public Works employees. He stated what they saw was just a snap shot of the department. All the employees were outstanding employees and give their best every day.

He reported year-to-date the Cemetery has collected \$49,247 and assessed \$95,289 in lot cutting fees. He said since last week Rightmyer Machine Rentals has been over on 5th and Charlotte Streets behind the T.J. Davis Recreation Center with a collapsed storm drain system. They have dug that out and are in the process of putting it all back together now. They have the pipe in the ground but they have to rebuild some

of the boxes. He hopes the project will come in under budget, but will not be able to tell until the end of it.

Public Works Director Chalker announced Watson Electric from Wilson was today digging the holes for the wayfinding signage project. The holes are 2 feet wide by 5 feet deep in the public right-of-way of the street. The Public Works Department plans to pour concrete in those holes tomorrow. The new street sweeper is on the street. It has its new graphics on the side and it is doing its job.

Fire

Fire Chief Patrick presented the report for November. He reported the department responded to 163 calls of service throughout the month. Some of the noted calls they ran were to overdose calls where they administered Narcan to the patient. They had a natural gas leak on Julian Allsbrook Hwy. which shut it down for basically the whole day. The initial response was 2 trucks and 8 men. After getting traffic rerouted with the help of the Police and Public Works Departments and closed the businesses down for their safety, they left a crew of 1 truck and 4 men on scene. The total hours of that call was 10 hours because they kept someone on site for safety of the workers on the gas leak. It was a time and labor intensive event.

He said firefighters were engaged in 596.5 man-hours of training throughout the month of November. One of the major training events they held was the burning of the W.B. Green house by Manning School. It was a very good training for the department as well as for neighboring fire departments from Davie, Gaston, Halifax and Weldon. When they have a house in that good of shape, the guys set fires in rooms and practice their interior fire attacks. They are working with the school system and Halifax Community College at this time to schedule the date for the Kenny Hale house to be burned. They were looking at January 12th at this time.

Fire Chief Patrick said they worked with Public Works on a safety class held by Halifax Electric with a live demonstration showing how electricity will jump from a wire to a tool or anything near an electrical line. He said it was eye opening to a lot of the workers. The inspections division conducted 23 inspections and completed 5 plan reviews.

Main Street

Main Street Director Caudle presented her monthly report. She thanked the Public Works Department; it was exciting to see the holes being dug for the Wayfinding signs.

As long as they stay on track and depending on weather, they expect to have the signs fully installed by mid to late January because of the concrete cure time.

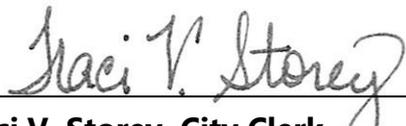
She stated this time of year is typically slow with business inquires, but the last two month have been a good indicator of what is happening in the area with economic development. Business inquiries in general compared to last year were up 260% so that is a huge indicator there is a lot more interest in starting a business here. Out of those there are several potential quality new businesses that are ready to seek business space on Roanoke Avenue. She has been working with them to find the right building fit for them. She was optimistic that some of these opportunities will be realized as early as next Spring. Also, they have leased 1028 Roanoke Avenue for retail and there is office space that will be opening in the 300 and 1300 blocks of Roanoke Avenue in the coming months.

Main Street Director Caudle announced Spartan Gym which was in the 1000 block of the Avenue effectively switched buildings with Stephens Outlet that was located on 11th Street. That has been completed and both businesses are open for business. It was a large expansion for Spartan Gym's business. They have been open for just shy of 2 years so that was a remarkable feat for any small business in any area across the country, but especially for a rural community. That is a great indicator that they are a strong business and the area is seeing some strengthening in the economy.

She reported there is also another gym that is expanding uptown. The current location is a small private training facility next door to Les Atkins' studio in the 1000 block of Roanoke Avenue. This business owner is expanding to a full scale gym at the corner of Roanoke Avenue and 10th Street. That last use there was Brian's Billiards. They hope to open in the next few weeks. She stated you never know what the future holds, but it seems like we are seeing positive trends in the Avenue and with reports county-wide, we are seeing some positive small business movement across the county.

Other Business/Council Comments
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There being no further business, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: January 8, 2019