



Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, June 4, 2019 at 5:15 p.m.** in the First Floor Conference Room of the J. Reuben Daniel City Hall and Police Station.

Present: Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor
Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem
Ernest C. Bobbitt)
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
Leigh Etheridge, Finance Director
Bobby Martin, Interim 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

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 Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for June 4, 2019 as presented.

Special Recognitions

Memorial Resolution for Councilwoman Carol Cowen

Mayor Doughtier read the following memorial resolution and presented it to Mrs. Cowen's daughter, Eva:

Memorial Resolution Carol H. Cowen

WHEREAS, Carol H. Cowen grew up in Nags Head, North Carolina and was a graduate of Peace High School, Peace College and completed numerous degrees throughout her teaching career; and

WHEREAS, Carol Cowen served the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District for 43 years as a teacher and a principal and retired as the Assistant Superintendent; and

WHEREAS, after retirement Carol was elected to serve on the Roanoke Rapids City Council and began her tenure on December 13, 2011 until her untimely death on April 15, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Carol was appointed to serve as the Council Liaison for the Recreation Advisory Committee where she assisted in planning for the Ledgerwood Athletic Complex, new Emry Park playground equipment, and drawing on her previous grant writing experience, oversaw several successful grant applications. She was also instrumental in the Chaloner Recreation Center renovation project; and

WHEREAS, Carol always placed people, especially children's interests, before her own thus making a lasting impact on many, and will forever be known as an advocate for children and public education; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure as an elected official, Carol was a dedicated public servant who gained the admiration and respect of her fellow Council members and the citizens of Roanoke Rapids; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Roanoke Rapids City Council, on behalf of a grateful community, does hereby express their appreciation for the life and service of Carol H. Cowen and their heartfelt sympathy to her family.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the original of this resolution be presented to the family of Carol H. Cowen and a copy of this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council.

THIS 4th day of June, 2019.

ATTEST: _____

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adopt the memorial resolution for Carol Cowen.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Patrick recognized Firefighters Dylan Clark and Vincent Mollicone who were hired April 1, 2019 and have been assigned to work “B” Shift.

He said Dylan Clark has 8 years of service with the Gaston Fire and Rescue. He is following in his family’s footsteps being a third generation serving the Gaston Fire Department. His parents serve and his grandfather is Deputy Chief. He has his Level 2 Firefighter, EBD and Technical Rescue. He was pinned by his mother, Kathy Clark.

Chief Patrick said Vincent Mollicone has 8 years of service with the Halifax Fire and Rescue serving as Lieutenant. He is two classes away from having his Level 1 Firefighter and his Emergency Vehicle Driver. He was pinned by his wife Taylor Mollicone.

Police Department

Interim Police Chief Martin stated in October 2018 an individual escaped from the Hoke County Correctional Facility named Cul Priest Jones. From the time he escaped the correctional institution, he came back to his hometown which is in Halifax County. He wreaked havoc throughout the area by breaking into places. During that time he had quite a few conversations with Lt. Perry Parks and he worked alongside the A Squad with the Halifax County Sheriff’s Office and Lt. Emmerson Carroll. Between the two lieutenants there was a lot of coordination. There was a couple of times they went to a location and would just miss Mr. Jones or they would get information on him and he would have a 45 minute head start on them. That went on for six months. They received information in April of this year and the information was passed on to Lt. Carroll and Lt. Parks. He said the cooperation that these two shifts showed that evening is the reason Cul Priest Jones was captured. They put a plan together, executed that plan and it worked perfect and nobody got hurt.

He recognized Roanoke Rapids Police Department “B” Squad: Lt. Perry Parks, Sgt. Terrence Tyler, Master Officer Ryan Cross, Officer Jaime Shelburne, Officer Brandon Council and Officer Joey Spragins. As well as “A” Squad with the Halifax County Sheriff’s Office: Lt. C. Emmerson Carroll, Sgt. Roger Jenkins, Cpl. Kyle Smith, Deputy Isiah Smith and Detective Matt Brown. He also recognized Corey Dixon who was a Detective at that time, but has recently been hired as the Gaston Chief of Police. He presented each with a Certificate of Merit for going above and beyond the call of duty.

Interim Police Chief Martin recognized Emily Cross. She organized a friendly competition. If more *Scentsy* police dogs sold versus fire department dogs, whoever lost had to take a pie in the face. Because of her hard work – it ended in a tie. Both Policemen and Firemen took a pie in the face. Where she went above and beyond was each one of those stuffed animals she had was given to a child at Manning and Belmont Elementary. The expression on those children’s faces was amazing. She brought the department into this effort and took the time and effort to put this together. The money she raised outside of this will help with several of the department’s programs for the kids this year. He presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation for her significant contribution in organizing a fundraising event to support the kids in the community.

<p>Public Comment (Scheduled)</p>

Mary Ann Avery

Mary Ann Avery, Resource Development Director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of North Central North Carolina introduced the team with the Roanoke Rapids club, Shereal Harvey and Chad Jacobs and one of the youth from the club, Adrianna. She thanked City Council for their continued support of the club. By their support they have changed lives in the community which is what they hope for with the youth. Everyday a child is leaving school and instead of going home to be a “latchkey” kid or a child without supervision, they are coming to the club; a facility that in part was made possible by their support.

Ms. Harvey, Program Director for the Roanoke Rapids club, stated currently they have 147 kids registered in the Roanoke Rapids Boys & Girls Club. They have served 8,438 meals to the youth here in Roanoke Rapids. Every child that is a member of the Boys & Girls Club goes home with a hot meal. They have a food program so if they come and register, they get a hot meal. In the summer, they will provide breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack with a full summer camp from 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. They have great things planned with the Fire Department and

she plans to contact Interim Chief Martin. She said if anyone knows of kids that need somewhere to be in the summer time or after school, send them their way. They have a safe place for them to be and would rather they be within their walls than walking around on the streets.

Ms. Avery thanked the City Council for making their field trips to the City pool possible which allows the kids the opportunity to swim a couple times a week.

Mayor Doughtie thanked them for the information and for what they are doing for the youth in the community. He said if there was anything the City could do such as transportation to help expose the kids to other things, please let them know. Mayor Doughtie presented a City lapel pin to Adrianna.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the May 21, 2019 Regular City Council Meeting minutes as drafted.

Public Hearings

Proposed Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget Public Hearing

City Manager Scherer said the proposed Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget was presented to City Council at the May 21, 2019 City Council meeting. In accordance with the NC Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, a copy of the proposed FY 2019-2020 budget has been on display for public inspection at the Clerk's Office and on the City's website since May 22, 2019. A public hearing has been scheduled for this evening to seek citizen input.

Mayor Doughtie opened the public hearing for citizen input or comments. With no wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Councilman Smith stated he would like to see if any other Council members would like to hold another meeting on the budget to go over line by line. He had some questions on it that he has not had a chance to get answered. He said there were some line items he would like cleared up for him and he was sure Council would like to discuss some of the same line items.

Councilwoman Scarbrough said she supported Councilman Smith's suggestion for

another meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he did not have a problem with it.

Mayor Doughtie said once a meeting date and time was scheduled, the City Clerk would get that information out.

CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Program Public Hearing

Planning & Development Director Lasky said the NC Department of Commerce has opened a new round of grants for the Community Development Block Program and the category is Neighborhood Revitalization. There are several different types of projects that are permissible under the application. Prior to the application deadline which is mid-July, there are two public hearings required; tonight was the first of the two hearings. The purpose of tonight's hearing was to receive any comments from the public or interested citizens about any of the needs of the city concerning housing, infrastructure, utilities, etc. The types of allowable projects have to benefit low to moderate income persons and can be used for elimination of area wide slum and blight conditions as well as community revitalization, improvements to housing, preservation, infrastructure, and public improvement needs can be done along with some housing rehab, public facilities and supportive infrastructure from any other private development. She said there are lots of different projects so they are seeking input as an application will be developed. At the second public hearing, likely the first meeting in July, they will have a specific project that will be described.

She requested Mayor Doughtie open the public hearing to receive comments from citizens.

Councilman Smith asked what were some of the restrictions. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied the maximum award is \$750,000. For example, if an owner occupied home was renovated, depending on the investment into the home or amount of improvement, if they spend more than \$20,000 on one home, there is an 8 year deed restriction period where the owner has to maintain occupancy and ownership of the home. After that 8 year period expires the deed restrictions would be released. If the owner were to sell the home or make a change in ownership there could be some repayment period, but that gets into the federal requirements of spending federal funds.

Councilman Smith asked if the owner does not meet the restrictions, did that mean the City has to pay it back. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied it depends on how it is structured. Tonight they were just looking for comments, but as the application is developed they would have a better understanding of exactly

what they would be looking at and the consequences of it. She could provide him with more specific information at that time.

Councilman Smith asked if there was any restriction on the City tearing down any buildings that were burned, fire-destroyed or beyond repair. She replied the use of federal funds requires an environmental review so the State Historic Preservation Office and other agencies would be reviewing the use of the funds with the proposed project. Any comments they would have the City would be subject to compliance with that. They could do some demolition but it was hard to say specifically what they would be allowed to do, depending on what area it was located.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked if the homeowner had to put in any matching funds. Planning & Development Director Lasky replied no matching funds were required but the homeowners obligation would be the time frame established under the amount of funds that were spent, to maintain ownership of the home for a certain time frame.

Mayor Doughtie stated 8 years was a long time if the homeowner did not keep up the home after the renovation it could get into a bad state fairly quick. He asked if there were some stipulations that make it stringent on the codes for keeping it up. She replied there was nothing on that, but once the home is renovated and improved and passes inspection and prior to grant closeout, representatives from the state may come take a look, but there was not a maintenance requirement. The grant funds do not include ongoing maintenance funds. Mayor Doughtie asked if it had to be an owner-occupied home. She replied yes. He stated in the past a large amount of the funds have been spent in the mill village and as time passes by it is becoming more difficult to find home ownership because people are dying or moving and other people buy the houses. If those homes have served their purpose, they have been there over 100 years, and what if the community wants a different type of housing; he knows what the City did on the project on Henry Street. They got a sizeable amount of money and found out after they got it they had to put back something very similar. He stated what he thought Councilman Smith was saying was they need to look really close at not just getting the money but to look at what they can or cannot do. They want to make sure it is going to help the neighborhood and citizens. If the city needs a new type of housing maybe they need to look at a getting a clear piece of land to start out with. He said they needed to look real close at what they would be doing.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said as they get closer in and if they were seeing that they may get the grant, they need to have some type of education to the point of this is

what they can do and this is what they cannot do. And to get together to look at some earmark to determine where they have the greatest need.

Mayor Doughtie said for instance if a homeowner finds out about the grant, they may be so excited about getting some money, they may overlook the 8 year requirement. Planning & Development Director stated all that would be disclosed upfront. Prior to the City making application, the owners would have to complete income surveys and all of it would be explained upfront and prior to the City submitting any application to the state. Within the next four weeks she will be busy updating data from previous applications that had been submitted for different grants and trying to find the best use of the funds that would serve the area.

Mayor Doughtie declared the public hearing open and asked for comments from the public.

Mr. Terri Buffaloe asked how someone would know if they qualify for the program. Planning & Development Director replied they could contact her at the office about the grant if there was someone in particular otherwise they would be evaluating the areas of the greatest need based on the criteria for award. They have to do door to door surveys for the housing project to see how many occupants were there, what were their income sources and amounts. She did not mean to be vague but there were a lot of different moving parts because the funds could be used for purchasing property, home renovation, new water/sewer lines and public building improvements. Mr. Buffaloe asked if abandoned buildings, buildings that have been burned up and demolition could be part of that consideration. She replied they could be. Their experience in the past has been if it is part of the historic district they have some pretty severe restrictions on demolition, they would rather put the monies toward preservation, but it doesn't rule it out completely.

With no further comments, the public hearing was closed.

New Business

Consideration of NCDOT Sweeping Agreement Extension

Public Works Director Chalker stated in May of 2018, City Council authorized the Mayor and Clerk to execute a new agreement with NCDOT for the City to perform routine sweeping of various streets and bridges within the corporate limits on an as needed basis.

One year extensions have been requested and granted each year in the past and

NCDOT is again requesting that the City Council extend this agreement for an additional period of one year (through June 1, 2020). A copy of the letter from Mr. David Beaman, Staff Engineer for NCDOT, is attached.

Public Works Director Chalker stated this does include the ability of Public Works to sweep other things besides bridges. They pay the City a certain amount of money per year and every now and then they will ask Public Works to sweep something else. Since NCDOT does not have a sweeper, they use this agreement to do that as well.

Mayor Doughtie asked how much NCDOT pays the City to do this. He replied it is approximately \$10,000. Mayor Doughtie asked if NCDOT notifies them to sweep anywhere within reason, even outside the city limits. Public Works Director Chalker replied they attempt to stay within the city limits although there are some areas of NCDOT streets and highways in and around the city that are curbed and guttered. The whole benefit of this is to keep the contaminants out of the storm drainage system so it is a benefit to them. They do not go too far out of the city, but if it was somewhere close and convenient for them; they would not agree to go to another town or city.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to extend the Sweeping Agreement (Agreement No. 7951) with the NC Department of Transportation for a period of one year (through June 1, 2020) and to authorize Mayor Doughtie to execute the attached letter.

Chaloner Recreation Project Update

City Manager Scherer asked for Parks & Recreation Director Simeon to give City Council an update on the Chaloner Recreation project.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon reported the project was moving along well. At this time the playground installation should be completed tomorrow. They should pour concrete tomorrow for the splash pad installation and then they will turn the water on to test the water flow. If the water flow is good they will start going vertical with the elements and hopefully that will be completed by the end of next week. He has a meeting tomorrow morning with the engineer and Rightmyer to discuss a timeframe with them as to when they can come in and finish the project. He hopes to have that information some time tomorrow afternoon. He hopes to receive good news and the project will continue moving forward.

Councilman Smith asked what did Rightmyer have to do to complete the project.

Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied they will need to come in and redo the sport court, some grading, asphalt the parking lot and complete the walking trail. Dominion will come in after that with streetlights.

Councilman Smith stated he would like to see the park open by the 4th of July, if nothing but the splash pad and the recreation area. They keep promising the neighborhood and have been promising for over a year that they were going to get this project done by the summer of this year and it looks like it was going to be past the summer. He asked if there was any way, if they could not get the parking lot done or asphalt done, to rope or fence off that area so it would be safe for kids so they can gather on the 4th of July like they had wanted to do. He asked if the splash pad and playground were done, why can't they close the rest of the area off so the citizens can enjoy it for the 4th of July.

City Manager Scherer replied they would have a better idea in order to answer that question after the meeting tomorrow and they could provide Council a report on what they feel they can do for a 4th of July event there.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee agreed with Councilman Smith. They did promise that it would be one year and they have been a year without. He said he would like to see it open for 4th of July and asked Parks & Recreation Director Simeon to present that to Rightmyer and see what he can bring back. He said that was 30 days and he had told them they needed two weeks to cure the asphalt after it is down and two weeks for the installation of the splash pad so that was about four weeks. It would be very nice if the opening could be on that date.

Mayor Doughtie asked that Parks & Recreation Director Simeon or City Manager Scherer keep Council in the loop. City Manager Scherer said they would provide a report after the meeting tomorrow and take a look at what they can do for the 4th of July weekend.

Councilman Smith stated let's get it done and not procrastinate anymore and get it done by the 4th of July. Let's not see what we can do, let's do it. This is one project the City has been promising that neighborhood we were going to do for a year so let's quit procrastinating. He said if Parks & Recreation Director Simeon had to sit over there in his car 24 hours a day to get it done, let's do it. City Manager Scherer said please understand that our hands are tied by contractors so we are at the mercy of their schedule and their abilities. Councilman Smith said he understood but who was paying these contractors. City Manager Scherer replied the City was. Councilman Smith asked why didn't the City have some say in it then. City Manager Scherer said they did up to the contractor's capabilities to do it and de-

pending on weather and other factors. Councilman Smith asked if the City had a contract with these people. City Manager Scherer replied they did. Councilman Smith asked what did the contract say; did it have a deadline in it. Parks & Recreation Director Simeon replied he was not sure, he would have to go back and look at the contract. He asked if Finance Director Etheridge recalled a deadline. Finance Director Etheridge said that was coming from PARTF so that would be something that he and Assistant Parks & Recreation Kelly Manning would need to take a look at.

Mayor Doughtie stated he felt sure they could find that out the answer to Councilman Smith's question tomorrow. And if there is a deadline in the contract, they could try to put more pressure on them. If there is not a deadline, it is too late to put one in it. He said let's try to stay on it and get it done.

Councilman Smith said the City had put the neighborhood off long enough. When the neighborhood understood that they could not spend all that money to fix the pool then the neighborhood, Council members and Parks & Recreation Director Simeon got together and worked for a solution and promised them this was what they were going to do. When City Council makes a promise to somebody, they need to keep that promise. He said he hears about rain, storms coming and he hears about this and that, but what he was hearing about was procrastination. Let's see what we can get done and he expects to get a phone call tomorrow from City Manager Scherer about it.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer stated that he believed most people would say our Cedarwood Cemetery is very beautiful and well maintained, offering a respectful setting to visitors. However, there is a trend by some visitors that is making it harder for Public Works to maintain Cedarwood Cemetery in such a respectful and pristine condition. The practice of leaving mementos on the grave site is in violation of our ordinances for the cemetery, it sometimes creates a distraction from the general appearance and hinders the maintenance crew in their moving and trimming of the grounds. We understand family members want to honor their loved ones but this practice cannot continue. He asked that families please cease putting these items on grave sites and consider removing the ones that are there now. At some time in the future, we will be forced to remove them for storage if they are not collected before then by the families. He attached some pictures of this in his report.

He announced the Eastern Carolina Christian College has been approved for a \$45,000 art project grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to be installed at Martin Luther King Jr. Park. This is the same project that was presented at an earlier meeting. The grant will be awarded in July and the group has 12 months to complete the project. The art project is intended to help share stories of diversity, equality, inclusion and equity as they relate to the people and places of North Carolina. UNC TV will be putting together a documentary on all 10 of the approved art project grants approved by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

He reported the application period for the police chief position ends this Friday. As part of the selection process, candidates will go through an assessment center method conducted by a firm from Raleigh. This process directly verifies critical skills, such as conflict resolution, project planning, meeting or group facilitation, leadership style, problem solving, writing, and presentation skills. The company does this by designing exercises that simulate the responsibilities of the position, such as making board presentations, developing written project plans, facilitating staff meetings, conducting performance-based role plays, and facilitating community meetings to directly observe the skills of candidates. I anticipate this step in the hiring process should take place during the last two weeks of June. We should be able to make a hiring decision shortly thereafter.

He said the Police Department will begin planning this week for an active shooter drill later this summer at Belmont Elementary School.

City Manager Scherer announced the Jo Story Senior Center will be having a social on Thursday at 3:00 p.m. John is coordinating another Regional Baseball Tournament July 15-21st at Ledgerwood Field. The only change thus far is they will be using the other two fields rather than the small fields in the back, like the first tournament did. They have solidified the Theatre for the dinner and opening ceremony. Lori Medlin will have a hospitality tent there. The new batting cages are up. Steve Owens will be coming in for sodding and he will water for a week and then Parks & Recreation will take over with watering after that. The TJ Davis outdoor pool will open at 1:00 p.m. on June 8th. Since children are out of school, the Parks & Recreation Department is busy with summer camps, swim team and other activities.

He reported Planning & Development Director Lasky has signed up for a HUD Grant application webinar on lead based paint this Thursday. She also plans to attend a Census class in Wilson next Thursday put on by the Council of Government. Badcock Furniture will locate in the old Staples building and received their Certificate of Occupancy yesterday. The owner of the car wash on 10th Street sub-

mitted plans to renovate the car wash which was approved. The Rural Health office construction in front of the hospital is moving along slowly. The new building on Premier Blvd. is moving along. One contractor is doing the shell building and individual tenants have other contractors for up fit. Dollar General – the interior is almost complete but they have a lot of site work to be done.

He stated as we near the end of the budget year, he has asked all departments to watch open purchase orders and minimize spending – if it can wait until July 1st, please wait.

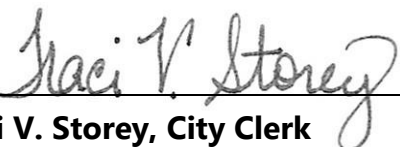
City Manager Scherer announced this Thursday is the 75th Anniversary of D Day landings in northern France. This event is one of the most important events in WWII and is only celebrated every 5 years and will probably be the last one the WWII veterans will attend as all are in their 90's now. His uncle is 98 and landed at Omaha Beach on D Day. He hoped everyone will take a moment Thursday to pause briefly to thank those veterans who made the landing and for the over 9,300 servicemen who remain there after giving their last full measure of devotion.

Councilman Smith asked that it be noted for the record that the Roanoke Rapids Youth Baseball Association is paying for the batting cage facility. No City funds are being used for it.

Other Business

Mayor Doughtie asked Parks & Recreation Director Simeon what was the cost for the children to go to the TJ Davis pool. He replied \$1.00 for residents and \$2.00 for non-residents.

There being no further business, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.



Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: June 18, 2019