Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall.

Present: Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor
Sandra W. Bryant, Mayor Pro Tem

W. Keith Bell)
Andy Jackson)
Rex Stainback)
Curtis Strickland)

Council Members

Kelly Traynham, City Manager
Geoffrey Davis, City Attorney
Traci Storey, City Clerk
Lawrence Wiggins, Police Chief
Krista Rourk, Acting Deputy Finance Director
Christina Caudle, Human Resources Director
Kelly Daughtry, Parks & Recreation Director
Kristyn Anderson, Planning & Development Director
Doug Love, Assistant Public Works Director
Richard Cook, Fire Chief
Ashley Thomas, Main Street Director

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Doughtie read a poem by Edgar Guest, *Sermons We See*. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Adoption of Business Agenda

Mayor Doughtie asked Council members if there were any known conflicts of interest with respect to the matters before them this evening and called for a motion.

Motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Jackson, and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda as presented.

Public Comment (Scheduled)

Ephraim Brodsky

Mr. Brodsky stated in their packet they will find the slide deck that he prepared on the analysis of the mayor's "apology." He handed out the entirety of the mayor's prepared statement as transcribed by the internet from a month ago. He asked them to read along as he reads his prepared speech. He stated his name and address and said he was here today to once again call for Mayor Emery Doughtie's resignation using an argument framed by the mayor himself. In an article published by the *Daily Herald* on August 18th, 2013, Mayor Emery Doughtie offered a clear standard for local leadership. This is what he said, "Whether you are the mayor of a big town or a small town, you have to realize the impact you can have, so you need to make sure you conduct yourself appropriately and don't do anything to embarrass the city." Thirteen years later, Roanoke Rapids has made national headlines, not for progress, industry, or community achievement, but for a public display of bigotry emanating directly from the mayor's household. Yvonne Doughtie publicly blamed black residents for her neighborhood's decline and problems at Roanoke Rapids High School. A look into her public profile showed that she also had a long-documented history of spreading anti-Muslim rhetoric online, all while identifying herself as the mayor's wife in her about section. In her mind, her job was to be the mayor's wife.

He continued to say after a week of public silence, the mayor walked into this meeting hall and delivered a prepared statement, the one he had provided for them. That statement was not leadership. It was not genuine remorse. It was an evasion of accountability, an insult to the intelligence of our citizens, and a total collapse of public trust. Let's consider what was actually said. First, the mayor opened by minimizing overt racism as mere words targeted to the African American sector, immediately pivoting to a domestic resume detailing past employers and caretaking duties. Racism is not an administrative miscommunication, Mayor Doughtie, nor is it erased by decades of residency. Second, the mayor framed the issue through the passive lens of hurt feelings. These words, when they were read, were very hurtful to the readers. This shifts the injury from the vile prejudice of the speaker to the reaction of the audience. He apologized for her creating without once naming, confronting, or explicitly denouncing the white supremacy, anti-black bigotry, and Islamophobia published under his name in office. True accountability requires naming the harm directly. Third, the mayor resorted to the oldest rhetorical deflection available, invoking token associations. He cited three decades of knowing minority businessmen, pastors, and community leaders, as if knowing people of color insulates a leader from responsibility. Worse, his singular concrete example from 30 years of public service and nearly 70 years on this planet involved one black city employee whose workplace issue ended with that employee leaving the city. The mayor

concluded that simply speaking to a city manager about an employee proves that he doesn't base decisions based on skin color. Fulfilling the baseline requirements of municipal governance is not proof of anti-racism, nor is it a shield against accountability. Public office is a privilege rooted entirely in trust. When an elected leader's home becomes a platform to vilify black students, denigrate black families, and demean Muslim residents, that trust is shattered. The leader cannot maintain moral authority while offering tepid excuses, demanding forgiveness, and concluding with a defiant decree: “My plan is to continue to serve the city for the continuation of my term.” Mayor Doughtie set the standard himself in 2013. Do not embarrass the city. Today, he fails to recognize the magnitude of the embarrassment and harm that his household has inflicted on Roanoke Rapids. Because Mayor Doughtie refuses to take true accountability, because his statement offered deflection instead of leadership, and because the public trust is broken beyond repair, he can no longer credibly lead his community for the dignity, unity, and future of Roanoke Rapids. Mayor Emery Doughtie must step down and tender his resignation immediately. He should have done it weeks ago.

Mr. Brodsky said since he had some time left, he’d like to say to his fan club, he’s been a registered Republican since 1997. First president he voted for was George W. Bush, a man he still respects to this day, but the Republican party now is not the Republican party then. Trump's not a Republican. He was a Democrat the majority of his life, he shifted to Republicanism because he thought he could control the party. And now he runs it like a white nationalist. That's not him, so he doesn’t identify with any party anymore. He would love to have conversations. He invites your fan club to reach out to him.

Mr. Jim Garrett interrupted and asked if Mr. Brodsky was addressing him. Mr. Brodsky replied absolutely he was.

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Brodsky to sit down.

Jerry Taylor

Mr. Taylor distributed copies of photos to City Council (On file in Clerk’s Office). He stated he has a furniture store at 240 Roanoke Avenue. He’s been running it for 27 years. Four years ago, there was a fire in the building next door. He has been fighting for four years trying to get something done with his building. He has painted all around every wall except for the one inside where he can't get to. He approached Mrs. Fitts and asked them about doing something or cleaning up the damage and getting it where they can get in there and get a contractor in there to fix the wall. He’s not asking her to fix it. He’ll fix it, but he has got to get in there to fix it. Nobody seems to want to help him. The only thing left to do is take her to court. He thought he'd come here before resorting to that.

Mayor Doughtie asked him if he had talked to the code enforcement or planning director?

Mr. Taylor replied he has talked with the Fire Marshall, the Planning Director, Brian Duhadaway and the other building inspector; he's talked to everybody. He talked to everybody that came down to the People's Theater when the roof collapsed. He even took a couple of them inside the building and showed them how his wall inside was deteriorating.

Mayor Doughtie stated this is not generally a question-and-answer type thing. People come and present information. He suggested Mr. Taylor contact code enforcement and try to get some conversation back going again. He said it could be civil issue that the city wouldn't have anything to do with it. If he continued the conversation and continued to work on it, he feels like maybe he could get something done.

Mr. Taylor said he has sure talked to everybody that's got anything to do with code enforcement and the building inspector, and nobody has gotten back to him with any answers.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Joey Davis

Mr. Davis stated he thinks the best thing they've had so far tonight is that Pledge of Allegiance to the flag guard and country. He saw something last week on TV. A man was at a convention telling everybody to raise their right hand, pledge to him, and if you didn't vote, you're going to hell. He remembered something like that back in history about 85-90 years ago, another man from another country. People have fought and died for freedom. He asked if somebody after this meeting was over can tell him what the difference is between AI and fake news because AI is short for AI BS. They have folks that get up there on conversation and put it up there and when you comment then they block you and they take you down. It's sad when they take AI BS and put biblical verses in there with it.

He said lastly, this is an anniversary for him, 52 years ago this month he had a problem. There was a doctor in town, Dr. Shankar. He told him he had to have one of his kidneys removed. He told the doctor he was only 19 and needed to get another opinion. He went to Rocky Mount and there was a Dr. Frohbose. Dr. Frohbose said he could save his kidney. He was there for two weeks, on the operating table for 12 hours and had to be turned every 30 minutes. He was still kicking, knock on wood.

When he tells this to people, they say, "I never thought about it like that." Not once did he ask was the blood he got from a black man or white man, brown, red or yellow.

Jim Garrett

Mr. Garrett said he'd like to emphasize how much control of this city they have lost. He has been to three meetings and has been addressed by the speakers two times at two meetings. He's sat right there, and the speakers do not address them. They think he is more important than they are. So, they have lost control of the city. Today he had to go to Charlotte Street and console a person where a person on narcotics had entered their house. He told them to call the police, and they did not want to call the police. He asked them why and they said they were afraid of retaliation. There is a drug house over by Guardian Care. The police department knows about it, the planning department knows about it. He's requested public documents to be presented to him about how many times the police department has gone there. They have ignored it. He's asked for information about how the city has coordinated a task force against this property that has been raided multiple times for drugs and he's gotten no response except his complaints. He said they were responsible for protecting this city. It's not the police department. It's your job to provide the police department and protect this city and they are not doing a very good job about it. They have more burned down houses; it's an anomaly how many houses are burning down in this city. When he started pointing out all the problems, then miraculously houses started getting boarded up. He wants to know why they didn't initiate that plan. Why hasn't the city manager created a real working task force? He'll tell them why. They have the most inexperienced administrative leaders that this city has ever had. Everybody here is under 40 years old. They don't have leadership like they need.

Desiree Thomas

Ms. Thomas stated the first thing she would like to say would kind of be directed at the mayor. She wanted to just let him know they still see his wife on social media. She may not write long paragraphs, but they still see her on social media. Let that be known. It is on those same kinds of posts from the previous situation; she's still there. Although the stage has been set for the clowns to dance and somehow they're acting like they had nothing to do with the circus. She was not going to waste her 3 minutes on Facebook drama because the real problems are still here. She understands that Lowe's donated the wood per online it says for the abandoned homes. That's wonderful but imagine the partnerships if they could get them to donate material to help struggling homeowners maintain their home they're actually living in, not just invested when the home has already failed. It's nice new wood but it didn't serve any purpose when those same pieces of wood could possibly have helped somebody who actually lives in a home. There's plenty of homes that are not vacant that she feels like some way, somehow there could be some help. She asked where's the visible

support for their local businesses. To be honest, she had been here her whole life and until they had the police meeting, she would never have known what the mayor even looked like. She just didn't know who he was. They haven't seen him and don't know him. They have locals right here in the city that are trying to make it better, yet they can't even get leadership to show up. The mayor came to the police meeting and was gone before the end. A lot of the local companies, smaller companies, people who have thought enough of their own selves and their business to actually build here in Roanoke Rapids. She's reached out to a few places, some responded, some didn't, and asked. In the bigger cities, they see the mayor at least say thank you for investing in the city. Recently they've got Elevation Dance Company, Little Mama's Kitchen, Hands for Hearts for Helpers, Naomi's Pudding, We Are One, Davis Auto, Redd's Bar and Grill, Just for Kids, Maui and Mane, Tales and Tangle. None of them advised that the mayor or anybody from City Council has stopped by. When people invest in their cities, at least they could do is say thank you; whether it's successful or not. That's not something that they do in this city. The ribbon cuttings and the grand openings, they just don't see them. When it comes to the working class, because people that open businesses, most of them are working class. The scripture also tells them because they like to refer to scriptures, the last shall be first and the first shall be last. Some of the people in this city have felt last for a long time. Many of them have had enough hard times. Whether they're black, white, purple, yellow, or green, November is coming. She strongly advised them to understand if they're working with them as a community, no matter what color they are, they'll see it. And if they're working against them, they'll be voting against them.

Approval of City Council Minutes

Motion was made by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to approve the September 1, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting minutes as drafted.

Committee Appointments

Recreation Advisory Committee

City Clerk Storey stated the terms for Ed Liverman and Dom Fenner on the Recreation Advisory Committee expired September 9, 2026. Both have expressed in continuing to serve. Also, a vacancy was created due to Joey Elias moving outside of the city limits. She has also received two applications from Kendall Dixon and David Pericek who are interested in serving on the Recreation Advisory Committee; both are eligible.

She reported City Council took a ballot vote earlier and Ed Liverman, Kendall Dixon and David Pericak were the top 3 vote getters. She asked the City Council to consider

a motion to waive the City Policy for Ed Liverman and reappoint Mr. Liverman and appoint Kendall Dixon and David Pericak to the Recreation Advisory Committee.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Bryant, seconded by Councilman Bell and unanimously carried to waive the City Policy for Ed Liverman and reappoint Mr. Liverman; and to appoint Kendall Dixon and David Pericak to the Recreation Advisory Committee.

New Business

Subdivision Plat – The Villages at Cross Creek, Phase One

Planning and Development Director Anderson presented a final subdivision plat for The Villages at Cross Creek, Phase Two, Section 1 for City Council's consideration of approval.

Staff have reviewed the final plat for compliance with the applicable subdivision provisions of the City's Land Use Ordinance. There are some remaining items identified on the site review punch list, and the property owner has provided a performance bond to ensure completion of those outstanding improvements. Based upon the plat review and the security provided for the remaining punch-list items, staff recommend City Council approve the final subdivision plat for The Villages of Cross Creek, Phase Two, Section 1. She noted formal acceptance of the subdivision streets will be presented to City Council separately at a later meeting by way of resolution. Staff will continue to monitor completion of the remaining punch-list items and the obligations secured by the performance bond.

Motion was made by Councilman Strickland, seconded by Councilman Stainback and unanimously carried to approve the subdivision plat for The Villages at Cross Creek, Phase One.

Budget Ordinance (Prior Year Deferred Revenues)

Acting Deputy Finance Director Rourk stated at the close of the fiscal year, they typically end up with deferred revenue in various lines that have not been adopted when the new fiscal year budget was adopted. This is because they are still receiving money and spending those funds, so they have to wait until the close of June 30, 2026, in order to figure out the exact amount to carry forward. These accounts are a mix of donations, grants and special program revenue that total $108,796.15. She presented the following ordinance for their consideration:

Ordinance No. 2026.43
CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS
BUDGET AMENDMENT

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS:

SECTION 1. The following additional amounts are hereby appropriated for the operation of City Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE A – PROJECT FUND REVENUES

Fund Balance – Prior Year Deferred Revenues
Project Revenues- General Fund

100-35506-000-300001	K-9 Donations Rev	$1,000.00
100-35506-000-000000	Donations-PD Special Projects Rev	$5,013.57
100-35505-000-000000	Donations-Friends of Library Rev	$815.00
100-35500-000-000000	Donations-Fire Department Rev	$12,927.83
100-36013-000-000000	Fire Recovery Program Rev	$17,162.69
100-34003-000-000000	Safe Kids Grant Rev	$2,572.83
100-34202-000-000000	SHIIP Grant Rev	$31,527.25
100-32069-699-699015	Special Programs-Summer Camps Rev	$3,285.00
100-32003-699-000000	Special Programs-Concessions Rev	$2,041.98
100-32044-699-000000	Special Programs-Athletic Sponsorship Rev	$5,250.00
100-32069-699-000000	Special Programs Rev	$27,200.00
FUND PROJECT TOTAL		**$108,796.15**

SECTION 2. The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE B – PROJECT FUND EXPENDITURES

Funding to General Fund – Prior Year Deferred Revenues
Project Expenditures – General Fund

100-54029-300-300001	K-9 Donations Exp	$1,000.00
100-54029-300-000000	Donations-PD Special Projects Exp	$5,013.57
100-54068-660-000000	Donations-Friends of Library Exp	$815.00
100-42052-400-000000	Donations-Fire Department Exp	$12,927.83
100-54047-400-000000	Fire Recovery Program Exp	$17,162.69
100-42050-300-000000	Safe Kids Grant Exp	$2,572.83
100-42060-630-000000	SHIIP Grant Exp	$31,527.25
100-54059-699-699016	Special Programs-Summer Camps Exp	$3,285.00
100-50000-699-000000	Special Programs-Supplies and Expense	$2,041.98
100-42200-699-000000	Special Programs-Athletic Sponsorship Exp	$5,250.00
100-54059-699-000000	Special Programs Exp	$27,200.00
FUND PROJECT TOTAL		**$108,796.15**

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

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Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Motion was made by Councilman Stainback, seconded by Councilman Strickland and unanimously carried to adopt Ordinance No. 2026.43 in the amount of $108,796.15 to be carried over into fiscal year 2026-2027.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Traynham presented and reviewed the following report:

Community

- Twilight Festival, Friday evening, September 18th at Centennial Park
- The Halifax County Board of Commissioners will hold its September 21 meeting at 5:30 PM in the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall, Roanoke Rapids
- Halifax County Intergovernmental Association (HCIA) meets September 23rd, hosted by Town of Halifax, 6:00 PM
- NCDOT Fall Litter Sweep, September 12-26

Main Street

- September's First Friday (rescheduled) occurred on Friday, September 11 at 1026 Roanoke Ave. Despite the rain, approximately 80 individuals attended and enjoyed samples from Joe's To Go and Blend of Flavors. October's First Friday at 1026 Roanoke Ave is planned for October 2nd after 5:00 PM. Restaurant vendors will include Crickets, Second Street Lunch, and Naomi's Pudding.
- HCC Small Business Center is hosting a "Create Your State & Experience Economy Marketing Workshop" on Saturday, 9/26 from 10:00 – 3:00, fee: No Cost!
- Considering options for the Downtown Rural Economic Development Grant opportunity

Police Department

- Police Club Cornhole Tournament – 9/19
- Coffee with a Cop at Hardee's on Julian R. Allsbrook Hwy – 9/24 8:00-9:30 AM
- Community Meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 19 from 6:30 – 8:00 at the First Pentecostal Holiness Church at Becker and Clearfield Drive.

Planning & Development

- Home2Suites permits were issued following approval by NCDOI
- Many thanks to Lowe's for the donation of materials for boarding houses

Parks & Recreation

- Met with RRGSD leadership on 9/10 to discuss desired updates to the Facility Joint Use Agreement.

- The Roanoke Canal 5k Run & Walk to be held on Saturday, September 19. The race will start/end at Dominion Day Use Park (end of Oakwood Ave). Participant check-in begins at 8:00 and the race will start at 10:00 AM.

Senior Center

- Grief Support with Nancy Hux at 2:00 PM on 9/17
- Medicare Appointments, 9/21
- ECU Health Screens, 9/29
- *Aging Expo at Kirkwood Adams Civic Center, October 1st*

Fire

- September is Lymphoma Awareness Month and the department will maintain the tradition of wearing **slime green** to increase awareness of firefighter cancer risks
- Led the September 11th Remembrance Ceremony on 9/11 at Centennial Park
- Assisting efforts to secure vacant commercial structures for life safety purposes
- Reviewing the ISO Survey with the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) on 9/28

Public Works

- Preparing vehicles and equipment for loose leaf collection, begins November 1
- Obtained resources from NCDOT for the Fall Cleanup occurring now until 9/26
- Identified need for plotting new cemetery lots due to limited availability
- The Repair Plan for the Dixie Street Bridge is altered after being reviewed by three contractors. The alternative approach includes replacement of the superstructure and the addition of an 8th joist, which will help boost the weight limit to 10 tons. This alternative is recommended as the most economical and beneficial method, extending the life of the bridge for another 20-25 years. The lump sum quote is $85,000 from a bridge contractor in Wilmington. The estimated construction duration is 1 to 2 weeks. *To proceed with this project, the City Council will need to consider and approve a Budget Amendment to fund the repair estimate. This will be an agenda item next month (October 6 or 20).*

Administration/HR/Finance

- Flu Shot Clinic is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21 in Human Resources

City Council

- Next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 6 at 5:30 PM

Councilman Bell extended appreciation from the City Council for City staff across all departments. They do a very hard job but they do the most with what they have. He also wanted to send an "attaboy" to the EMS, Police Department and Fire Department for responding to a couple of incidents, most recently where an individual had basically stopped breathing and some of the equipment malfunctioned. They used manual CPR to revive that individual. That's what it's all about when people save lives, they can't take that for granted because the most precious thing we have is people.

Councilman Strickland thanked Boy Scout Troop 144 for their efforts cleaning up litter around the city. He stated there may have been others involved and it is very much appreciated.

Mayor Pro Tem Bryant said City Council had decided they also wanted to do some type of cleanup effort. They are looking to do a Saturday in October. The date has not been set yet, but they are planning to start with Emry Park. The community is invited to join in and help. Notification of the date will be provided through the media.

Finance Director's Report

Acting Deputy Finance Director Rourk reported for the month of August 2026, General Fund year-to-date receipts totaled $366,256 and year-to-date expenditures totaled $3,969,010.00. As a result, year-to-date expenditures exceeded revenues by $3,602,754.00. She stated this is very typical of the first couple of months of the fiscal year. Last year they received their first receipt of property tax collections on September 22nd. So hopefully within the next week they will be seeing a nice check come through and this report can look a lot different next month.

She stated in last month's report she told them they had received all of the revenues, completed all of their expenses for fiscal year 2026, and they did not have to use any fund balance. She provided an updated report for the month of June in their Council packets. She noted a couple of highlights for that year end.

- The City recognized a total revenue shortfall of about $285,000. There is about eight revenue lines where they really outperformed what they expected to and are grateful for that because if it had not been for outperforming in those areas that shortfall would have been a little bit higher.

- They recognized expenditure savings of approximately $1.8 million. That is primarily attributed to lapsed salaries which equated to about $820,000 of that money and then also a combination of our department heads careful management of their operating expenses. Departments did a really good job last year and an awesome job in the past of doing what they can with very little, so they appreciate those efforts on their behalf.

- As a result, the City's overall favorable position for fiscal year end 2026 means that they will not use any of the $1.28 million that was appropriated in fund balance, and they will also recognize a fund balance increase of $234,889.

She stated as a side note that is not an annual audit. That is just a budget snapshot from where they ended up. They will start diving into the heavy load of the annual audit on October 1st when they start uploading things into our system.

Mayor Doughtie said they have a lot of cones around town. He was not talking about building downtown, but there are culverts, sunk down sidewalks and stuff like that. He was told there was not any money in the budget to do that. This early in the year, he would think there would be money for those small items like that.

Acting Deputy Finance Director Rourk said they did not include any street resurfacing money in the budget. There is some asphalt paving money that's included in the FY27 budget.

Mayor Doughtie said he was not really talking about resurfacing. He was talking about where there is concrete, drainage and a lot of cones are out.

Acting Deputy Finance Director Rourk asked what streets they were on. Mayor Doughtie said he did not know right off the top of his head. She said if he could get those areas to them, the Public Works Department could see what they need to do.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Bell, seconded by Councilman Stainback, and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Traci V. Storey

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: October 6, 2026