

Minutes of the Roanoke Rapids City Council

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on **Tuesday, February 6, 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, Council Member
Suetta S. Scarbrough)
Wayne Smith)

Council Members

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

Absent: Traci Storey, City Clerk

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, motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for February 6, 2018 as presented.

Special Recognitions

Police Department Recognitions

Police Chief Hasty recognized Officer Daniel Hundley for achieving his Advanced Criminal Justice Law Enforcement Certificate from the State of North Carolina. To obtain this certification a lot of hours and training are involved. Chief Hasty said that he was very proud of Officer Hundley for this achievement.

Police Chief Hasty also recognized Captain Bobby Martin of the Criminal Investigation Division with a Certificate of Merit for going Above and Beyond the Call of Duty while serving the citizens of Roanoke Rapids. While at the Chief's Conference in Cherokee, Chief Hasty was approached by Mr. Hinnant who is the Deputy Director of the Governor's Crime Commission. Mr. Hinnant said that one of his officers was staying at a hotel in our area and had become very sick. He asked if Chief Hasty could send someone by to check on his sick employee. Chief Hasty called Captain Bobby Martin and asked if he would go by and check on Mr. Plyler. Captain Martin went by the hotel, checked on him, went to get him meds and took him some chicken noodle soup to keep him hydrated. Chief Hasty said that going above and beyond to a visitor to our City was a positive impact on Mr. Plyler and on behalf of our police department and community. Hasty thanked Captain Martin for all that he did for Mr. Plyler and presented Martin with a Certificate of Merit.

Mayor Doughtie asked Captain Martin if he would like to make any comments. Captain Martin said that he didn't do anything that Mr. Plyler would not have done for one of our officers. Martin said that everything he does is for the City of Roanoke Rapids and because our Chief here who instills in us to look out for the people first and ourselves last. Martin said he did not feel like he deserved this recognition because he was just doing what he was supposed to do, but he was very grateful for it. And he thanked the City Council and Chief Hasty for this certificate.

Mayor Doughtie said that we are very, very fortunate to have the people that we have that work for our city. I am talking about police, fire, public works, parks & recreation, administration and all city departments. We have some very good people working for us. Mayor Doughtie said thank you very much for what you do to make yourself stand above.

Public Comment (Scheduled)

Elle and Leah Brewer

Mrs. Brewer said she and Elle (pitbull) were there to speak on behalf of their partnership with the Roanoke Rapids Police Department. Mrs. Brewer said that Elle told her she was very proud to be a Police Department Volunteer. Elle has devoted her life to serving, asking nothing in return. She surely enjoys entertaining everyone at the Police Department. Elle has done silly zoomies down the hallway, sitting up pretty in Chief Hasty's office for a treat and barking to the tune of BAD BOYS. Elle has been presented with a police patch and a personalized key card that she proudly displays. Elle has been visiting the Roanoke Rapids Police Department for over 8 years. Mrs. Brewer said she was very thankful for the RRPD taking a chance on a pitbull. This partnership has changed lives and changed perceptions of pitbulls by sharing Elle's extraordinary story. It has inspired people around the world. Mrs. Brewer shared her sincerest thank you to Chief Hasty, Deputy Chief Jackson, Ozzie Morgan (Retired Officer – not present), Tina May, Animal Control Officer Pete Wilson and the entire Roanoke Rapids Police Department with a large frame of Elle volunteering in her many aspects in the police department. Let Elle's legacy show that friendship is forever through the power of love.

Chief Hasty said he wanted to thank Leah and our Animal Control Officer, Pete Wilson to find an alternative to the animal owner fines. Through this partnership with the RRPD and Leah & Elle, a Community Responsible Pet Ownership Class goes to help people out who cannot pay the fees that are imposed upon them. By attending this class their first fines will be waived and hopefully we will not get any more calls to their residence for animal control issues. Chief Hasty thanked Elle & Leah for coming to assist with those classes and for her many different programs.

Deputy Chief Andy Jackson thanked Leah & Elle for showing in their first therapy session in the department that not every dog you see, especially a pitbull, is not a bad dog. He also said that responsible owners raise dogs the way they should be will get a good dog. He also said that Elle is a sweetheart.

Mayor Doughtie thanked Mr. & Mrs. Brewer along with Elle for coming. He said for Mrs. Brewer to thank Elle in dog talk for all that she does.

Public Comment (Unscheduled)

Jerry McDaniel

Mr. McDaniel said that time flies because last year on February 10th was in someone's office being threatened with extortion by the Capital Police. The Mayor was calling that person saying their stocks were on fire, Mr. McDaniel was trying to hear what stocks they were. He did not understand why he was being threatened with extortion unless it was a letter he read on August 2016. He tried to get someone to start a conversation with the paper mill about testing the river. Not attacking the paper mill, very happy for the new people there. Mr. McDaniel said he got paid to dump coal ash in the river for a decade. He's not saying the river is still dangerous, he would just like it to be tested to find out. The person he asked to intervene screwed the conversation all up and poisoned the topic. That person had their own baggage and their own agenda. Mr. McDaniel said that he himself has gotten someone from NCDENR to come down and look at the river. The person said that everything looked fine to them, they wanted to know where the bodies were and what was the smoking gun. Mr. McDaniel said that the bodies were those of rockfish and that he did not see any human bodies. He said the smoking gun might be in the bottom of the river, where everyone always throws the smoking gun. He wants the people downstream to know that this happened to them. Mr. McDaniel talked about someone wanted to put in something near Lowe's Distribution about Vista Green, but then said they were again Vista Green. Mr. McDaniel said that he had been threatened with the Capital Police, with self-incrimination, if he didn't stop talking about it. An ex-employee of the Associated Press called Mr. McDaniel and said the NCDENR employee no longer works there anymore, probably because of something he put in writing but Mr. McDaniel was not sure. He said the guy should not have been so stupid to put anything in writing. Mr. McDaniel said he had gotten the runaround and stalled so long that House Bill 467 passed. This person has added to the extortion charge and no kidnapping involved because this person was too much of a mama's boy.

Tim Hinnant

Mr. Tim Hinnant, the Deputy Director of the Governor's Crime Commission came to address the City Council about an incident that occurred while he was at the Chief's Conference in Cherokee, NC. This is the event that took place that involved Captain Bobby Martin. Within 10 minutes of Mr. Hinnant asking Chief Hasty to have someone check on Mr. Plyler, Captain Bobby Martin was already at Mr. Plyler's hotel room. Upon arriving there Captain Martin said that Mr. Plyler was so ill he should have probably already have gone to the emergency room.

Captain Martin spoke with Mr. Hinnant several times throughout the day. Mr. Plyler is a retired police chief and his brother is a retire police chief. Captain Martin talked with his brother several time to let the brother know how he was doing and what was going on. It's not just about the fact that he checked on Mr. Plyler, got him meds or took him food. Captain Martin took the time to keep the employer, Chief Hasty and the family aware of Mr. Plyler's condition. Mr. Hinnant said that he came from Raleigh tonight just to make the council aware of the effort that had been put forth by Chief Hasty and especially Captain Martin and to personally thank them both.

Approval of Council Minutes

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to approve the January 16, 2018 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as written.

New Business

Presentation and Acceptance of FY 2016-2017 Audit Report

Mr. Greg Redman, CPA presented City Council with a summary of the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Audit Report. Mr. Redman highlighted a few different pages in the 83 page report.

Page 1: Independent Auditors Report

Page 2: Summarizes are in accordance with general statues. Summarizes the whole audit, including grants and internal control. It is an unmodified opinion. No findings to report.

Page 14: Balance sheet shows General Fund Cash in Bank was \$4,000,092. Undesignated fund balance of \$3.7 million as of June 30th.

Page 16: Shows Capital Project Funds

- General Fund - Revenue \$14.9 million
- Total Expenditures - \$18.1 million

Shows a decrease in Fund Balance of \$2.5 million. The difference in this year and last year (one time fee) this includes the Refinance of the Revenue Bonds almost \$2.0 million which was reserved for this purpose. Unassigned fund balance increased due to the reserved funds.

Page 44: LGC and new GASBY must be reported. LGC wants us to be aware money scheduled to spend in the future and booked as liabilities.

- Pension for Local Law Enforcement - \$1,328,000 (current and future pay out)
- Pension for all other employees - \$2.2 million
- Other (Healthcare) benefits for retirees - \$1.3 million

Page 53-60: Details by department - a breakdown by department of revenues and expenses. This is to check if there was overspending of the budget. If there was overspending in the budget, it would show as a finding. None of the categories in any department overspent their budget. That is to be commended.

Page 74: Property Taxes

- Statewide collection rate average is 98% used to be 97%.
- City tax collection rate is 98.9% (Taxes have not been raised).
- Everyone involved to be commended for this rate.

Page 75: Letters summarize budget and grants – Unmodified Opinion

Mr. Redman said that there were no issues found in the audit. Mr. Redman also said that he knew Council just received the audit reports but if they had any questions or concerns to contact either himself or Finance Director Leigh Etheridge.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to accept the FY 2016-2017 Audit Report.

Consideration of Hwy 158 Master Plan Funding

Parks & Recreation Director John Simeon discussed funding for the Hwy 158 Master Plan.

The City will be applying for two grants to assist in funding the Chaloner Recreation Center part of the 158 Master Plan. They will apply for \$150,000 from the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation (Deadline is February 13th) and \$200,000 from the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund (Deadline is May 1st).

Director Simeon stated that by committing to fund \$50,000 toward the project it will show that the City is supporting the grants. With the \$50,000, this will allow them to seek \$400,000 towards this project.

Director Simeon said that he is not asking for the funding at this time just a verbal commitment for \$50,000 from the City.

Councilman Smith asked if this \$50,000 would be in next year's budget. City Manager Scherer stated that it would be included in the upcoming year's budget.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve a verbal commitment of \$50,000 toward the project funding.

Consideration of \$55,000 Appropriation for Equipment (Public Works)

Public Works Director, Larry Chalker stated that currently they have three (3) wheel loaders. Out of the three, only one is currently in operation – it is used in the limb yard. It is a Case W14B manufactured in 1989. It is not road worthy, therefore, it is limited to use in the limb yard only. Another Case W14C manufactured in 1990 is nonoperational due to faulty brakes and parts are no longer available. The third machine is a Volvo L50C manufactured in 1997. This machine has had the engine rebuilt in the last two years and currently has a catastrophic hydraulic system failure – no longer usable without yet another major repair.

Director Chalker stated the requested budget amendment would cover the purchase of a used Caterpillar IT28G 2005 model wheel loader from M.J. Price Construction. The department has been renting this machine for several months and it has operated fine. While there have been a few issues, the vendor has spent about \$3,000 to bring this machine up to good but used condition. The machine is on-site so it will go into permanent service immediately if funds are approved.

Director Chalker requested that council consider a motion to adopt a budget amendment of \$55,000 (Ordinance No. 2018.02) to purchase equipment for the Public Works Department.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilwoman Cowan and unanimously carried to adopt the following budget amendment of \$55,000 (Ordinance 2018.02) to purchase equipment for the Public Works Department:

2018.02

**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, 2017 and ending June 30, 2018, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE A – GENERAL FUND (OPERATING)

General Fund – Public Works Equipment	\$ 55,000
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GENERAL FUND OPERATING TOTAL	\$ 55,000
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SECTION 2. The following additional revenues and reductions in appropriations are available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2018, in order to meet the foregoing appropriations, according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE B – GENERAL FUND (FUND BALANCE)

Fund Balance – To fund budget for Public Works Equipment	\$ 55,000
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Replacement - Front End Loader

GENERAL FUND OPERATING TOTAL	\$ 55,000
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SECTION 3. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

Adopted this 6th day of February, 2018.

Consideration of Resolution No. 2018.01 Supporting NC DOT Improvements at US 158 at I-95

Public Works Director, Larry Chalker presented Resolution No. 2018-01 supporting the North Carolina Department of Transportation improvement project to construct back to back left turn lanes along US 158 between the I-95 ramp termini, including sidewalks for an estimated \$350,000.

NC DOT has reserved money for this particular project. This would be two left turn lanes from Hwy 158 to I-95 ramp. This would alleviate congestion in this area for interstate bound traffic.

Director Chalker request that council consider a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2018.01 Supporting NC Department of Transportation and Improvements at US 158 at Interstate 95.

Motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to adopt the following Resolution No. 2018.01 Supporting NC Department of Transportation and Improvements at US 158 at Interstate 95:

RESOLUTION NO. 2018.01

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND IMPROVEMENTS AT US 158 AT INTERSTATE 95**

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation promotes the safety and wellbeing of the traveling public for motorists across the State through new roadways, improvements to existing roadways and continual roadway maintenance; and

WHEREAS, the Roanoke Rapids City Council considers the safety of the motoring public along streets and roadways within the city to be of the utmost importance; and

WHEREAS, The Appropriations Act of 2017 Senate Bill 257 established funding for projects considered "High Impact and Low Cost" could be pursued for intersection improvements, minor widening and operational improvement projects; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation, Highway Division 4 seeks to submit the intersection of US 158 at I-95 to be considered for the aforementioned funding with support of these improvements from the City; and

WHEREAS, the following improvements would be considered under this proposed project; construction of back to back left turn lanes along US 158 between I-95 ramp termini, including sidewalks for an estimated \$350,000.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Roanoke Rapids City Council does hereby support and endorse the North Carolina Department of Transportation improvements at the intersection of US 158 and I-95.

Duly adopted this 6th day of February, 2018.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Traci V. Storey, City Clerk

City Manager's Report

City Manager Scherer acknowledged Finance Director Etheridge and her staff for their outstanding work as noted in the recent audit report. That was four years in a row they had received an unmodified report with no comments or mistakes from the auditor. That says a lot about her and her staff and what they do and along with that, they are very accommodating to the department heads to help them out whenever they need to process purchase orders, but at the same time they hold them to the standard and don't allow them to overspend their budget as Mr. Redman noted.

He stated that NCDOT has officially announced the long-awaited Julian R. Allsbrook road construction project will begin in the very near future. The project includes road repaving with turn lanes, curbs and gutters and a new sidewalk. This project will take a long time and NCDEOT intends to try and maintain two-way traffic as much as they can during the project.

He said the 2020 Federal Census program is coming and work is beginning to be prepared for it. Kelly Lasky will attend a workshop next week to receive training on the Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) process and information on Census Geographic Programs.

He announced the Planning Board will meet next Thursday at 5:30 p.m. to consider a rezoning request for a 6.5 acre piece of property next to the Mystique venue, to go from R-40 to B-4, which allows the widest range of commercial uses. We have not received any proposals or plans for this parcel of land.

City Manager Scherer said he and several department heads will attend a workshop tomorrow in Wilson regarding disaster planning and preparedness. The workshop is being put on by the NC League of Municipalities, the American Red Cross and the Regional Councils of Government.

He reported Ms. Lasky and Ms. Caudle continue working on a proposal to design and place attractive wayfinding signage at several key spots around the City. They are working with the County Tourism Board on this project and hope to bring the final sign design/concept to Council during one of the March meetings. The signage is intended to provide nice-looking and highly visible signage to direct visitors to several attractions around the City.

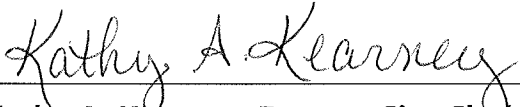
He said all the necessary parties have finally signed off on the required project agreement to construct a new water drainage line at the ice house facility in the Forest Hills lot and work should begin soon to install the line.

He said several City Administration construction projects are either ongoing or planned for around the City, to include a new restroom/concession building at Chockoyotte Park, a new net/backstop at Doyle Field and concrete work at the 1026 Roanoke Avenue outdoor venue. Public Works continues to repair potholes with a temporary cold asphalt patch process. We encourage everyone to report any pothole they observe to the Public Works office, who will also contact NC DOT with potholes reported on roads they are responsible for.

Other Business/Comments by Council Members

Mayor Doughtie reemphasized what he said earlier about the City having some highly qualified people that work for us and they were fortunate to have those people. He stated Mr. Redman had told him in the past that they generally do not give an opinion about the audit, they are just talk about the figures and the money, but he spoke about how we did a good job collecting what money we had available for us. We as the City, the administration and the department heads do a very good job in providing the citizens of this area with the services that we do with the revenues that we have. We are very fortunate for the businesses that contribute to the community, the many individuals that do that and we have volunteers that do a lot in our community. We do a good job with what we have to work with.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Scarbrough and unanimously carried to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.


Kathy A. Kearney, Deputy City Clerk

Approved by Council Action on: 2/20/2018