

June 28, 2021

The City Council of the City of Rocky Mount met this day in a regular session scheduled for 4:00 p.m. in the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building with Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr. presiding.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and called for a moment of silence for individual prayer.

Councilmembers present: André D. Knight, Reuben C. Blackwell, IV, Richard Joyner, T.J. Walker\*, Lige Daughtridge, W.B. Bullock and Christine Carroll Miller.

*\*joining remotely*

NOTE: No vote was recorded for Councilmember Walker for the entirety of the meeting pursuant to NCGS 160A-75 as he indicated he experienced technical difficulties. He can be heard at the beginning and end of the meeting only.

Staff present: Rochelle Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Dorothy Brown Smith, Chief Communications and Marketing Consultant; Peter F. Varney, Interim Community & Business Development Director; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Kena Cofield-Jones, Humans Resources Director; Will Deaton, Development Services; Amy Staton, Finance Director; Nicki Gurganus, Accounting Manager; Chris Beschler, Director of Energy Resources; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Corey Mercer, Fire Chief; Gregory Cotten, Chief Technology Officer; Joel Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director; Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Latasha Hall, Director of Business and Collections Services; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Brenton Bent, Water Resources Director; Felisa Hunter, Human Relations Specialist; Chase Norwood, Management Analyst; Keyana Walston, Management Analyst; Jayson Dawkins, Policy Analyst, Budget and Evaluation Department; Tariq Al-Harbi, Summer Intern, Budget and Evaluation Department; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

*NOTE: Public participation limited relative to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19); meeting was accessible remotely via FaceBook and the City's YouTube Channel.*

**PRAYER/MOMENT OF SILENCE**

The Mayor requested a moment of silence for individual prayer.

**APPROVAL OF/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)**

Mayor Roberson noted the following requested amendments/additions to today's agenda for consideration:

- Move Introduction of Interim Finance Director to just prior to Public Petitions portion of the meeting;

- Add item concerning consideration of budget ordinance at the end of the meeting;
- Add Closed Session for attorney-client privilege and personnel; and
- Removal of consideration of bids (a) through (c).

A motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge and seconded by Councilmember Miller that the following items be added to the agenda to be voted on separately:

- 1) The Mayor shall review all expenses submitted for reimbursement or payment from the City Clerk, City Manager and City Attorney and any expenses charged to the City credit card by said positions. No reimbursement, credit card statement or invoice shall be paid until the Mayor approves same with date and signature. City policy shall be followed to be eligible for reimbursement. If the above-mentioned is not approved the City Clerk, City Manager or City Attorney can appeal to the City Council for a final decision;
- 2) The City Council shall be provided a monthly list of all grant approvals signed by the Mayor and City Manager;
- 3) The City Council shall approval all fund transfers. The City Manager shall provide the City Council a list of all proposed fund transfers at each meeting to be placed on the City Council consent agenda; and
- 4) The City Council shall approve any utility write-offs. The list with detail shall be presented in closed session at the beginning of each month at the Committee of the Whole. At the subsequent City Council meeting a summary should be provided in Council packets and voted on as part of the Consent Agenda.

A Motion made by Councilmember Joyner and seconded by Councilmember Knight that Councilmembers have time to review the list of requested additions as outlined above before they are placed on a Council agenda and that consideration of placing these items on the agenda be tabled passed with a vote of 4 ayes/2 nays (Councilmembers Daughtridge and Miller opposed).

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that above listed additions/amendments to the agenda, with the exception of the additions requested by Councilmember Daughtridge, be approved.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the minutes of Special Called Committee of the Whole Budget Sessions held May 26, June 2 and June 7, 2021 be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

#### **COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney provided the following community update. The Manager:

- Began by sharing that the City's annual Independence Day Celebration will take place this Saturday, July 3 at the Rocky Mount Sports Complex from 6 to 9 p.m. This year's event will be filled with music, vendors, games and fireworks. Visit [imperialcentre.org](http://imperialcentre.org) or check out the City's Facebook page for more information;
- Reported that the Maria V. Howard Arts Center at the Imperial Centre for the Arts & Sciences is hosting three new exhibits this summer. Currently on display is SMALL WONDERS, a macro photography exhibit by Bob Sober featuring 25 different insect species that can be viewed until August 8 and SHOWCASE: ANIMALIA features works from local, regional, and state artists based around a specific theme and will be on display

until August 15. From July 16 – August 13, NAVIGATING JIM CROW: THE GREEN BOOK AND OASIS SPACES IN NORTH CAROLINA will help the community better understand the risks African Americans faced while traveling during the Jim Crow era. *The Green Book* was published as a resource for African American travelers and highlighted safe spaces for those on the road, including restaurants, shops, gas stations, hotels, and much more;

- Stated that the City’s Summer Night Lights Series continues next Friday, July 9 at Three Sisters Park in Battleboro and will be held every Friday after that from 6-8 p.m. at various City parks through the month of August. The events are free and offer field games, family fun, music and hot dog snack packs. In addition, some of these events will feature an opportunity to meet and speak with the new Chief of Police, Robert Hassell. For more information, contact the City’s Parks and Recreation Department at 252-467-4902;
- Advised that the City’s Business and Collections Services Department is utilizing the Community Development Block Grant CARES Act funding to assist utility customers within the City limits who meet income requirements. The program is designed to assist with payment of delinquent utility bills for low-to-moderate income households impacted by the loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Households that became delinquent after March 31, 2020 and whose income was affected by COVID-19 may receive up to six months of utilities assistance via this program. For more information on eligibility requirements, visit [rockymountnc.gov](http://rockymountnc.gov) or contact the Business Services Center at 972-1250;
- Reported that Tar River Transit service is offering free rides to COVID-19 vaccination sites for those with scheduled appointments to “drive-up” sites. Transportation is available from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday to vaccination sites located in Nash and Edgecombe Counties. Citizens who are interested in transportation to and from vaccination sites may call Tar River Transit at 252-972-1174, 252-972-1514, 252-972-1515, 252-972-1516 or 252-972-1517. All appointments need to be scheduled the day before the trip. Healthcare facilities may also call and schedule transportation on behalf of their patients. Free rides will be available until at least June 30. Visit [tarrivertransit.org](http://tarrivertransit.org) regarding more information about general routes and services; and
- Concluded her report by advising that, in observance of the July 4 holiday, City offices, the Business Services Center, the South Rocky Mount and Booker T. Washington Community Centers, RM Wilson Gym, Rocky Mount Senior Center and the Imperial Centre for the Arts & Sciences will be closed Monday, July 5. Also, Tar River Transit will not operate Monday, July 5. Denton Street Pool and Sunset Park will be open.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION/ROCKY MOUNT AREA YOUTH COUNCIL 2021 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**

The Mayor welcomed members of the Rocky Mount Area Youth Council, a state-chartered organization composed of area high school students, designed to serve, listen to and represent local youth in all matters of civic interest and need. He recognized Human Relations Specialist and Youth Council Advisor Felisa Hunter to introduce the following Youth Council members:

Jayla King – Nash-Rocky Mount Early College

Mauranda Morgan – Nash-Rocky Mount Early College

Ta’Niya Thorne – Rocky Mount Senior High School

Tareasure Owens – Nash-Rocky Mount Early College

The Mayor thanked the Youth Council members for their service to the Rocky Mount Area Youth Council, the Human Relations Department and the City. Mayor Roberson, City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney, Human Relations Director Archie Jones and Candace Dudley, from the State

Office, joined Ms. Hunter and the Youth Council members for a photograph.

#### **PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH**

Mayor C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. read a proclamation designating the month of July 2021 as "Parks and Recreation Month" in the City of Rocky Mount and presented the proclamation to Parks and Recreation Director Joel Dunn and staff. The Mayor and City Manager joined Mr. Dunn and members of the Parks and Recreation Department for a photograph.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF INTERIM FINANCE DIRECTOR**

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney introduced Robert Bobb and Leon Glaster of The Robert Bobb Group. She stated the group will provide interim finance director services following the loss of a stellar member of the City's executive leadership team, Finance Director Amy Staton. The City Manager reported that Robert Bobb is the founder, President and CEO of The Robert Bobb Group, a global, minority-owned consulting firm, specializing in public and private sector consulting and advisory services. Additional background information about the firm was provided through a PowerPoint presentation. It was noted that Leon Glaster will oversee the day-to-day financial operations of the City and the group will report weekly to the City Manager. Information relative to Mr. Glaster's background was provided.

Mr. Robert Bobb was invited to the podium for comments. The City Manager stated she hopes to have a new Finance Director named in the next couple of months and reported that the term of the contract with The Robert Bobb Group is June through September 2021 and can be amended, as necessary.

Mr. Bobb told the City Council that he has reviewed the City's financial records and the City is in a good financial state as has been confirmed by the rating agencies. He gave additional background information about The Bobb Group and Mr. Leon Glaster and responded to questions and comments from Councilmembers.

#### **PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Mayor opened the meeting for petitions from the public and outlined guidelines for public petitions. He recognized the following individuals for public comment and a summary of comments is outlined below:

o ***Dr. Kim Koo:***

- Told the Council she is a member of the Rocky Mount Racial Justice Group;
- Spoke in opposition to SB 473 stating the bill targets Rocky Mount and is highly suspect, prejudicial and racially motivated adding the intent of the bill is to remove two of the City's legitimately elected officials from Wards One and Two and besmirch the good name of the City Manager;
- Said the bill attempts to repeat a coup d'etat of the legitimately elected fusion government in Wilmington in 1898 but without bullets at a time that the City has a highly visible black majority on the City Council who are working hard to bring some measure of progress to the poorer side of the City, in mainly communities of color, which have suffered from years and years of neglect, disinvestment and repression;

- Said she observed overt and covert pushback from white supremacists within and outside the City working to dismantle progress which has taken the form of whining at Council meetings to egging State Auditor Beth Wood to focus investigations particularly on Rocky Mount;
  - Said as a citizen she is highly outraged that the North Carolina legislature wants to take away the City's right to self-determination and the right of the Council to act on behalf of citizens;
  - Said Rocky Mount is a test case spearheading the right-wing fascist backlash of a regime change in all cities with progressive municipal governments and this must be stopped;
  - Petitioned the Council to issue a proclamation of repudiation of the North Carolina Senate for even considering such a highly racist and biased bill
- ***Malachy Noones:***
- Said he is a partner in the properties the City is trying to take by the power of eminent domain, which is item number 14 on the agenda and said they were never informed or notified of this meeting and never given due process;
  - Questioned why they weren't notified their properties were being taken from them;
  - Said they have been told the property is needed to promote public health and safety and added they have fenced in the property which has passed all fire inspections and have contracted with a pest elimination service and the property passed inspection four days ago;
  - Asked how it is a public safety matter;
  - Said the term fair market value is the price real estate would bring after fair and reasonable negotiations between a seller willing but not forced to sell and a buyer willing but not forced to buy;
  - Added they are under contract right now and have been for three weeks and plan to close in less than 90 days
- ***Mae Parker:***
- Said she is here today to give thanks to Council for the service received by the Holly Street community adding the street has been paved and it is beautiful but Barnhill indicates there are still some problems with standing water at the curb and the mosquitoes are getting really bad;
  - Thanked the Council and Parks and Recreation Director Joel Dunn for the Juneteenth event adding that people from out of state attended the event and John Perry and his wife who have established a scholarship were recognized with a Mayor's proclamation; she noted 3,000 people were counted in attendance but there were others and it was a great day
- ***Curmilus Dancy:***
- Said he is a committed fully paid life-time member of the NAACP and is the Vice President of the Rocky Mount branch and the legal redress chair. He said all complaints come to him and he investigates and makes recommendations to the committee and the matter then goes to the executive committee;
  - Said those wishing to address the NAACP can contact him and asked that Council shut down any complaints about the NAACP received
- ***Sydney Meeks:***
- Said she is outraged about SB 473;
  - Said one of the key findings of the Rocky Mount investigation that inspired SB 473 was a \$47,000 utility debt over 20 years which equates to .02% of the entire City budget while the audit itself cost taxpayers nine times that amount, which is \$428,000 in 169 days;
  - Said SB 473 automatically criminalizes any findings in investigative audits with penalty of personal liability and jail time and requires the auditor to alert the Local

Government Commission of all published reports and enables it to control the City audit process for three years at the expense of the investigated city;

- Said there are no checks and balances to ensure audit investigations are not disparately impacting communities of color, despite history of institutional racism;
  - Said the State Auditor has unlimited jurisdiction and no limits of power and investigation and SB 473 ignores decades of discriminatory budgeting, spending and concentrated efforts to maintain racist voting systems and threatens current and future minority leadership with felonies and fines for mistakes and actions outside of their knowledge, control or skill set;
  - Asked the Council to come up with a resolution to fail SB 473;
  - Said Rocky Mount citizens should be able to choose their own destiny and the Senate Bill threatens black leadership and black power;
  - Said the black leadership on the Council has progressively helped poor people in this community and if this bill goes through, that threatens poor people, affordable housing and the school system and threatens every black individual in the community
- ***Eden Curtiss:***
- Said she is here today to voice a concern about an act of injustice happening in the North Carolina Congress whereby Lisa Barnes along with other republicans crafted Senate Bill 473, a bill based on Rocky Mount;
  - Said if this bill is passed it will punish those with any findings from investigative audits with no checks and balances for ensuring equity in the process and the process can cause taxpayers and City members to pay monetarily as well as in a possible loss of black leadership;
  - Said since SB 473, has no equitable accommodations for North Carolina's history of racism it could allow for a situation that mirrors the horrible incident of the late 19th century, where powerful black postmasters of Rocky Mount were framed by white supremacists with investigative audits adding just as this measure was taken to limit black power, the passage of this bill could as well;
  - Said this is dangerous as it could threaten representation and perspective in the City;
  - Said Rocky Mount has proven its desire to lead North Carolina into a more equitable future and in order for this progress to continue Rocky Mount citizens must be able to decide their own leadership through a true American democracy and should be able to choose its own future;
  - Said as a representative of the people she asks the Council to join her and other Rocky Mount citizens in voicing concern for this bill and to help make a change
- ***Samuel Battle:***
- Said he is disgusted that people are coming out talking about SB 473 and using poor people and he is one of those poor people;
  - Said he has been poor all his life and came out of the Armstrong projects; suggested the people in those areas be asked how they feel about SB 473 when their utility bills are being cut off;
  - Said he doesn't care about SB 473 because if elected officials are doing right, they won't have to worry about the bill;
  - Said he was cut off at the last City Council meeting when commenting on \$47,000 that somebody owed but won't be cut out this time because everybody is running down here talking about it;
  - Said it is amazing how we try to glorify people and asked if Council knows that people are dying from black on black crime;
  - Said he does not pick sides relative to black and white but what is good for the blacks is good for the whites and what is good for the whites is good for the blacks;
  - Said the black community is fed up with Council and not enough is being spent to provide programs for kids and murders are happening;
  - He said he does not care about SB 473 but cares about his people dying in the street

- **Bronson Williams:**
  - Said he knows Parks and Recreation is working on a backordered slide at Sunset Park and said he used to work at Sunset Park as a child and has great memories;
  - Said the City's banking partner is PNC Bank and PNC has no ATM or banking location on the Edgecombe County side of Rocky Mount adding the City should have a conversation about banking opportunities with the institution it banks with; he added Edgecombe County has a Wells Fargo ATM, there is a State Employees Credit Union and a Southern Bank; said while PNC sponsors a number of events, including the Juneteenth Event its ongoing commitment is questioned since it closed its location at Oakwood Shopping Center;
  - Supported relocating the Judicial Center to a location Downtown suggesting it be attached to City Hall
  
- **Cooper Blackwell:**
  - Said he too is from the streets; said he and his friends spend time Downtown and spend their money there and the power is there and in the neighborhoods;
  - Said he does not know what the confusion is about getting behind a bill and why it does not apply when it is known that Congress and its laws drive economic power and drives laws that create reasons for prosecution and persecution of black leadership;
  - Said it is clear to him that Senate Bill 473 has an impact on our people here in the same neighborhoods and streets that they grew up on and directly attacks leadership that has supported funding directly in those neighborhoods for the past 20 years;
  - Said spending has not been appropriated correctly in neighborhoods and now that there is increased money in black neighborhoods and places for black development it seems to be an issue for some who don't understand the concept of reparations today;
  - Said he is glad there is an open floor to talk about SB 473 and why it's important;
  - Said he wanted to share some history and said stated that postmasters were elected in Rocky Mount and after reconstruction those postmasters were under persecution and were audited, locked up and thrown into jail, specifically, Clinton Wesley Battle who was born into slavery in 1849 and learned to read after his emancipation and bought property on Atlantic Avenue;
  - Said in 1898 shortly after the Wilmington massacre, officials coordinated a movement to reinstate white rule that targeted black officials like Clinton Battle for embezzlement of postal funds and his books were found to be good, just like "our" books were found to be good today;
  - Said Clinton was fined \$166 and locked up and sentenced to 9 months in Halifax County jail;
  - Said we are seeing the same thing with the attack on Councilmembers Knight and Blackwell by Senate Bill 473; and
  - Called on the City's leaders to stop SB 473
  
- **Rita Barrett:**
  - Said she and her husband, Reginald Barrett, were on the board for the Juneteenth Empowerment Committee;
  - Said she is here to thank the Mayor, her friend, Sandy Roberson, and the Councilmembers and Manager for support;
  - She thanked Joel Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director, for his work and said he was the liaison to the funding that made the event possible;
  - Voiced appreciated that Juneteenth is now a holiday; and
  - Said the event went smoothly and there was a great turn out

There being no other speakers, the public petitions portion of the meeting was closed.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. AD VALOREM TAX RELEASES: (recommended for approval)**

The City Council received the following schedules of ad valorem taxes recommended for release and/or refund:

**SCHEDULE A - acknowledge receipt of report of the following taxes under \$100 approved for release and/or refund by the City Manager:**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BILL NO.</u>	<u>NAME/ADDRESS</u>	<u>TAX</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	
<b><u>EDGECOMBE COUNTY</u></b>					
2020	106	SALEH, BASEN 116 J B LANE BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	39.94 3.99 2.53	CITY PEN INT	PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE</b>	<b>46.46</b>		
2019	412	SALEH, BASEN 116 J B LANE BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	42.88 4.29 6.95	CITY PEN INT	PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE</b>	<b>54.12</b>		
2018	556	SALEH, BASEN 116 J B LANE BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	45.62 4.56 11.91	CITY PEN INT	PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE</b>	<b>62.09</b>		
2017	296	SALEH, BASEN 116 J B LANE BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	46.93 4.69 16.91	CITY PEN INT	PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE</b>	<b>68.53</b>		

**NASH COUNTY**

2020	1001062	BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF NASH & EDGECOMBE COUNTIES 301 S CHURCH ST STE 290 ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27802	20.37 5.95 1.51	CITY SPEC INT	EXEMPT PROPERTY
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>	<b>27.83</b>		

**SCHEDULE B - taxes over \$100 recommended for release and/or refund by the City Council:**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BILL NO.</u>	<u>NAME/ADDRESS</u>	<u>TAX</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>	
<b><u>EDGECOMBE COUNTY</u></b>					
2020	401	TRADE VENTURES LLC 102 DISCOVERY ST ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	159.78 15.98 10.11	CITY PEN INT	OWNER CORRECTION
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>	<b>185.87</b>		
2020	288	FULL CIRCLE SOLUTIONS INC 238 HOLLY BERRY LN ROXBORO, NC 27574	2542.25 254.25 160.81	CITY PEN INT	PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>	<b>2957.51</b>		CITY LIMITS

**B. FY 2021-2022 PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS: (recommended for approval)**

Consideration was given to the following Project Ordinances for FY 2021-2022 Transit Grants:

- Project Ordinances/Amendment:
  - 1) Tar River Transit (\$2,799,068 - requires matching appropriations of \$5,395):
    - a. Transit Planning - \$53,950
    - b. Rural Operating - \$2,438,618
    - c. Rural Capital - \$66,500
    - d. Rural Feeder - \$240,000
  - 2) Community Development:
    - a. Community Development Block Grant - \$514,419
    - b. HOME Investment Partnership Grant - \$457,772 (requires matching appropriation of \$50,000)
    - c. CDBG, HOME and NSP Grant Program Income - \$30,548
    - d. American Recovery Plan Act - \$11,521,180;
    - e. Battle Park Renovations - \$1,252,350
  - 3) Project Ordinance Amendment:
    - 2020 Bulletproof Vest Grant - appropriates additional grant funds received from U.S. Department of Justice - \$1,320 (requires 50% local match of \$660)

**C. TAXICAB LICENSE (recommended for approval):**

The City Council received a recommendation from Chief of Police Robert A. Hassell for the award of one (1) taxicab license to Gerald L. Burney.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the Consent Agenda be approved inclusive of approval of the tax releases and/or refunds, adoption of the following Ordinances and approval of the taxi license to Gerald L. Burney:

- a. Ordinance No. O-2021-47 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2022 TRANSIT SYSTEM PLANNING PROJECT;
- b. Ordinance No. O-2021-48 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2022 RURAL TRANSIT OPERATING PROJECT;
- c. Ordinance No. O-2021-49 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2022 RURAL TRANSIT CAPITAL PROJECT;
- d. Ordinance No. O-2021-50 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2022 RURAL TRANSIT SYSTEM FEEDER PROJECT;
- e. Ordinance No. O-2021-51 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2021-2022 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) ENTITLEMENT GRANT PROJECT;
- f. Ordinance No. O-2021-52 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2021-2022 HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROJECT;
- g. Ordinance No. O-2021-53 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT/CDBG, HOME AND NSP GRANT PROGRAM INCOME;
- h. Ordinance No. O-2021-54 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/AMERICAN RECOVERY PLAN ACT;
- i. Ordinance No. O-2021-55 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/BATTLE PARK RENOVATION; and
- j. Ordinance No. O-2021-56 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT/BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT

**2020-2021 PROPOSED ANNUAL ACTION PLAN – PROPOSED AMENDED CITIZENS PARTICIPATION PLAN/PUBLIC HEARING**

The City Council was advised that pursuant to federal requirements the City and the Down East HOME Consortium is required to hold a public hearing for the Proposed Amended Citizens Participation Plan which reflects an updated list of Down East HOME Consortium Participating Jurisdictions to include: Conetoe, Edgecombe County, Middlesex, Pinetops, Princeville, Rocky Mount, Sharpsburg, Spring Hope and Whitakers. The Council was advised that additionally the amended plan reflects an updated list of locations where citizens will be able to review the Citizens Participation Plan, Assessment to Fair Housing, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program.

The City Council was further advised that a draft of the Proposed Amended Citizens Participation Plan was available for public review and comment for fifteen (15) days beginning June 13, 2021 and ending June 28, 2021 and a copy of the draft document was available for review at the Office of Community & Business Development, Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building, 331 S. Franklin Street, Rocky Mount, NC during regular business hours and on the Community & Business Development webpage on the City's website.

Peter F. Varney, Interim Director for Community & Business Development, gave an overview of the Amended Citizens Participation Plan and said the change is being made as a result of Nash County's decision to withdraw from the consortium. He added that in past years the public hearings have been held in Nash and Edgecombe Counties, as well as in Rocky Mount.

The Mayor opened a public hearing to receive public comments relative to the Proposed Amended Citizens Participation Plan. No one appeared for comment and the public hearing was closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the Amended Citizens Participation Plan be adopted.

**BUDGET REVIEW - FY 2021-2022 ORDINANCE/FEES & CHARGES/POSITION CLASSIFICATION**

Consideration was given to the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget Ordinance, amendments to the following fees and charges and a resolution approving revision to the position and classification plan:

- A. Police Department:
  - 1. Policy No. X.6.1 Animal Control Fees
- B. Public Works Department:
  - 1. Policy No. X.8.3 Rollout Container Disposal & Exemption Fees
  - 2. Policy No. X.8.5 Solid Waste Transfer Station Tipping Fees

It was noted that all other fees and charges presently in effect remain unchanged.

The City Manager provided a resolution for staffing plan changes to the City Council.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that overall he supports the budget but disagrees with some line items. He voiced approval for renovation of Unity Cemetery, the fee increase to expand services to include year-round leaf collection and litter disposal crews; the interchange off I-95; and the Police FUSUS report. He said in his time on the Council he has expressed a lot of concerns relative to where money is and is not being spent and for those reasons will not be supporting the budget.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and carried by a vote of 4-2 (Councilmembers Daughtridge and Miller opposed) that **Ordinance No. O-2021-57** entitled **CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT 2021-2022 BUDGET ORDINANCE; Resolution No. R-2021-28** entitled **RESOLUTION AMENDING CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES FOR FEES AND CHARGES;** and **Resolution No. R-2021-29** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN** be adopted.

The above ordinance and resolutions adopt the FY 2021-2022 budget maintaining the City’s current tax rate at \$0.685 per \$100 valuation, amend/approve certain fees and charges and amends City’s Pay and Classification Plan to fund thirteen (13) new positions and reclassify six (6) positions in the Public Works Department as follows:

**New positions and assigned ranges:**

Department/Division	Classification	Range	No. Positions
City Manager’s Office/City Manager’s Office	Council Relations Coordinator	22	1
Human Resources/Human Resources	Training Development Specialist	18	1
Finance/Accounting	Payroll Coordinator	16	1
Public Works/Environmental Services	Crew Supervisor	14	3
Public Works/Environmental Services	Truck Driver	10	1
Public Works/Environmental Services	Environmental Services Technician I	8	6

**Reclassification of position:**

Current Department/Division	Current Classification	New Classification	Range	No. Positions
Public Works/Environmental Services	Sanitation Equipment Operator I	Environmental Services Technician I	8	6

**CDBG PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Department of Community & Business Development recommended award of the following CDBG Public Service Awards:

- Buck Leonard Association for Sports & Human Enrichment - \$21,000;
- Ripple Effects - \$30,140; (\$10,977 - HOME-ARP Funding)
- Rocky Mount Edgecombe Community Development Corporation - \$30,000;
- The Mercer Foundation, Inc. - \$28,425 - HOME-ARP Funding

- United Community Ministries (Bassett Center) - \$7,000; and
- United Community Ministries (Community Shelter) - \$30,000 (HOME-ARP Funding)

It was noted that the City's CDBG public service allocation for FY 2021-2022 is \$77,163 and the City has received six (6) proposals seeking a total of \$145,565 in funding. Council was provided with a list of service proposals and background and eligibility requirements.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the funding request be approved, as outlined, including HOME-ARP Source funding to fulfill requests from Ripple Effects, The Mercer Foundation, Inc. and United Community Ministries, contingent upon HUD approval of the Consortium's amended HOME budget, and that the City Manager and/or Mayor and City Clerk to be authorized to executed required documentation on behalf of the City; and that an additional award of \$5,000 (HOME-ARP funding) be awarded to Ripple Effects for rent for Mrs. Harper, pending rehab/reconstruction of her home.

#### **DEPOSITORY**

The City Council was requested to authorize a change of the City's primary authorized banking representative from the Director of Finance to the City Manager to be effective July 1, 2021. Council was advised that the authorized banking representatives is the primary City contact granted authority on the PNC bank accounts and may delegate access and authority to others. The authorized representative may also make additions, deletions and other changes as needed based on municipal operational needs and changes in personnel responsible for banking transactions.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner and seconded by Councilmember Knight that the resolution be adopted. Councilmember Blackwell questioned if this authorization is temporary until the permanent Finance Director is identified or moves the authority to the Manager permanently and City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney responded that it is intended to be temporary. Councilmember Daughtridge requested a friendly amendment include the language discussed to make the authorization temporary.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the City Manager be authorized as the City's banking representative until such time as a permanent Finance Director is found and retained and that **Resolution No. R-2021-30** entitled **MASTER RESOLUTION AND AUTHORIZATION FOR DEPOSITORY ACCOUNTS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT SERVICES** be adopted. Councilmember Miller voiced a concern for the lack of division of duties and said as a person with an accounting finance background she believes in division of responsibility and it is a matter of internal control.

**BEAL STREET REDEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

The City Council was advised that the Beal Street Redevelopment Area has been partially redeveloped with multi-family residential construction financed through the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency and the Redevelopment Commission now owns thirty-six (36) lots that are available for redevelopment. Council was provided a map of the area and further advised that the cost to mow the lots is \$1,080 per cutting or just under \$10,000 per year.

Interim Director of Community & Business Development Peter F. Varney reported that the Redevelopment Commission has expressed a willingness to work with staff on a plan for redevelopment and disposal of the properties and it was recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution to direct the Commission to proceed with preparing a redevelopment plan leading to the disposal of the properties in the Beal Street Redevelopment Area.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2021-31** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DIRECTING THE ROCKY MOUNT REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TO PURSUE REDEVELOPMENT IN THE BEAL STREET REDEVELOPMENT AREA** be adopted. This resolution directs the Commission to pursue redevelopment at Beal Street with guidance and assistance from staff of the Department of Business & Community Development; that activities be conducted within funding appropriated and that the Commission forward minutes of its meetings to the City Council in order for the Council to follow the progress of the Commission.

**EMINENT DOMAIN/REAL PROPERTY - ATLANTIC AVENUE, ALBEMARLE AVENUE, ROSE STREET AND E. THOMAS STREET**

The City Council was advised that based on the Council's authorization, staff has attempted to acquire the following properties but has been unable to obtain the property by voluntary conveyance:

- a) 116 Atlantic Avenue
- b) 112 Atlantic Avenue
- c) 161 Albemarle Avenue
- d) 171 Albemarle Avenue
- e) 210 Rose Street (aka 206-216 Rose Street and 108 Atlantic Avenue)
- f) 120 Atlantic Avenue
- g) Parcel ID No. 3850-70-4447-00 identified as 124 Atlantic Avenue, 126 Atlantic Avenue and 211 E. Thomas Street

Councilmember Miller asked staff to state the specific need for each of the properties in question. City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney stated the need has been kept broad and called on Finance Director Amy Staton to provide information to Council. Ms. Staton reported that the property is needed to promote and protect the public health, safety and welfare; to construct off-street parking facilities and systems to provide parking to support the redevelopment of Downtown Rocky Mount to establish, extend, enlarge or improve stormwater drainage systems located on the property; and any other public purpose authorized by law

and it was recommended that Council consider exercising the power of eminent domain conferred upon the City by Chapter 40 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Councilmember Blackwell questioned if all steps for the condemnation process have been followed and the Finance Director stated this is the beginning of the process and deferred to the City Attorney for further response. City Attorney Richard J. Rose stated that due process rights come into effect once the process begins and adoption of the Resolution today would begin the authorizing process.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing condemnation to acquire certain interests in the above-named property. Discussion continued and Councilmember Daughtridge stated that in general he does not agree with exercising eminent domain and questioned if the process followed is state law or City policy. Mr. Rose responded that state law is followed. Additional conversation was held.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and carried by a vote of 4-2 (Councilmembers Daughtridge and Miller opposed) that **Resolution No. R-2021-32** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT AUTHORIZING CONDEMNATION TO ACQUIRE CERTAIN INTEREST IN REAL PROPERTY** be adopted.

**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM ASSISTANCE POLICY AND PROCUREMENT AND DISBURSEMENT POLICY**

The City Council was provided with Administrative Policy No. II.29(a) entitled "Policy: Urgent Repair Program Assistance" and "Policy: Urgent Repair Program Procurement and Disbursement."

The Council was advised that the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency has approved \$100,000 for the City as a part of the FY 2021-2022 cycle of the Urgent Repair Program (URP21) and it is anticipated that Council will approve an additional \$150,000 for the Urgent Repair Program for a total of \$250,000 for the 2021-2022 URP21 program cycle.

It was explained that the Urgent Repair Program is one of three (3) housing programs offered by the City for homeowners at or below 50% of the Area Median Income and eligible repairs are those affecting the safe occupancy of the home such as flooring support structures, the roof, bathroom and doorway modifications for handicap accessibility and heating and cooling. Council was advised that approval and adoption of the policies detailing eligibility requirements, the selection process and overall program process along with the bidding and payment process is required.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2021-33** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING POLICY NO. II.29(A) ENTITLED "POLICY: URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM ASSISTANCE"** and **POLICY NO. II.29(B) ENTITLED "POLICY: URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM PROCUREMENT & DISBURSEMENT"** be adopted.

**BIDS/PARK MAINTENANCE AND LANDSCAPING SERVICE AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND LANDSCAPING SERVICE FOR CITY PROPERTIES**

The City Council received the tabulation of bids received for park maintenance and landscaping service for Holly Street Park, City Lake Park, Tar River Reservoir Boat Ramp and Saponi Creek Boat Ramp and grounds maintenance and landscaping service for the Douglas Block, City Hall, the Senior Center, the Imperial Centre, the Business Services Center, the Rocky Mount Event Center, Main Street, the Judicial Center, the Train Station, the Bus Station and Station Square and Battleboro and Northeastern Cemeteries.

By consensus, consideration of Item 16(a), (b) and (c) was removed from the agenda.

**BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES/ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS**

Councilmembers made the following nominations for appointments and/or reappointments:

- **Board of Adjustment** (term expires June 30, 2024):
  - Carl Revis (Ward 3; reappointed)
- **Central City Revitalization Panel** (three-year terms expire June 30, 2024)
  - Garland Jones (Central City Property Owner; reappointed)
  - Jean Kitchin (Member-At-Large; reappointed)
- **Community Appeals Board** (term expire June 30, 2024)
  - Darlene Spencer-Harris (Ward 3; reappointed)
- **Human Relations Commission** (terms expire June 30, 2025)
  - Nehemiah Smith (Ward 1; reappointed)
  - William A. Sharpe (Ward 5; reappointed)
- **Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities** (term expires June 30, 2024)
  - Alice Davis (appointed; contingent upon receipt of PHF)
- **Planning Board** (terms expire June 30, 2024)
  - Clara H. Knight (Ward 1; reappointed)
  - Johnnie Mayo, Jr (Ward 3; reappointed)
- **Tree Advisory Board** (terms expire June 30, 2025)
  - Celeste Beatty (Ward 3; appointed)
- **Utility Service Review** (terms expire June 30, 2025)
  - Chantelle Mosley (Ward 5; reappointed)
  - Crystal Ann Wimes-Anderson (Ward 3; appointed)

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Miller and unanimously carried that the appointments, as outlined above, be approved.

Councilmember Blackwell questioned the genesis of the Animal Care and Control Advisory Board and questioned why a citizen board is evaluating the operation of how the City works with animal control. He said there is no other citizen board providing oversight of the Police Department. The City Manager stated the Board was created by the City Council about two (2) years ago and has no oversight or control over staff members. She added it is her understanding the Board was to

provide guidance and share practices, but she is advised the Board is going beyond the designed authority. Ms. Small-Toney emphasized the Board is an advisory board and may make suggestions for consideration by the Police Chief and/or staff. She stated the City's animal control operation has met every state standard for many years and, in her opinion, there is no need to do anything differently and the process is working well. Councilmember Miller said it is her understanding the Board wishes to hear citizen concerns about the care of animals and does not think it has any control over the Police Chief. She added she does not think there are any racial issues and it is her belief that all citizens want animals to be cared for and this board is no different from the City's other advisory Boards. Councilmember Blackwell said he never said anything about race but now remembers interesting allegations were being made about the animal control department and this Board was put in place to hear those comments. He said it appears to him that some on the Board want their way and argue if they don't get that not caring what is being done. Mr. Blackwell added if there is going to be a citizen board related to the Police, he would prefer to see a board that works with the Police Chief to ensure there is safe and equitable policing and community engagement with the Police Department. He said he is not calling for review at this time but with the tenor of Police and law enforcement relations across the country the community needs to take more responsibility to keep the community safe and work with law enforcement. Councilmember Blackwell added that the Police have the responsibility and moral obligation to treat all equitably and to ensure there are safe practices for the Police and the people they are serving and protecting. He said if there is going to be a citizen board to work with the Police Department, he would prefer to have a board that works with the Department and the Chief to provide input relative to policing.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that language shared in the Council packet states the Animal Care and Advisory Board advises, with advises being a key word, the Mayor and City Council on policies, procedures and other matters of concern regarding the care and control of animals in the City of Rocky Mount. He suggested if another advisory board is created then both should exist and added there are a lot of people who are passionate about animals saying he thinks Council needs to listen to people. He said when looking at the hierarchy, the citizens are the ones in control of the City, and then it comes down to the City Council and down from there and he thinks the Council needs to be reminded of that. He said the comment made towards Councilwoman Miller relative to race is unfair because it goes back to an email dated April 14. He stated he thinks the entire City Council knows what that was referring to and he would presume that is why the comment was made.

Councilmember Joyner made an additional appointment as follows:

- **Workforce Housing Advisory Commission** (terms expire June 30, 2024)
  - o Aston Haughton (Ward 3; reappointed)

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the additional appointment be approved.

No action was taken to fill the remaining vacancies on the City's Boards, Commissions and Committees.

**COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS - SB 473**

Councilmember Blackwell thanked all present who came to talk about SB 473. He spoke in opposition to SB 473 by saying:

"I have tried and I think all of us have tried to walk this line of ethical movement as it relates to the state auditor and Senator Barnes, but to me, they've crossed every line that I have tried to respect and I'm respectfully and vigorously and unapologetically opposing this bill, because it is a veneer. It's a target. It's an overreach of power and it's done in complicity with everybody who is not courageous enough to stand up and say that this was a targeted effort from the beginning. And what I want to say, to Ms. Woods directly, and to anybody else involved, "you know it was a sham from the start." There were people who started the movement on social media, they told everybody what to say, gave them phone numbers, gave them the talking points and then they heated it up with everything else taking place around the nation. We want to act like Donald Trump didn't come through Rocky Mount - well, he did; and this is nothing but an attack from those people who support the January 6 insurrectionist and they're trying different ways to overthrow the legitimate right of citizens to elect representation of their choice and carry agendas that they choose to support. I am not afraid to speak the truth because the truth is outlined in writing, and because a person has the ability through the concept of their position, to say that their position should be objective, does not mean that they are objective. Objectivity is proven by your actions, by your deeds and by your findings and I experienced it at OIC. I know what her staff said, and I know how my staff responded. I know what they couldn't find because there was nothing there. That's why you didn't hear anything about it. But I say that this overreach might be targeted today to Reuben Blackwell and Andre Knight and Rochelle Small-Toney and OIC but it's no different than the momentum that was established in 1898 and spread through this entire country. We call it out for what it is, and we oppose you, and I don't care who votes for it. You know what you're doing. You will not vote for it and not know what it's about. And I just ask this community to be loud and vocal and if we win or don't win, that's not the issue. The issue is that history will record that there was a resistance, and a movement to bring equity, parity, inclusion and shared prosperity to everybody who lives in our city and our community, and that everybody matters in Rocky Mount. And if Rocky Mount can do something great, something great can be done anywhere. I oppose that bill. I support the idea of a resolution opposing the bill and come out

[of] the shadows people. Come out [of] the shadows and stop making one or two people pay for civil rights. Civil Rights helps everybody. You want to support people after they are dead, name a street after people after they've already paid their sacrifice but if you're afraid to stand up and say what is right, then shame on you. You don't have to ask yourself, what would you have done? You're doing it right now. You would not have marched with King, you would not have stood with Malcolm, you would have run and hidden under a tree and waited for a sacrifice that Strange Fruit paid for. And I'm just here to tell you right now. I'm not Strange Fruit. I stand with two solid feet. I oppose you, Beth Wood, I oppose you, Lisa Barnes and I oppose this bill. And I'll support anything that brings justice, equity and shared prosperity to everybody who lives in our community. Thank you very much."

Councilmember Knight asked to make a comment and the Mayor requested his comment be held until just prior to going into the Closed Session in order to move the meeting agenda forward. Councilmember Knight voiced objection and the Mayor recognized him for comment.

Councilmember Knight said he would like to publicly say on this afternoon: "After listening to all the accusations of owing \$47,000, abuse of power and corruption and the allegations of two of my colleagues, that Reuben Blackwell, OIC, (Reuben Blackwell is the CEO of OIC) and used his power to get a grant which is not true. Because Rocky Mount has always funded both sides of the street; the allegation that Rochelle Small-Toney overspent in travel and foods when in past management the same practice had taken place. So I just want to say to this Council that I've served almost 17 years with my heart, fought and advocated and put others before myself and my family and to just listen to some of the things that have come across this Council in this gallery is a shame. I just want to say that I've been quiet because the Lord said stand still and seek the salvation of the Lord. I'm not going to preach, but what I want to say is that the Spirit spoke and imparted in me and said be not weary in well doing. So I just want to say to my Council, let's not be weary in well-doing because we're gonna reap in due season. And the last thing I want to say is my faith has brought me this far and I may not be able to see the future or see through a dark cloud or see through tear drops but I am going to walk on by faith. And I'm going to end with: it said walk on by faith on Monday; on Tuesday walk on by faith so I'm saying to Reuben, TJ Walker, Rochelle Small-Tony and Reverend Richard Joyner and my other Councilmembers, we have to walk on by faith and if we do we will win and we will succeed."

He said he is opposed to the house bill because when it is said it was inspired by Rocky Mount and that is not true. He said as a Council they are going to have to speak boldly and stand firm on what they believe in. He said the City's staff and Manager answered the audit and

responded in a professional way so there should be nothing left to say. He said processes are in place to respond to the audit.

He said he wants the citizens to know "We have served you well; we have served you when we have had pushbacks; we've served you when it's very hard for us to even get things on the table but we stood together, and we saw it through.

Thank you, Mayor for giving me this space and at this time, I hope that this Council would direct the City Manager and staff to draft a resolution to send to our General Assembly that we oppose House Bill 473."

**BUDGET ORDINANCE (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)**

The Mayor stated that the City Council was provided with a Budget Ordinance amending the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 budget to appropriate \$600,000 in the Self-Insurance Internal Service Fund for the purpose of covering health insurance claims by the City in the current fiscal year and agreed to add consideration to today's agenda.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell unanimously carried that **Ordinance No.O-2021-58** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 FOR CITY HEALTH INSURANCE FUND** be adopted.

**CLOSED SESSION/COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS - HB 473**

A Closed Session was requested for matters concerning attorney-client privilege and personnel. At the request of the Mayor, motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell to enter into a Closed Session.

Councilmember Knight stated that a request has been made for the City Council to consider the adoption of a Resolution opposing HB 473 to send to the General Assembly.

The Mayor confirmed that Councilmember Knight had requested staff to generate a resolution for Council consideration.

Councilmember Knight stated that is correct but wants there to be a record of such a request.

The Mayor stated that he has not been given this much space in a long time and moved forward with requesting a second to a Motion previously made to enter into a closed session. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Daughtride and, without objection, the City Council entered into Closed Session at 5:45 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-581** at the end of **Minute Book 37** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

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OPEN SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

The Council returned to open session at 7:30 p.m. and there being no further business, without opposition, the meeting was adjourned.

  
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Pamela O. Casey  
City Clerk