

October 14, 2019

The City Council of the City of Rocky Mount met this day in a regular session scheduled for 7:00 p.m. in the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building with Mayor David W. Combs presiding.

Councilmembers present: André D. Knight, Reuben C. Blackwell, IV, E. Lois Watkins, Tom Rogers and W. B. Bullock.

Councilmembers absent: Richard Joyner and Christine Carroll Miller.

Staff Present: Rochelle Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Chris Beschler and Natasha Hampton, Assistant City Managers; Tameka Kenan-Norman, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer; Ken Hunter, Budget and Evaluation Manager; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Will Deaton, Director of Development Services; Jeffery Walston, Human Relations Specialist; Corey Mercer, Fire Chief; Elton Daniels, Parks and Recreation Director; George Robinson, Police Chief; Kim Batts, Deputy City Clerk; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

The following members of the Fire and Police Departments were in attendance: *Fire*: Tracey Drewery; Michael Roupp; Rod Smith; Jason Bland; Jameson Joyner; and Dillon Lassiter; *Police*: William Mayfield; Chad Creech; Dustin Wester; Colton Craft; and Cameron McFadden.

Security Officers: Retired Police Sergeants L. S. Parker, Jr. and Stoney Battle.

The Mayor called the meeting to order and called on Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers to offer prayer.

WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed citizens and directed them to copies of the agenda near the entrance of the City Council Chamber.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held September 23, 2019 were approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney announced the resignation of Chief Communications and Marketing Officer Tameka Kenan-Norman. She stated this is a rather bittersweet moment for her personally as City Manager as she has had the distinct pleasure and honor of working with Tameka who has done a tremendous job for the City. She reported that Tameka started working for the City in April of 2012 and since that time the Communications and Marketing Office which started with a staff of two (2), including herself, has now grown to a staff of four (4) and has garnered many achievements including, but not limited to, starting the "My Rocky Mount" magazine (an

annual publication sent to all public utility customers; initiating a quarterly publication that goes out to all City employees entitled "Talk of the Town"; completing a branding style-guide and along with that the new brand including branding jiggle and videos which aired on WRAL and WNCN (Rocky Mount, the Center of It All); regional marketing initiatives such as Google display ads, advertising in the Mudcats stadium, in the Raleigh News & Observer and on radio stations in the Raleigh and Greenville markets; continued programming on C.I.T.Y. TV 19; completion and premier of the "Sanitation Workers Strike" documentary; and received sixteen (16) awards from the North Carolina City and County Communications Association since 2012. She said Ms. Kenan-Norman will be joining her husband in Salisbury, Maryland where he has taken a new job and will serve as Chief Communications and Marketing Director for an agency there. She stated it is with regret that she announces Tameka's last day of employment on October 23, 2019 and added that she will be missed in many different ways. The City Manager announced there will be a celebration for Tameka on Thursday, October 17, 2019 and added that she hopes the community will come down to say farewell and good luck to one of the City Leadership Team's most valuable members.

PROCLAMATION - DISABILITY AWARENESS EMPLOYMENT MONTH

The Mayor presented a Proclamation proclaiming the month of October 2019 to Human Relations Director Archie Jones, Human Relations Specialist Jeffery Walston and members of the Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities. The Mayor and City Manager joined them for a photograph.

Mr. Walston announced that each year the Commission partners with other community organizations to sponsor events to highlight services for the disabled community. He invited all to attend this year's Bowling for Disabilities event which is a collaborative effort between the Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bowling Center to raise awareness, share resources and raise funds for the Curtis Dew, Jr. Scholarship Fund for Advance Educational Studies. He noted the event will be at the Bowling Center, 3250 N. Church Street, on October 26, 2019 from 1 to 4 p.m. Mr. Walston reported that tickets for the event are \$10 which will cover the cost of shoe rental and two games of bowling.

PROCLAMATION - HONORING THE NATION'S FIRST RESPONDERS DAY

The Mayor read a Proclamation proclaiming October 28, 2019 as "Honoring the Nation's First Responders Day" in the City of Rocky Mount and presented the proclamation to Fire Chief Corey Mercer and Police Chief George Robinson. The Mayor and City Manager joined the Police and Fire Chief for a photograph.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Mayor outlined the guidelines for petitions from the public

and opened the meeting for public petitions.

Mayor Combs recognized the following individuals and a summary of comments is outlined below:

- **Chris Larsen:**
 - Stated he is the Vice-Chairman at the Edgecombe County Veteran's Museum in Downtown Tarboro;
 - Stated they are bringing the Traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall to Edgecombe County near the museum (375 feet long; longer than a football field);
 - Said there are over thirty (30) names of Nash County soldiers on the Wall who did not come home from Vietnam;
 - Announced the Wall will be open at 9 a.m. on Thursday, October 17, 2019 and there will be a flyover by jets from Seymour Johnson AFB on Saturday and a Navy Band from Norfolk, Virginia and Honor Guard from ROTC units and the speaker will be Colonel Walter Marm who won the medal of honor;
 - Invited all to visit the "Wall" and said it will be open 24 hours a day

Mayor Combs thanked Mr. Larsen for his comments and noted that the brochure indicates the exhibit will be open from October 17 through 20, 2019 twenty-four (24) hours a day.

- **Samuel Battle:**
 - Congratulated Councilmember Knight on winning the recent election and said he congratulated him when he saw him the night of the election;
 - Said it is his understand Councilmember Knight said at the victory party a man named Samuel Battle who had been fighting against us for two (2) years is congratulating him and said God said he would make your enemy your footstool;
 - Said he is not Mr. Knight's enemy and surely not under his foot and a long way from being under anyone's feet;
 - Said at the end of the day no matter who wins or loses he has promoted unity and harmony and said all have a part to play but it is difficult to promote unity when it is one-sided;
 - Said he has a right to support any candidate he wishes and is under no one's feet and expressed congratulations again

Councilmember Watkins called on the Mayor to remind Mr. Battle of the guidelines for speaking from the podium. Mayor Combs admonished Mr. Battle stating that he pushes the limit each time he comes up to speak.

Mr. Battle continued by saying:

- Said this month is Breast Cancer Month and questioned why people in Rocky Mount are dying from breast cancer when there is a mammogram machine at the Event Center that is not hooked up

Councilmember Blackwell stated that every time Mr. Battle comes to speak he makes allegations. He said anyone who deals with nuclear radiation knows they are at the mercy of the State of North Carolina and OIC is collaborating with Nash/UNC Hospital and Nash Radiology to go through the process. He said, "you don't just buy a machine and hook it up and start using it." Mr. Blackwell said OIC is going through the process and when it is ready to be opened, it will be opened. He said if Mr. Battle is blaming breast cancer rates on a mammogram machine that is not yet hooked up he should do his homework on what causes breast cancer, including the root causes, who is

treating it, whose is getting it, who is living with it and who is dying with it, adding it will open when OIC is finished with it.

- **David Farris:**
 - Said he is President and CEO of the Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce;
 - Said most in this room can agree on barbeque and this past weekend Rocky Mount hosted the 12th annual Downeast BBQ Throwdown and it was a success;
 - Said the weather could not have been more perfect and the event was enjoyed and the food and entertainment was great;
 - Said Al Carver, owner of Big Al's Restaurant in Raleigh, who was a participant at the event visited him today to tell him what a great job the City always does, and he has participated many years and complimented the City from set up to clean up (and clean-up throughout the event); said he was very complimentary of the Police Department;
 - Thanked and congratulated the City on the good job

- **Dr. Kim Koo:**
 - Said at the last Council meeting a resident petitioned the Council to consider building a prison in the City so kinfolk do not have to go see their loved ones in County jails in either Tarboro or Nashville;
 - Said she is completely appalled by this suggestion and we do not need more cages to lock people in but rather have to mitigate and eliminate the causes that let people take the wrong path;
 - Said there are also people who get swept up for being in the wrong place at the wrong time and people in jail for minor infringements;
 - Said a system of racial preference manifests in the unequal distribution of power and resources;
 - Said lack of work, affordable housing, universal healthcare and a meaningful educational system is the basis for the poverty and neglect that can be seen around us;
 - Said these communities have long been ignored by authorities which has maintained the status quo and both youths and adults are alienated from each other and families and friends;
 - Said we need to come together and recover our shared humanity and build back the true potential of all community members through working and struggling together for positive social changes and our strength lies in our ability for a common goal and with other people and communities around us;
 - Said it is with such a conviction that she denounces building more jails or expanding any reason to lock more people up

- **Bronson Williams:**
 - Thanked the Council and Mayor for quickly funding the run-off election;
 - Said one of the uniters in the City is the right and privilege to vote and as a City we must continue to stay the course in developing a vibrant Downtown, safer communities and a flowing and growing local economy;
 - Said Rocky Mount is really the center of it all and asked Council to speak truth to power when it comes to misinformation that sometimes flows like water through the City;
 - Said when we tell our own story it negates any manufactured stories and commended the Mayor and Council and said in spite of the negatives things thrown at or about this governing body and City, they stay focused on improving the lives and making the City attractive to new business and industry;
 - Said he often wonders what more could be done if all residents work together rather than against each other;
 - Said it is important that the Mayor's office be a leading voice in creating an equitable Rocky Mount and it can move from better to excellence when we all work together

- **Gwendolyn Wilkins:**
 - Wished Tameka Kenan-Norman the best and said she was a class act and the City's loss is Salisbury's gain;

- Asked the Council to do its due diligence in building up Ward 3 and said she fears issues raised before the election may be forgotten now that the election is over;
 - Stated Ward 3 needs to be built up with a focus on reducing crime, including hiring more officers and consideration of Police substations in high crime areas; removing abandoned boarded-up houses or remodeling them and assisting neighborhood residents with home ownership or rental and asked that Council give as much attention to the impoverished areas as to the building and renovating of Downtown;
 - Said it is thought that people will come Downtown once it is built up, but the truth is if we were to ever have a reputable performer come to the Event Center most residents in Ward 3 would not be able to afford to attend the event let alone eat at the steakhouse afterwards;
 - Said residents need to be prepared to qualify for the jobs that are coming by emphasizing and assisting workforce readiness and set examples for residents not by saying words or doing deeds intentionally meant to tear the community apart;
 - Said on a recent visit to the South Rocky Mount Community Center she was dismayed to learn that the roof is leaking and some of the ceiling tiles have turned brown presumably from the rain coming in and she said she is worried about the presence of mold and mildew that could present a health risk;
 - Said although the community center may be in Ward 4, it serves the majority of youth in Ward 3 and said it seems only yesterday she attended the ribbon cutting and that is why it is so hard to believe the roof is leaking so soon and either it was not replaced during the remodeling or the quality of the work done is questionable; she said if Council has not already put a plan in place to fix the problem she asked that they do so;
 - Said the community does not need to be taught how to be sharecroppers again and we have learned to eat right and about the different foods groups in school and most have seen their grandparents plow a field but said why not encourage people to pursue degrees so that they can one day own an agribusiness rather than plow a field so they can buy the whole farm rather than toil the land; empower people to do for themselves and this is how we make it as a successful community and how we become again a “City on the Rise”
- ***Elaine B. Williams:***
 - Congratulated Councilmembers Knight (Ward 1) and Joyner (Ward 3) on their re-election and congratulated incoming Councilmembers Walker (Ward 4) and Daughtridge (Ward 5) on their election;
 - Requested the City Council consider an advisory committee noting for the past 36 years there has been an African-American female on this Council and that voice will now be missing; she noted the advisory committee would help to bridge that voice to the Council for the needs of the African-American female;
 - Told Councilmember Watkins that she will be missed and thanked her for her service;
 - Wished Tameka Kenan-Norman best wishes in her new job and said she will be missed;
 - Thanked the City Council for their hard work and consistency and said each member of the Council is appreciated
 - **Nehemiah Smith, Jr.:**
 - Said today he was gifted a Love Rocky Mount T-shirt and it shows him that there are other people that love Rocky Mount like he does;
 - Said he is a native of Rocky Mount and was born and raised here and is a proud graduate of Rocky Mount Senior High and from the largest class ever graduating in 1988;
 - Said the gift shows him that all over the country people are finally learning to live together and more importantly to co-exist;
 - Said on December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks the mother of the modern civil rights movement refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus and 64 years later and 200 years into the city's history the citizens elected the first African-American Mayor and said he hopes that action will be mirrored here in Rocky Mount;

- Said the move towards unity in the City is happening;
 - Said a few months ago he does not know if he would have received the gift or if he would have taken it, but he took it because he met these people at the Mill, and they were talking and all enjoying Rocky Mount and he saw that someone else enjoyed Rocky Mount like he does;
 - Said it is going to take time and a good faith effort from all parties and prayer and understanding of different perspectives and, most importantly, the capacity to love but thinks if we do those things, we will be able to come together and solve some of our issues;
 - Added that he did not grow up on a farm but has worked on his family's farm and it taught him work ethic and, though he is a college graduate, he does not discount anything that his family did on the farm because they worked so that their family could have better lives and it showed them what a work ethic is;
 - Said he believes community gardens are great and will teach children a work ethic
- ***Nathlyn Ohree:***
 - Said she is the third Vice-President of the Rocky Mount branch of the NAACP;
 - Said the NAACP was founded in 1909 and recited the mission of the organization;
 - Said she is standing before Council because the eyes of America have been looking upon Rocky Mount, North Carolina and she believes with the current leadership and oncoming leadership that the City Council has demonstrated a high level of respect for one another and the people they serve;
 - Said as a city resident she is very proud of the City Council and where the City has come from and can see a great vision of where we shall go in a continued environment of respect
- ***Morris Minges:***
 - Said as a former teacher she is really upset about the Nash-Rocky Mount Schools being in the tanker with D and F grading and questioned how it got that bad;
 - Says she knows a lot of excellent teachers and questioned what is going on;
 - Questioned if the City Council has an advocate on the school board or if citizens just give the School Board tax dollars;
 - Said a couple of years ago she attended the Twin Counties Hall of Fame banquet and the tickets were \$36.50 and now they are \$50 each and said she was hoping her Council representative from Ward 7 would be here so that she could ask the question because if she and her husband go that will be \$100 and questioned if it would be worth it;
 - Said please don't litter;
 - Said she was glad people said the BBQ Throwdown was clean, but they obviously did not go down Hwy. 301 in front of her shop because she needs to go out and clean it up
- ***Lewis Turner:***
 - Said he is impressed with the number of people in attendance;
 - Said he was going to ask Council to authorize a city vehicle to take him home but when he looked around, he saw so many familiar faces he felt he could draft someone;
 - Said he is proud he heard everything that was said including the criticisms and people had time to say what they wanted to say and thanked Council for that

Mayor Combs stated he has been Mayor for almost 12 years and Mr. Turner has attended more City Council meetings than anyone whose presence was not a requirement.

- ***T. J. Walker, Jr.:***
 - Thanked the Council for their service and hard work and for being able to do what they do to serve the City;
 - Thanked them for the guidance, assistance and prayers during this election process and stated he is looking forward to serving Ward 4 and the citizens of

the City and looks forward to working with Council to unify and move the City forward to make it the City it can be and will be;

- o Said he prays the Councilmembers leaving will continue to do great things even beyond their tenure and that all will have a great night's rest

URBAN DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City Council was provided with a copy of a letter from the Mayor to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) delegating signature authority for HUD related CDBG and HOME grant agreements, vouchers and application documents to City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney as the alternate designee to sign in his absence from August 8, 2019 through December 9, 2019. The Council was also provided with Environmental Review Activity/Project Information forms (Section 58.5) for twenty-nine (29) projects/activities executed by Mayor David W. Combs in order for the Council to ratify approval of and execution of the letter to HUD and the twenty-nine (29) activity/project forms.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Watkins and unanimously carried that the action taken by the Mayor David W. Combs to execute the letter and project/activity forms be ratified.

GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/ASSISTANCE FOR FIREFIGHTERS GRANT

The City Council was provided with a Grant Project Ordinance appropriating \$154,091 (\$138,681 from grant funds from FEMA and a local match of \$15,410 from the General Fund) for the Assistance for Firefighters Grant approved by Council during the September 23, 2019 City Council meeting for the purchase of heavy-duty washers and dryers specialized for cleaning turnout gear and removing carcinogens deposited on the gear during structural firefighting.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Rogers and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2019-68** entitled **GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/ASSISTANCE FOR FIREFIGHTERS GRANT** be adopted.

EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE GRANT (JAG)

The City Council was advised that the Police Department has received funding from the Department of Justice in the form of the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant for 2019 in the amount of \$37,794 which will be shared with Nash County in a 60/40 split with the City receiving \$22,676.40 and Nash County receiving \$15,117.60. The City Council was further advised that the funds will be used to purchase a LiveScan fingerprint station to replace the current aging system. It was requested that the grant funding be approved; that the City Manager be authorized to execute the "Award and Special Conditions Document", including initialing each page of the document and that the Project Ordinance appropriating the grant funds be approved.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rogers, seconded by Councilmember Watkins and unanimously carried that the City Manager be authorized to execute/initial the documentation required and that **Ordinance No. O-2019-69** entitled **GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE GRANT** be adopted.

ASSESSMENTS/HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT

The City Council received the preliminary assessment roll prepared to recover costs incurred by the City in connection with Housing Code Enforcement on the following properties:

- a. 415 S. Mercer Street
- b. 300/302 Middle Street; and
- c. 4144 Sunset Avenue

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that receipt of the preliminary assessment roll be acknowledged; that **Resolution No. R-2019-40** entitled **RESOLUTION OF DETERMINATION OF COST OF REPAIR/DEMOLITION OF SUBSTANDARD HOUSING AND STRUCTURES** and **Resolution No. R-2019-41** entitled **RESOLUTION OF PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT ROLL** be adopted; and that a public hearing on the assessments be scheduled for November 11, 2019.

FY 2020 METROPOLITAN PLANNING PROGRAM GRANT/TRANSIT

The City Council was advised that the City has been approved by the North Carolina Department of Transportation for the FY 2020 Section 5303 Metropolitan Planning Grant from the Public Transportation Division in the amount of \$39,000. Council was advised that the funding shares are as follows: Federal \$31,200; State \$3,900; City \$3,900.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rogers, seconded by Councilmember Bullock and unanimously carried that the grant agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation be approved and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the grant agreement and any required documentation/certifications on behalf of the City.

ANNEXATION AND UTILITY (WATER) SERVICE AGREEMENTS

The City Council received Annexation and Utility (Water) Service Agreements (including Irrevocable Petitions for Annexation of Property) for water service outside the City limits to the following properties:

- 3780 Briarwood Drive
- 1019 Stillbrook Court; and
- 3480 Aspen Road

Council was advised that the property owners have paid the standard annexation petition fees and have agreed to be bound by all provisions of the Irrevocable Annexation Petitions; however, the properties are not good candidates for annexation at this time.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Rogers and unanimously carried that the Annexation Petitions be received and annexations postponed; that the Annexation and Utility (Water) Service Agreements for water service to the following properties be approved, subject to payment of required privilege and connection fees, and that the City Manager be authorized to execute the following Agreements on behalf of the City:

- a. Agreement with Kyrstie Woodward Ireland for water service to 3780 Briarwood Drive **(C-2019-32)**;
- b. Agreement with Zarko and Angie L. H. Dorovic for water service to 1019 Stillbrook Court **(C-2019-33)**; and
- c. Agreement with Zarko and Angie L. H. Dorovic for water service to 3480 Aspen Road **(C-2019-34)**

HEALTH, SANITATION AND NUISANCES CODE AMENDMENT/NOXIOUS WEEDS

The City Council was provided with an Ordinance amending Chapter 10 of the Code of Ordinances to reduce the maximum allowable height of grass as defined in the current Ordinance from 18 inches to 12 inches and reducing the minimum allowable distance of growth from the property line of a structure from 150 feet to 75 feet or one (1) parcel width, whichever is less.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Watkins and unanimously carried the **Ordinance No. O-2019-70** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 10 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT ENTITLED "HEALTH, SANITATION AND NUISANCES"** be adopted.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

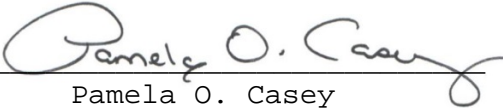
Motion was made by Councilmember Rogers, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that a Special Called Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting be scheduled for Wednesday, October 23, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. for the purpose of going into a closed session for discussion relative to a personnel matter.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING - ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING

Mayor David W. Combs announced that the City Council will hold a Special Called Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting on Monday, October 28, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. just prior to the 4:00 p.m. regular scheduled City Council meeting for the purpose of going into a closed session for discussion relative to a matter concerning attorney-client privilege.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the City Council meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.


 Pamela O. Casey
 City Clerk