

November 11, 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, Richard Joyner, E. Lois Watkins, Tom Rogers, W. B. Bullock and Christine Carrol Miller.

Councilmembers absent: Reuben C. Blackwell, IV.

Staff Present: Rochelle Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Chris Beschler, Assistant City Manager; Dorothy Brown Smith, Interim 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; George Robinson, Police Chief; Elayne Henderson; Director of Human Resources; Tracey Drewery, Division Chief; Kevin Harris, Business Development Manager; Amy Staton, Finance Director; Kim Batts, Deputy City Clerk; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

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.

Mayor Combs recognized the Veterans in attendance and asked them to stand to be recognized for their service. He noted there was a very nice service today at the Veterans Memorial in recognition of Veterans Day and that other recognitions occurred across the City.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held October 28, 2019 were approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

The City Council received the minutes from a Special Called Committee of the Whole meeting held Monday, October 23, 2019. The minutes are as follows:

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2019 AT 2:00 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Rogers, Mayor Pro Tem
 André D Knight
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV*
 Richard Joyner*
 E. Lois Watkins
 W. B. Bullock

STAFF PRESENT:

Pamela O. Casey
 Robin Cox

Chris Miller
Mayor David W. Combs

**participated via conference call*

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor David W. Combs called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. and welcomed all present.

The City Council canceled the Special Called Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for Monday, October 28, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

City Clerk Pamela O. Casey received direction from the City Council relative to conferences/schools and the organizational meeting scheduled for December 9, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION/PERSONNEL

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Rogers and unanimously carried that the City Council go into Closed Session at 2:19 p.m. for the purpose stated. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as **ESM-540** at the end of Minute Book 36 upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor Pro Tem convened the Committee in regular session at 4:05 p.m. and the Committee of the Whole was adjourned.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Rogers and unanimously carried that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole be approved.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

2019 Citizen of the Year

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney announced that she was recently notified by the local chamber of Omega Psi Phi that she has been selected as their 2019 Citizen of the Year. She stated she is humbled, honored and appreciative of the recognition and wants to share acceptance of the award with the City Council and the community. She said they have been through a lot over the past months and are coming out on the high end. She said it took a lot of faith in God and in reflecting on the commitment of public servants that sit on the dais with one hope and desire to make the City the best it can be. She reported the recognition will be bestowed at the Tri-Faith Ministries Church on Saturday and that she will accept the award on behalf of all.

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:

- **Dr. Kim Koo:**
 - Spoke in opposition to the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and requested the Council rescind its support of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline;
 - Provided the Council with petitions from citizens (253) from across Eastern North Carolina in opposition to the pipeline

- **Robert Davis:**
 - Asked that the City be granted a new beginning and said the opportunity exists and it only needs to be claimed;
 - Said Rocky Mount is not two cities, but one;
 - Said as we turn this corner where we can see much success, we should try to manage one city and be one people and go forward with one goal;
 - Said he hopes whatever is blocking the Downtown Development of the hotel can be removed;
 - Asked that citizens be positive members of the City

- **Gloria Davis:**
 - Questioned when the first meeting of the Workforce Housing Advisory Commission will be and who will lead the Commission;
 - Said she would like to see swift movement to complete appointments

- **Samuel Battle:**
 - Thanked Councilmembers for a condolence letter recently received by his family;
 - Referred to a recent newspaper article saying no one is above the law and no one should get a “get out of jail free card”; (NOTE: Mr. Battle was interrupted by Johnny Cunningham’s call for a point of order; Mayor Combs requested that Mr. Battle finish his comments)
 - Said human trafficking is a real issue;
 - Noted there are 535 sex offenders in Nash and Edgecombe Counties and voiced concern for children in the communities

- **Bronson Williams:**
 - Recognized active and retired members of the military for their service;
 - Said African Americans are still disproportionately affected by crime, poverty, unemployment and incarceration and more police on the street will not solve those issues;
 - Said we must improve health outcomes and advance wrap around programs to strengthen economic and educational opportunities;
 - Said it seems we live in a City where it is taboo to be black and the idea of blacks uniting is somehow an illegal activity;
 - Urged Council to find dollars for after school programs before increasing the budget for more police;
 - Said several months ago he asked about the City’s franchise agreement whereby the public studio space currently offered by WHIG TV was an exchange for their coverage on the cable system and as of today has heard nothing back from anyone relative to whether the agreement is still in place and whether WHIG is discriminating against those wanting to use its space; and added it would be a shame for the City to be included in a lawsuit;
 - Said he will now focus on being made whole again and letting people know their worth and helping them to find their rightful space in the City

- **Nehemiah Smith:**
 - Wished Councilmembers Bullock and Joyner and other Veterans and their spouses a Happy Veterans Day;
 - Said racism in the City is a festering open sore and to pretend it does not exist erases the experiences of African Americans and other people of color and diminishes all;
 - Said if racism is ignored the progress we say we seek will never come to fruition;

- Relayed an experience in a local restaurant he recently observed (NOTE: The Mayor cautioned Mr. Smith not to call names of individuals) wherein racism was seen;
 - Said government, business and religious sectors of the community need to come together to address this issue and added when we do not acknowledge the very real ways in which racism has existed and continues to exist, we are just ignoring racism and not solving it;
 - Ended with a quote from the Macbeth (second witch)
- ***Elaine B. Williams:***
 - Wished all Veterans a Happy Veterans Day;
 - Said the community needs to support youths coming home from college wanting to do good work in the City and said sometimes they have been beat down;
 - Said she remembers a Councilmember who went off to college and came back to the City who was beat up constantly by the local newspaper;
 - Said we need to welcome our youth back because they are our future and need to stop making “stuff” front page news that is not warrant front page coverage;
 - Asked for an update relative to the state audit (NOTE: Mayor Combs responded by saying no report has been received and he does not expect to hear anything from the State Auditor until they are finished with their audit)
- ***Johnny Cunningham:***
 - Said HOPE stands for helping other people excel; said the crime he hears about on the news is not happening here in Rocky Mount because hope has been restored and this Governing Body has restored hope in the community;
 - Said his organization employs some sex offenders and is implementing programs to help others excel;
 - Told the City Manager he knows what she has encountered because he has been threatened and said for her to subject herself to such treatment for the betterment of the City brings hope;
 - Said the Manager’s efforts to bring a black investor to the City brings hope and encouraged her to continue doing what she is doing because it is unacceptable for people to lose hope
- ***Leon Henderson:***
 - Said on April 23, 2018 the Council adopted a Resolution concerning red-light cameras;
 - Said former Assistant City Manager Varney presented a report showing that, when installed, red-light cameras resulted in a reduction in accidents;
 - Said Council adopted a resolution that staff be authorized to move forward with drafting agreements with the school system and that the City be authorized to proceed to obtain required legislative authority;
 - Questioned where the City stands with moving forward with the installation of red-light cameras and stated there are a lot of accidents at red lights

CONSENT AGENDA

A. FY 2019 ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS:(recommended for adoption)

Budget:

- **Ordinance No. O-2019-75** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 FOR FIRE SAFETY GRANT AWARD PROJECT** (appropriates grant funds received from Underwriter’s Laboratory Firefighter Safety Institute received as grant prize from a national video contest in which Rocky Mount Fire Department and two (2) other agencies participated – \$8,333.33)

It was noted that no local match is required.

Project:

- **Ordinance No. O-2019-76** entitled **GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT FOR TRANSFER STATION IMPROVEMENTS** (appropriates additional funds for bus transfer station improvements - \$170,000)

B. TEMPORARY STREET CLOSING (recommended for approval):

- Request from City Engineer, Steve Yetman, for permission to close the following streets for the annual Christmas parade on Sunday, December 1, 2019, from 1:00 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. (ordinance adoption requirement of NCDOT standards):
 - Along the east side of Main Street from Marigold Street to E. Thomas Street, Thomas Street (US 64 Business West) from NE Main Street to Church Street and Church Street (US 301 Business) from W. Thomas Street to Bassett Street

Ordinance No. O-2019-77 entitled **ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE**

C. TEMPORARY STREET CLOSING (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING - recommended for approval):

- Request from Evangeline Bullock for permission to close the 5000 Block of Marriot Street (5101 Marriot Street) from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, November 16, 2019 for the Main Community Yard Sale and Give Away

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the Consent Agenda be approved inclusive the street closings and adoption of the Ordinances contained therein.

ASSESSMENTS/HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT/PUBLIC HEARING

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to assessments proposed to be levied to recover costs incurred by the City in connection with Housing Code Enforcement on the following properties:

- 415 S. Mercer Street
- 300/302 Middle Street
- 4144 Sunset Avenue

Dr. Ada Gray Pulley, owner of 300/302 Middle Street, told the City Council that she was in the process of remodeling in 2015 and had most of the inside work completed when she was admitted into the hospital. She stated the property was damaged during this time and a Police report was filed. She added that before the final work on the property could be completed the property was torched. She inquired what consideration she can receive for her expense and added she is disappointed that no action was taken by the Police relative to the damage to her property. Mayor Combs requested that Dr. Pulley provide information to a City staff member.

No one else from the public appeared relative to the assessments and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that consideration of 300/302 Middle Street be deferred and that **Resolution No. R-2019-43** entitled **RESOLUTION CONFIRMING ASSESSMENTS** be adopted.

ANNEXATION NO. 315 - 2014 OLD MILL ROAD

The City Clerk provided the City Council with a resolution certifying the petition for Annexation No. 315 - 2014 Old Mill Road as sufficient pursuant to G.S. 160A-31 to proceed with annexation of the contiguous parcel.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Watkins and unanimously carried that the following resolutions be adopted and that the Department of Planning and Development be instructed to prepare a feasibility study in connection with the annexation:

- a. **Resolution No. R-2019-44** entitled **RESOLUTION OF CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION OF THE SUFFICIENCY OF PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA BY CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT/ANNEXATION NO. 315 - 2014 OLD MILL ROAD**; and
- b. **Resolution No. R-2019-45** entitled **RESOLUTION CALLING A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE CITY LIMITS OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT TO INCLUDE ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA/ANNEXATION NO. 315 - 2014 OLD MILL ROAD** (schedules public hearing for February 10, 2020).

MAINTENANCE CONTRACT - 800-MEGAHERTZ RADIO SYSTEM/MOTOROLA, INC.

The City Council was advised that the City completed a major radio system upgrade in 2017 and that Motorola, the vendor providing the upgrade, included in their pricing a three-year maintenance and software upgrade package which is set to expire in June 2020.

It was requested that Council approve Motorola's six-year system upgrade agreement for the City's 800-megahertz radio system as it is the most cost-effective pricing option on an annual basis and approval will hold pricing until the current contract expires on June 30, 2020.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Rogers and unanimously carried that the maintenance and software upgrade contract (option 2) with Motorola for coverage of the City's 800-megahertz radio system be approved at a cost of \$2,384,821 for a six-year period and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the bid contract (**BD-2019-32**) on behalf of the City.

Mayor Combs noted there was a presentation at the Committee of the Whole meeting just prior to this meeting relative to this matter.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING/CANCELLATION

Consideration was given by the City Council of canceling the second regular Council meeting scheduled for December 23, 2019.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the regular City Council meeting scheduled for December 23, 2019 be canceled.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULES (REGULAR AND COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE)

Consideration was given by the City Council of 2020 City Council and Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting schedules.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the 2020 meeting schedules be approved.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE FOR CITY FACILITIES

Councilmember Knight questioned if a holiday schedule for City facilities has been prepared.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney stated that she does not have a schedule at this time but noted the holidays will be a busy time. She stated that last year the Mayor requested that the Imperial Centre be open the day after Thanksgiving and the Parks and Recreation Department will be looking at a holiday schedule.

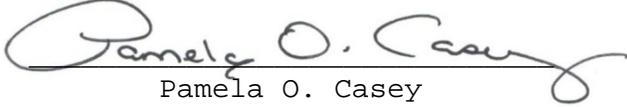
CLOSED SESSION/ATTORNEY-CLIENT (PERSONNEL ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)

A Closed Session to discuss matters concerning attorney-client privilege and personnel was requested.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rogers, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the City Council go into Closed Session at 7:39 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-542** at the end of **Minute Book 36** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor convened the City in regular session at 8:11 p.m. and there being no further business for regular session, adjourned the meeting.


Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk