

April 13, 2020

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 C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. presiding.

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

**Councilmembers joining remotely*

Staff Present: Rochelle Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Dorothy Brown Smith, Chief Communications and Marketing Consultant; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director*; Will Deaton, Director of Development Services*; Cynthia Jones, Director of Community and Business Development*; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist*; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

**Briefly present as needed.*

Security Officer: Retired Police Sergeant L. S. Parker, Jr.

The Mayor called the meeting to order and called on Councilmember Daughtridge to offer prayer.

WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed staff and citizens attending via Facebook Live.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that the minutes of a special called meeting of the City Council held March 19, 2020 and a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held March 23, 2020 be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

The City Council received the minutes and recommendations from a special called Committee of the Whole meeting held Monday, March 19, 2020. The minutes are as follows:

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2020 AT 4:00 P.M. IN THE GEORGE W. DUDLEY CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING WITH MAYOR PRO TEM ANDRÉ D KNIGHT PRESIDING:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

André D Knight, Mayor Pro Tem
Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
Richard Joyner
T.J. Walker*
Lige Daughtridge
W. B. Bullock
Christine Carroll Miller*
Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.

**participated remotely (Microsoft Teams)*

Security Officer: L. S. Parker, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle D. Small-Toney
Pamela O. Casey
Natasha Hampton
Elton Daniels
Brenton Bent
Amy Staton
Joel Dunn
George Robinson
Corey Mercer
Will Deaton
Chris Beschler
DeNaide Dickens
Dorothy Brown Smith
Cynthia Jones

Brad Kerr
 Ken Hunter
 Mark Adcox
 Jessie Nunery
 Latasha Hall
 Anthony Ladd
 Tracey Drewery
 Lesley Hudgins
 Robin Cox
 Julian Whitney
 Mike Roupp
 Mike Whitley
 Clay Wilder
 Richard J. Rose

OPENING REMARKS – Mayor Pro Tem André D. Knight:

Mayor Pro Tem André D Knight called the meeting to order and made opening remarks. He asked that all guests remain seated at the end of the meeting and wait to be escorted from the Council Chamber due to precautions being taken for social distancing in response to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) which is being experienced across the nation.

Mayor Pro Tem Knight made the following statement:

- "On March 13, 2020 Mayor Sandy Roberson declared a State of Emergency in Rocky Mount as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- It has been almost one week since that declaration;
- This Council has a history of working together with the Mayor and staff to advance the safety, health and well-being of all residents in our City.
- We are no strangers to disaster. In 1999, when Hurricane Floyd devastated our City and much of eastern North Carolina, the City of Rocky Mount responded in such a coordinated and supportive manner that our City was recognized in our state and around the country as a model for our preparedness and recovery efforts.
- Our City Manager led the effort to appoint working staff task forces and coordinated with other local, state and federal resources to bring help and relief to our City's residents.
- Today, over 20 years later, we find ourselves in the midst of an international health crisis. I called this Special Meeting as a follow up to the press conference lead by the Mayor so that the City Manager can provide the Mayor, City Council and our citizens an update on the actions that she is taking in response to many challenges in several sectors.
- We have asked the City Manager to address several topics that impact our citizens including:
 - o How the City will work with our utility customers to ensure that households continue to have running water, electricity and all the essentials the City provides to keep us safe and healthy;
 - o What the City is doing to ensure the health and safety of our City's workforce;
 - o How the City is collaborating with the public healthcare sector in their response to the pandemic;
 - o How the City's finances are impacted by the wild swings in the stock market; and
 - o If we need to, and I pray we will not, need to activate our Emergency Operations Center (EOC)."

Mayor Pro Tem Knight called on City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney to provide an update on these topics and any others she deemed necessary.

UPDATE ON CITY'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19 - City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney:

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney provided a COVID-19 update to the City Council relative to significant actions taken in response to State directives from the government and guidelines from the Federal Center for Disease Control (CDC); reviewed the City's overall plan for departmental operations; and presented her recommendations for handling disconnections of utility services during this period.

She outlined the following efforts relative to the City's response to COVID-19:

- Collaboration with local leaders in the healthcare field, schools and other governments;
- Keeping the City's employee portal website, social media sites and media outlets up to date;
- Cancellation of meetings of the City's boards, commissions and committees and neighborhood meetings;
- City Hall (is not closed); however, the areas open to the public are limited (plan review meetings and bid openings will be held in the Human Resources training room or the atrium on the first floor);
- City travel has been restricted within designated areas (local);
- Business Services Center:
 - Effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020, the Business Services Center was closed to the public and customers have been directed to pay their utility bills online or through the three drive-thru bays;
 - Customer service representatives have been reassigned to service calls
- Parks and Recreation:
 - Recreation centers and the Imperial Centre have ceased activity (due to Governor's mandate of 50 or less participants);
 - Youth and adult leagues for tournaments at the Sports Complex are postponed;
 - Rentals for Parks and Recreation facilities are not being accepted at this time;
 - Rentals for events of 50 or less will continue;
 - Parks remain open to the public
- Utilities (water, wastewater, sewer, electric and gas) will all operate normally (water is especially important to our safety and health);
- Transit: running without changes to current routes or services (buses are being cleaned and sanitized);
- Police:
 - Call screening has been elevated to identify potential health risks to first responders;
 - Student Resource Officers assigned to schools have been reassigned;
 - Coffee with a Cop has been postponed;
 - Animals for adoption can be viewed online and can be processed on a case by case basis
- Fire:
 - Serves as the City's Management Team for emergencies and is the liaison between the counties and the State Emergency Management Office;
 - Is the City's first responders to emergencies and are triaging calls through E-911 to determine if calls are potential COVID-19 related (if COVID-19 related EMS will be called to transport)
- Community and Business Development:
 - Will continue to monitor the response to the Governor's requests relative to Small Business Administration;

- o Mortgage relief is available for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac borrowers unable to make their mortgage payments and homeowners should contact their lenders for more information;
- o Urgent and Housing Repair programs are in progress and will continue uninterrupted
- Event Center:
 - o Has canceled events scheduled for March 2020;
 - o Staff is working diligently with event holders to reschedule

The City Manager told the Council enhanced cleaning of City buildings and facilities has been implemented either by the City's contract cleaning service or by City employees. She added that:

- Employees are being urged to follow CDC published guidelines for their safety and health;
- Employees are urged to stay at home if they are sick and if they believe they have been in contact with anyone who has or is suspected of having this virus and to seek immediate medical attention;
- Employees are practicing social distancing wherever they can in offices and other settings while keeping all buildings open to the public (with the exception of the Business Services Center);
- Employees who are unable to come to work as a result of the pandemic will have time appropriately charged; authorization for employees to go into a negative balance for two weeks after leave balances have been exhausted will be approved;
- Efforts are being made to procure protective equipment needed to serve our citizens;
- It is the goal to keep every City employee working and employees may be reassigned during this time, as appropriate, if program areas and activities are canceled;
- The City will provide free childcare for employees effective Monday, March 23, 2020 at the education building at the Imperial Centre from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for ages 5 through 12; participants will need to bring their lunch but snacks will be provided; program capacity will be 30 children and will be on a first come first served basis

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney reported on direction suggested to her by Mayor Pro Tem Knight to consider a revision of the City's utility disconnection policy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Council was providing with the proposed revision to collection practices for utility service that includes the following:

- **Section A - No Disconnection Collection Process During the COVID-19 Pandemic**
 - o No disconnection for non-payment;
 - o No late fees will be assessed during this phase;
 - o Customers will continue to receive an automated courtesy call for past due balances;
 - o Staff will monitor past due balances and customers with 2 months delinquency will be contacted to encourage them to pay something on the account; staff will provide available assistance information to customers
- **Section B - Resume Disconnection Collection Process at the Conclusion of the COVID-19 Pandemic**
 - o Two payment assistance plans will be offered to help customers with past due balances: COVID-19 Standard Payment Assistance Plan and COVID-19 Hardship Payment Assistance Plan (eligibility criteria and benefits of each plan were outlined)

The City Council was advised that customers will need to provide proof of hardship and the application process was outlined.

The City Manager responded to questions from Councilmembers and noted that cases will be handled on a case by case basis. She recommended approval of the proposed revision to help customers during this unprecedented event by offering temporary relief by not disconnecting services for nonpayment for a limited time for residential and small business customers. She added that during this moratorium on disconnections, customers are encouraged to pay if they can do so to avoid a large balance when the City resumes normal operations.

Ms. Small-Toney told the Council there are other ripple effects of COVID-19 on the local economy and on the City's budget. She said as the City approaches the fourth quarter of 2020 and is in preparation of the budget for next year a loss of approximately \$350,000 below the budget amount is being forecast.

Discussion was held among Councilmembers.

The City Manager told the Council that the stock market suddenly became a volatile environment and indications are the downward turn will continue like the level experienced in 2008, or even worse, in 1929, though both those market corrections rebounded over time. She said that similar to 2008, there are stimulus ideas being discussed to ease the financial markets such as federal purchasing of corporate and municipal bonds and providing liquidity to banks and other distressed businesses. The Manager noted that the City did not lose any investment portfolio value in 2008 yet experienced a decline of \$750,000 of investment earnings.

She further advised:

- Investments of idle funds for North Carolina governments is regulated by NCGS 159-30 and allowable investment types include items that tend to guarantee the principal such as obligations of United States and North Carolina bonds;
- While the City will be impacted by lower investment earnings, the value of investments should remain intact;
- The City invests both government and term funds through the North Carolina Capital Management Trust (NCCMT) that has mutual funds approved by the Local Government Commission (LGC) and both funds have an excellent track record and are focused on safety and liquidity over return;
- Portfolios for the NCCMT Government Fund, which is shorter term investment, and NCCMT Term Fund, which is longer term investment, seek to preserve capital by investing in obligations of the U.S. Government, agencies of the U.S. Government and the state of North Carolina and also invests in local government bonds and notes and high-grade money market instruments;
- 99.5% of the investments are fully collateralized and the investment risk is interest rate risk and issuer-specific decline in credit quality;
- The City's earnings on investments are expected to decline and, for the current year, earnings are anticipated to be \$350,000 to \$400,000 below the budgeted amount;
- The City's idle funds are concentrated as follows:

o Bank account for operations	4%
o NCCMT Government Portfolio	5%
o NCCMT Term Portfolio	91%
- The concentration changes with expected cash flow needs and longer-term investments are moved to shorter term and to the bank account as needed;
- The City has 2 months of available fund balance for operations in the General Fund, 2 months in Electric, 5 months in Gas, Water and Sewer and 5 months in Stormwater and fund balance makes up the idle funds that are invested

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney stated if revenues decline an adjustment can be made on the expenses side, but the City is not yet at

that point. She said staff will be working to close the current year balance and work will be ongoing to prepare the budget for the upcoming year for Council's approval in the face of these new realities.

She added that she is hearing from local partners in healthcare, schools, public safety and business that this pandemic is being taken very seriously and no one has any idea of how long it will last or how we will be impacted in terms of illnesses. She told the Council it is being managed hour by hour and day by day and local partners met at City Hall yesterday. She added collaboration in the meeting was great.

Mr. Small-Toney reported that she has learned that healthcare providers throughout the country lack protective equipment which makes the situation even more challenging.

Council was advised that another concern is how to feed the children who will not have food because of the schools being closed and that a contingency plan which has been put in place is working well.

She told the Council the City's experience is not unique. She recognized the Executive Leadership team, Directors and City staff and said they will bond to bring the City through this crisis. She noted that though this event is different than ones experienced in the past, some of the lessons learned within the community will serve as a guide.

She appreciated the Office of Communications and Marketing for doing a "yeoman's job" in utilizing Microsoft Teams to implement today's meeting.

DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION TO CITY MANAGER

Councilmembers held discussion relative to:

- keeping City staff working;
- putting criteria in place for participation in the moratorium for utility disconnections and the effect on the ability of the City to make the payment to the Municipal Power Agency relative to utilities (\$55M annually);
- past efforts for a more relaxed policy towards collections/disconnections in response to an emergency;
- FEMA reimbursement; and
- monitoring events to be sure gatherings are limited to no more than 50 people and the challenge relative to enforcement

Discussion continued with the Mayor Pro Tem and Councilmembers expressing concerns and discussing available options.

The City Manager recommended that the Council approve/adopt the proposed moratorium to the collection practices for utility services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor Pro Tem thanked the City Manager for the detailed and thorough report and for the information provided by the Office of Communications and Marketing and the Committee of the Whole adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

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

AMENDED AGENDA

The Mayor stated that the City Manager has requested that Item 17 relative to award of a contract for third-party collections be removed from today's agenda and Councilmember Daughtridge has requested that

Items 20 and 21 relative to Administrative Policies dealing with Downtown Building Assistance and Residential Façade Improvement grants be tabled.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he feels consultation with the UNC-SOG, the City's Attorney and the North Carolina Department of Commerce (Main Street) with regard to the grants is needed. He read 2017 and 2020 opinions by Tyler Mulligan, attorney with the UNC/SOG, relative to gift clauses and donations for private development.

Mayor Pro Tem Knight requested the City Manager and City Attorney make comment and City Attorney Richard J. Rose stated he would have to look at the policy to provide an opinion.

The City Manager stated she would like to be a part of any discussion because she is aware of this type of action by other municipalities, even in North Carolina, to incent private owners to invest in their properties. She stated she is surprised that constitutional issues are being raised because it has been a standard policy in many cities throughout North Carolina and the country and she would be interested in hearing the legal opinion as to constitutionality concerns. She stated she has been of the opinion that the City has been behind the curve and is only now starting to provide similar incentives as neighboring cities. She added it is important to look at outcomes of the incentives relative to revitalization of the Downtown by property owners.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

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

- There were some outages from 6:45 a.m. until 2 p.m. due to weather conditions and approximately 2,300 customers lost power. The peak time for outages was between 8:45 a.m. through 9:45 a.m. with approximately 1,400 customers without power. The longest sustained outage was on Oak Level Road at its intersection with South Halifax Road which lasted from 6:45 a.m. through 9:30 a.m. and affected 97 customers. She added all power was restored by 2 p.m.
- COVID-19 Stimulus funding: as of today, she is advised the City has been approved for \$4,798,801 in federal appropriations for services related to the COVID-19 event and the overwhelming majority of that amount (\$4,367,324) is for the Transit System from the FTA for continuation of the City's rural and urban transit operations with no required match. The Manager reported that in terms Community Development \$309,806 will be received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development by the City under a special allocation through the CDBG Program with no required match. She stated Public Safety will receive \$121,771 from the U.S. Department of Justice through an emergency supplemental funding program with no required match.
- The City is eligible for reimbursement of certain expenses due to its response to COVID-19 due to the Federal Disaster Declaration through the Public Assistance Program of FEMA. She added City staff is currently working to gather information on eligible expenses to provide requests for reimbursement to FEMA.
- All Commission and Board Meetings have been canceled. In addition, Neighborhood meetings, Citizens Academy and the Rocky Mount Area Youth Council Meetings are canceled. Program meetings such as Yoga

in the Galleries and Art programs, are also canceled, but there are a few virtual class options available. Email arts@imperialcentre.org for information on these programs.

- Per the City Council's direction, there is now a moratorium on all utility disconnections until further notice and late fees will not be assessed during this time. If you are struggling and need help with your bill, please contact the Business Services Center.
- Reminded the public: if you can...stay home and know that during this pandemic, the City of Rocky Mount is working to ensure you continue to receive excellent municipal services. To highlight the incredible work our employees are still doing during time of uncertainty, we have launched the Our City At Work Campaign, which incorporates the thank you signs residents have placed in their yards. Whether answering customer calls, collecting garbage, repairing a line or responding to various emergencies, City employees continue to provide high quality services. You can participate in The Our City At Work campaign by sharing your pictures of City employees at work using #ourcityatwork and #rockymount for posting on the City's Facebook site.
- If you have not done so, please fill out and send in your 2020 Census form. In March, you should have received your form in the mail. The census will determine funding for housing programs, schools, hospitals, economic development and much more in our community. You can respond online, by phone or by mail. For more information or to respond, visit 2020census.gov.
- Finally, to ensure our citizens are well-informed of the latest information regarding the coronavirus pandemic, the City of Rocky Mount has launched a Citizens Resource Center on its website. There are a number of local, state and federal agencies and organizations providing exceptional services and assistance during this pandemic, and this information can be found in a centralized place on our website to streamline the way citizens can access the information regarding the many resources currently available. Information is included on health/healthcare, employees, employers, small business, education, housing, legal assistance and more. The Citizens Resource Center is for information purposes only and will be updated as new initiatives and news becomes available. Citizens should contact organizations or businesses directly for additional information. We encourage citizens to access this site to stay informed of all the assistance available to our community.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that the Governor's directive relative to the moratorium on utility disconnects requires that a weekly report be provided to the Utilities Commission. He requested that he, along with the other City Councilmembers, be provided with the weekly report as well as prior reports already submitted.

Councilmember Miller questioned if yard waste is being collected and the Manager responded by saying that in order for the City to comply with the Governor's stay at home order crews are being rotated in and out and street crews are being used in the rotator so that staff can adhere to the Governor's mandate. She added this slows the collection process relative to yard waste and encouraged citizens to continue to place yard waste at the curb adding it will be picked up, but the highest priority during this time is residential garbage collection.

The Mayor thanked the Manager for her leadership during this pandemic.

Councilmember Joyner questioned what support system is in place for employees who are going through tough times with the demands being

placed on them. The Manager stated that employees are encouraged to stay in touch with the Human Resources Department. She thanked Council for their support in approving payment of salaries to City employees during this time. She added a luncheon will be launched on a weekly basis for staff utilizing local restaurants and food trucks in the City. She added department heads do an outstanding job reporting issues so they may be addressed promptly.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that waste collection works hand in hand with code enforcement and noted that bills are still being sent to residents. He requested that consideration be given on a case by case basis during the pandemic.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WEEK

The Mayor presented a Proclamation proclaiming the week of April 13 through 17, 2020 as Community Development Week in the City of Rocky Mount to Cynthia Jones, Director of Community & Business Development. Mayor Roberson joined Ms. Jones for a photograph.

FAIR HOUSING MONTH

The Mayor read a Proclamation proclaiming the month of April 2020 as Fair Housing Month in the City of Rocky Mount. He presented the proclamation to Archie Jones, Director of Humans Relations, and joined Mr. Jones for a photograph.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mayor Roberson announced that petitions from the public will not be held at today's meeting due to Governor Cooper's social distancing order for COVID-19 and for the safety of citizens, Council and City staff.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Council received the minutes and recommendations from a Planning Board meeting held March 10, 2020. The minutes are on file in the office of the City Clerk.

The Public Hearing relative to the following rezoning request recommended for approval and found in compliance with the comprehensive plan by the Planning Board was recommended for deferral until the April 27, 2020 meeting of the City Council:

- Request by William Carter Keller to rezone ±12.62 acres located on the corner of River Drive and Carr Street from R-10 and I-1 to R-6MFA

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that receipt of the minutes of the March 10, 2020 Planning Board be acknowledged and that the Public Hearing be deferred until the April 27, 2020 meeting of the City Council, as recommended.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CODE AMENDMENT

At the request of the City Attorney, the City Council was provided with an amendment to Chapter 2 of the City Code entitled "Administration", Article. IV. entitled "Emergency Management" to update the Article IV. in its entirety.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that Ordinance No. **O-2020-12** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT ENTITLED "ADMINISTRATION", ARTICLE IV. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT** be adopted. **ANNEXATION NO. 316 - 3786 WEATHERFORD STREET**

The City Council received a petition from Taylor Weatherford for annexation of a contiguous parcel at 3786 Weatherford Street.

Councilmember Daughtridge requested clarification relative to the address requested for annexation and was advised by the City Clerk that she had asked for clarification as well and was told 3786 is the address of the property requested to be annexed and is property which was gifted to the Petitioner. The City Attorney stated that adoption of the resolution starts the process and the matter will come back to Council for consideration of the annexation.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that receipt of the petition be acknowledged and that **Resolution No. R-2020-7** entitled **RESOLUTION ORDERING THE CITY CLERK TO INVESTIGATE THE SUFFICIENCY OF A PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT/ANNEXATION NO. 316 - 3786 WEATHERFORD STREET** be adopted.

TAXICAB LICENSE/APPLICATION

The City Council received a recommendation from the Chief of Police for the issuance of one (1) taxi cab right to Melvin Lee Hines.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that a taxi permit be approved for issuance to Melvin Lee Hines as recommended by the Chief of Police.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS CODE AMENDMENT

The City Council was provided with an amendment to Chapter 5 of the City Code entitled "Buildings and Building Regulations", Article. IV. Entitled "Building Construction Standards", Sec. 5-19 Entitled "Electrical code adopted; additional standards to refer to the current electrical code as adopted by the State of North Carolina and to remove additional requirements" to modernize and update standards for consistency.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock and seconded by Councilmember Blackwell that the Ordinance amendment be approved. Councilmember Miller voiced concern for safety of individuals in affected Downtown buildings. Councilmember Daughtridge echoed Councilmember Miller's concerns and questioned if the Fire Marshal has reviewed the recommended amendments. He questioned why the City would decrease rather than increase the requirements noting that many of the buildings are wood framed with residential upstairs and commercial downstairs. He voiced concern for the safety of residents.

Community Development Director Will Deaton responded that the boundaries of the fire district are not being reduced. He explained that in the specific area being addressed the maximum requirements are standard based upon an older version of the North Carolina code and do not mesh with the City's code. Councilmember Daughtridge asked for clarification as to commercial property requirements. Councilmember Blackwell questioned if the intent is to give flexibility for decisions based on the State Code and not relinquishing owners from being responsible for the level of investment and level of safety. He added that Rocky Mount has a reputation in eastern North Carolina for being overly strict for small business investors. He questioned if the ordinance is being aligned with the ordinance of other cities the size of Rocky Mount and added that it seems if the goal is to incent Downtown development the City cannot make it so hard to develop the Downtown so that investors cannot do so. Mr. Deaton explained the steps taken by staff relative to the recommended amendment and added that development will continue to be reviewed on a case by case basis and stricter requirements may be required in some cases.

Discussion continued. Councilmember Daughtridge voiced concern that it was explained that the Fire Chief had been consulted relative to the required standards, but not the Fire Marshal. Mr. Deaton explained that plans will be reviewed on a case by case basis and exposed wiring will still not be approved, but to require metal jackets in a brick or cinder block wall is an added expense and a stricter requirement that normally required by the State.

Mayor Roberson asked for clarification and Mr. Deaton explained that the type of use mandates the requirements.

Ordinance No. **O-2020-13** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT ENTITLED "BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS", ARTICLE IV. BUILDING CONSTRUCTION STANDARDSRELATIVE** passed and was adopted by a vote of 6-1 (Councilmember Daughtridge opposed). **SURPLUS PROPERTY DISPOSAL/DERRICK TRUCK**

The City Council received a request from Chris Beschler, Director of Energy Resources, to declare a Derrick truck (Altec model on a 2005 International 7400) as surplus to the needs of the Department of Energy Resources and the City and for approval for the donation of said truck to Nash Community College to be used in their Electric Lineman Training Program.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2020-8** entitled **RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN PROPERTY SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING DONATION** be adopted; that a Claw back Agreement with Nash Community College (**C-2020-4**) be approved and that the Mayor be authorized to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City.

TRAFFIC ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

The City Council received the following recommendation from the Traffic Engineer:

ADOPT:

- No Parking Anytime on Both Sides of Ravenwood Drive from W. Raleigh Boulevard to Recreation Drive

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Miller and unanimously carried that Ordinance No. **O-2020-14** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE TRAFFIC CONTROL ORDINANCE MAP OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

THIRD PARTY COLLECTIONS CONTRACT AWARD

By consensus and at the request of the City Manager, consideration of a contract for third party collections was removed from the agenda.

MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT/SUNSET AVENUE PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS PROJECT

The City Council was provided with a municipal agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for pedestrian signals at signalized intersections on Sunset Avenue between Church Street and US 301. It was explained that the project has a total estimated cost of \$150,000 and the City will be reimbursed for 80% of eligible expenses up to a maximum of \$120,000.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Bullock and unanimously carried that the municipal agreement (**C-2020-5**) with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (Project EB-5711; WBS Element: 50407.1.1 and 50407.3.1) be approved and that the Mayor, Finance Director and City Clerk be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the City.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated there are no sidewalks or signalized intersections in the area of Sunset Avenue down to Winstead Road and Old Carriage Road. He requested that the Manager direct staff to look at that area to help enhance pedestrian traffic, along with the area near the mall, Walmart and Chick-Fil-A. He stated these areas are concerns relative to pedestrian traffic.

Councilmember Bullock responded that Sunset Avenue is an NCDOT controlled street.

DOWNTOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The City Council was advised that the City would like to disburse Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in the amount of \$100,000 for the Down Payment Assistance Program. It was explained that the purpose of the program is to provide residents and those who desire to become residents with affordable homeownership financing opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Council was advised that the Rocky Mount Housing Authority has previously and is currently administering down payment assistance programs for eligible program participants. It was recommended that the Down Payment Assistance Program Agreement with the Rocky Mount Housing Authority be approved (**C-2020-6**).

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the agreement with the Rocky Mount Housing Authority be approved and that the City Manager, Director of Community & Business Development, Finance Director and City Clerk be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the City.

POLICY AMENDMENT/DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The City Council was advised that Council approval is required to revise and/or add to the existing Downtown Business Assistance Program (DBAP). Approval was requested to amend the policy guidelines to authorize the City Manager to implement, administer and grant in accordance with revisions and the full program scope, as needed. Council was provided with the updated Administrative Policy entitled Policy No. II.33.

Mayor Roberson reminded the Council that Councilmember Daughtridge had questioned the constitutionality of the program and requested an opinion from the City Attorney. Mayor Pro Tem Knight stated he feels the City should move forward with the development of the Downtown area and requested that the City Attorney research the matter and report to Council any concerns.

Councilmember Blackwell requested an opinion from the City Manager. Ms. Small-Toney responded that currently the policy requires the property have or be eligible for a certificate of occupancy in order to qualify for grant funding. She stated that the amendment would allow for the City Manager to authorize grant funding prior to the date on which the building qualifies for a certificate of occupancy if the owner of the property enters into a contract with the City, secured by a promissory note in the amount of the grant and a deed of trust on the property providing adequate security to the City and guaranteeing the building will qualify for a certificate of occupancy within 24 months from the date of the contract. She stated this would assist the developer in making advancements. She explained that the program is administered by the Department of Community & Business Development and this type program is helpful in incenting developers and potential developers and is similar to the large economic recruitment incentives.

Discussion was held among Councilmembers.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that the City cannot meet its proforma relative to the Event Center without Downtown development and is pleased the Manager's Office is looking at ways to incentivize Downtown investment and protect the City's interest. The City Attorney clarified that should there be default the City can foreclose on the property. He recommended the policy be revised to include the language relative to security.

Councilmember Daughtridge said he is in favor of Downtown development but is concerned about the constitutionality of the program.

He outlined other concerns and requested that consideration of the amendment be tabled.

Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampton explained that the grant is a matching grant based on the building repair. She further explained that some Downtown buildings require substantial work and it is the opinion of staff that 24 months allows enough time for investment needed.

Councilmember Daughtridge suggested and Councilmember Miller agreed that the timeline be amended from 24 months to 18 months. Additional discussion was held.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and carried with a vote of 6-1 (Councilmember Daughtridge opposed) that **Resolution No. R-2020-9** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING AMENDMENT TO POLICY NO. II.33 ENTITLED "POLICY: DOWNTOWN BUILDING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM"** be adopted, upon revision as recommended by the City Attorney.

POLICY AMENDMENT/RESIDENTIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT

The City Council was advised that eligible homeowners in designated areas of the City are being offered an opportunity to beautify the facades of their residential property through a Residential Façade Improvement Grant Program (RFIP). The Council was provided with a policy establishing the program guidelines for consideration. It was recommended that the City Manager or her designee be authorized to execute grant contract agreements on behalf of the City.

The City Council was provided with the Administrative Policy outlined above entitled Policy No. II.36 entitled "Policy: Residential Façade Improvement Grant."

Councilmember Daughtridge questioned why this grant would be administered by the Department of Human Relations and voiced the same concerns as set out relative to the Downtown Building Assistance Program.

Archie Jones Director of Human Relations explained that original funding from a beautification project is available for use for this grant. He stated homeowners will have to be residents of homes that are 50 years old or older. He explained that all of the 18 neighborhoods across the City that work with the Human Relations Department are eligible for the grant. He added there is an exception that may allow homes in designated neighborhoods to qualify, even if not 50 years old or older.

Councilmember Daughtridge questioned some of the language contained in the policy. Councilmember Joyner voiced support for the grant and any language changes necessary to move forward.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and carried with a vote of 6-1 (Councilmember Daughtridge opposed) that **Resolution No. R-2020-10** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING**

POLICY NO. II.36 ENTITLED "POLICY: RESIDENTIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT"
be adopted.

In response to a question from Councilmember Miller, the City Manager stated that any and all loans and grants made available to the public from the City will be administered by the appropriate department to ensure eligibility, but funding will be monitored by the Finance Department.

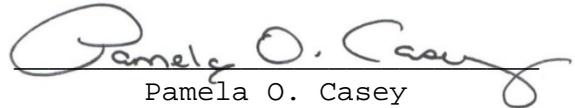
APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Roberson nominated Steven Larry Cederberg to fill the unexpired vacancy on the Business Development Authority.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that Steven Larry Cederberg be appointed to the Business Development Authority. This unexpired term will expire June 30, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the meeting adjourn at 8:17 p.m.


Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk