

June 8, 2020

The City Council of the City of Rocky Mount met this day in regular session 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 7:12 p.m. and offered prayer. Mayor Roberson reported that due to changes in the law due to remote meetings as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) there will be a roll call vote on each agenda item.

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*

Staff present: Rochelle Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Dorothy Brown Smith, Chief Communications and Marketing Consultant; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the Manager for Budget and Evaluation; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

Staff participating via MS Teams: Natasha Hampton and Elton Daniels, Assistant City Managers; Corey Mercer, Fire Chief; Bob Batchelor, Systems Administrator, Technology Services; Latasha Hall, Business & Collections Services Director; Kena Cofield-Jones, Human Resources Director.

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

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight, and unanimously carried by roll call vote that the minutes of a rescheduled special called meeting and a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held May 26, 2020 be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

#### **SPECIAL CALLED COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES**

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and unanimously carried by roll call vote that the minutes of a special called Committee of the Whole meeting held May 26, 2020 to discuss Council relations and future programs be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting. The minutes are as follows:

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2020 AT 3:00 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:**

*NOTE: Participation limited due to Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order banning gatherings of more than ten (10) people relative to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19); meeting was available via Microsoft Teams and Facebook Live*

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.

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle D. Small-Toney  
 Pamela O. Casey  
 Dorothy Brown Smith  
 Robin Cox  
 Richard J. Rose

Security Officer: L. S. Parker, Jr.

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem André Knight called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

AUDIT FINALIZATION

The Mayor Pro Tem stated the City Council's discussion and response to the State audit has been finalized and Council has approved the response previously submitted.

COMMUNICATION

Mayor Pro Tem Knight stated that he wants to hold discussion relative to communication among Councilmembers and the Mayor. He said the Mayor has held discussion with the media without the knowledge of Councilmembers relative to a special called meeting, a pledge which he planned to ask Councilmembers to sign, called for the resignation of the Mayor Pro Tem and mandated that Council attend additional ethics classes and further misguided the public. He asked the City Attorney and City Manager to address the Mayor's authority pursuant to the City Charter and provide an update relative to a photograph of a City Police Officer that recently appeared in the Spring Hope newspaper.

City Attorney Richard J. Rose reported that the Mayor does not have the authority to compel Councilmembers to appear at a meeting and the Manager stated that the photograph which appeared in the Spring Hope newspaper of the Mayor and a Police Office has caused the Officer a great deal of consternation.

Mayor Pro Tem Knight expressed his feelings relative to the photo in the newspaper.

Councilmember Joyner requested that items previously planned for discussion at the City Council retreat which was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic be placed on a COW agenda and that concerns mentioned at today's meeting be used as opportunities for training so that Council better communicate and conduct the business of the City.

Councilmember Walker stated the manner in which the Mayor handled communication with media outlets has caused controversy at an already tense time. He and Councilmember Miller reported that they never refused to attend the meeting called for Thursday, May 21, 2020, as was reported by the media.

Councilmember Blackwell stated the past cannot be forgotten because it crafts the present. He expressed his displeasure at comments made by the Mayor adding that he will not be dictated to nor will he dictate and that no one on the Council will be bullied.

Discussion continued relative to recent media reports.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that he had not been made aware of the press release relative to the City's response to the

State Auditor's report prior to it being released to the media and said he feels there is a double standard. He questioned if Councilmembers can use the Council Chamber whenever they desire. He stated unity is being discussed but he felt attacked at a recent press conference about the COVID-19 pandemic when he voiced a concern relative to utility payments. He added that he agrees with the contract the Mayor has drafted and feels the Council should show they are above reproach. He reported on ethics requirements placed upon him in his service on a state board.

Mayor Pro Tem Knight stated that the media has reported on matters discussed in closed session and stated that all Councilmembers take an oath and are required to take ethics training. He further voiced concern that the City logo is being used without approval of the Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Knight requested that the City Manager work with staff to develop official Facebooks for each Councilmember.

Councilmember Joyner requested the City Manager and staff identify an action plan to unite Council and provide a training process for the Council.

Mayor Roberson thanked the Councilmembers for their comments and suggestions adding that he will take all under advisement.

**STATUS OF HOTEL PROJECT ON A FUTURE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION (LGC) AGENDA AND UPDATE ON HOTEL PROJECT**

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney advised the Council that the last two agenda items can be combined.

She provided a report relative to action to date regarding the Downtown Hotel project noting that the application was filed with the LGC on August 8, 2019 and that staff and the developer has met with the LCG. She added that there has been a recent conference call with BWC Consulting and the developer to develop timelines and staff is working with Davenport and Associates to update the financial proforma.

The Manager outlined further steps to be taken and stated she is waiting for a return call from the LGC. She reported that staff is in the process of updating and refreshing information previously reviewed by the LGC and expects the matter to be placed on the LGC's agenda as early as July. She stated that once updates have been made, they will be provided to Council for review and staff will proceed with formal revision to the application.

The Mayor Pro Tem requested the City Manager send a letter to State representatives requesting their assistance with having the matter placed on an upcoming LGC agenda.

Councilmember Daughtride stated the hotel project was approved by a previous Council and has been on hold. He stated there is a new Council and revenues have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and requested that the matter come before the new Council for a vote.

Councilmember Blackwell responded by saying the hotel project is not the only project approved by the previous Council. He suggested that Councilmember Daughtride request an update relative to the project if that is needed. He questioned the reason for delay of the project if financials have not been greatly impacted. The City Manager stated that consultants will make adjustments to the proforma and updated financial information will be provided to Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Knight stated he has heard from a lot of people asking that the project move forward and stated it is his hope that economic development in the City will move forward in spite of COVID-19.

Mr. Knight stated the budget schedule update will be provided in the 4:00 p.m. Council meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

By consensus, the Committee of the Whole was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

#### **BUDGET REVIEW SESSIONS - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES**

The City Council received the minutes and recommendations from Committee of the Whole meetings (budget sessions) held May 28, June 1, June 2 and June 4, 2020. The minutes are as follows:

#### **2021 BUDGET SESSION (Day 1) - May 28, 2020**

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET REVIEW SESSION) HELD THURSDAY, MAY 28, 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**

*NOTE: Participation limited due to Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order banning gatherings of more than ten (10) people relative to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19); meeting was available via Microsoft Teams and Facebook Live*

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

André D Knight, Mayor Pro Tem  
Reuben C. Blackwell, IV  
Richard Joyner  
Lige Daughtridge  
Christine Carroll Miller

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Pamela O. Casey  
Ken Hunter  
Jessie Nunery  
Robin Cox  
Corey Mercer\*  
Latasha Hall\*  
Bob Batchelor\*  
Joel Dunn\*  
Cynthia Jones\*  
Archie Jones\*  
Dorothy Brown Smith\*  
Natasha Hampton\*  
Tanika Cooper\*

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.  
T. J. Walker  
W. B. Bullock

*\*participated remotely (Microsoft Teams)*

Security Officer: Scoey Lewis, Police Corporal

***NOTE: The complete FY 2021 Proposed Annual Operating Budget is on file in the City Clerk's Office.***

#### **OPENING OF MEETING**

Mayor Pro Tem André Knight called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

The City Council was provided with a copy of a PowerPoint Presentation from the City Manager's Office and a revised schedule for FY 2021 Budget Review.

#### **BUDGET REVIEW**

A pre-recorded message from City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney to the City Council presenting a review of the City Manager's

Proposed FY 2021 Annual Operating Budget was presented to the City Council.

The City Council was provided with a PowerPoint presentation which included the following highlights:

- Total proposed budget: \$212,244,900M (-3.6%)
- General fund: \$66,189,000M (-6.8%)
- No increases to property tax rate or retail utility rates
- Annual adjustment to solid waste transfer station rate
- Uphold commitment to established Council initiatives

The City Manager explained the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the budget. She reported proposed budget reduction action includes plans to:

- Reduce departmental submissions by \$13.9M to balance
- Eliminate new initiatives, ensure effective delivery of essential services
- Freeze 54 vacant positions (37 General Fund, 17 Utilities; does not include vacancies in Police and Fire Departments)
- Project anticipation of salary savings
- Reduce overtime and part-time by 50%
- Reduce travel by up to 75%
- Reduce fuel budgets by 20-30%
- Reduce operating line items to minimal necessary levels
- Eliminate vehicles, heavy rolling equipment; reduce capital outlay

The Manager provided the following highlights relative to staffing, capital projects and utility enterprises:

**Staffing:**

- Creation of 7 new positions:
  - 1 Coordinator of Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program
  - 3 Building Maintenance staff for proper facility management (including the Event Center)
  - 3 Business & Collection Services operations staff
- Provide "pay for performance" adjustment (average 2%)
- Fund pension increase from 8.95% to 10.15% of wages & salaries
- Maintain 401(k) contributions at current levels
- Maintain health insurance premiums at current levels

**Capital Projects (most of FY 2021 Capital Budget presented May 11 is funded):**

- Street resurfacing & reconstruction
- Continued renovations to City Hall (first & second floors)
- Extension of sidewalks
- Replacement of technology equipment
- Stabilization of former National Guard building, study of future uses
- Installation of professional live broadcasting capabilities in Council Chamber
- Improvements to Meadowbrook Park
- Acquire rollout carts to complete Citywide conversion
- Paving of dirt streets within City

**Utility Enterprises:**

- Revenue forecasts maintained at current levels (review actual revenues on monthly basis)
- Applied similar staffing freezes, operating account reductions
- Capital expenditures:
  - Generator replacement at Wastewater Treatment Plant
  - Replace Transformer at Old Mill Point of Delivery Station
  - Gas Distribution Extensions
  - Springfield Road Widening Water & Sewer Improvements
  - Johnson Street Pump Station
  - Downtown Drainage Improvements

Mrs. Small-Toney concluded her pre-recorded presentation by reporting that:

- Potential for future opportunities will be recognized
- Budget implementation requires creativity and innovation
- Proposed budget does not include recognition of potential State/Federal stabilization funding; will continue to advocate for these resources; and
- Adjustments to the budget to reflect stabilization and economic realities (January 2021) are anticipated

It was reported that the City Manager's proposed FY 2021 Budget is available online at [www.rockymountnc.gov](http://www.rockymountnc.gov).

The City Manager added that she looks forward to questions and comments from Councilmembers during the budget review process.

Assistant to the Manager for Budget and Evaluation Ken Hunter presented the City Council with highlights from the Budget in Brief relative to the revenue summary for all budgeted funds. Mr. Hunter reported that questions previously submitted by Councilmembers will be addressed during the upcoming budget review sessions. In response to a question from Councilmember Daughtridge, Mr. Hunter advised that the proposed budget will be placed online today along with the Manager's pre-recorded budget message.

Councilmember Joyner requested additional small group meetings for budget review.

Ms. Dorothy Smith Brown, Chief Communications and Marketing Consultant, introduced Steven Thorburn with Thorburn Associates. Mr. Thorburn responded to comments from Councilmember and stated the live broadcasting project is a substantial investment but will last 15 to 20 years.

Councilmember Miller questioned if there is still time to have additional discussion relative to the budget. Mayor Pro Tem Knight responded that each Councilmember has an opportunity to agree, disagree, request an amendment or provide input to the City Manager relative to the proposed budget. Councilmember Miller stated that she has mentioned but never pushed for acquisition of North Green Golf Club, but the golf club is on the market again and its condition continues to decline. She added that further decline could affect surrounding property values. Mrs. Miller recommended the City consider making inquiry relative to the cost of the golf club noting that Wilson has a golf course.

Councilmember Blackwell suggested that the City Manager could be asked to add additional meetings for next week to have discussions with Councilmembers, individually or collectively, in order to have discussion relative to revisions prior to the public hearing on the budget scheduled for June 8, 2020.

Mayor Pro Tem Knight requested that Mr. Hunter request that staff make inquiry relative to the asking price of the golf club so

that Council can hold a discussion as to the interest of Council and the feasibility of the City owning a golf course.

**ADJOURN**

The Mayor Pro Tem adjourned the meeting at 4:56 p.m.

**2021 BUDGET SESSION (Day 2) - June 1, 2020**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

André D Knight, Mayor Pro Tem  
Reuben C. Blackwell, IV  
Richard Joyner  
Lige Daughtridge

**MEMBER ABSENT:**

W. B. Bullock

**MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY:**

Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.  
T. J. Walker  
Christine Carroll Miller

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Rochelle Small-Toney  
Pamela O. Casey  
Ken Hunter  
Mark Adcox  
Dorothy Brown Smith  
Robin Cox  
Bob Batchelor\*  
Latasha Hall\*  
Will Deaton\*

Joel Dunn\*  
Corey Mercer\*  
Michael Paul\*  
Kena Cofield-Jones\*  
Brad Kerr\*  
Tanika Cooper\*

*\*participated remotely (Microsoft Teams)*

Security Officer: Scoey Lewis, Police Corporal

**OPENING OF MEETING**

Mayor Pro Tem André Knight called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

The City Council was provided with a copy of a PowerPoint Presentation overview of the FY 2021 City Manager's Proposed Capital Budget.

**FY 2021 CAPITAL BUDGET**

Assistant to the Manager for Budget and Evaluation Ken Hunter provided a thorough review of the FY 2021 Capital Budget outlining proposed funding, providing a breakdown of projects and costs and responding to questions from Councilmembers. An overview of the presentation and discussion are:

- General Government Service and Utility Enterprises are tied to each enterprise fund - 103 projects = \$24,065,750
- Facilities - 8 projects (3 large scale)
  - o Capital Maintenance Projects = \$2,089,000
    - Rocky Mount Event Center
    - Train Station Improvements
    - Business Services Center
    - Booker T. Washington High School
    - Bus Station Improvements
  - o Administrative Complex Improvements = \$1,000,000
    - Continued renovations City Hall 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors
  - o Former National Guard Armory (currently vacant) = \$525,000
    - Building stabilization
  - o Live Broadcasting of City Council Meetings = \$430,000
- IT & Communications - 4 projects = \$992,000
- Douglas Block - 6 projects = \$237,500
- Transit - 4 projects = \$1,084,250

- Police - 1 project = \$100,000
- Fire - 1 project = \$100,000
- Parks & Recreation - 3 projects = \$550,000
- Public Works - 3 projects = \$356,000
- Surface Transportation - 24 projects = \$4,351,000
- Electric - 10 projects = \$5,945,000
- Gas - 4 projects = \$950,000
- Water - 16 projects = \$2,485,000
- Sewer - 13 projects = \$3,855,000
- Stormwater - 7 projects = \$971,000

*\*Full PowerPoint Presentation which includes cost and details of each project will be filed with the COW agenda*

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney told the Council it would be helpful to staff if she could receive via email any concerns or suggested budget changes as soon as possible.

#### **BLACK LIVES MATTER**

Councilmember Walker asked if the City could write a letter to the Governor requesting that he be in contact with the Governor of Minnesota to let him know that Rocky Mount supports the fight for justice relative to the recent murder of George Floyd.

Councilmember Blackwell expressed appreciation to the City management team, Fire and Police Departments, Nash County Sheriff's Department and the North Carolina Highway Patrol for the thoughtful support and assistance at the protest at Battle Park on Sunday. He stated that he is advised there were people in the City from other places with the intent to destroy and because leadership restricted movement those plans were foiled. Councilmembers agreed and Councilmember Miller added appreciation for Councilmembers, area clergy and prayer warriors who were also in attendance. Councilmember Joyner concurred and added that Edgecombe County Sheriff's Department also provided assistance and expressed his appreciation.

Mayor Sandy Roberson requested that the Clerk draft a resolution supporting the Black Lives Matter movement.

The City Manager voiced appreciation to Police Chief George Robinson for the fine job as commander in chief for the event, to Police staff and to City Attorney Richard J. Rose for his legal guidance and added it was a very well-planned and thought out process. She added that the City was able to send 10 police officers to assist Greenville and was prepared to send an additional 10 officers. She stated the power of public service does not stop at the borders of the City. Ms. Small-Toney expressed appreciation to Elizabeth City for supplying drones used at the event and said the City would be watching for a grant that can be used for the purchase of drones.

#### **ADJOURN**

The Mayor Pro Tem adjourned the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

### **2021 BUDGET SESSION (Day 3) - June 2, 2020**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

André D Knight, Mayor Pro Tem  
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV  
 Richard Joyner  
 Lige Daughtridge  
 W.B. Bullock

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Rochelle Small-Toney  
 Pamela O. Casey  
 Ken Hunter  
 Mark Adcox  
 Dorothy Brown Smith



Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.

Robin Cox

Joel Dunn\*

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY:

T.J. Walker

Corey Mercer\*

Elton Daniels\*

Christine Carroll Miller

Kena Cofield-Jones\*

Robin Cox

Kena Cofield-Jones\*

Bob Batchelor\*

*\*staff participating remotely (Microsoft Teams)*

Security Officer: L. S. Parker, Jr.

**OPENING OF MEETING**

Mayor Pro Tem André Knight called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

The City Council was provided with a copy of a PowerPoint Presentation overview of the FY 2021 City Manager's Proposed Capital Budget.

**FY 2021 CITY MANAGER'S PROPOSED BUDGET - GENERAL FUND**

Ken Hunter, Assistant to the Manager for Budget and Evaluation, provided the City Council with an overview of the General Fund by department outlining key changes and changes in the budget from the prior year:

- Mayor & Council - \$2,071,089 (+\$170,160)
- City Clerk's Office - \$167,300 (+\$9,010)
- City Manager's Office - \$972,970 (+\$13,280)
- Human Resources - \$1,292,850 (+50,230)
- Human Relations - \$408,220 (-\$30,560)
- Finance - \$366,750 (+\$47,550)
- Central Services - \$1,830,890 (-\$871,440)
- Technology Services - \$440,850 (-\$290,060)
- Business & Collection Services - \$232,510 (+\$44,360)
- Police - \$16,853,700 (-\$915,200)
- Fire - \$12,338,100 (-\$367,870)
- Public Works - \$10,233,000 (-\$326,230)
- Parks & Recreation - \$9,045,250 (-\$2,537,710)

Mr. Hunter identified each frozen position by department and job title and responded to questions from Council.

**CONFEDERATE STATUE/BATTLE PARK**

Mayor Pro Tem Knight stated he thinks no future funds should be allocated to Battle Park until such time as the City Council addresses removal of the confederate statue. He said the statue casts a cloud over the park and the City.

Council engaged in discussion.

Councilmember Daughtridge expressed concern for the legal ramifications of removing the statue and stated he would like more information from the City Attorney.

Councilmember Blackwell responded that the City Attorney has not given clarity and it is shrouded in mystery. He stated it should be moved to protect it in spite of any potential legal concerns.

The Mayor Pro Tem stated that Councilmember Joyner has suggested the City be proactive in protecting the statue because in

the current environment there is potential for it to be damaged or destroyed. Councilmember Walker added that there are those in his generation who are displeased with the wrongful doings of racists and white supremacist and all types of unjust policies and procedures and are fed up and they will take it down. He said they are fearless of any type of fight and while he is strong for unity and peace and can't speak for his generation, he believes they will remove the monument if the City does not do so. He stated the City should move the monument to a private place where those who enjoy history are able to enjoy their history, adding that not all history is good history and the statue should not be in a public place where there are those striving for unity and justice for all.

Mayor Roberson questioned if action should be postponed until Council is in a regular meeting and consideration of moving the monument has been made public. The Mayor Pro Tem replied that there is a motion on the floor.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.** *Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and passed by a vote of 6-1 (Councilmember Bullock opposed) that the confederate monument at Battle Park be removed from its current location to a place for safe keeping until a private location is determined for its relocation.*

**RECESS**

By consensus, the Committee of the Whole was recessed at 5:16 p.m.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECONVENED**

Mayor Pro Tem André Knight reconvened the Committee of the Whole in regular session at 5:27 p.m. and Mr. Hunter continued the overview of the General Fund by department:

- Development Services - \$2,399,370 (-\$251,200)
- Rocky Mount Event Center - \$6,237,140 (+\$710,950)
- Community & Business Development - \$721,400 (-\$284,660)

Mr. Hunter continued his presentation of Utility Enterprise Funds and Other Funds:

Utility Enterprise Funds:

- Energy Resources:
  - o Electric Fund - \$82,355,900 (-\$644,100)
  - o Gas Fund - \$23,156,360 (-\$77,640)
  - o Water Resources - \$12,461,000 (-\$2,564,000)
    - Sewer Fund - \$18,520,500 (-\$471,420)
  - o Stormwater Fund - \$4,828,680 (-\$296,320)

Other Funds:

- Powell Bill Fund - \$4,351,000 (+\$955,000)
- Emergency Telephone Fund - \$382,460 (-\$3,000)
- Trust (Canteen) Fund - \$505,630 (+\$65,340)
- Self-Funded Insurance - \$9,730,000 (No change)
- Communications Fund - \$1,571,250 (+461,500)

Councilmembers voiced concerns and/or made the following suggestions/requests:

- That sand be made available to be provided to residents during storms or flooding in Downtown
- That entrances to mobile home parks be expanded/improved
- Completion of the Jacobs engineering study
- Poor drainage/mosquitos behind the Boys & Girls Club

- That payment by credit card be promoted and that the City be proactive in negotiating rates with credit card providers;
- Provide training for Police that is more therapeutic and less punitive; provide mental health assessments/trainings;
- Questioned if new cemetery policies relative to notice of removal of flowers are a result of COVID-19; now only post notice to City's Facebook (City Manager stated this has been addressed);
- Concern relative to reduction in Code Enforcement/demolition;
- Concern for large amount of unpaid taxes; need other avenues for collection;
- Concern for unpaid stormwater and pier fees (reservoir);
- Models for grass cutting contracts (some cutting grass do not care where clippings blow); different approached for unkept property (Manager suggested summer youth program could be an option);
- Upkeep of City properties

Mayor Pro Tem Knight questioned if the Development Services position could be unfrozen and requested that a presentation relative to Downtown Development be placed on the July COW agenda.

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney told the Council this was a very difficult budget to balance and stated that usually a budget of this size is budgeted in difficult times by staff reduction, but it has been dealt with by the freezing of vacant positions. She stated this creates higher expectations and places additional duties on current staff but if the sentiment of the work force was measured, she is certain they would rather have additional duties than have jobs eliminated. She added her hope is that the frozen positions can be released for recruitment as the economy improves.

#### **ADDITIONAL BUDGET MEETING**

It was noted that the next budget meeting will be Thursday, June 4, at 4:00 p.m. The City Manager stated that the purpose of Thursday's meeting will be to receive direction from Council relative to amendments to the budget. Councilmember Daughtridge requested that Council be provided a summary of any requested changes prior to the meeting.

#### **RESOLUTION/BLACK LIVES MATTER**

Councilmember Blackwell stated that Councilmember Walker had to leave the meeting early but had previously asked for a letter to be drafted to the governor requesting him to reach out to the governor of Minnesota and out of that conversation came a request that the Clerk draft a Resolution in Support of Black Lives Matter. He added that the Resolution was drafted in collaboration with the Communications and Marketing Office.

Mr. Blackwell read a portion of the Resolution and stated it would be on Monday's City Council agenda for formal consideration.

#### **ADJOURN**

The Mayor Pro Tem thanked the Mayor and Councilmembers for their input and discussion and said it is sometimes hard to express how we feel. He thanked them for their honest opinions and said he is thankful they are standing together in solidarity.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

*\*Full PowerPoint Presentation which includes cost and details of each project will be filed with the COW agenda*

**2021 BUDGET SESSION (Day 4) - June 4, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

André D Knight, Mayor Pro Tem  
Reuben C. Blackwell, IV  
Richard Joyner  
Lige Daughtridge

MEMBERS ABSENT:

T.J. Walker  
W.B. Bullock

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY:

Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.  
Christine Carroll Miller

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle Small-Toney  
Pamela O. Casey  
Ken Hunter  
Mark Adcox  
Dorothy Smith Brown  
Robin Cox  
Latasha Hall\*  
Bob Batchelor\*  
Elton Daniels\*  
Corey Mercer\*  
Archie Jones\*  
Paula Carbone\*  
Natasha Hampton\*  
Tanika Cooper\*  
Amy Staton\*

*\*staff participating remotely (Microsoft Teams)*

Security Officer: L. S. Parker, Jr.

**OPENING OF MEETING**

Mayor Pro Tem André Knight called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. and stated that today's meeting will provide an opportunity for discussion and to provide direction to the City Manager.

Ken Hunter, Assistant to the Manager for Budget and Evaluation, provided the City Council with a list of items for discussion.

Discussion was held and the following amendments to the budget:

Projects to be added:

- Grand Avenue Corridor Study
- Improvements to Booker T. Washington High School
- Northgreen Golf Club Feasibility Study
- Community Engagement Training for Police Officers
- Regular Mental Health Assessments for Police Officers
- Storing Sand for Use by Residents During Severe Weather Events
- Improving Entrances to Mobile Home Parks
- Expanded Communication with Residents (i.e., Ward email/newsletters)
- Unfreeze Vacant Community Code Inspector position
- Funding for Non-residential Demolition
- PR Coordination for Communications, Marketing & Public Relations
- Ward 5 Youth Recreation Study
- Unfreeze Business & Downtown Coordinator
- Northgreen Stormwater Evaluation
- Address Stormwater Drainage behind Boys & Girls Club (W. Raleigh Boulevard)

Projects on hold:

- Battle Park Improvements

Projects to be reduced:

- National Guard Armory Stabilization
- Live Broadcasting in Council Chamber

It was noted that the public hearing on the budget will be on Monday's agenda and consideration of adoption of the budget on the June 22 agenda.

The amended budget will be placed on the City's website at rockymountnc.gov.

#### ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and passed by a roll call vote of 6-1 (Councilmember Bullock opposed) that the minutes and recommendations of the budget session be approved; and that **Resolution No. R-2020-15** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO RELOCATE THE CONFEDERATE MONUMENT ON FALLS ROAD AND TAKE ALL REASONABLE AND APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO PRESERVE THE MONUMENT** and **Resolution No. R-2020-16** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT AGAINST RACIAL INJUSTICE AND DECLARATION THAT BLACK LIVES MATTER** be adopted.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and passed by a unanimous roll call vote that **Resolution No. R-2020-16** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT AGAINST RACIAL INJUSTICE AND DECLARATION THAT BLACK LIVES MATTER** be amended to reflect that at this time all police officers involved in the incident resulting in the death of George Floyd have been charged.

Councilmember Knight requested that the Mayor read aloud the resolution declaring that Black Lives Matter and that a framed copy be presented to the Rocky Mount Black Action Committee at the City Council's first meeting in July.

#### COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

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

- The Parks and Recreation Department is proud to announce the return of its annual summer camps. The sessions are open to children ages 5-12 and will be held at two sites - The Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences and the Booker T. Washington Community Center. Camps will run June 22-July 31, Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Camps are limited to 50 children per site. Please register in person at the Booker T. Washington Community Center or South Rocky Mount Community Center. Call 252-467-4925 or 252-972-1169 for more information.
- All Commission and Board Meetings remain canceled during this time. Also, of note, the 2020 Juneteenth Empowerment Festival, Downtown Live! and Lawn Chair Theatre series are postponed until further notice.
- The City of Rocky Mount is a sponsor of Downtown Cares, a local non-profit initiative designed to support seniors and essential workers with meals and more via local small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Orders are taken each Tuesday by 5 p.m. for meals to be delivered Wednesdays. If you are interested in

supporting the initiative, visit [downtownrockymount.com](http://downtownrockymount.com) for more information.

- Pursuant to the City Council's direction as well as a pair of Executive Orders from our Governor, there is 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 at 252-972-1250.
- Starting June 1, applications for the Residential Façade Improvement Grant Program will be accepted. The program, administered through the Human Relations Department, will offer eligible homeowners in designated areas of the city the opportunity to beautify residential property façades. The program provides for a grant of up to \$5,000, and matching funds are not required. Contact the Human Relations Department at 252-972-1181 or visit [rockymountnc.gov](http://rockymountnc.gov) to find the list of eligibility standards and obtain an application.
- During this time, it is important you remember to fill out and send in your 2020 Census form. 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](http://2020census.gov).

Councilmember Miller asked for an explanation as to why Boards, Commissions and Committees are not meeting, at least remotely. The City Manager stated she will wait for consensus of the Council relative to direction in that regard adding that City Hall remains closed due to the Governor's executive orders.

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

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

- The following individuals spoke in support or against the removal of the confederate monument located at Battle Park
  - For removal
    - *Jackie King*
    - *Bronson Williams – thanked Council for voting to relocate monument; requested Council urge General Assembly to vote on House Bill 10*
    - *Anthony Pittman, Jr.*
    - *Nisaja Thomas*
    - *Jen*
    - *Steve White*
    - *Mike Parker*
    - *Sam Whicker*
    - *Rhiannon Pace*
    - *Eden Curtiss*
    - *Nia Barner*
    - *Sydney Meeks*
    - *Apryl Davison-Cobb*
    - *Regina Lyons*
    - *Nehemiah Smith*

- Against removal
  - **Jerry McRoy**
  - **Randy Adcox**
  - **Robert Carr** – *questioned who would pay for relocation*
- **Dr. Lisa Nelson Robinson:**
  - stated the monument was a symbol to something that was a treasonous act of rebellion;
  - stated Rocky Mount’s population is majority black and the Resolution for Black Lives Matter means nothing until there is black economics;
  - stated with the current generosity of corporations and industries, she expected this City to make a concerted effort to capture some of that money for economics in the black community;
  - stated the black community does not need another handout, hand up, rehabilitation or thoughts and prayers; it needs economic independence in the form of land and business ownership;
  - stated she is tasking the City Council and Mayor to seek the money to help build black downtown Rocky Mount and the entire black community because when the black community in Rocky Mount rises, everyone in Rocky Mount will rise
- **George Whitaker:**
  - asked the City Council to take time in their consideration of whether or not to relocate the monument;
  - Asked for details relative to the cost, placement and time frame relative to relocation of the monument
- **Morrie Minges:**
  - asked questions relative to the cost of relocating the monument and asked if the money would be better spent assisting homeless children in the City;
  - asked who owns the Booker T. Washington High School and who uses it;
  - stated the City’s trash truck damaged cement at the back of her shop
- **Nehemiah Smith:**
  - thanked Council for voting to move the monument;
  - requested the City officially endorse fast tracking of House Bill 10;
  - requested the City form a law enforcement reform task force comprised of City Officials, law enforcement and citizens to discuss best practices relative to policing in the community;
  - commended the peaceful protest that was held in Rocky Mount
- **Clint Williams:**
  - stated he feels Google searches will show corruption and malfeasance in Rocky Mount and does not feel that is in the best interest of Rocky Mount;
  - stated that government exists at the expense of the community it serves;
  - stated he feels servitude to the best interests of the citizens in Rocky Mount has been forgotten
- **Samuel Battle:**
  - stated that while there was a peaceful protest he wanted to remind everyone of the 19 murders last year;
  - stated he feels there were other issues rather than the monument that need to be addressed

- **Nathlyn Ohree:**
  - stated the disparities that continue to manifest must be dealt with so we can move forward and prosper as a community;
  - stated she feels Rocky Mount has one of the best City Managers it has ever had;
  - stated she feels Rocky Mount needs to have a parking deck to compliment the Rocky Mount Event Center
- **Johnny Cunningham:**
  - thanked Councilmembers Blackwell and Knight for their courage in starting the movement for the removal/relocation of the confederate monument;
  - asked the Mayor if he would have voted for or against removal of the monument if the vote had been a tie

Mayor Roberson stated his vote would have been for removal.

- **Lewis Turner:**
  - Stated he did not commend the Council often but he wanted say he was proud of the Mayor and Council for being willing to listen this evening

Councilmember Knight stated that Mr. Carr had made a threatening hand gesture to the City Manager as he was walking away and requested the Police speak with him immediately and that he be banned from future Council meetings. Councilmember Blackwell stated he had also seen the gesture.

#### **2020-2021 PROPOSED BUDGET/PUBLIC HEARING**

Mayor Roberson stated that written comments will be received from interested citizens up to 24 hours following the public hearing and may be submitted to the City Clerk via email at [pamela.casey@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:pamela.casey@rockymountnc.gov) pursuant to the legal requirements associated with remote meetings (*no comments were received*).

Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation, presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining budget modifications based on Council directives at the last budget session Committee of the Whole meeting on June 4 and noted that the budget, as presented, is balanced.

The Mayor opened the Public Hearing on the budget and recognized the following citizen. A summary of comments are as follows:

- **Tom Harris:**
  - Thanked the Council for passing a budget without a tax increase;
  - Commended the City Manager and staff for a good job putting the budget together;
  - Said he hopes to see some good things happening at the Event Center and hopes the revenues will at least cover expenses and the debt services over the next 15-16 years;
  - Questioned the amount of utility write-offs in 2019-2020 and asked the amount of the projected amount of write-offs expected for 2020

There being no more public comments, the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.



Receipt of the budget was acknowledged.

**ANNEXATION NO. 316/3786 WEATHERFORD STREET**

The City Clerk provided the City Council with a resolution certifying the petition for Annexation No. 316 - 3786 Weatherford Street as sufficient pursuant to G.S. 160A-31 to proceed with annexation of the contiguous parcel.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Miller and unanimously carried that the Department of Development Services be instructed to prepare the required feasibility study on the proposed annexation and that the following resolutions be adopted:

- a. **Resolution No. R-2020-17** 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. 316 - 3786 WEATHERFORD STREET**; and
- b. **Resolution No. R-2020-18** 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. 316 - 3786 WEATHERFORD STREET** (schedules public hearing for July 13, 2020).

**PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Finance Director, Amy Staton, provided the City Council with a proposal from the John Hackney Agency and existing carriers, primarily Travelers Insurance Company, for insurance coverage to meet the City's risk management goals for FY 2021 at a total cost not to exceed \$1,450,000. She reported that the current proposal covers existing and potential additions in property and equipment and is an increase of \$111,000, an overall 8% from FY 2020.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the proposal of the John Hackney Agency be accepted.

**TAXICAB LICENSE/ADDITIONAL APPLICATION**

The City Council received a recommendation from the Chief of Police for the issuance of new taxi right licenses to:

- a. Roosevelt Lunnon, Jr. - 1 right
- b. Gerald Lonnell Burney - 1 right

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that taxi permits be approved for issuance to Roosevelt Lunnon, Jr. and Gerald Lonnell Burney, as recommended by the Chief of Police.

**FY 2021 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY/NCDOT - PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DIVISION**

The City Council was provided with a Delegation of Authority form designating Mayor C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. as the authorized official to submit funding applications and enter into contracts with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and to execute all agreements and contracts with the NCDOT's Public Transportation

Division. The City Council was advised that the form also designates the Finance Director as the primary designee to submit reimbursement request, budget revisions, budget amendments and period of performance extensions and names the Accounting Manager and Grants Accountant as "alternates" for these functions.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Walker and unanimously carried that the Delegation of Authority be approved and that the Mayor be authorized to execute the same on behalf of the City.

#### **LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF) APPLICATION/BATTLE PARK**

The City Council was advised that staff is requesting authorization to submit an application for a \$500,000 grant through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for the renovation of Battle Park.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Daughtride and unanimously carried that staff be authorized to submit the application on behalf of the City; and that the Mayor, City Clerk and City Attorney be authorized to execute any required documentation, certifications and delegation of authority, including the subsequent grant agreement on behalf of the City.

#### **APPOINTMENTS**

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the following reappointments be approved:

- **Historic Preservation Commission (three-year terms expire June 30, 2022):**
  - Reappoint:
    - Josie B. Davis\*
    - Raymond Gantt, Jr.\*
    - Samuel W. Johnson\*
- **Human Relations Commission (three-year terms expire June 30, 2022):**
  - Reappoint:
    - Linwood Williams\*

*\*Note: prior terms expired June 30, 2019*

Councilmember Miller thanked Ms. Davis, Mr. Gantt, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Williams for continuing to serve past the time of the expiration of their terms.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtride, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that Councilmember Christine Carroll Miller be reappointed to the STEP Board. This term will expire on December 31, 2020.

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

#### **COMMENTS**

Councilmember Joyner requested that youth summer employment be considered. Councilmember Knight responded that this matter was

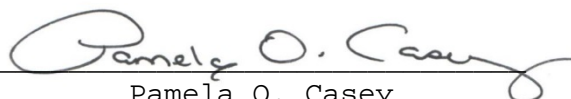
discussed as a previous meeting and due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) it is uncertain if summer employment will be available this summer.

Councilmember Bullock clarified that his vote relative to the removal of the confederate monument was made due to the uncertainty of legal ramifications. He stated he would have preferred to have legal questions answered prior to the matter coming before Council for a vote.

Councilmember Knight noted that some may not realize that Council has today voted to remove the confederate monument.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, by consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

  
Pamela O. Casey  
City Clerk