

July 27, 2020

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

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

*\*joining remotely*

*Note: Councilmember Miller showed on the screen as logged into the meeting but did not respond to the roll call. The City Clerk contacted Councilmember Miller and she was instructed to log off and log back into the meeting. Councilmember Miller attempted to offer a voice vote, however, her vote could not be clearly heard until item 10 on the agenda.*

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

Some staff members participated via MS Teams.

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

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and requested a moment of silence for individual prayer for the City.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Roberson opened the floor for approval, amendment or comments relative to the agenda.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small Toney requested that item 15(c) (architectural services for City Hall interior renovations) be removed from the agenda.

Councilmember Walker requested that a public comment received by him, submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting, be recorded in the minutes.

The Mayor requested a motion for approval of the agenda, as amended.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/0 nays; no vote is recorded for Councilmember Miller) that the agenda be approved, as amended.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/0 nays; no vote is recorded for Councilmember Miller) that the minutes of a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held July 13, 2020 be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES**

The City Council received the minutes from a regular rescheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held July 13, 2020. The minutes are as follows:

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR RESCHEDULED COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD MONDAY, JULY 13, 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  
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  
Mark Adcox  
Robin Cox  
Richard J. Rose  
Kevin Harris\*\*  
Cynthia Jones\*\*  
Chris Beschler\*\*

\* *participated remotely (Microsoft Teams)*  
\*\**in meeting for limited time, as required*

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Brad Hufford, Vice President, Carolinas Gateway Partnership  
David Hartigan

Security Officer: L. S. Parker, Jr.

*Note: A number of other City staff participated remotely via Microsoft Teams*

**OPENING OF MEETING**

Mayor Pro Tem André D Knight called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and introduced the first agenda item.

**DOWNTOWN OUTLOOK REPORT (continued) - Kevin Harris**

The City Council was advised that the City and the Department of Community and Business Development continues to invest, engage and partner to renovate and revitalize the Downtown Central City District and that over the past several years the Downtown area has provided incentives for businesses and entertainment opportunities for citizens as well as positive investment in the City.

Downtown Development Manager Kevin Harris continued a presentation begun at the June 8, 2020 meeting of the Committee of the Whole relative to the outlook Downtown.

Mr. Harris reported that his June 8, 2020 presentation concluded at page 11 of his PowerPoint presentation relative to a discussion regarding the City's Main Street designation. He continued his presentation by providing information relative to the following:

- The City's history with the North Carolina Main Street Program advising that currently the membership is as an affiliate member;
- Membership - annually North Carolina Main Street members are evaluated to determine whether they meet the standards of performance for affiliate or accredited membership;

- The standards of performance for North Carolina Main Street Program members;
- Accredited members must meet basic standards of performance. Mr. Harris noted that one of the drivers is the development of a comprehensive Main Street Work Plan. He noted that the Central City Revitalization Panel (CCRP) has been charged with preparing the work plan;
- The CCRP determines the work plan and decides where to prioritize efforts and the lack of a work plan and the level of performance are the items keeping the City from being an accredited member;

The Council was informed that the work plan has not historically come to the City Council for formal approval. Councilmember Blackwell stated it would be his preference that the work plan receive Council approval before being submitted to a third party. The Mayor Pro Tem agreed adding the work plan should be reviewed by the City Manager and then submitted to the City Council for consideration.

Mayor Pro Tem Knight stated it appears from the presentation that the difference between affiliate and accredited membership seems to be the difference between an A and an A+. He added that newspaper articles appear to imply that the City Council is not doing what it should to receive an accredited status adding that he thinks the Downtown will receive more than an A+ once ongoing work Downtown is complete.

It was noted that the CCRP annual work plan is not a masterplan but could be part of a masterplan.

In response to a question from Councilmember Joyner, Mr. Harris reported that no meetings are currently being held with Downtown merchants or the CCRP, but he continues to communicate with, and the City continues to provide support, Downtown merchants. Discussion was held relative to the recent City-sponsored Downtown Event, Seniors "Downtown Cares" Day, as well as others and Councilmember Joyner thanked staff for the façade grant and other opportunities.

Councilmember Daughtridg stated he thinks it would be prudent if Council could receive the North Carolina Main Street assessment and perhaps a presentation from Liz Parham with the North Carolina Department of Commerce could be arranged. Discussion was held relative to the City's access to grants.

Mayor Pro Tem Knight noted the North Carolina Main Street program is designed for cities with a population of less than 50,000 and it is his understanding if Rocky Mount does not continue its affiliate status continuously it will be unable to rejoin the North Carolina Main Street Program because it has outgrown the program. He questioned if a program exists for cities having a population over 50,000. Mr. Harris responded that he is unaware of such a program.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney stated it appears the distinction between "affiliate" and "accredited" member is very subjective and said the quote from Liz Parham noted the difference is bragging rights. She said the performance standards are the same. She told the Council there is nothing substantive to push the City to become accredited. The Manager added that the work of the CCRP drives this process and is one of the reasons the CCRP was established. She added the work to develop the Downtown will continue and the City plans to continue to be an affiliate member of the North Carolina Main Street Program. It was explained that the work plan is developed through the committees of the CCRP and the Downtown Development Manager supports the CCRP. She said staff will be happy to share the current application with the Council. She added that within the work plan will come the expectation of City resources to support the development of the Downtown Masterplan, if that is the expectation.

The Manager supported re-starting the process of development of a Downtown Master Plan and advised the Council there will be some expenses related to remaining in the North Carolina Main Street Program in order to meet the objectives of the CCRP and the development of the Master Plan. Mr. Harris clarified that a masterplan is not required, and the Manager stated that the CCRP has developed a work plan and within that work plan is the expectation to develop a Downtown Master Plan. Mr. Harris identified the three objectives from the CCRP work session to include: Downtown residency; park history and a completed master plan.

By consensus, the Council expressed the desire to approve the Downtown Master Plan, once completed.

The Downtown Development Manager continued his presentation by sharing future plans for marketing and promotion of the Downtown and activity and entertainment activities from 2019 to include:

- Successful 1<sup>st</sup> food truck invasion (3,000 in attendance; Event Center)
- Imperial Centre activities: Downtown Live, First Fridays and other events
- Successful Juneteenth
- Bar Crawl events (Halloween and Ugly Sweater)
- Spring Affair food truck rodeo (Station Square)
- Christmas shopping spring

He outlined future planned events.

Mayor Roberson questioned what is being done to recruit business to the Downtown and Mr. Harris responded that current efforts include getting the building stock ready and responding to those looking for space. He added the promotional video being planned is an effort towards recruitment. Councilmember Joyner requested that the video be shared with the City Council.

Councilmember Daughtridg encouraged working with opportunity zones as a part of Downtown development and noted it is being done successfully by The Carolinas Gateway Partnership. He suggested working with The Carolinas Gateway Partnership. Mr. Harris stated that the geography that falls within opportunity zones is outlined on the City's Downtown website. Discussion continued and the Mayor Pro Tem voiced his hope that all Councilmembers will support the Downtown hotel project. He added there have been prior presentations to Council relative to opportunity zones.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney said the City is moving forward with amending the application to the LGC relative to the Downtown hotel project/garage. She said the project is the largest economic project to come to the City and is scheduled to spur over \$100M in direct and indirect investment in not only the Downtown but also to the neighborhoods surrounding the Event Center within two or three years of completion. She noted the cost is expected to be approximately \$60M. She added that job opportunities during construction are estimated in the range of 100 jobs and upon completion and opening of the business and residential sites jobs could be expected to double if not triple.

The Mayor Pro Tem stated that the goal is to have approximately 250 people living in the Downtown in the next year to year and a half and expressed a desire for the Downtown Manager to work with the City Manager to bring to Council a plan for incentives for businesses to be located on the lower level in the Downtown and residential housing on the upper levels to encourage businesses to create housing in their buildings.

Councilmember Daughtridg questioned if the Council will see a presentation relative to the Downtown hotel project prior to a presentation to the LGC. The City Manager responded in the affirmative.

She added that the goal is to complete revisions to the application by the end of July or early August and to have the application to the LGC no later than September. She stated a special called meeting of the Council may be required.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.** *Information only; no formal action.*

**UTILITY ASSISTANCE COVID-19 - CDBG-CV FUNDING** - *Latasha Hall*

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney informed the City Council that it was learned today that HUD will be following up with localities in terms of the requirements for the use of CDBG-CV funding. She added that the funds may be used for utilities; however, the administrator will be required to show that recipients of the funding have suffered a loss of employment or that the household has been affected in a negative way. The Manager told the Council that the City prefers to administer the funds rather than retain a third-party administrator to ensure funding is properly administered. The Mayor Pro Tem supported the funds being administered in-house.

Latasha Hall, Interim Director of Business and Collections Services, reported that staff is working with the City Manager to create an application process to ensure HUD requirements are met. She presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining the following:

- COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPACT
  - Executive Order No. 121 (Stay at Home) was effective March 30<sup>th</sup>
  - The unemployment rate for Rocky Mount increased 132.73% from March to April 2020
  - As of July 7, 2020, 4,227 out of approximately 25,000 residential utilities accounts were 31 to 120 days delinquent resulting in unpaid utility services of \$911,901.07
- COVID RELIEF FUNDING
  - United Way - Urgent Relief Grant (URG) - \$5,000 (serves all residential customers; documented hardships associated with loss/reduction of income resulting from COVID-19; for various income levels and for accounts 31-120 delinquent)
  - Community Development Block Grant-CV (CDBG-CV) - \$309,806
  - General fund - \$50,000 (proposed for customers not eligible for CDBG-CV funding)
- PROPOSAL FOR UTILITY RELIEF
  - Residential Utility Assistance - Low/Moderate income - 620 citizens = URG (\$5,000) and CDBG funding (\$309,806)
  - Non CDBG eligible - 125 citizens = General funding (\$50,000)

The requirements for assistance were explained and it was noted that URG funding will be provided on a first come first served basis.

Planned implementation by the Business and Collections Services Department was outlined as:

- Finalization of the intake process;
- Building reports to capture required data;
- Developing public solicitation notices outlining program assistance levels and requirements; and
- Establishing a date to begin accepting applications (CDBG-CV)

The Council was advised that the application will be available online.

Graphs of the WARM program trends for 2018-2020 were provided and it was explained that the WARM program aids customers annually from January to May. Mayor Pro Tem Knight suggested that customers,

especially elderly customers, may also need assistance with utility bills during hot summers. He suggested changing the program name. Ms. Hall stated that the utility assistance program has been extended past WARM guidelines.

Ms. Hall responded to questions from Councilmembers and added that staff is proactively calling customers to advise of available assistance. She told the Council it is her belief that the City is ahead of some in providing assistance programs and extending payment arrangements.

Mayor Pro Tem Knight questioned the process once the Governor's executive orders expire. Ms. Hall stated that utilities may not be cut off for six months after the executive orders expire. She added that staff is making courtesy calls in an effort to collect at least partial payments.

Councilmember Joyner questioned if the City is doing anything relative to weatherization efforts and assisting customers relative to savings by changing out appliances. Ms. Hall responded by advising that Business and Collections Services is working with Energy Resources to create a virtual class for the Energy Share Program. Councilmember Joyner requested that this information be placed on the Councilmembers' individual Facebook pages.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he does not think we have seen the worst of the results of COVID-19 and unemployment has increased dramatically. Discussion continued and Ms. Hall stated that though payments are coming in slowly, they are coming in. He noted that Council did not receive the July 6 utility report but based upon the June 21, 2020 report and today's report it would appear there has been a dramatic reduction in those eligible for disconnect from 5,406 to 4,227. Mr. Daughtridge said one of his concerns was that documentation be collected to document hardships when providing assistance. He questioned if the City will ensure that those receiving assistance with utility bills provide proof of income or proof of hardship. Ms. Hall responded by advising that proof of hardship will be requested, but there is no income limit. He responded that based upon an opinion he has received from UNC School of Government the City is authorized to establish community development programs to provide for the needs of citizens with low- to moderate incomes. He added that persons of low income are defined as persons earning no more than 60% of the area median income and persons of moderate income must be defined locally based on factors. He stated in his opinion there should be an income limit based on the statute.

The City Manager stated she would question identifying utility assistance as a community develop program. The Mayor Pro Tem recommended the matter be reviewed by the City Attorney and City Manager. He added it is the City Attorney's job to consult with the School of Government should that be needed to be certain the City is in compliance with North Carolina law. Mr. Daughtridge stated that would be his recommendation as well.

Councilmember Daughtridge questioned if the WARM program is administered by the Salvation Army. The Interim Business and Collections Services Director advised that the WARM program and the Utility Assistant Program are different programs. She added that the WARM program is the same as it has always been, and the City does not provide funding for the WARM program and 100% of those funds come from fund raising. She told the Council WARM program funds are held by the City and disbursed to the Salvation Army who takes care of the intake process, sends the customer back to the City for final approval and then funds are released to the Salvation Army. Councilmember Daughtridge stated he asked the question because some may not be aware of that and with the information may feel more inclined to contribute to the program.

\*Councilmember Bullock left the meeting at 5:08 p.m.

Councilmember Blackwell questioned if the City has a cash app address and if that is possible saying that some people might not respond to tradition appeals, but a social media appeal with a cash app address would be almost like crowd funding. Ms. Hall advised that the City has an electronic option for those paying utilities online to select the option to donate electronically. She stated staff can research the cash app and PayPal programs.

Councilmember Joyner questioned if churches contribute to the WARM program and Ms. Hall responded in the affirmative.

The City Manager asked for and received consensus from Council to move forward and the Mayor Pro Tem requested that the information requested by Councilmember Daughtridge be provided to him.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Information only; no formal action.**

**EDGECOMBE COUNTY CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND ALLOCATION TO THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT - Cynthia T. Jones**

Community and Business Development Director Cynthia T. Jones advised the City Council that Edgecombe County has received a \$1,087,000 allocation under the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) from the State and the County is allowed to make subgrants for eligible projects to local municipalities. She reported that each municipality is eligible to receive an allotment proportionate to its population and based on this method the City is eligible to receive \$300,000.

Councilmember Blackwell noted that the letter from the Edgecombe County Manager outlines the City’s eligible amount as \$125,000. Ms. Jones stated that the Edgecombe County Manager has verbally authorized \$300,000 but she is not yet in receipt of the confirmation letter.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney told the Council that staff is seeking authority to complete and submit the funding application by the deadline of July 24, 2020.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. By consensus, Council authorized staff to complete and submit the application for funding to the County.**

**DEHC UNALLOCATED FUNDS FOR EDGECOMBE AND NASH COUNTIES - Cynthia T. Jones**

Cynthia Jones, Director of Community & Business Development, provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining the history of the Down East HOME Consortium. The Council was advised that after extensive research staff has compiled accounting records from the conception of the DEHC in 1995 to the present. She outlined the allocations for both Edgecombe and Nash Counties as:

JURISDICTION	DEHC FUND ALLOCATIONS
Edgecombe County	\$ 573,791.52
Nash County	1,156,170.55
TOTAL	\$1,729,962.07

She advised that as lead agency for the DEHC, the City will request that each county identify eligible projects to be completed within three years to reconcile and satisfy the above allocations. The Council was advised that the City currently has a balance of \$1,219,068.50 to assist with the reconciliation and plans to use FY 2020-2021 HOME allocations of \$194,374 to assist with the reconciliation. Ms. Jones advised with this approach a balance of 316,522.57 would remain and the City will need to obligate those allocations to fulfill the reconciliation in future years.

Mayor Roberson questioned if this approach has been approved by the Counties and Ms. Jones responded that staff wished to obtain Council support and approval prior to providing final numbers to the jurisdictions. She added that eligible projects will need to meet HUD guidelines.

The City Manager reminded the Council that this issue existed prior to her becoming City Manager. She stated that because neither Edgecombe nor Nash County had eligible projects for a period of time the City used the allocations for projects within the City limits (Beal and Holly Street projects) and now is the time to restore those funds (\$1.7) to Nash and Edgecombe Counties. She added that if the City receives its normal allocations of HOME funds then the reconciliation should take place within two years and once all information is finalized a Memorandum of Agreement will be prepared to outline the terms of the repayment or reconciliation. She responded to questions from the Council.

The Manager reported that consideration of this matter will be placed on the agenda for the next regular City Council meeting.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.** *By consensus, the Council recommended staff move forward with preparation of the Memorandum of Agreements with the jurisdictions as recommended.*

**ADDITIONAL HOLIDAY - JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup> - JUNETEENTH** - *Rochelle D. Small-Toney*

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney recommended that June 19<sup>th</sup>, Juneteenth, be designated a paid holiday for City employees to promote diversity and inclusion within the organization. She noted that this date marks the day in 1865 when African Americans living in Texas received notification that their enslavement had been abolished by the Emancipation Proclamation.

The Manager reported that Wake County and the City of Raleigh have adopted similar legislation.

The City Council was provided with a Resolution designating the holiday.

The City Manager reported that the cost to the City will be the direct cost of \$35,000 for those employees required to work during holidays and an indirect cost of approximately \$207,420 for regular payroll and benefits. Councilmember Joyner stated he is in full support of the additional holiday but would like to see an offset in the budget adding that the City is only thirteen days into the new budget cycle and the result of COVID-19 on the City is yet unknown. The City Manager reported that the offset comes from salary savings from vacancies.

Councilmember Daughtridge requested that when recommendations are made that will impact the budget, that Council be provided with information relative to how the budget will be impacted.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.** *Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried by roll call vote that adoption of the Resolution designating the Juneteenth holiday be recommended for approval (7 ayes; 0 nays); the votes for Councilmembers Walker and Bullock were recorded as affirmative pursuant to NCGS 160A.75.*

**RURAL GRANT PROCESS** - *Brad Hufford, The Carolinas Gateway Partnership*

The City Council received a handout from Brad Hufford, Vice President of The Carolinas Gateway Partnership relative to Rural Building Reuse and Infrastructure grants including a grant application and guidelines.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney stated that the City and The Carolinas Gateway Partnership have come to an agreement and



understanding relative to rural building reuse applications. She stated that Council has been receiving applications at an early date and applications were sometimes incomplete. She said this gave the appearance that the City was delaying the grant process and it is now her requirement that Council receive only completed applications.

Mr. Hufford told the City Council that The Carolinas Gateway Partnership is the City's primary industrial recruiter and they depend on State incentives to close deals. He outlined the State incentives and said the Partnership has a track record with the City and depends on a unit of local government to receive the funds which are then disbursed to the business making the investment and creating jobs. He added there is often a 5% local match paid for by The Carolinas Gateway Partnership and the Partnership often hires a grant manager. He introduced David Hartigan who manages a number of grants for the Partnership.

Mr. Hufford outlined the process for Rural Economic Development grants. He advised that the City has three active projects but unfortunately none are active now (two are on hold due to COVID-19 and the third is on hold due to being held up due to a death and properties being held in an estate). He added that the Council may receive a project for consideration within the next month. Mr. Hufford explained the reasons grants sometimes get out of order.

Councilmember Blackwell thanked Mr. Hufford for sharing this information with the Council and asked if there is a threshold dollar amount for participation. Mr. Hufford stated they are now encouraged to use the term "up to" and the Rural Program is a maximum of \$500,000 per project. He stated that the minimum job creation target is five.

Mr. Hufford and Mr. Hartigan responded to questions from Councilmembers.

The City Manager suggested that Councilmembers refer interested parties to the Manager's Office or call The Carolinas Gateway Partnership directly. Mr. Hufford stated if there is a company that has to get going that he will call her directly to discuss.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Information only; no formal action.**

**CLOSED SESSION**

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the City Council adjourn to Closed Session at 5:49 p.m. to discuss matters concerning attorney-client privilege and economic development. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as ESM 556, Minute Book 37, upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

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**REGULAR SESSION**

The Mayor Pro Tem convened the Committee in regular session at 6:57 p.m.

**BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES - Pam Casey**

Due to time restraints, there was no discussion relative to boards, commissions and committees.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Committee of the Whole adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

**Printed copies of the PowerPoint presentations are on file in the office of the City Clerk**

Without objection, the Committee of the Whole minutes and recommendations were approved by consensus.

**COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER**

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

- Encouraged all to fill out and send in their 2020 Census form noting that the census will determine funding for housing programs, schools, hospitals, economic development and much more in our community. Reported that the City's Census Outreach Team launched a series of Neighborhood Census Day activities July 23 focused on increasing the response rate in Rocky Mount adding that Neighborhood Census Days will continue until August 7. She stated the remaining dates, times and locations of Neighborhood Census Day activities are as follows:
  - o July 30, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Hillsdale
  - o July 31, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Southeast Rocky Mount
  - o Aug. 6, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Cross Creek
  - o Aug. 7, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Little Raleigh

The Manager reported the Census Outreach Team is available for assistance from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays at the City of Rocky Mount's Human Relations office;

- Reported that the Finance Department will host a free MWBE virtual Fundamentals of City Contract workshop at 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. on July 31. She stated registration is required; and those interested in participating can register on-line at [rockymountnc.gov/mwbe](http://rockymountnc.gov/mwbe);
- Reported that, due to the pandemic, in lieu of Night Out Against Crime, the Police Department is leading a Back to School "Drive Thru" Give Away, along with all City departments for students in grades K-5. She stated the event will be held from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 4, 2020 at the Rocky Mount Municipal Stadium, adding that children must be present to receive the bags of school supplies, which will be given out on a first come first receive basis;
- Acknowledged this is a tough time for a lot of residents with layoffs and furloughs and reminded, per the 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. She added if customers need help with utility bills, they can contact the Business Services Center at 252-972-1250;
- The OIC continues to hold COVID-19 testing sites at the Rocky Mount Event Center. Those tested will need to bring their photo ID and insurance cards. Insurance is not required for testing. Testing days are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Registration can be performed prior to arrival by logging on to [oicrmhub.com](http://oicrmhub.com). Call 252-210-9856 for more information.
- The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID -19. Beginning today, the Communications, Marketing and Public Relations Department, in conjunction with the Mayor and City Council, is launching the "Rock the Mask Rocky Mount Campaign" to encourage all of our citizens to wear their face coverings and help slow the spread of COVID-19. In the coming

weeks, you will see billboards in Edgecombe and Nash Counties (like the one on the screen), and on digital billboards, social media outlets and in other City communication channels.

- Also, last month, City Councilmembers released their first individual newsletters to constituents in their respective wards. The August newsletters will be published the week of August 9. If you would like to sign up for the newsletter from your Councilmember, email: [communications@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:communications@rockymountnc.gov).

Councilmember Daughtridge asked for clarification that the local moratorium relative to utility bills remains in effect after the Governor's executive orders end on July 29, 2020 and the Manager responded in the affirmative.

Mayor Roberson questioned if there have been any changes relative to televising City Council meetings and City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney reported that the Chief Communications and Marketing Consultant and her staff continue to work on this initiative.

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

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

- ***Perry LaGrange***
  - Voiced opposition to the City painting Black Lives Matter on the rooftop of the loading dock on Falls Road;
  - Stated he feels the BLM movement is a Marxist movement disguised as racial unrest;
  - Requested that Councilmember Walker let his grandfather, as pastor of one of the City's largest churches, know that the BLM movement is anti-God and anti-Christ and stands for destruction of the nuclear family (*Mayor Roberson asked Mr. LaGrange not to address individual Councilmembers – Councilmember Walker requested Mr. LaGrange finish his statement; he continued by addressing a statement to Councilmember Blackwell and the Mayor again asked that comments not be directed to individual Councilmembers*)
  - Requested the City place a referendum on the November ballot to give the citizens a choice about the mural – suggested the mural could be of the Event Center, Buck Leonard, Thelonious Monk or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- ***Samuel Battle***
  - Stated if the former National Guard Armory building is sold, he would like to see a bid process used and does not want the building given to a nonprofit;
  - Said more needs to be done to keep people from being killed;
  - Voiced opposition to some utility write-offs
- ***Dr. Lisa Nelson***
  - Stated she understands that a member of the Downtown Renaissance Committee has several properties that have not been developed for over two years;
  - Asked the Councilmember in her Ward if she would approve of someone having a house in that Ward for over two years and not rehabbing it;
  - Stated she would like to see the newspaper do a walkthrough and then write an article/pictoral on the properties that are owned by Jesse Gerstl

- **Morrie Minges**
  - Asked who usually puts up flags for July 4<sup>th</sup> and why it wasn't done this year;
  - Questioned if plans to paint Black Lives Matter on the roof of the loading dock have been placed on hold and voiced concern for the cost and said the community had no input in the decision;
  - Said if the City has a litter committee, she would like to serve on it
  - Said the plants in front of City Hall look very nice
  
- **Nathlyn Ohree**
  - Stated the Honorable John Lewis' work had just begun and will continue through the conscious and deliberate efforts of those who are left behind having a vision and hope for a future of equality and justice for all;
  - Stated she has received communication this week of several of the City Council persons working in their communities with their citizens to keep progress happening in the midst of this pandemic;
  - Thanked the City Officials for continuing to address the needs and wants of citizens

The Mayor closed the petitions from the public portion of the meeting.

Councilmember Walker requested that the following petition sent to him from **Kisah Cutler** of Ward 4 be included in the record:

“First I would like to say I hold each of my leaders in high regard and I do believe if there is any way possible you all can help in making Ward 4 a better place you would do so.

I am saddened by the gun violence in my ward over the weekend involving at least 3 that I know of being shot. The shooting Saturday night early Sunday morning woke my daughter and myself up with fear of our life.

These individuals must be brought to justice and can't come in our community talking [sic] the lives of our citizens.

I'm asking if the Nash County & And [sic] Edgecombe county [sic] sheriff's department can come in and assist out [sic] Rocky Mount Pd with this what I hope is a temporary crisis. Hats off to TJ Walker for all you do for us we know you care and are here for us but we need more help. Also Thankyou [sic] Council and Rocky Mount police for all you do.

Much prayers Kisah Keyana Cutler

#### **ANNEXATION NO. 316 - 3786 WEATHERFORD STREET**

It was noted that the feasibility study prepared in connection with Annexation No. 316 - 3786 Weatherford Street was explained and the public hearing held on July 13, 2020. Mayor Roberson stated that written comments were accepted up to 24 hours following the public hearing and none were received.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/0 nays; no vote is recorded for Councilmember Miller) that **Ordinance No. O-2020-31** entitled **ORDINANCE EXTENDING THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT/ANNEXATION NO. 316 - 3786 WEATHERFORD STREET** be adopted.

#### **TAXICAB LICENSE**

The City Council received a recommendation from the Chief of Police for the issuance of a new taxi right license to Allan C. Walters.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/0 nays; no vote is recorded for Councilmember Miller) that the taxi permit be approved for issuance to Allan C. Walters, as recommended by the Chief of Police.

**POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN AMENDMENTS/CORRECTIONS**

The City Council received a recommendation for the following amendments/corrections to the City's Pay and Classification Plan:

a. Addition of the following positions:

Dept/ Division	Position	Pay Grade	No. Positions
Business & Collections Services	Director of Business & Collections Services	28	1
City Manager's Office	Policy Analyst	19	1

b. Reclassify the following position:

Dept/ Division	Current Classification	New Classification	Pay Grade
City Manager's Office	Budget and Evaluation Manager	Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation	27

c. Reassign the following position:

Current Dept/Division	New Dept/Division	Classification	Pay Grade
Public Works/ Community Code	Public Works/ Environmental Services	Keep America Beautiful Coordinator	18

d. Reassign the following groups of positions:

Current Dept/Division/Position	New Dept/Division/Position
Finance/Information Systems	Technology Services/Technology Services
Finance/Business Office	Business & Collections Services/Business & Collections Services
Public Works/Community Code	Development Services/Community Code
Engineering/Administration	Public Works/Engineering Design
Engineering/Traffic	Public Works/Transportation Engineering
Planning & Development/Administration & Planning	Development Services/Development Services Administration
Planning & Development/Inspections	Development Services/Inspection
Community & Economic Development/Administration	Community & Business Development/Administration
Community & Economic Development/Community Development	Community & Business Development/Community Development
Community & Economic Development/Downtown Development	Community & Business Development/Downtown Development
Community & Economic Development/Business Development	Community & Business Development/Business Development

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Bullock and failed by a roll call vote of 4-3 (Councilmembers Knight, Blackwell, Joyner and Walker opposed; 3 ayes/4 nays;) that consideration of the Resolution be tabled.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and carried by a roll call vote of 4-3 (Councilmembers Daughtridge, Bullock and Miller opposed; 4 ayes/3 nays;) that **Resolution No. R-2020-24**

entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN** be adopted.

**REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE**

The City Council was advised that the City joined in a regional planning effort to update its 2015 hazard mitigation plan (HMP) to better protect the people and property from the effects of natural and human-caused hazards and to maintain eligibility for mitigation funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It was noted that for the first time, in 2015, the City participated in a regional planning process which included Edgecombe, Nash and Wilson Counties and all the municipalities within those three counties' boundaries to create the multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). The Council was further advised that a requirement of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 is that the City update its HMP every five (5) years.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that **Resolution No. R-2020-25** entitled **RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE N.E.W. REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN** be adopted.

**TRAFFIC ORDINANCE AMENDMENT**

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

**ADOPT:**

- 25 MPH on Liriope Drive (from Cox Avenue to Shreve Road)

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that Ordinance No. **O-2020-32** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE TRAFFIC CONTROL ORDINANCE MAP OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

**FY 2020 URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM (URP) FUNDING AGREEMENT**

The City Council was advised that the City has been awarded \$100,000 from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency to provide urgent repairs for low- and very low-income homeowners within the City limits. It was noted that repairs will be done up to a dollar amount of \$10,000 and it is anticipated that a minimum of 12 repairs can be accomplished and an additional 6 homes will be funded under the Urgent Repair Program with the support of \$150,000 from the General Fund.

Council approval of the City's Urgent Repair Program (URP20) Assistance Policy, Procurement and Disbursement Policy and Post Approval Documentation was received on June 22, 2020. Approval of the Urgent Repair Program (URP 20) Funding Agreement was requested.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the FY 20 Urgent Repair Program Funding Agreement be approved and that the City Manager and City Clerk be authorized to execute the Funding Agreement on behalf of the City.

**ROCKY MOUNT TRANSIT GRANT AGREEMENT/FY 2020 CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES ACT)**

The City Council was advised that the City has been approved by the North Carolina Department of Transportation for the FY 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES ACT) grant in the amount of \$377,450. It was explained that the grant will assist in funding operating expenses related to the Tar River Transit's Rural General Public (RGP) program and are in addition to the Federal CARES ACT funds allocated to the City (\$4,367,324) and the grant does not require a local match.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the grant agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation be approved and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the grant agreement and all required documentation and certifications on behalf of the City.

**BIDS/WATER PURIFICATION CHEMICALS FY 2020-2021**

The City Council received the tabulation of bids received for Water Purification Chemicals FY 2020-2021 Bids were received and opened on June 18, 2020 after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented, including advertisement, and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2020-17**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the bid be awarded to Univar USA for a twelve-month contract, with an option to renew for two (2) additional one-year terms, at a total cost of \$14,175 (22,500 pounds @ \$.063) and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the bid contract on behalf of the City.

**SOLE-SOURCE PURCHASE/CITY HALL TELEPHONE SYSTEM UPGRADE (DIGITAL)**

The City Council received a proposal for the "sole-source" purchase for an upgrade to the current telephone system at City Hall pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e)(6) based on standardization or compatibility. The information furnished by the Purchasing Division supporting the recommendation will be placed on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2020-18**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the "sole-source" purchase for the upgrade to the City Hall telephone system at a total cost of \$83,124.84 be approved and that the Purchasing Division be authorized to issue a purchase order for the system in accordance with the Council's award.

**CITY HALL INTERIOR RENOVATIONS - 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOORS (SOUTH SIDE)**

At the request of the City Manager, by consensus, consideration of the contract with Oakley Collier Architects for architectural services

for FY 2021 City Hall interior renovations 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors (south side; part of the one-stop-shop) was removed from the agenda.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The Mayor stated that a Closed Session has been requested for matters concerning attorney-client privilege and personnel.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the City Council go into Closed Session at 4:50 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-556** at the end of **Minute Book 37** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

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**REGULAR SESSION**

The Mayor convened the City in regular session at 5:40 p.m.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

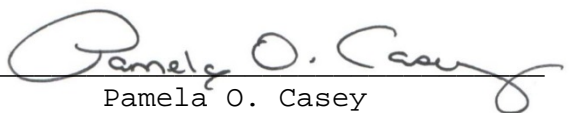
Councilmember Joyner stated that the funeral for retired Police Sergeant Stoney Battle is tomorrow and asked for a moment of silence for those who have lost their lives.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney reported that Parks and Recreation employee Yameer Greene lost his life this week on the way to work.

The City Council recognized those lives lost with a moment of silence.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

  
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Pamela O. Casey  
City Clerk