

November 23, 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**.

**arrived at 4:20 p.m.*

***joining remotely*

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

****present as required*

Security Officer: Police Sergeant Stephen Walker***.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and requested a moment of silence for individual prayer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/0 nays) that the minutes of a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held October 26, 2020 be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA (ADDED IN OPEN MEETING)

Mayor Roberson stated he is aware of two additional items to be added to today's agenda as follows:

- Closed Session (Attorney-Client Privilege); and
- Crime Report (Interim Police Chief Charles Williams)

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/0 nays) that the agenda be approved, as amended.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

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

- Wished all a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving holiday. She reminded all that City offices will be closed Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27 in observance of the holiday and will return to normal business hours, Monday, November 30, 2020
- Congratulated the Parks and Recreation Department and noted that during the North Carolina Recreation Trails Program board meeting last week, the City of Rocky Mount was awarded a \$100,000 grant to fund a multi-use trail for upcoming renovations to Battle Park. She said out of 49 applications, the application of the City of Rocky Mount ranked second in the state and said the Department's hard work has been rewarded in a total of \$649,000 from three grants for the Battle Park project. She congratulated Director Joel Dunn and staff who continue to work diligently on the planning and grant award portion of this project.

- Announced that the City of Rocky Mount's Purchasing Division, in coordination with its Minority Women Business Enterprise program, encourages citizens to support local businesses on Saturday, November 28 for Small Business Saturday. She said Small Business Saturday is an unofficial holiday launched by American Express in 2010 to help small businesses gain exposure and inspire consumers to shop within their local communities during the holiday season adding that shopping locally keeps money in the community and helps support Rocky Mount. She encouraged residents to use the hashtag #SuperSaturday while shopping on November 28.
- Reminded all that the City of Rocky Mount's extended moratorium on disconnection of utility services due to COVID-19 hardships was lifted effective, Monday, October 30. She said the City will work diligently with customers to work out reasonable payment arrangements on past due balances and late fees will not be assessed for accounts until March 30, 2021. It was noted that Business and Collections Services encourages payments via drive-thru at 224 S. Franklin Street, online via rockymountnc.gov or by phone at 972-1250. The Manager stated the department also will be working with customers who qualify for COVID-19 relief funds due to financial hardships and proof of financial hardship via lost wages must be provided to receive federal COVID-19 relief funds.
- Advised that the Imperial Centre will also hold a virtual Christmas Celebration at 6 p.m. on December 4 featuring a variety of local musical talents. She encouraged all to learn more about the event by visiting rockymountnc.gov and imperialcentre.org.
- Noted that OIC continues to hold COVID-19 testing sites at the Rocky Mount Event Center. She said those tested will need to bring their photo ID and insurance cards and added that insurance is not required for testing. It was noted that testing days are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and registration can be performed prior to arrival by logging onto oicrmhub.com. Call 252-210-9856 for more information.

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:

- **Ron Magnum:**
 - *Said his parents were residents of Rocky Mount from 1994 until their death;*
 - *Said he lived in Bermuda for 30 years and still has a business in Bermuda;*
 - *Said he came to Rocky Mount because he owns the property where his parents formerly resided;*
 - *Said he had some issues related to COVID-19 and his power was turned off, which was a violation of the state and local moratorium;*
 - *Said he has been residing in the City for the past two years;*
 - *Said his utilities should not have been shut down pursuant to the moratorium and leadership should have put the moratorium in place in March and a stimulus package should have been sent out every month until the pandemic was resolved*
- **Samuel Battle:**
 - *Said there were 3 shootings in Ward 4 recently and kids are dying;*
 - *Said the Council is talking about parking decks and we are losing our kids; questioned when somebody will step up and put something together;*
 - *Said a young lady has lost a 2nd child within three months;*
 - *Said the youth tell him they have nothing to do so they are going to keep shooting; there are no programs and no jobs;*
 - *Said the young man who lost his life 2 months ago was shot in Little Raleigh by a gang member and no one is concerned about that;*

- *Said he has seen this for 9 years;*
 - *Said he is no gang banger, but they respect him like he respects them, and someone has to step up say we have had enough of this;*
 - *Said a young man he talked to about the cemetery wants the Telegram to come talk to him and get the real story relative to what happened in 2006 about the cemetery and they are going to bring a proposal in two weeks; said former Assistant City Manager Peter Varney previously said it would take \$100,000;*
 - *Said Troy Davis is doing a great job Downtown but there are others who received funds and are doing nothing, and they will be called out because if they are receiving funds and doing nothing then funds need to be allocated to clean up Unity Cemetery;*
 - *Said Dred Wimberly is buried in United Cemetery and was an inspiration to him*
- *Nehemiah Smith:*
- *Recited Matthew 25:35-36 and said we are compelled by the Bible to take care of each other;*
 - *Said Covid-19 has taken an exacting toll on the world, state and community and people are in need of things that were taken for granted before the pandemic and many needs are a direct result of the pandemic;*
 - *Said he has witnessed devastation firsthand and the amount of food given out by Mount Zion, First Baptist and other locals churches was staggering;*
 - *Said people are not worried about trivial things but more concerned with how they can make ends meet and feed their children;*
 - *Said as a part of Mount Zion First Baptist Church's 1871 initiative the church is holding its first "Feed the City" event on Saturday, December 12, 2020 at 320 W. Thomas Street from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the goal is to feed 5,000 people in the City and surrounding area and they are asking that all Councilmembers come out and participate in the event; he said all City officials are invited to come out and volunteer for the event; thanked the City and businesses assisting with this event and said he is hoping this will be an annual or bi-annual event*
- *Bronson Williams:*
- *Said he was glad to receive the report from the Interim Police Chief adding that there is little that can be done relative to the recent shootings from a Governmental perspective, but it is the mindset of people that needs to be addressed;*
 - *Said he remembers hearing at a school board meeting some years ago that it was said that children don't expect to live past 16 years old;*
 - *Said as he looks at the City from an economic standpoint, growth is still taking place in the midst of the pandemic;*
 - *Said the Davis lofts in the Downtown will greatly increase the tax base in the City;*
 - *Said he remembers hearing from former City Manager Charles Penny about how Asheville grew its Downtown and increased its tax base and said he thinks if people will stay engaged in the process of how the City functions they will have a fuller understanding of where the City is going and start making the necessary investment;*
 - *Commended the City for continuing to make the investment and said he believes that investment will be returned, and he is excited to see what is happening and looks forward to more industries coming*

There being no other speakers, the Mayor closed the public petitions portion of the meeting.

OPTION TO PURCHASE 55.52 ACRES ALONG THOMAS A. BETTS PARKWAY/PUBLIC HEARING

It was noted that the City Council previously approved (September 14, 2020) an assignment and assumption of option to purchase a 55.52-acre parcel located on Thomas A. Betts Parkway (PIN No. 384200922115) for economic development and that notice of a required public hearing

was properly noticed for today's meeting. The Mayor stated that the purchase price is \$740,000 including related closing costs. The City Council was provided with a Budget Ordinance appropriating funds for the acquisition.

The Mayor opened the public hearing.

No one appeared and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed noting that written comments will be accepted up to 24 hours after the public hearing in accordance with NCGS 166A-19.24 and such comments can be submitted to the City Clerk.

NOTE: No comments were received.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that staff be authorized to exercise the option to purchase and the City Manager be authorized to acquire the property and execute any closing documents on behalf of the City; and that **Ordinance No. O-2020-55** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 FOR BOSEMAN PROPERTY PURCHASE** be adopted. The vote for Councilmember Bullock was recorded in the affirmative pursuant to NCGS 160A.75.

AWARD OF DUTY SIDEARMS AND BADGES

The City Council received a recommendation for the award of duty sidearms and badges to the following officers who will soon retire from the Rocky Mount Police Department pursuant to NCGS 20-187.2(a):

- Police Chief George Dewayne Robinson - retirement date December 1, 2020 - 30+ years of service;
- Police Captain Donald Moseley - retirement date January 1, 2021 - 27+ years of service; and
- Police Sergeant Scott Hale - retirement date January 1, 2021 - 27+ years of service.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the award of duty sidearms and badges be approved.

AD VALOREM TAX RELEASES

The City Council received the following schedules of ad valorem taxes recommended for release and/or refund:

SCHEDULE A - acknowledge receipt of report of the following taxes under \$100 approved for release and/or refund by the City Manager:

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>BILL NO.</u> | <u>NAME/ADDRESS</u> | <u>TAX</u> | <u>COMMENT</u> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| <u>EDGECOMBE COUNTY</u> | | | | |
| 2020 | 478 | HIGH SH LLC PO BOX 800729 DALLAS, TX 75380 | 1.56 | PEN LATE LIST REMOVAL |
| | | TOTAL RELEASE: | 1.56 | |

NASH COUNTY

| | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--------------|------|---|
| 2020 | 1001145 | ALLEN, PAUL MOSBY ALLEN, MARCIA PERRY 1317 GREEN TEE LN ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804 | 78.69 | CITY | PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS |
| | | TOTAL RELEASE: | 78.69 | | |
| 2020 | 1001290 | BARNES, MIRANDA GAIL 6569 ROCKY QUARRY RD ELM CITY, NC 27822 | 22.88 | CITY | PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS |
| | | TOTAL RELEASE: | 29.56 | | |
| 2020 | 1000319 | JOHNSON, LORENZA JUNIOR JOHNSON, LAKEEA NICOLE 2909 WELLINGTON DR ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803 | 34.37 | CITY | PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS |
| | | TOTAL RELEASE: | 34.37 | | |
| 2020 | 11670 | OWEN, MARK J & KAY 3200 CORNWALLIS DR ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804 | 20.00 | DOG | DUPLICATE BILL |
| | | TOTAL RELEASE: | 20.00 | | |
| 2020 | 1000492 | PERRYMAN, JEAN MARIE 101 KILLIAN CT ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804 | 34.07 | CITY | PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS |
| | | TOTAL RELEASE: | 34.07 | | |
| 2020 | 1000343 | WILLIAMS, DONALD LANE 720 COUNTRY CLUB RD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804 | 40.40 | CITY | VALUATION CORRECTION |
| | | TOTAL RELEASE: | 40.40 | | |

SCHEDULE B - taxes over \$100 recommended for release and/or refund by the City Council:

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>BILL NO.</u> | <u>NAME/ADDRESS</u> | <u>TAX</u> | | <u>COMMENT</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|--|---------------|------|---|
| | | <u>NASH COUNTY</u> | | | |
| 2020 | 832 | NASH CONSTRUCTION LLC ONEAL SKIPPER 325 LAKE ROYALE LOUISBURG, NC 27549 | 188.59 | CITY | PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS |
| | | TOTAL RELEASE: | 188.59 | | |
| 2020 | 1000772 | SALAMCO GROUP LLC AWAMLEH HMOUD 3180 ABBEY RD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804 | 286.88 | CITY | PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS |
| | | TOTAL RELEASE: | 286.88 | | |
| 2020 | 2356 | SOUTHERN HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT C/O MARVIN F POER & COMPANY PO BOX 52427 ATLANTA, GA 30355 | 240.18 | PEN | LATE LIST REMOVAL |
| | | TOTAL RELEASE: | 240.18 | | |

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that receipt of the report from the City Manager of Schedule A

taxes approved for release and/or refund be acknowledged and that the tax releases and/or refunds listed on Schedule B be approved.

FY 2020-2021 BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT/HURRICANE ISAIAS ELECTRIC MUTUAL AID REIMBURSEMENT

The City Council was advised that in response to Hurricane Isaias the Department of Energy Resources provided assistance via Mutual Aid to the Town of Belhaven and City of Washington to facilitate restoration of electric distribution systems. The Council was advised that pursuant to the mutual aid agreements the City was able to invoice these jurisdictions for all costs associated for their services (August 4-6, 2020) and payment has been received from both jurisdictions totaling \$39,156.98. It was noted that the funds will be appropriated in order to provide additional funding for staff overtime wages which were directly impacted by delivery of mutual aid.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Walker and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that **Ordinance No. O-2020-56** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 HURRICANE ISAIAS ELECTRIC MUTUAL AID REIMBURSEMENT (\$39,157)** be adopted.

WATER ASSESSMENT CONTRACT

The City Council received a water assessment contract with Cirilo Rivas Martinez and Jesus L. Martinez for water service to 4417 Ottermount Court (PIN #383105070469). Council was advised that the contract provides for prepayment of water meter and capacity fees of \$265 and for the remaining water main and tap fees of \$4,000 to be assessed against the property.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the assessment contract with Cirilo Rivas Martinez and Jesus L. Martinez for water service to 4417 Ottermount Court (**C-2020-28**) be approved and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the same on behalf of the City. This contract will be recorded in the Office of the Nash County Register of Deeds.

FY 2021 METROPOLITAN PLANNING PROGRAM GRANT/TRANSIT

The City Council was advised that the City has been approved by the North Carolina Department of Transportation for the FY 2021 Section 5303 Metropolitan Planning Grant from the Public Transportation Division in the amount of \$53,950. Council was advised that the funding shares are as follows: Federal \$43,160; State \$5,395; and City \$5,395.

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

LEASE/PARKING LOT (TARBORO STREET)

Consideration was given to authorizing use of an upset bid process relative to an offer from the Historic Peoples Building, LLC to lease parking spaces in two (2) asphalt parking lots which are located in the 100 Block of Sunset Avenue and 100 Block of Northeast Main Street pursuant to the terms of a Restated Parking Lot Lease between the City and the Historic Peoples Building, LLC. The City Council was advised that the lease will provide for the lease of 45 City-owned spaces at \$100 per year per space for years one through five; \$125 per year per space for years 6 through 10; and market rate for each of the three renewal terms based on the rate of other off-street City lots. It was explained that the original lease approved in 2005 provided for lease of 45 spaces on Tarboro Street and that the requested action will relocate parking from Tarboro Street as follows: 14 spaces on Sunset Avenue and 31 spaces on NE Main Street.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2020-43** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT AUTHORIZING AN UPSET BID PROCESS FOR THE LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY FOR A TERM EXCEEDING TEN (10) YEARS** be adopted. This resolution authorizes the City Clerk to advertise the offer for upset bids pursuant to GS 160A-269; and, if no qualifying upset bid is received, further authorizes the Mayor to execute the lease agreement **(C-2020-29)** and any other instruments necessary to lease the parking spaces to the Historic Peoples Building, LLC on behalf of the City.

NOTE: No upset bids were received.

LEASE AMENDMENT/ROCKY MOUNT AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Consideration was given to an amended lease agreement with the Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc. for approximately 5,200 square feet on the second floor of the Helen P. Gay Train Station. The Council was advised that the main terms for the current lease which was effective February 1, 2019 calls for monthly rent of \$2,197 for a period of four years. The City Council was advised that the Chamber has experienced a hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic and is requesting a temporary reduction in rent from \$2,197 to \$1,100 per month from January 1, 2021 for six months ending June 30, 2021.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the amended lease agreement with Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce, LLC be approved and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the amended lease agreement on behalf of the City. The amended lease will be filed with the original lease agreement **(C-2019-20)** in the office of the City Clerk.

APPOINTMENTS

Motion was made by Councilmember Walker, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that Monika Underhill be appointed to fill the Ward 4 vacancy on the Planning Board. This unexpired term shall expire on June 30, 2022.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that Maria Chavez-Cadena be appointed to the Human Relations Commission, as the Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce representative for a four-year term to expire on June 30, 2024.

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

CITY COUNCIL MEETING CANCELLATION

Consideration was given to canceling the second regular City Council meeting in December scheduled for December 28, 2020.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the December 28, 2020 meeting be canceled.

CRIME REPORT (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)

Mayor Roberson called on City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney. The City Manager stated that all are concerned regarding the recent rash of shootings and reported that staff thought this was a good time to provide an update to the Council and the community.

Interim Police Chief Charles Williams provided the City Council with a crime report. Some highlights of the report are:

- Since November 12, 2020 five (5) significant events have occurred in the City with two (2) resulting in homicides; none of the cases appear to be random; four (4) arrests have been made related to these cases and in three (3) cases strong leads are currently being investigated ;
- Since October 20, 2020 the Police Department has continued to implement its Violent Crime Plan of Action; 79 guns have been submitted by Police Officers; hours have been adjusted and expanded for availability of Officers during times of violence;
- The Violent Offenders Unit and CID Unit have been instrumental in identifying suspects and witnesses in the above cases and are following up on leads;
- Work continues with State and Federal partners relative to prosecution;
- A plan of action is in place for the holiday season in the areas of retail

Interim Chief Williams responded to questions from Council and additional comments were made by the City Manager.

The City Council voiced support of a proactive approach and of the Police Department.

CLOSED SESSION (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)

A closed session concerning a matter relating to attorney-client privilege was added to the agenda.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the City Council adjourn to Closed Session at 5:15 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-567** at the end of **Minute Book 37** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

REGULAR SESSION

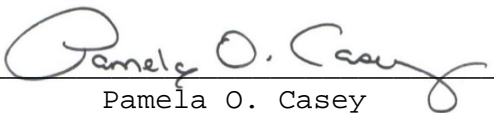
The Mayor convened the City in regular session at 5:40 p.m.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

Councilmember Joyner announced that the Berkshire Neighborhood will hold an open house event on Saturday, December 5, 2020 added that this is the first community-owned home. He provided other information relative to the Berkshire Communities' accomplishments and stated that an invitation to the open house will be sent to the Mayor and Councilmembers.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the meeting adjourn at 5:42 p.m.



Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk