

January 25, 2021

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 Daughtride, W. B. Bullock and Christine Carroll Miller\*.

*\*joined remotely*

*\*\*attended in-person first part of the meeting and remotely last part of meeting*

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; George Robinson, Interim Police Chief\*\*\*; Will Deaton, Development Services\*\*\* and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

*\*\*\*present as required*

*The following Police Honor Guards were also in attendance\*\*\*:*  
Sergeants Denton, McDaniel and Mayfield.

Security Officer: Police Sergeant Stephen Walker.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and requested a moment of silence for individual prayer.

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

Mayor Roberson stated the following two items will need to be added to today's agenda and asked if there are any other additions or deletions to the agenda:

- Resolution Honoring a Life Well-Lived and Remembering Lewis Turner; and
- Closed Session (Personnel and Attorney-Client Privilege; pending litigation: American Lighting and Signalization vs. City of Rocky Mount

No changes were requested, and, without opposition, the agenda was approved, as amended.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Miller and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the minutes of a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held January 11, 2021 be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

#### **RECOGNITION/HONORING AND REMEMBERING A LIFE WELL-LIVED**

Mayor Roberson read aloud a resolution honoring and remembering Lewis Turner for a life well-lived.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that **Resolution R-2021-6** entitled **RESOLUTION HONORING A LIFE WELL-LIVED AND REMEMBERING LEWIS TURNER** be

adopted. The Mayor presented a framed copy of the resolution to the family of Lewis Turner. Councilmembers and the City Manager joined the Turner family and the Mayor for a photograph. The resolution is as follows:

**RESOLUTION HONORING A LIFE WELL-LIVED AND REMEMBERING  
LEWIS TURNER**

**WHEREAS**, Lewis Turner was a long-time resident of the City of Rocky Mount, Edgecombe, North Carolina; and

**WHEREAS**, Lewis Turner throughout his life was a faithful and dedicated freedom fighter for many causes and an active participant for over thirty (30) years in the public life of his community in an informed, committed and constructive manner, with a focus on the common good; and

**WHEREAS**, Lewis Turner has been a strong advocate for various causes associated with social justice, social change or respecting the rights of others and core principles related to the foundation of a democracy, including welfare rights and workers' rights for the most economically vulnerable; increasing affordable and fair housing opportunities for residents of disinvested and racially segregated communities; voting rights protection especially for those denied the right to vote based on race; and death penalty matters because one hundred forty-one (141) death row prisoners in North Carolina in 2020 were Black; and he also expressed his solidarity with the human rights and liberation of oppressed people in other similar movements in other countries; and

**WHEREAS**, Lewis Turner was active with Black Workers for Justice, the NAACP, the Rocky Mount Racial Justice Group and Community Academy; and was an ardent supporter of the freedom of the Wilmington 10 and Charlotte 3; and

**WHEREAS**, Lewis Turner imparted knowledge and wisdom to those he impacted, compassion and selflessness to those in need and inspiration and encouragement to those he led; and

**WHEREAS**, Lewis Turner's perseverance, compassion, energy and graciousness enriched those fortunate enough to know and work with him; and

**WHEREAS**, Lewis Turner's unwavering commitment, courage, willingness and ability to understand and respond to the concerns of the most marginalized people, based upon race and or economic circumstances, has made a substantial contribution to the betterment of the City of Rocky Mount, the United States and the world.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council, on behalf of the residents of Rocky Mount, extends appreciation, posthumously, to Lewis Turner for his years of dedication to community service to the City and to its residents; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Rocky Mount City Council extends its sympathy to Lewis Turner's family and decrees that they be furnished a copy of this Resolution, which is spread upon the minutes of the January 25, 2021, City Council meeting.

Adopted this 25<sup>th</sup> day of January 2021.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES**

The City Council received the minutes from a regular scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held January 11, 2021. The minutes are as follows:

*NOTE: The Honorable Lamont Wiggins, Resident Superior Court Judge for Judicial District 7B, administered the oath of office of Mayor Pro Tempore to Councilmember Richard Joyner just prior to the COW meeting. Immediately following the administration of oath Mayor Pro Tempore Richard Joyner took his seat on the dais.*

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2021 IN THE GEORGE W. DUDLEY CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING WITH MAYOR PRO TEM RICHARD JOYNER PRESIDING:**

*NOTE: Participation limited due to Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order relative to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19); meeting was available remotely*

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Joyner, Mayor Pro Tem  
 André D. Knight  
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV  
 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\*\*\*  
 Ken Hunter\*\*\*  
 Mark Adcox\*\*\*  
 Charles Williams\*\*\*  
 Cornelia McGee\*\*\*  
 Brenton Bent\*\*\*  
 Richard J. Rose

\* *Participated remotely*

\*\*\* *Present as needed during open session*

~ *Arrived after meeting called to order*

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr. Jim Johnson, Jr., Kenan-Flagler Business School\*  
 Professor Jeanne Milliken Bonds, Kenan-Flagler Business School\*  
 Brett Theodos, Douglass Community Land Trust\*

Security Officers: Sergeant Stephen Walker\*\*\*  
 Senior Police Officer Andrew Crumpler\*\*\*  
 Senior Police Officer Shawn Battle\*\*\*

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem Richard Joyner called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance including those attending remotely. He called on City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney to introduce the agenda items and speakers.

The City Manager made brief remarks and introduced Dr. Jim Johnson, Jr. and Professor Jeanne Bonds from the Kenan-Flagler Business School to provide an update relative to community land trusts.

COMMUNITY LAND TRUST UPDATE - *Dr. Jim Johnson, Jr., and Professor Jeanne Milliken Bonds, Kenan-Flagler Business School; and Brett Theodos, Douglas Community Land Trust*

Dr. Johnson introduced Professor Bonds to provide an update relative to land trusts. Professor Bonds explained that a community land trust works by using capital from private donors, federal housing subsidies, city-owned property, community foundations or neighborhood associations to acquire or rehabilitate homes.

The following is a summary of the community land trust update:

- Four pillars of an inclusive and equitable develop strategy:
  - Community Land Trust
    - Non-profit
    - Develop (or redevelop)
    - Provide affordable path to homeownership
    - Secondary functions:
      - Homebuyer education classes
      - Loans for repairs and energy efficiency
      - Training for youths and adults (specialty trades, construction, remodeling)
      - Green spaces and urban gardens
      - Healthy aging
  - Inclusive Supply Chain Management System
    - Contracting
    - Procurement
  - Cross-Ward community mobilization and engagement strategy
    - Collective ambition training
    - Management services organization
  - Impact investing strategies

Professor Bonds explained that a community land trust can assist with permanent affordability since:

- The current resident sells a house at a price set by the community land trust earning a portion of the increase in the value of the home;
- The community land trust retains the land;
- The new resident buys the house at a price that is affordable and agrees to the same requirements at the time of resale

Community land trust governance was outlined to include a Board of Directors consisting of:

- Seven at-large representatives chosen for their experience;
- Seven resident representatives; and
- Seven public representatives and stakeholder intermediaries to represent the City, CDC and the Redevelopment Authority

Next steps were identified as:

- Review of current housing and renovation costs for affordable housing parcels under consideration;
- Determination of future potential properties for inclusion in the community land trust;
- Assessing available funding sources; and
- Engaging community partners

She advised the Council of the current workplan and timelines to include the following and outlined actions required for each step:

- **WORKPLAN:**
  - Property analysis (timeline: January through May)
  - Coordination of relationship of neighborhood associations
    - Community training (timeline: February through March)
  - Creation of legal entity (timeline: May through October) and early fundraising
  - Fiscal analysis
    - Coordinating policy analysis; review short- and long-term benefits (timeline: January through June)

Professor Bonds introduced Brett Theodos with the Douglass Community Land Trust in Washington, DC. Mr. Theodos provided a brief summary of his work with land trusts and provided information from a number of research studies, case studies and impact analyses. He advised the Council that shared equity is fascinating but more complex than buying a home on your own. He added there are real benefits including the ability to steward investment over time.

*~Councilmember Miller joined the meeting at 5:23 p.m. and indicated she had not been able to join previously*

*~Councilmember Walker arrived at 5:30 p.m.*

Mr. Theodos responded to questions from Councilmembers relative to governance and membership in land trusts.

In response to a question relative to land values, Professor Bonds noted that land value in Rocky Mount is clearly not the same as in DC but increases in land values can be expected.

The Mayor Pro Tem and Manager thanked all for their presentations.

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

**CRIME STATISTICS - Charles Williams, Interim Police Chief**

Interim Police Chief Charles Williams provided the City Council with a summary of city-wide crime numbers in comparison with the same time period as the prior year and stated that a positive trend continues. The Council was provided with maps depicting the areas of shots fired, incidences of aggravated assault and murder and highlights relative to efforts and successes of the Police Department to combat violent crime.

- Total crime numbers by months and years were reported as:

Crimes/NIBRS Part 1	December 2019	December 2020	+/-	YTD 2019	YTD 2020	+/-
Total	170	143	-27	2008	2172	164

- December 2020 crime numbers for murders, aggravated assault and shooting into occupied building/vehicle (map of location provided):
  - o Victims with injuries = 14
  - o Victims without injuries = 5
  - o Total victims = 19
  - o Cases cleared by arrest = 5
  - o Inactive cases = 1
  - o Open cases = 11
  - o Gang related = 0
- Aggravated assault cases and investigations:
  - o Aggravated assault cases = 17
  - o Aggravated assault victims = 18
  - o Number cases with multiple victims = 1
  - o Aggravated assault arrests = 4
  - o Aggravated assault cases cleared = 6
- Shots fired calls City-wide:
  - o Shots fired/heard = 116
  - o Calls resulting in shell casings found = 23
  - o Number shell casings found = 129
  - o Number firearms seized = 32
  - o Number firearms seized to date = 439
  - o Weapon violation arrests = 14
- Property crime cases cleared by arrest:
  - o Individual robbery = 2

- o Commercial robbery = 2
- o Larceny (other) = 1
- o Larceny (auto) = 1
- o Larceny (auto parts) = 2
- o Larceny (shoplifting) = 10
- o Motor vehicle theft = 2
- o Residential breaking & entering = 1
  
- Police involved community events:
  - o Cops and kids
  - o Toy and coat drive at the South Rocky Mount Community Center
  - o Boys & Girls Club toy drive
  - o Food give away at homeless shelter, Bassett Center and My Sister's House
  - o Pack a patrol car
  - o Wellongate Community Christmas for residents
  - o Mt. Zion Baptist Church "Feed the City"

In response to a question from Council, Interim Chief Williams advised there are currently twenty (20) vacancies in the Police Department.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he would like to receive information on how the City compares relative to salaries/compensation with sister cities and questioned if the number of vacancies have anything to do with compensation. Interim Chief Williams stated he and the City Manager have recently met relative to that topic. Councilmember Daughtridge stated the City seems to be 8-15% behind Wilson as to compensation. City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney reported that she has recently held a conversation with Chief Robinson and Interim Chief Williams to determine if the City is in line with other departments relative to compensation and reported that it is in line with others.

Councilmember Knight voiced a desire to see more emphasis on the hiring of officers who live in the community and Councilmember Walker added that he would like to see incentives offered to officers willing to live in the City.

Interim Chief Williams reported on incentives offered to Police Officers who live in certain neighborhoods.

Mayor Pro Tem Joyner thanked Interim Chief Williams for his hard work and the presentation and the City Manager thanked Interim Chief Williams for his service as interim chief.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received report; no formal action**

**CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER)** - Cornelia L. McGee, Community Development Administrator

The City Council was advised that the Down East HOME Consortium (DEHC) Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation and Report (CAPER) for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program is due to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) no later than January 31, 2021.

The Council was further advised that the Down East HOME Consortium (DEHC) Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for program year 2019 provides a quality assessment of high priority activities accomplished during this reporting period and during the second year of the 2018-2021 Consolidated Plan the City has made great progress meeting the high priority needs identified in the Strategic Plan.

The Council was provided with a list of FY 2019-2010 program year major accomplishments and a process timeline to include public input for the CAPER.

Ms. McGee presented a PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the CAPER. Highlights of the presentation included:

- CDBG Housing Rehabilitation
  - \$284,730 allocated in CDBG funds
  - 23 low-to-moderate homeowners assisted during the Housing Repair Program
- Activities pending completion
  - Housing Repair Program
    - 9 additional low-to-moderate income homeowners approved
    - 3 additional housing repairs completed in first quarter of Program Year 2020
    - 6 pending bid awards
- CDBG Public Service
  - 4 local nonprofit organizations awarded a total of \$84,864
    - Boys & Girls Club of the Tar River Region
    - Buck Leonard Association for Sports & Human Enrichment
    - Rocky Mount Edgecombe Community Development Corporation (RMECDC)
    - United Community Ministries (UCM)
- CDBG Economic Development
  - 1 local non-profit awarded a total of \$15,000
    - RMECDC Business Center
- Down East HOME Consortium (DEHC) Activities
  - \$87,178 allocated in Program Year 2019 HOME funds
    - Two (2) program eligible homeowners in Tarboro/Edgecombe County assisted
- DEHC Project in progress
  - Six (6) low-income homeowners
  - Four (4) Nash County and two (2) Edgecombe County homeowners
- HOME Affordable Developments
  - 80 affordable units completed
    - HOME funds supported construction of 10 units at Ravenwood Crossing
- General Fund Accomplishments
  - Urgent Repair Program
    - \$119,092 allocated in General Fund with the exception of \$100,000 in NC Housing Trust Funds (state funds)
    - 19 urgent repairs completed to very-low to low-moderate income homeowners
  - Housing Rehab Matching Rebate Program
    - \$260,845 allocated in General Funds
    - 32 housing rehab matching rebates awarded for homeowners
  - Addressing Homelessness
    - General Fund supported UCM's Community Shelter Program with \$20,000
    - Community Shelter provided 63 beds for 179 people
- General Fund Accomplishments
  - Urgent Repair Program
    - \$119,092 allocated in General Fund with the exception of \$100,000 in NC Housing Trust Funds (state funds)
    - 19 urgent repairs completed to very-low to low-moderate income homeowners

- Summary of Accomplishments
  - Program Year 2019
    - Total housing improvements assistance funded = \$851,845
      - 19 urgent repairs completed for very-low to low-to-moderate income homeowners
      - 23 housing repairs completed for low-to-moderate income homeowners
      - 32 homeowners and/or investors received housing rehabilitation matching rebates
      - 2 DEHC HOME full scattered housing projects completed
    - Total public services funded = \$84,864
      - 4 local non-profits funded to support public services
- Next Steps
  - Citizen Participation
    - January 6, 2021 - published in local newspaper and on department website
    - January 10-25, 2021 - public review and comment period
    - January 25, 2021 - City Council approval/adoption
    - January 27, 2021 - submittal to HUD

It was recommended that the City Council receive public comments at the January 25, 2021 City Council meeting in order for the CAPER to be submitted to HUD no later than January 31, 2021.

Councilmember Knight questioned if there is a waiting list and Ms. McGee responded in the affirmative adding that staff is starting to reach out to the 19 individuals on the waiting list and there are 5 bid packages out on 30 homes. He questioned if there is anything that can be done to speed up or made the process smoother. Ms. McGee reported that in December 2020 staff received notification from HUD that staff will no longer have to obtain approval before starting processes and added that she is hopeful that will result in a quicker process in 2021. She added that the pandemic was a challenge in 2020. Ms. McGee told the City Council that a housing rehab specialist has recently been hired and the department is now fully staffed. She noted the department works with the Community Code Division and is working to strengthen the relationship with that department.

Ms. McGee advised that sometimes the program is closed with individuals remaining on a waiting list and if that occurs those applicants will be the first contacted once additional funding is available.

Mayor Pro Tem Joyner thanked Ms. McGee for her report and City Manager Small-Toney reported that the department is now off the HUD "watch list". She said the team has worked hard to right some of the issues it faced.

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

**NATURAL HAZARDS RESILIENCY PLAN UPDATE** - Brenton Bent, Director of Water Resources

Brenton Bent, Director of Water Resources, told the City Council that in June of 2020 the City Manager created a project team to research a resiliency plan. He reported that the Natural Hazards Resiliency Planning Committee received a scope of work from Wood PLC on August 28, 2020 totaling \$79,650 and committee members met on September 4, 2020 to evaluate the proposal and discuss its feasibility. It was noted that a follow up meeting was held on September 14, 2020 with consultants to

discuss details and the proposed schedule and timeline for the project is thirteen months (January 2021 - February 2022).

The Director of Water Resources identified community resilience as the capacity of a community, business or natural environment to prevent, withstand, respond to and recover stronger from a disruption. He added that community resilience allows for better planning for natural hazards and changing climatic conditions. He told the Council that resiliency (strength) comes from the following and resilience to natural hazards and climate change is key to a prosperous and thriving City:

- City buildings and infrastructure;
- Public and private services that provide daily support;
- Leadership inside and outside of government;
- The health and well-being of City residents; and
- The condition of the land, air and water.

Mr. Bent presented a PowerPoint presentation to the City Council giving a broad overview of the importance of developing a resiliency plan, explaining key terms and summarizing specific tasks to be taken to transform Rocky Mount into a resilient city. He outlined the scope of work of Wood PLC to include:

- Consultation/scope of work (8/28/2020);
- Planning committee evaluation and discussion (9/5/2020);
- Proposed schedule timeline = 13 months (January 2021 to February 2022);
- Cost = \$79,650
- Seven tasks:
  - o Data collection
  - o Risk and vulnerability assessment
  - o Steering Committee coordination
  - o Public engagement
  - o Resiliency strategy development
  - o Draft plan development
  - o Plan adoption

Mr. Benton explained the scope of work for each of the seven tasks, provided the City Council with a copy of the Wood PLC scope of work document and responded to questions from Councilmembers. He reported that the idea is for the resiliency plan to be a guiding document for the City and added it would not be an additional approval structure for land development.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received report; no formal action**

**CLOSED SESSION**

The Mayor Pro Tem stated the Council needs to enter into a closed session to discuss a matter concerning economic development. City Attorney Richard J. Rose requested an additional item concerning attorney-client privilege be added to the closed session discussion.

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**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Miller and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 6:25 p.m.**

The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as **ESM-569** at the end of **Minute Book 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

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**REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT.** The Mayor Pro Tem convened the Committee in regular session at 7:02 p.m. and, without opposition, adjourned the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Miller and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the minutes and recommendations from the January 11, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting be approved.

**COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER**

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

- Reported that the City's Business and Collections Services Department will utilize the Community Development Block Grant CARES Act to assist utilities customers within the City limits who meet income requirements. The program is designed for low-to-moderate income households impacted by the loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible households may receive up to \$500 toward delinquent City of Rocky Mount utilities that became due after March 31, 2020 and remain unpaid. For more information on eligibility requirements, visit [rockymountnc.gov](http://rockymountnc.gov) or contact our Business Services Center at 972-1250.
- Announced the public is invited to join the Down East Home Consortium for a virtual meeting on the 2021-2023 Consolidated Plan, the 2021 Annual Action Plan and an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. The meetings begin tomorrow, Tuesday, January 26 and continue through Thursday, January 28. Information on times as well as the online link are available via [rockymountnc.gov](http://rockymountnc.gov).
- Stated the City's Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences remains closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. She encouraged the community to sign up for free Virtual Arts Education Programs including yoga, creative writing and calligraphy. The Imperial Centre's YouTube page is also home to live, virtual performances. Visit [imperialcentre.org](http://imperialcentre.org) and [rockymountnc.gov](http://rockymountnc.gov) for more information on these events.
- Reminded all that City Council meetings are replayed on Suddenlink Channel 19 on the Wednesday following each meeting. Replay times are 5-7 a.m., 5-7 p.m., and 9-11 p.m. She encouraged residents to subscribe to the CITY-TV 19 YouTube page and to stay connected to receive the latest news and information. Links to each of the City's social media pages are located at the bottom of the City's homepage, [rockymountnc.gov](http://rockymountnc.gov).
- Noted OIC continues to conduct COVID-19 testing. Those tested will need to bring their photo ID and insurance cards. Insurance is not required for testing. Testing days are Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment or walk up at the OIC Specialty Care Center located at 260 Albemarle Avenue. Tests are also being done at the ROCI Triage located at 1641 E Raleigh Boulevard, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Monday through Thursday by appointment.
- Reported that approximately 40 people attended the MWBE-hosted virtual event this past Friday. With guest presenters, the two-and-a-half-hour meeting informed attendees about "The Numbers Behind Operating a Business" and gave "Strategies and Resources to Help Ensure that MWBEs are Prepared, Equipped, and Vested for Partnerships and Opportunities to Grow Their Business." She added that the City's Purchasing Division outdid themselves in bringing this event to our local businesses and encouraged all to stay tuned for more workshops.

Councilmember Miller questioned if the OIC tests are rapid tests and Councilmember Blackwell stated the tests are regular esophageal tests and results are provided within 24 to 48 hours.

### AFRICAN AMERICAN TRIBUTE MONTH

The City Council was advised that the Police Department is requesting that the month of February be proclaimed "African-American Tribute" month and that the following Police Department employees be recognized and celebrated for their achievements:

- **Lieutenant Herbert Tillman** - first African American Police Officer;
- **Officer Katie Pope Hunter** - first African American female Police Officer;
- **Detective Barbara Wright** - first African American female Police Corporal;
- **Deloris Kelly** - first African American Telecommunicator;
- **Lieutenant George Cooper** – restructure of the Explorers Program #774;
- **Delores Pittman** – first African American Administrative Secretary;
- **Gloria Arrington** - first African American Police Records Lead Clerk;
- **Chief Willie Williams** - first African American Major; and
- **Chief John H. Manley** - first African American Police Chief

Mayor Roberson proclaimed the month of February 2021 as African American Tribute Month" in the City of Rocky Mount and read a proclamation recognizing each of the above recipients. Each recipient, or their designee, were presented with a framed copy of the proclamation and Mayor Roberson, Mayor Pro Tem Joyner and Interim Police Chief George Robinson joined each for a photograph. Police Honor Guards presented the recipients or their designees with flowers.

### 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:

- **Johnny Cunningham:**
  - Said right and wrong has no color or agenda and it is wrong for organizations to blame the City for the condition of Unity Cemetery;
  - Said he recalls a group took it upon themselves to kidnap the project and they reported they took away tons of debris and beautified the cemetery and now claim their work was in vain. He said they took that task on and should stop blaming others for their failure;
  - Said Councilmembers should not continue to allow people to single out the City and possess citizens' private information stolen from the "dark web" and to distribute said information and to continue to disrespect the City Manager;
  - Said at the last Council meeting no one said anything relative to the appointments to the City's Boards, Commissions and Committees and added that four people should have requested that Steve Cedarburg be removed from service on the City's Boards, Commissions and Committees and removed from any involvement relative to the growth in the City adding he is making that request now;
  - Said some are treated differently and legal action needs to be taken

Councilmember Blackwell asked for clarification about comments made by Mr. Cunningham relative to a reference about information obtained illegally.

Mr. Cunningham said:

- When the City became a victim of a cyberattack and information stolen that information, according to Clint Williams, was posted on the dark web and he has said he was able to obtain and possess that information; added he is disturbed that Mr. Williams is a fraud investigator with BB&T and as such he should have known the

information was the property of the City and was stolen; he added Mr. Williams obtained the information under false pretenses and shared the information knowing it was stolen and that it contained personal information of customers. He said Mr. Williams shared information with other entities included the Rocky Mount Telegram and such action displayed a willingness and utter disregard for the privacy of citizens and a desire to hurt/harm those involved;

- Said it seems any time stolen information is possessed and shared with others it should be considered possession and distribution and questioned if this action is a legal matter adding he believes the FBI should have been notified by Mr. Williams if he was aware of the location of such stolen information

A conversation was held among Councilmembers and the City Attorney was requested to look into the matter. City Attorney Richard J. Rose suggested law enforcement may be the proper authority to look into this matter. Councilmember Daughtridge stated that he does not feel it is proper for the Council as leaders of the community to discuss an individual in this venue. Discussion continued and Councilmember Knight responded that he feels it is very proper particularly when it was brought to the public arena and particularly when the person stated they received information off the dark web and posted information on social media indicating they had some kind of inside information.

Councilmember Blackwell suggested the conversation continue in a different forum and the Mayor stated he would welcome that particularly based upon comments by the City Attorney. Councilmember Knight requested the matter be referred to the City Attorney and City Manager for investigation and Councilmember Blackwell voiced support. The Mayor stated further discussion can be held during the closed session.

o ***Samuel Battle:***

- Said a couple months ago the City had a meeting in a Little Raleigh Park in which discussion was held relative to demolition of dilapidated houses and at least one house has been demolished in the Little Raleigh neighborhood;
- Said a gentleman on Vernon Road is concerned about a house that has been there for 16 years affecting his property value and wants the City to demolish the house;
- Said property owned by the owner of Jenkins Furniture (1628 Raleigh Boulevard) is in serious disrepair and makes the Edgecombe County side of the City look bad and the only things that look nice on that side of town are 2 cleaning businesses;
- Said a wreck occurred on Country Club Drive about 3 months ago and the road has not been repaired since that time;
- Said the City owns property behind United Cemetery and a sewer line backs up in that area and debris can be seen including toilet paper and added the City needs to take a look at it

Councilmember Knight stated the City Manager has been asked to investigate the property owned by Jenkins Furniture adding it was an open dwelling, broken glass was removed, and plexiglass installed and then replaced with plywood. He added some of the properties in that area have been referred to Community Code for investigation and it has been requested that Alan Matthews contact the owner of the parking lot connected to Roses, the Dollar Tree and Pizza Hut adding that Council is aware of these issues and are actively pursuing a resolution.

o *Shanti Davis:*

- Said she is here to speak on behalf of her son who graduated with honors; was employed making \$13 per hour; adding his baby was born recently and he missed delivery because he was in police custody relative to a shooting and she was told he was in custody for his protection;
- Said a police officer came to her home and said he needed to talk with her son about an incident involving a shooting; said her son was not the shooter but was driving her truck;
- Gave further details about the incident and said she has contacted the NAACP and Sheriff's Department for help and was given information to prove her son's innocence;
- Pled to the Council for help in having her son released and responded to questions from Councilmembers.

Councilmember Blackwell suggested the City Manager request the Director of Human Relations speak with Ms. Davis and Councilmembers Joyner and Knight made comments. City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney stated she has not spoken with Ms. Davis but from what she is hearing the matter appears to be under investigation by the Police Department and it is customary to allow that process to take place and City administration and Council cannot interfere.

Councilmember Walker noted the matter has been under investigation for about 2 months.

The Mayor and Councilmembers expressed concern and the Mayor stated Council has heard Ms. Davis' comments, but the investigation is ongoing, and Council is not law enforcement. He added that Councilmembers can see the anguish Ms. Davis is experiencing and is trying to understand the details she is sharing and that they empathize with her.

Councilmember Walker added the City needs to be sure they are prioritizing these investigations.

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney stated this is a professional Police Department and said she stands behind them and they have a good track record for following through. She added this appears to be an ongoing investigation and needs to be allowed to take its course and said she trusts the investigators are working hard to investigate. She added she does not want to be on record saying anything that will disrupt the investigation.

Councilmember Walker encouraged Ms. Davis to keep coming and reaching out until justice is served and investigation concluded adding he has sons.

o *Nathlyn Ohree:*

- Said she comes to greet the new dawning of a new day upon the United States of America and to the never ending need to strive for unity, equality and justice for all and thanked Council for their professionalism;
- Said she appreciates Council's diligence and attention to speakers and for what they do to strive to assist individuals;
- Said she encourages others to be in contact with City departments because as she rides around the City, she observes things that need to be done and tries to call and report issues; said her concerns have been addressed and she has been treated courteously by City staff;
- Thanked the Council their service and said she prays for their safety and for the City

○ ***Nehemiah Smith, Jr.:***

- Quoted a portion of the “to be, or not to be” scene from Hamlet’s soliloquy;
- Said when he received the news that Mr. Lewis Turner had transitioned that quote was the first thing to come to mind and he then later thought of the many conversations with Mr., Turner in which he said “we have to continue to speak out for the least, the lost and the left out;
- Said he is more than pleased that the Council took the time to honor Mr. Turner and spoke of things Mr. Turner had said adding he will never forget Lewis Turner for his encouraging spirit, his fighting spirit and his spirit of advocacy; and
- Said when it is his time to meet God, he hopes he is empty because he has used all he was given to help those who are less fortunate;
- Thanked the Council for honoring Mr. Turner

○ ***Bronson Williams:***

- Thanked the Council for allowing petitions from the public not just once a month, in accordance with state law, but twice a month;
- Said Lewis Turner will be missed in the Council Chamber and mentioned some comments made by Mr. Turner in the past;
- Said he heard comments made earlier about the condition of Edgecombe County and said he appreciates the investment made by Council to keep Hunter Odom Funeral Home in Edgecombe County;
- Thanked the Council and Manager for the work they do to move forward collectively

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

*Note: Councilmember Walker left the meeting*

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT SUPPORTING IMPROVED BROADBAND ACCESS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTALLATION AND LEASING AUTHORITY**

It was noted that the City Council had requested that a resolution supporting improved broadband access and local government installation and leasing authority be prepared and placed on the agenda for today’s meeting for Council consideration. The Mayor read the resolution aloud.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/0 nays) that **Resolution No. R-2021-7** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT SUPPORTING IMPROVED BROADBANK ACCESS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTALLATION AND LEASING AUTHORITY** be adopted. A copy of this resolution shall be sent to each member of the General Assembly representing the citizens of the City of Rocky Mount.

**AWARD OF DUTY SIDEARMS**

The City Council received a recommendation from the Chief of Police that the duty sidearm and badge of Police Captain Michael Paul be awarded to him in recognition of twenty-eight (28) years of service, pursuant to the Police Departments’ General Order concerning the recognition of retiring officers and in compliance with state law and that Captain Paul be allowed to purchase a secondary sidearm issued to him at a cost of \$350. It was noted that Captain Paul’s retirement date is February 1, 2021.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Miller and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/0 nays) that the recommendation of the Chief of Police for award of duty sidearms and badge to Police Captain Michael Paul be approved.

**AWARD OF DUTY BADGE**

The City Council received a recommendation from the Chief of Police that the duty badge of Senior Police Officer R. E. Pennington, Jr. be awarded to him in recognition of eleven (11) years of service, pursuant to the Police Departments' General Order concerning the recognition of retiring officers and in compliance with state law. It was noted that Senior Police Officer Pennington's retirement date was December 22, 2020.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/0 nays) that the recommendation of the Chief of Police for award of duty badge to Senior Police Officer Pennington 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>
<b><u>EDGEcombe COUNTY</u></b>				
2014	2376	ZIEGLER, KENNETH LEROY ZIEGLER, BONNIE LOU 712 TREASA DR BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	11.28 1.13 6.95	CITY PEN INT
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>	<b>19.36</b>	
2015	167	ZIEGLER, KENNETH LEROY ZIEGLER, BONNIE LOU 712 TREASA DR BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	10.95 1.10 5.67	CITY PEN INT
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>	<b>17.72</b>	
2016	2369	ZIEGLER, KENNETH LEROY ZIEGLER, BONNIE LOU 712 TREASA DR BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	10.16 1.02 4.25	CITY PEN INT
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>	<b>15.43</b>	
2017	190	ZIEGLER, KENNETH LEROY ZIEGLER, BONNIE LOU 712 TREASA DR BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	10.30 1.03 3.29	CITY PEN INT
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>	<b>14.62</b>	
2018	646	ZIEGLER, KENNETH LEROY ZIEGLER, BONNIE LOU 712 TREASA DR BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	10.69 1.07 2.35	CITY PEN INT
		<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>	<b>14.11</b>	

2019	24	ZIEGLER, KENNETH LEROY ZIEGLER, BONNIE LOU 712 TREASA DR BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	9.93 0.99 1.20	CITY PEN INT	OWNER CORRECTION
<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>			<b>12.12</b>		
2020	489	ZIEGLER, KENNETH LEROY ZIEGLER, BONNIE LOU 712 TREASA DR BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	9.93 0.99 0.22	CITY PEN INT	OWNER CORRECTION
<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>			<b>11.14</b>		

NASH COUNTY

2020	2361	MASIMO AMERICAS INC C/O MARVIN F POER & CO 2460 CURTIS ELLIS DRIVE ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	91.99 1.84	PEN INT	LATE LIST REMOVAL
<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>			<b>93.83</b>		

**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	1000151	GRIMES, JAMES BENJAMIN 3813 PROVIDENCE RD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803	224.54 4.49	CITY INT	PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS
<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>			<b>229.03</b>		
2020	10023	ROCKY MOUNT RECYCLERS INC 816 S HALIFAX RD BLDG ONLY ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803	1,304.86 26.10	CITY INT	EXEMPTION
<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>			<b>1,330.96</b>		
2020	10022	WARD, GARRY PROPERTIES LLC 816 S HALIFAX RD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803	1,686.35 33.73	CITY INT	EXEMPTION
<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>			<b>1,720.08</b>		
2020	10012	WARD, GARRY PROPERTIES LLC 4601 COMMUNITY DR ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	848.63 16.97	CITY INT	EXEMPTION
<b>TOTAL RELEASE:</b>			<b>865.60</b>		

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 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.

ANNEXATION NO. 320/GREEN HILLS ROAD

The City Clerk provided the City Council with a resolution certifying the petition for Annexation No. 320/Green Hills as sufficient

pursuant to G.S. 160A-31 to proceed with annexation of the contiguous parcel.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/0 nays) 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-2021-8** 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. 320/GREEN HILLS ROAD;** and
- b. **Resolution No. R-2021-9** 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. 320/GREEN HILLS ROAD** (schedules public hearing for March 8, 2021).

*Note: Councilmember Walker returned to the meeting remotely*

**FY 2019-2020 DOWN EAST HOME CONSORTIUM (DEHC) CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER)**

The City Council was advised that the Down East Home Consortium (DEHC) Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation and Report (CAPER) for CDBG and HOME investment partnership programs is due to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by January 31, 2021. The Council was provided with a copy of the report which provides details on the previous program year's progress in implementing the goals of the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Plan as well as expenditures related to these activities. It was noted that the required public display period was January 10 through January 25, 2021 and no public comments have been received to date. The Council was advised that all public comments received during today's meeting will be included in the CAPER.

*Note: No comments were received at the January 25, 2021 City Council meeting*

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) be approved for submission to HUD on behalf of the City.

**DEMOLITION ORDINANCE/NON-RESIDENTIAL**

The City Council received an ordinance ordering the Community Code Inspector to proceed with demolition of the following substandard property:

- 1045 Leggett Road

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Rogers and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that **Ordinance No. O-2021-5** entitled **ORDINANCE ORDERING THE COMMUNITY CODE INSPECTOR TO PROCEED TO DEMOLISH CERTAIN DILAPIDATED STRUCTURES PURSUANT TO THE NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING MAINTENANCE CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

**SURPLUS PROPERTY DISPOSAL/K9 VEHICLE PARTITION**

The City Council received a request to declare one (1) Police Department K9 vehicle petition valued at approximately \$100 as surplus to the needs of the Police Department and for approval for the donation of said K9 vehicle partition to the Town of Hertford Police Department for use in their K9 Program.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that **Resolution No. R-2021-10** entitled **RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN PROPERTY SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING DONATION** be adopted.

**FY 2020-2021 BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT/SENIOR CENTER GENERAL PURPOSE GRANT**

The City Council was advised that the Parks and Recreation Department applied for and was awarded a grant from the Upper Coastal Plain Agency on Aging in the amount of \$10,515 to be used for supporting and developing programming, general operations and facility improvements at the Senior Center. It was noted the grant requires a local match of \$3,505. It was requested that the City Council adopt a budget amendment appropriating the \$10,515 grant award to the General Fund.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that **Ordinance No. O-2021-6** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 FOR SENIOR CENTER GENERAL PURPOSE GRANT** be adopted.

**SOLE-SOURCE PURCHASE/AXON IN-CAR CAMERA SYSTEM**

The City Council was advised that the Rocky Mount Police Department is requesting approval to purchase Axon in-car camera systems for eleven (11) new vehicles. The Council was advised that the cameras will be installed before the new vehicles are delivered to the City and that it is anticipated that the Police Department will purchase an additional fifty (50) in-car cameras for the current fleet. It was noted that although this sole source standardization was approved by Council on June 12, 2019, the amount of this agreement exceeds the Council contract approval amount. It was recommended that a contract with Axon Enterprise be awarded at a total cost of \$92,965.37 over a five (5) year term to include a five (5) year warranty, maintenance agreement, software licensing, taser assurance plan, replacement parts and replacement cameras at the end of the term for twelve (12) vehicles 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-2021-1**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the "sole-source" purchase of the Axon In-Car Camera Systems for Police Cars be approved and that that the bid be awarded to Axon

Enterprise at a total cost of \$92,965.37 and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the bid contract on behalf of the City.

**APPOINTMENTS**

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

**CLOSED SESSION**

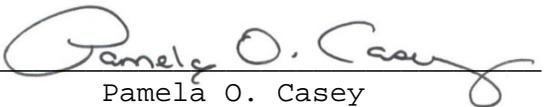
The Mayor stated that a Closed Session has been requested for matters concerning attorney-client privilege and personnel. City Attorney Richard J. Rose reported that discussion will be held relative to pending litigation relative to American Lighting & Signalization vs. The City of Rocky Mount.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the City Council go into Closed Session at 5:37 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-571** at the end of **Minute Book 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

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**REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT**

The Mayor convened the City in regular session at 6:48 p.m. and without opposition the meeting was adjourned.

  
Pamela O. Casey  
City Clerk