

June 14, 2021

The City Council of the City of Rocky Mount met this day in a regular session scheduled for 7:00 p.m. in the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building with Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr. presiding.

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

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

Councilmember absent: W.B. Bullock

Staff present: Rochelle D. Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Jessie Nunery, Media Relations Specialist; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Latasha Hall, Director of Business and Collections Services; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Chris Beschler, Director of Energy Resources; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation; Kena Cofield-Jones, Human Resources Director; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Chase Norwood and Keyana Walston, Management Analysts; Joel Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director; Brenton Bent, Water Resources Director; Gregory Cotten, Chief Technology Officer; Jayson Dawkins, Policy Analyst; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Corey Mercer, Fire Chief; Kevin Harris, Business Development Manager; Will Deaton, Development Services; Amy Staton, Finance Director; Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Peter F. Varney, Interim Community & Business Development Director; Tim Bunt, Interim Captain, Special Operations, Police and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. and requested a moment of individual silent prayer.

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

Mayor Roberson inquired if there were any changes to or additions/deletions to the agenda and there were none.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the minutes of a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held May 24, 2021 be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

**COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER**

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

- Began her report by sharing that the City will hold the second installment of the #RockyMount4All Virtual Town Hall Series on Tuesday, June 15 at 7 p.m. Tuesday's session will focus on Public Safety. She stated she will be joined by Police Chief Robert Hassell, Katheryn Zugbhi of Fighting Crime News and Who's Wanted, as well as Robert Davis of the Meadowbrook Community Improvement Association. She added that, most importantly – the desire is that citizens participate. She invited all to visit the City's

Facebook page for information to join the virtual session, which will be broadcast live on the City's Facebook and YouTube channel. For more information or to share views the public was invited to email [outreach@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:outreach@rockymountnc.gov). She invited all to stay connected for information on upcoming Town Hall sessions during the next two months. Topics will include Affordable Housing on July 13, and Business Development in August on a date to be announced.

- Stated she is pleased to announce that the City's annual Juneteenth Community Empowerment Festival is returning. The Juneteenth Community Empowerment Festival is Rocky Mount's largest community festival, filled with music, dance, vendors, and cultural activities. The festival will take place this Friday and Saturday (June 18-19) in Downtown Rocky Mount. Friday begins with a block party style theme in the Five Points area at Tarboro and Washington Streets. The festival heads over to the Helen P. Gay Rocky Mount Historic Train Station on Saturday. Both days are filled with musical acts, vendors and cultural festivities. Visit [imperialcentre.org](http://imperialcentre.org) or check out the City's Facebook and YouTube pages for more information as well as a full lineup of the festival.
- Reported that the spring and summer also brings the return of the Summer Night Lights Series. The Series continues this Friday, June 18 at Branch Street Park and will be held every Friday from 6-8 p.m. at various City parks through the month of August. The event is free and offers field games, family fun, music and hot dog snack packs. In addition, some of these events will feature an opportunity to meet and speak with the new Chief of Police, Robert Hassell. For more information, contact Parks and Recreation Department at 252-467-4902.
- Advised that the City's Business and Collections Services Department is utilizing Community Development Block Grant CARES Act funding to assist utility customers within the City limits who meet income requirements. The program is designed to assist with payment of delinquent utility bills for low-to-moderate income households impacted by the loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Households that became delinquent after March 31, 2020 where income was affected by COVID-19 may receive up to six months of utilities assistance via this program. For more information on eligibility requirements, visit [rockymountnc.gov](http://rockymountnc.gov) or contact the Business Services Center at 972-1250.
- Stated that the City's Tar River Transit service is offering free rides to COVID-19 vaccination sites for those with scheduled appointments to "drive-up" sites. Transportation is available from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday to vaccination sites located in Nash and Edgecombe counties. Citizens who are interested in transportation to and from vaccination sites may call Tar River Transit at 252-972-1174, 252-972-1514, 252-972-1515, 252-972-1516 or 252-972-1517. All appointments need to be scheduled the day before the trip. Healthcare facilities may also call and schedule transportation on behalf of their patients. Free rides will be available until at least June 30. Visit [tarrivertransit.org](http://tarrivertransit.org) regarding more information about general routes and services.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

- A. 1) TEMPORARY STREET CLOSINGS (recommended for approval/adoption of ordinance; ordinance adoption requirement of NCDOT standards):
- **Ordinance No. O-2021-39** entitled **ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE ANNUAL JUNETEENTH COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FESTIVAL:**
    - June 18, 2021 from 12:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m.:  
Temporary Closure of Tarboro Street (US 64 Business) from NE Main Street to Atlantic Avenue (NC 97), N Washington Street from Hill Street to E Thomas Street (US 64 Business), Albemarle Avenue from E Thomas Street to Tarboro Street and W Rose Street from Albemarle Avenue to Atlantic Avenue
    - June 19, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m.:  
Temporary Closure of S Church Street (US 301 Business) from Andrews Street to Nash Street, Hammond Street from S Franklin Street (US 301 Business) to SW Main Street, SW Main Street

from Hammond Street to a point 200 feet north of Hammond Street and Coastline Street

2) **TEMPORARY STREET CLOSING (recommended for approval):**

- Request by Dr. Thelma Bullock for permission to close the 400 Block of Highland Avenue on Saturday, October 23, 2021, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of North End Missionary Baptist Church

**B. FIREWORKS DISPLAYS REQUESTS: (recommended for approval)**

- 1) City of Rocky Mount - at 550 Independence Drive (Sports Complex) on Saturday, July 3, 2021 - (rain date - TBD);
- 2) Rise Church - at 3520 Bishop Road on Saturday, July 3, 2021 - (rain date requested - July 2, 2021); and
- 3) Englewood Baptist Church - on church property at 1350 South Winstead Avenue on Sunday, July 4, 2021 - (rain date requested - July 5, 2021)

**C. GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE CLOSEOUTS: (recommended for adoption)**

- 1) Ordinance No. O-2021-40 entitled FINAL GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/GOVERNOR'S CRIME COMMISSION 2017 BLOCK GRANT;
- 2) Ordinance No. O-2021-41 entitled FINAL GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT; and
- 3) Ordinance No. O-2021-42 entitled FINAL GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTIC GRANT

**D. FY 2021-2023 THREE-YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN, FY 2021-2022 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN AND ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS OF FAIR HOUSING CHOICE (AMENDED APPLICATION):**

The City Council was advised that the City has received notice from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocation is increasing from \$506,949 to \$514,419 (an increase of \$7,470). The Council was further advised that the Department of Community & Business Development is requesting approval of amended application documents reflecting the revised allocation amount.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtride and unanimously carried that the Consent Agenda be approved inclusive of approval of temporary street closings, fireworks requests, adoption of the Closeout Ordinances contained therein and approval of/authorization for the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the amended HUD application documents reflecting the revised CDBG allocation.

**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:

- o ***Gloria Davis:***
  - Said she lives in the Meadowbrook Community and is concerned about a cat situation;
  - Said she sent the Council a video of activities that went on at her house, that cats have damaged the house next door, and this is a serious situation;
  - Said she received a response from Councilmember Walker and asked that other members review the video;

- Asked what can be done and indicated that someone is supposed to come to her home tomorrow

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney stated that staff will look into the matter and she suspects cages will be placed to catch the feral cats.

Police Chief Hassell reported that he will follow up with Animal Control tomorrow.

Councilmember Miller stated that neighbors should be cautioned not to feed the cats because they will continue to come and will multiply.

○ ***Shantaé Batts:***

- Said she is here fighting for her son, Jahere Jones;
- Said her son was in the National Honor Society when in school and was never in trouble in school and graduated with honors;
- Read a prepared statement on her son's behalf questioning how she can make it worse fighting for son's freedom;
- Said she was told to be quiet and not to come to City Council meetings and that it is all about politics and she would make it worse for him;
- Said her son has been locked up since December 2, 2020 for murder;
- Said before her son was arrested she was the person that gave Rocky Mount Police information they needed to get the evidence needed to arrest the person who shot the little boy and they took her evidence and used it against her so now she is fighting against herself for trying to help the Police;
- Said she brought forth proof her son was just the driver and was innocent and feels it is racially unfair;
- Said they went to court and her son was given a \$100,000 cash bond;
- Said while this was happening a little boy went in; and a person has confessed to the crime and Police have the murder weapon;
- Said the supervisor told her that her son is guilty by association just by being there;
- Said she wanted to explain to them that they are saying it is a drive by but when her son rode past the house his windows were down so if her son wanted to shoot anybody, he would have done it while his windows were down;
- Said they are trying to say her son made a turn and he should have kept straight but when somebody is shooting at you what direction do you go;
- Said the only person arrested was her son who was driving but another person came forward and confessed and the Police Department has all this but fail to go after the kids that shot up her truck when there is a video showing them setting up the incident and her truck being fired upon;
- Said now the Police say they cannot make any arrests because they were at home and when they went there, they did not have any guns;
- Said those kids were not at home and every week in Rocky Mount a young black boy is getting murdered; it is time for someone to do something about the crime in the City and not try to punish her son if there is evidence and a witness who confesses to the crime; and
- Said her son has been held since December 2 with his baby being only 4 months old

○ ***Donte Caudle:***

- Said on August 6, 2013 he was hit by motor vehicle;
- Said he has an attorney, but the attorney is not doing a proper job;
- Said he was told to come to NAACP because he needs help;
- Said Police Officers told a bunch of stories on his police report;
- Said the accident was a hit and run and the Officer told lies on the police report;
- Said he doesn't know either of them, but it seems the Officer and man who hit him know and are taking up for each other;

- Said he needs help with the civil lawsuit that is currently pending, and he is trying to get stuff done properly and move on and do something better for his life, but this is stressing him out and holding him back from doing anything for his 3 kids;
- Said he is just trying to show justice and needs some help

Mayor Roberson thanked Mr. Caudle and told him this is a Rocky Mount City Council meeting. Councilmember Blackwell stated that he has had several conversations with Mr. Caudle about another matter.

○ **Troy Davis:**

- Said he is present to talk about public/private partnerships and how one can help the other;
- Said public dollars and incentives are helping develop the Downtown which ultimately helps revenue streams coming into the City and helps surrounding communities adding he thinks more incentives should be offered for Downtown development;
- Said he has experience and expertise in all seven (7) City wards and owns property in each ward and has invested heavily in the City;
- Said he is spending about \$2M on Main Street now and has another \$3-\$4M allocated for redevelopment of the former Carleton House hotel;
- Said he thinks the City needs to incentivize Downtown development to help it grow so the remainder of the City will grow

○ **Samuel Battle:**

- Supported investment in the Downtown but said he would like more funding to go to those who already have business in the Downtown;
- Said the City supports the Boys & Girls Club each year, but Edgecombe County needs more investment because there is nothing for the kids;
- Disagreed with elected officials owning property in the Downtown;
- Said affordable housing is needed across the City;
- Said some people need to be called out noting a Councilmember owes \$47,000 to the City

Mayor Roberson struck the gavel and reminded Mr. Battle of the rules not to address Councilmembers individually. Mr. Battle responded that he knows the rules and Council breaks them every day.

○ **Charles Roberson:**

- Thanked the Councilmembers for the work they have done, are doing and will do;
- Said Downtown is one of the best returns on investment and investment in the Downtown will help the whole City adding when Downtown wins Rocky Mount wins;
- Said he is happy to be in the company of champions who have breathed life into the Downtown and is here with a mandate for increasing the budget for the Downtown;
- Said Downtown is suffering from years of disinvestment and deferred maintenance and those investing and pouring their blood, sweat and tears into the heart of the City are being injured by banks and credit unions not seeing the value in revitalizing the Downtown; added like Unity Cemetery – the Downtown is not sustainable without substantial public investment;
- Thanked the Council for investing in the Event Center;
- Said transformative projects are waiting to happen Downtown but gap funding is needed for marketing, grants and loans to small businesses and incentives to help increase heads in beds;
- Asked that a minimum investment of \$3M be allocated in the 2021-2022 Budget for Downtown development
- Said he is providing a letter to the Council that has been put together

Mayor Roberson stated there has been some blurring of the lines and reminded all this is the time for public petitions and the public hearing on the budget will follow. He asked those coming to the podium to consider which category their comments best fit.

○ ***Quatoshia Hill:***

- Said she is speaking on behalf of the DeQuan “Noot” Dickens family; she stated “Noot” was murdered on July 12, 2019 on Long Avenue and his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday would have been yesterday;
- She added a community cleanup was held over the weekend and a scholarship has been launched at Edgecombe Community College with the help of the Mayor and the owner of Burger King, where he worked;
- Thanked the City, the Mayor, Environmental Resources staff for their assistance and the Police Officers (Seabreeze, Miller, Jones and Hinton) for attending and mingling, playing ball and racing with the kids; she added many neighborhoods participated and there was no trouble;
- Stated they want to have a fun day in the park in memory of “Noot” and asked for City help and support adding it felt good to see African American males in the park with no shooting or fighting

Councilmember Knight stated he did not know about the event and was sorry he missed it adding he is glad to see positive energy around something so tragic and the work to help other African American males become future leaders. He stated the Council has identified funding in the budget to be used for an African American male’s initiative. He supported Ms. Hill’s efforts and commended her for the manner in which she expressed herself today with respect and dignity. Mr. Knight said his heart is saddened because of the loss of her family member and encouraged her to keep up her work asking her to notify the Council of future events and stating the City can provide resources to assist.  
*Councilmember Walker arrived\**

○ ***Curmilus Dancy:***

- Said he would like to see more funding to support mental health and training for the Police Department; said there has been talk of defunding law enforcement across the nation adding defunding is not the right work and he would like to see that money is in place for resources for law enforcement officers;
- Supported funding for eastern Rocky Mount adding it has been left out over the years while Council has supported other great things and progress has been made over the past 18 years but more is needed; said it is sad that some do not want to see the east side of the City progress;
- Spoke in support of Downtown redevelopment and affordable/workforce housing;
- Said the NAACP is continuously monitoring the work of Rocky Mount City government and will share concerns as needed;
- Thanked the City Council for the work done over the past 18 years in spite of criticism just because there has been a black majority;
- Thanked City staff and the City Manager saying they too have had to endure criticism;
- Said he hopes Rocky Mount will be the trendsetter for other towns and the nation

○ ***Dr. Kim Koo:***

- Said speakers having to wait in the hall for 15-20 minutes and being shut out of the general discussion felt as if speakers were being punished and put her in a bad mood adding that some waiting were not young;
- Requested the Town Hall Series be more inclusive of the community; she applauded the City Manager for having the Town Hall Series of discussions but said no one from the community was invited to participate and added she has a problem with a top down approach; she said she would like to hear from those whose family members have been

incarcerated and from those who have been incarcerated, as well as seeing the sessions address the causes of crime and ideas for how to deal with crime not just about punishment or more repressive methods adding that punitive measures alone will never work

○ ***Nathlyn Ohree:***

- Voiced appreciation for the Council Chamber being open to the public;
- Encouraged the Council to unite and work together as a team

**2021-2022 PROPOSED BUDGET/PUBLIC HEARING**

The Mayor opened the public hearing relative to the proposed budget for the City of Rocky Mount for FY 2021-2022.

Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation, provided an introduction of the budget. The Council was advised that the public hearing fulfills the requirements stated in the North Carolina Local Budget and Fiscal Control Act and includes the appropriation within the budget of expenditures for Economic Development for Downtown Improvement Grants, as determined necessary by the City Attorney.

Mr. Hunter told the Council the proposed budget totals \$223,606,080M and does not involve any tax increase. He noted the tax rate remains at 68.5 cents per \$100 of assessed property value and adoption of the budget is scheduled for June 28.

The Mayor opened the public hearing and recognized the following citizens:

○ ***Kevin McLaughlin:***

- Stated he is the owner of Larema Coffee House in Downtown Rocky Mount;
- Said he moved to Rocky Mount 2.5 years ago to open his business and the primary thing that attracted him to Rocky Mount is the beautiful historic Downtown;
- Said he echoes what his colleagues have said about the financial support that they feel is needed [Downtown] adding the investment will pay off immediately and exponentially in the years to come;
- Requested the City partner with Downtown business owners adding there is a unique opportunity in the Downtown and the historic character and beauty of the Downtown can't be matched;
- Said the Event Center was a huge investment on the part of the City and brings people into the City from out of town who then leave because they are not seeing what else is happening, specifically in the Downtown;
- Said during the pandemic the small business community banded together and pooled resources because they understood the importance of working together to make the Downtown a destination;
- Requested the City work with them;
- Said while he is excited the Juneteenth event will be happening outside his business on Friday he learned it through the grapevine adding while he is excited there will be a lot of people Downtown, and especially that there are events in both Nash and Edgecombe Counties, as a business owner it is hard to prepare especially with being short staffed

○ ***Dr. Kim Koo:***

- Said she watched the budget discussion online;
- Said while the crime rate has continued to be disproportionately higher in poor and communities of color the proposal to deal with crime has not been very innovative; she suggested a public safety mobile app and more policy patrolling in troubled areas; she

added she was in Malaysia during the pandemic and even a small country like Malaysia had an app for contact tracing; she added unless the root cause of the problem is addressed, violence to persons and property will continue;

- Said the pandemic has widened the fault lines in the system of vast wealth disparities and deepened the economic and political crisis throwing many people into despair and well-being is threatened by the lack of supportive services like health care, housing, meaningful employment and regular economic support adding young people can no longer say they have better lives than their parents;
  - Said this level of poverty and despair is fertile ground for many to lash out and crime is the tip of the iceberg; she said she thinks it is a desperate call for help for other manifestations such as despair, alcohol and drug addictions and the rising rates of suicides;
  - Said the City should start with small spend and provide more funding for different types of services to tackle and improve community spirit and engage youth in cooperative activities adding job training is an alternative to arrest and incarceration and empowering communities to overcome poverty is a meaningful way to decrease crime;
  - Stated the war on terror has not stopped terrorism but instead generated millions of refugees, destroyed many civil societies and Muslim countries and killed countless innocent;
  - Appreciated the overall sincerity of Council in moving forward with affordable housing (housing bond) adding she is disappointed that some leaders in certain wards, instead of providing the necessary leadership to their constituency, succumb to the backwards notions of continuing policies of keeping poor communities poor and making rich communities richer
- **Michael Hurt:**
- Said he is a developer and has 203 SE Main Street under contract;
  - Said he met Troy Davis and Charles Roberson recently and they asked him to come talk to Council about some of the things he has been able to accomplish in other municipalities that could have a positive impact on the City;
  - Said he sees an opportunity to take a building that is in distress and turn it into something that is a positive contribution to the community;
  - Said he has rental property in the City and is trying to have a positive impact in the communities he serves by providing worthy housing;
  - Said a lot of what he does is public/private partnerships; he described a property he has renovated into housing in Halifax, North Carolina;
  - Said he has heard Council talking about affordable housing and knows it is in demand and added he would like to be a part of what is going on in Rocky Mount as he is in other communities; and
  - Said he would like to see a stronger Police presence in communities such as Pine Street adding there are grandparents who won't call the Police because they won't show up and because they are afraid of backlash and said he would like to sit down and talk further
- **Jackie King:**
- Said she is a member of the Community Academy which is a group of concerned citizens who come together to improve housing conditions in blighted disinvested neighborhoods;
  - Voiced support of the FY 2022 budget and affordable housing expenditures;
  - Said housing affordability is central to other key priorities like healthcare, food security, education and more;
  - Said far too many living in the City, especially those in low-income communities or communities of color, live in homes that are in desperate need of repair or pay more than they should because of a huge shortage of housing supply



- ***Celeste Beatty:***
  - Said she came to Rocky Mount in 2018 as part of the Rocky Mount Mills incubator program and she and her partner, Briana Brake, own Spaceway Brewing Taproom (Harlem Brew South);
  - Said they along with other community members and entrepreneurs are excited with the vibrant Downtown;
  - Recognized the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tulsa, Oklahoma and that vibrant Downtown that African Americans created which she has learned stemmed from another amazing community in Wilmington, North Carolina;
  - Said she had planned to read about the Main Streets throughout America and what they represent in terms of the vibrancy and the center of entrepreneurship and opportunity, but her notes are on her phone and the battery is weak;
  - Said there is a history of vibrant communities created across America that through unfortunate situations and circumstances are no longer around;
  - Said she was struck by how much opportunity there is Downtown;
  - Said she has heard some of the discussion about the budget and knows, based on the money already invested by a number of those in the Downtown – over \$500,000, the amount budgeted is not sufficient;
  - Said there is great concern why there has not been more investment in the 14 other communities and knows on Howard Street alone they are not just talking about how to add vibrancy to Downtown but how each and every one of their businesses can extend a hand to those 14 communities to make sure their businesses are creating opportunities for the communities;
  - Said she is not from Rocky Mount but has roots in North Carolina and is concerned about the investment being made in the Downtown and making Rocky Mount a better place and looks forward to joining hands with people in the community;
  - Encouraged the Council to consider adding more to the budget for Downtown redevelopment
  
- ***Pamela Thompson:***
  - Stated she is a teacher at Rocky Mount Middle School and also a coach and assistant coach and works in the community;
  - Said she and Coach Tasha Wilson are asking for financial funding for what is known as the South Rocky Mount Community Girls Summer League;
  - Said the South Rocky Mount Community has had financial difficulties and there are problems associated with children not being healthy;
  - Reported that the pandemic increased the problems with children not going to school, not being active or playing sports and becoming obese;
  - Said they are asking for funding to expand the project to hire a mentor and encourage these young ladies;
  - Said currently about 50 young girls are participating and they have been doing this project for 6 years adding that some who have aged out are coming back to the program to mentor and coach;
  - Said the project teaches responsibility and leadership to encourage them to be great citizens
  
- ***Tasha Wilson:***
  - Reiterated request for funding requested by Pamela Thompson;
  - Thanked the community for allowing them to work with these young ladies through the summer adding they want to add tutoring;
  - Said some ladies who have aged out have come back to mentor, teach and coach and have been given the opportunity to obtain college scholarships based on their training;
  - Said she works for the Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department;
  - Said the program is not a non-profit and if the City will provide funding, they plan to continue to work with the young ladies at the South Rocky Mount Community Center

- *Gloria Davis:*
  - Said she is a member of the Community Academy and came to support the FY 2022 Annual Operating Budget and affordable housing;
  - Said housing is important and whenever the bond is created asked that mental health and substance abuse, security and education be included along with housing initiatives to complete the whole man
  
- *Susan Perry Cole:*
  - Told the Council she is a member of the Community Academy and speaks tonight in support of the FY 2021-2022 proposed operating budget and the affordable housing strategic plan expenditures included in the budget;
  - Commended the City Council, City Manager and staff for the vision and leadership demonstrated in proposing a broad and robust plan to expand affordable housing;
  - Said the wisdom of those timely actions to boost affordable housing development is apparent since recently across the United States home values have soared, buyer demand has jumped, and mortgage rates hit historic lows;
  - Said prior to and during the pandemic not many housing economists predicted there would be immense competition and demand by buyers looking to purchase a new home and experts say we have not seen this level of demand in the housing market since 2006;
  - Said high demand and low supply cause housing prices to rise;
  - Stated housing inventory, or the supply of homes that are currently available for purchase, is another important factor for the housing market; and housing supply has been low in recent years and the pandemic only worsened things;
  - Said homes are simply not on the market right now;
  - Added in the Triangle region, the supply is at 1.9 months – down from 3.1 months the same time last year which means every house on the market should sell in 1.9 months;
  - Told the Council in the short term, these market conditions suggest there is no end in sight to the current housing inventory shortage;
  - Added that mortgage interest rates also play a big role in the housing market, impacting demand, home prices and affordability;
  - Said in January, the average range on a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage was just 2.74% and mortgage rates are hovering at all-time lows;
  - Said in light of the above-referenced key housing trends, supporting the expansion of affordable housing efforts in the City seems like an obvious choice;
  - Stated given the red-hot conditions existing in today's housing market, Rocky Mount needs to embrace an aggressive strategy to invest in expansion of its housing stock to enable the City to build and modernize housing units across the City;
  - Added that capital investments are needed to build, preserve and rehabilitate homes affordable to the lowest income people in the City, as well as for working and middle-class families;
  - Said she has a question regarding the proposed General Obligation Bond and the City Manager's PowerPoint materials presented to the City Council during the Committee of the Whole session on May 10 adding the materials included a public engagement cost of \$75,000. She encouraged the Council to ensure the public engagement expenditure is included in the proposed budget;
  - Concluded her comments by saying the City cannot be a modern city without the basic components of a modern economy: high quality roads, quality water, widely available broadband and affordable and adequate housing for every income level and without each of these components, Rocky Mount as a city will fail to effectively compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and all of us will suffer

Mayor Pro Tem Joyner requested speakers with printed comments

provide them to the City Manager.

- **Sharon Evans:**
  - Questioned where the City stands with affordable housing;
  - Added discussion has been ongoing about education, affordable housing and employment and said affordable housing is needed in the City;
  - Said in the 2021 Consolidated Plan it was stated that 15.2% of households pay more than 30% of their gross income for housing and a lot of people have to make three times the amount of rent they pay;
  - Said bond investment is needed to make housing more affordable for the low income and working and middle-class families;
  - Voiced support for a general obligation bond and said it could be a solution to aid in housing stability in the communities neglected for generations
  
- **Jessie Hicks:**
  - Said she is the owner of Willow Tree Yoga Studio and part owner of Bel Air Art Center in Downtown Rocky Mount;
  - Said her comments today barely scratch the surface and she is grateful for the presence of other Downtown Business Owners relative to the Downtown budget;
  - Said the majority of people that support Bel Air are tourists or out of town guests and the lack of local and City support has been disappointing, though they have come to accept it and are grateful for the support they receive;
  - Said multiple times she has heard or experienced comments from tourists pertaining to the lack of development Downtown;
  - Said she loves Downtown and though it hurts to hear those things – they are true;
  - Said when she and her husband moved here in 2015 she saw the potential others speak of; however, the past 4 years of being Downtown and trying to work with the City have taught her firsthand why Downtown is how it is and after reviewing the City’s Downtown section of its website she has yet to see either of her businesses mentioned or other retail businesses;
  - Said she has enjoyed working with Explore Nash County and they have invested in tourism marketing of individual Downtown businesses and are doing amazing things;
  - Said though she is not in Edgecombe County she is aware that Discover Edgecombe is doing wonderful tourism things as well;
  - Added she believes adding a tourism tab to the City’s website linking it to Nash and Edgecombe County tourism sites would be beneficial to all Downtown businesses;
  - Stated another idea is for the City to invest in and maintain Downtown City maps that show location with arrows and all business locations;
  - Said without the financial and unbiased support of the City the Downtown will not strategically develop and Downtown is home of some wonderful places;
  - Said business owners have invested much of their time and money because they believe in Downtown and it is time for the City to do the same;
  - Asked the Council to consider increasing the budget for Downtown and listen to the business and property owners Downtown;
  - Said putting up flags that have cheerleading chants on them is not going to cut it;
  - Concluded by saying there is no reason there should not be a healthy amount of growth and development in Downtown Rocky Mount and it seems the City is its own worst enemy adding this mentality starts at the top;
  - Said if Council accepted their position or have appointed positions to prevent things from happening rather than make things happen, they are doing things for the wrong reasons and a City, let alone its Downtown, cannot grow and strategically develop this way
  
- **Michael Hicks:**
  - Said he and his wife own and operate Bel Air Art Center;
  - Said he understands from the recent City Council retreat that the City needs about \$30M to stabilize the Downtown and yet \$550,000 has been budgeted;

- Said one of the biggest hurdles their business faced with their upstairs was getting fire suppression and water main requirements to meet the code;
  - Said it was very expensive especially for a building of the size and age of their building and he feels that other Downtown buildings are in the same situation;
  - Said grants are available for certain things and they have obtained some and are appreciative of that, but others don't apply to them;
  - Said art is vital to Downtown development and they have invested a lot;
  - Said some cities like Cincinnati, Miami and Asheville City governments are very much involved in certain aspects of coordinating some of the art presentation and culture Downtown;
  - Said youth school programs are utilized to aid in community support and children come out and paint and do art; added in those communities there are festivals for art installation pieces;
  - Said they think creating community around art grows a city based on commonalities and that is extremely important, not to mention what it receives from tourist attractions and community enjoyment;
  - Said if the City is serious about art there needs to be coordination and financial support to capitalize on the potential;
  - Said they were in Kinston recently and noticed it had a very artsy Downtown and were told there was subsidized housing for artists living and working in their Downtown;
  - Said they were recently approached by the artist that did the Moe & D's mural about a mural and were told by the City they could use their façade grant;
  - Said growth needs to start from the ground up
- ***Michael Moe Deloach:***
- Said he is the owner of Moe & D's and that he grew up in Rocky Mount and spent his whole life in the South Rocky Mount area;
  - Said he had a chance to go off and play basketball and decided to come back home;
  - Said he had a chance to spend time in Downtown Rocky Mount this past weekend and it was amazing to see the growth in the night life;
  - Said it is an eye opener to see more things come Downtown and he has been a part of organizing bar crawls and block parties;
  - Said some of the friends he went to school with say there is nothing Downtown and drive 45 minutes away to have a night life;
  - Supported a budget increase for the Downtown area;
  - Asked for there to be more Police patrolling the Downtown
- ***John Williams:***
- Said he is the owner and operator of Sunset Farm Stand in Downtown Rocky Mount;
  - Said a lot has been said about the budget relative to Downtown business owners and the art district;
  - Said he was a single Dad when he moved here and has seen the potential in Downtown Rocky Mount and is glad to have been a part of it;
  - Said what he is seeing makes him think about babies and how they need support adding that watching the Downtown is like waiting for a baby to be born;
  - Said a lot of people are interacting together to make this baby be born and it needs funding;
  - Said he is going to make his request short by saying "support the baby – pay child support"

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

Receipt of the budget was acknowledged.

Councilmember Blackwell stated he has been on the Council for a long time and this is the most robust public hearing on the budget he

has witnessed adding this is where priorities are set. He voiced appreciation for the well thought out comments and said the City has an aggressive budget plan and more resources are coming.

He thanked those present for coming and sharing great ideas and added if there is someone present who has not been Downtown on the weekends, they need to come see what the talk is about.

Councilmembers Joyner and Knight thanked the public for their presence and comments.

Councilmember Knight stated that seeing Ms. Evans made him remember he had forgotten to mention to the City Manager that some community leaders are asking for funding of approximately \$50,000 for special neighborhood projects to uplift neighborhoods. He said this Council has been one of the most aggressive in the past forty (40) years in Downtown development and has been criticized. He added the priorities have been housing and they have worked with Sue Perry Cole. Additional comments were made by Councilmembers Knight and Blackwell.

Mayor Roberson acknowledged City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney for comment. Her comments include the following:

- The budget is balanced but does not include an additional \$3M for the Downtown adding she has taken a number of notes about things that can be done;
- The budget starts in July and as time passes staff will assess the revenue picture;
- Changes to the budget at this stage would be quite a challenge and to add funding for something would require it to be cut from something else;
- Said Downtown development has her full support, the need is understood, and the City will do all it can to assist;
- Cities all over the country are receiving federal money and regulations are not yet known; however, the Downtown is at the top of the list along with other initiatives and if there is a way to increase support the matter will be brought back to the City Council for consideration.

#### **PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

The City Council acknowledged receipt of draft minutes and recommendations from a Planning Board meeting held May 11, 2021. The minutes are on file in the office of the City Clerk.

The following action was taken upon the recommendations of the Planning Board:

#### **A. LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS/PUBLIC HEARING**

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following Land Development Code amendments recommended for approval and found in compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

**PURPOSE OF AMENDMENTS:** to revise the following Chapters and Sections of the Land Development Code of the City of Rocky Mount to reflect the provisions of the new Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes:

- Chapter 1 entitled "DEFINITIONS AND CONSTRUCTION," Sec. 102. Terms and uses defined.;
- Chapter 2 entitled "General Provisions,"; the following sections: Sec. 201. Title and Authority.; Sec. 202. Purpose and Intent.; Sec. 205. Applicability and Jurisdiction.; and Sec. 209. Transitional Provisions.;
- Chapter 3 entitled "Development Review Administration,"; the following sections: Sec. 308. Board of Adjustment.; Sec. 309. Historic Preservation Commission.; and Sec. 311. Written Interpretations.;
- Chapter 4 entitled "Zoning Districts"; the following sections: Sec. 401. Zoning Districts Established.; Sec. 408. Overlay Districts.; and Sec. 409. Conditional Districts.;
- Chapter 5 entitled "Zoning Use Regulations,"; Sec. 506. Zoning special use permit standards and conditions. item D. Coordination with Variances. and item E. Special use permits, BOA.;
- Chapter 7 entitled "General Development Standards."; Sec. 702. Building permit.;
- Chapter 9 entitled "FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT,"; Sec. 902. Statutory authorization.;
- Chapter 10 entitled "Historic Overlay District,"; Sec. 1002. Local historic landmark overlay. and Sec. 1003. Certificate of appropriateness required.
- Chapter 12 entitled "Enforcement,"; Sec. 1208. Vested Rights.; and
- Chapter 13 entitled "MINIMUM DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT REQUIREMENTS,"; Sec. 1310. Assurance of improvements and inspection procedures., Item F. Actions against illegal transfer

No one from the public appeared and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Walker and unanimously carried that receipt of the Planning Board minutes be acknowledged; that the recommended amendments to the Land Development Code to reflect the provisions of the new Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes be approved; and that **Ordinance No. O-2021-43** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted, as recommended.

**LEASE AMENDMENT EXTENSION/ROCKY MOUNT AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Consideration was given to extending a lease amendment 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 amendments to the current amended lease effective January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021 is an adjustment to the monthly lease payment of \$1,100 per month due to the adverse effect of the pandemic and a provision to allow for consideration to extend the modification through December 31, 2021.

Council was further advised that the Chamber has been unable to hold any in-person events dating back to the annual meeting on February 6, 2020. Additionally, it was noted that the original lease dated February 1, 2019 included use of a third floor office and the Chamber will be required to vacate the third floor office for a period to be determined due to a floor plan change which will require the Chamber to

rent a storage unit to house records and supplies currently stored in the third floor space.

The original lease dated February 1, 2019 called for monthly rent of \$2,197 for a period of four years. Due to hardship experienced by the pandemic, the City Council approved an amendment to the lease on November 23, 2020 to temporarily reduce the rent from \$2,197 to \$1,100 per month from January 1, 2021 for six months ending June 30, 2021 and a six-month extension of the reduced rent is being requested.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Walker and unanimously carried that the amended lease agreement with Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce, LLC be extended for an additional six months (July 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021) and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the amended lease agreement on behalf of the City. The extended amended lease agreement will be filed with the original lease agreement **(C-2019-20)** in the office of the City Clerk.

#### **PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Finance Director Amy Staton provided the City Council with a proposal from the John Hackney Agency and existing carriers, primarily Travelers Insurance Company, for insurance coverage to meet the City's risk management goals for FY 2022 at a total cost not expected to exceed \$1,550,000. She reported that:

- Premiums increased \$82K or 6% from FY 2021;
- Policy coverages remain the same except for excess workers compensation (self-insured retention for police and fire personnel is \$100,000 higher than for all other personnel);
- Property coverage increased by 7%;
- Law enforcement liability increased related to national trends resulting in higher costs to defend and settle law enforcement cases;
- Auto liability increased due to 3% increase in number of vehicles, higher values and associated costs to cover specialized equipment; coverage impacted by the North Carolina recoupment surcharge of 14.61% effective October 2018; and
- Cyber liability increased as a result of the City's experience and increased cyber incidents globally.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell that the proposal of the John Hackney Agency be accepted. Councilmember Daughtridge recused himself for the reason of having a business relationship with the John Hackney Agency and the proposal was approved by all remaining members without opposition.

#### **TEMPORARY STREET CLOSINGS - PERMANENT AUTHORIZATION/ROCKY MOUNT EVENT CENTER**

The City Council received a request from Public Works Director Brad Kerr for permanent authorization for the Rocky Mount Event Center (RMEC)

to close portions of NE Main Street, Albemarle Avenue, Goldleaf Street, Ivey Street and Washington Street, as needed, to safety manage event traffic and provide safe and orderly movement of traffic during RMEC events.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the permanent authorization for temporary street closings be approved and that **Resolution No. R-2021-25** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING PERMANENT AUTHORIZATION FOR TEMPORARY STREET CLOSURES BY THE ROCKY MOUNT EVENT CENTER** be adopted.

**DEMOLITION ORDINANCE/NON-RESIDENTIAL**

The City Council received ordinances ordering the Community Code Inspector to proceed with demolition of the following substandard properties:

- 707 N. Pine Street
- 513 Sunset Avenue
- 628-634 N. Raleigh Boulevard

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the following ordinances be adopted:

- **Ordinance No. O-2021-44** 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 (707 N. Pine Street);**
- **Ordinance No. O-2021-45** 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 (513 Sunset Avenue); and**
- **Ordinance No. O-2021-46** 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 (628-634 N. Raleigh Boulevard).**

**TAR RIVER TRANSIT/MANAGEMENT CARE CONTRACT (MODIVCARE SOLUTIONS)**

The City Council received a request for consideration of approval of a management care agreement with Modivcare Solutions, LLC (Modivcare). They were advised that Tar River Transit (TRT) provides non-emergency medical (Medicaid) transportation for Nash and Edgecombe Counties and currently these trips are referred to TRT by the Nash and Edgecombe Departments of Social Services and the agencies compensate TRT monthly for the trips by using a fee-for-service model.

It was noted that effective July 1, 2021 the Departments of Social Services have been directed to transition to a "managed care" model in which the state contracts with insurance companies which in turn hire transportation brokers to schedule all Medicaid trips.

Council was provided with an agreement with Modivcare Solutions, LLC (Modivcare) for brokerage services.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and carried that the agreement with Modivcare



Solutions, LLC (Modivcare) be approved and that the City Manager be authorized to execute the agreement **(C-2021-17)** on behalf of the City.

**POLE ATTACHMENT AGREEMENT/SOUTH CAROLINA TELECOMMUNICATIONS GROUP HOLDINGS, LLC (SEGRA FIBER)**

The City Council received a recommendation to approve a pole attachment agreement with South Carolina Telecommunications Group Holdings, LLC (SEGRA). Council was advised that SEGRA Fiber operates and maintains a telecommunication system in the City and is requesting permission to attach and maintain aerial cables, wires and associated facilities on twenty-four (24) utility poles jointly owned by the City and CenturyLink. Council was further advised that the Department of Energy Resources has completed a field and engineering evaluation of the request and has determined the attachments will have no impact on the City's electric infrastructure. It was noted the annual revenue received by the City from this agreement will be approximately \$200.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the pole attachment agreement with South Carolina Telecommunications Group Holdings, LLC (SEGRA) **(C-2021-18)** be approved and that the Mayor be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the City.

**ANNEXATIONS NOS. 322 AND 323 (NON-CONTIGUOUS) AND WATER SERVICE AGREEMENTS: OLD SPRING HOME ROAD SUBDIVISIONS**

The City Council received Annexation and Water Service Agreements (including Irrevocable Petitions for Annexation of Property) for water service outside the City limits for properties in the Old Spring Hope Road Subdivision as follows:

- Annexation No. 322 - Williams Lots (4); and
- Annexation No. 323 - Horton Lots (20).

Council was advised that the developers are requesting water service and the proposed agreements will replace a previous agreement with Williams Builders of Rocky Mount, LLC (C-2020-31) approved December 14, 2020. Council was further advised that the petitioners have paid the standard annexation petition fees, have agreed to be bound by all provisions of the Irrevocable Annexation Petitions and the agreements provide for connection to City water and include a provision that the lots are to be served by septic systems constructed by the developers and a guarantee that the developers will be responsible for repair of any damage to Eggers Road resulting from residential construction activities. It was noted that staff has performed a preliminary analysis of the annexations and recommend proceeding with investigation of the sufficiency of the petitions.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Walker and unanimously carried that receipt of the petitions be acknowledged; that **Resolution No. R-2021-26** entitled **RESOLUTION ORDERING THE CITY CLERK TO INVESTIGATE THE SUFFICIENCY OF A PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF A NON-CONTIGUOUS AREA INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE**

**CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT - ANNEXATION NO. 322 - OLD SPRING HOLD ROAD SUBDIVISION - WILLIAMS LOTS** and **Resolution No. R-2021-27** entitled **RESOLUTION ORDERING THE CITY CLERK TO INVESTIGATE THE SUFFICIENCY OF A PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF A NON-CONTIGUOUS AREA INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT - ANNEXATION NO. 323 - OLD SPRING HOPE ROAD SUBDIVISION - HORTON LOTS** be adopted; and that the Annexation and Water Service Agreements for water service to the following properties be approved, subject to payment of required privilege and connection fees, and that the Mayor be authorized the execute the following Agreements on behalf of the City:

- a. Agreement with Williams Builders of Rocky Mount, LLC for water service to the Old Spring Hope Road Subdivision - Williams' Lots (4) **(C-2021-19)**; and
- b. Agreement with D.R. Horton, Inc. for water service to the Old Spring Hope Road Subdivision - Horton Lots (20) **(C-2031-20)**.

**ANNEXATION NO. 324 (NON-CONTIGUOUS) AND UTILITY (WATER) SERVICE AGREEMENT: 3583 S. HALIFAX ROAD**

The City Council received an Annexation and Utility (Water) Service Agreement (including Irrevocable Petition for Annexation of Property) for water service outside the City limits to 3583 S. Halifax Road. Council was advised that the property owner has paid the standard annexation petition fees and has agreed to be bound by all provisions of the Irrevocable Annexation Petitions; however, the property is not a good candidate for annexation at this time.

Motion was made by Councilmember Walker, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the Annexation Petition be received, and annexation postponed; that the Annexation and Utility (Water) Service Agreement for water service to 3583 S. Halifax Road be approved, subject to payment of required privilege and connection fees; and that the City Manager be authorized the execute the Agreement with Janice G. Howell, acting by and through her duly appointed Attorney-in-Fact, Michael Eugene Martin for water service to 3585 S. Halifax Road **(C-2021-21)** on behalf of the City.

**MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT/RENOVATION OF BATTLE PARK BOAT RAMP AND FISHING PIERS**

The City Council was provided with a Memorandum of Cooperative Agreement between the City and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) for the renovation of the boat ramp, two fishing piers and associated American with Disabilities Act compliant parking spaces (2) at Battle Park. Council was advised that the NCWRC will be responsible for design and construction and the project is part of the renovation receiving funding from the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and Water Resources Development. The City Council was further advised that additional funding from the Land and Water Conservation is pending and the cost of the project is \$235,000.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the Memorandum of Cooperative Agreement between the City and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) **(C-2021-22)** be approved and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the City.

**BID/SOLE-SOURCE PURCHASE/AXON - TASERS, BODY CAMERAS AND IN-CAR CAMERA SYSTEMS (POLICE)**

The City Council was advised that the Rocky Mount Police Department is requesting approval for a formal sole source procurement of 145 tasers, 145 body cameras and 62 in-car cameras for police cars. Council was further advised that the Police Department has used the Axon body camera system since the contract was awarded in 2016 and since that date new tasers, body cameras and/or in-car camera purchases have resulted in new contracts. It was recommended that a contract with Axon Enterprise be awarded which will not only include the recommended new purchases but will combine all existing contracts under one contract. The total cost of the contract is \$2,812,745.14 over a five-year term which includes a five-year warranty, maintenance agreement, software licensing, taser assurance plan, replacement parts and replacement cameras at the end of the term to be awarded 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-2021-11**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the "sole-source" purchase of the Axon equipment be approved and that that the bid be awarded to Axon Enterprise at a total cost of \$2,812,745.14 over a five-year term, as recommended, and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the bid contract on behalf of the City.

**RE-BIDS - FY 2022 HOURLY TREE TRIMMING AND LUMP SUM TREE TRIMMING AND MOWING**

The City Council was provided with a tabulation of the bids received for FY 2022 hourly tree trimming and lump sum tree trimming and mowing with a recommendation to award the contracts to Xylem, Incorporated.

Discussion was held relative to tree trimming requirements/guidelines in response to a question from Councilmember Knight. The City Manager called on Energy Resources Director Chris Beschler for comment and stated there has been conversation with the contractor relative to tree trimming and there is a conflict between the aesthetic appearance of trees as trimmed and assuring that tree limbs are not interfering with electric lines which sometimes requires a deep cut.

Councilmember Blackwell questioned the proposal relative to the MWBE allocation and Mr. Beschler responded that the contractor proposes

that 20% of its spend go to minority vendors. Councilmember Blackwell inquired how that is monitored and was advised by the City Manager that this is a function of the Purchasing Division. Councilmember Blackwell requested this provision be included in all City contracts and the Manager stated staff is working towards that.

Conversation continued and motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner unanimously carried that consideration of the bids for FY 2022 hourly tree trimming and lump sum tree trimming and mowing be tabled.

**APPOINTMENT (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)**

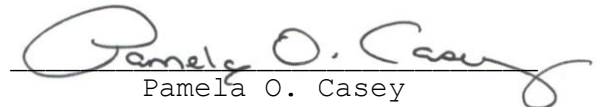
Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that Bruce M. Berry be appointed to fill the Ward 5 vacancy on the Planning Board for a term to expire on June 30, 2024.

**HILLSDALE PARK RIBBON CUTTING (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)**

Councilmember Knight announced that a ribbon cutting for Hillsdale Park will be held on June 25, 2021 from 6 to 8 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Without opposition, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 9:11 p.m.

  
Pamela O. Casey  
City Clerk