

August 23, 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.

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, Lige Daughtridge, W.B. Bullock and Christine Carroll Miller.

Councilmember absent: T.J. Walker.

Staff present: Rochelle Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Jessie Nunery, Interim Director of Communications and Marketing; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Latasha Hall, Director of Business and Collections Services; Joel Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Chris Beschler, Director of Energy Resources; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Chase Norwood and Keyana Walston, Management Analysts; Brenton Bent, Water Resources Director; Paula Loftin, Human Resources Manager; Gregory Cotten, Chief Technology Officer; Jayson Dawkins, Policy Analyst; Corey Mercer, Fire Chief; Tracey Drewery, Assistant Fire Chief; Corey Woodard, Battalion Chief; Charles Bunn, III, Battalion Chief; Kim Wittig, Fire Captain; Andrew Brown, Fire Captain; Aaron Pike, Senior Firefighter; James Reid, Firefighter; Jaquan Wilkins, Firefighter; Will Deaton, Development Services; Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Peter F. Varney, Interim Community & Business Development Director; Maysieo Tanks, LeadNC Fellow, Office of Budget and Evaluation; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

Security Officers: Police Sergeant Stephen Walker and Senior Police Officer, Shawn Battle.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight, and unanimously carried that the minutes of a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held July 12, 2021, and of a regular rescheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held July 12, 2021, be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

*Councilmember Blackwell arrived**

The minutes of the regular scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held July 12, 2021, are below:

MINUTES OF A REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, JULY 12, 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 relative to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19)

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.

*Participating remotely

Security Officers: Stephen Walker
 and Shawn Battle

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle D. Small-Toney
 Pamela O. Casey
 Dorothy Brown Smith
 Jessie Nunery
 Mark Adcox
 Robin Cox
 Archie Jones
 Ken Hunter
 Elton Daniels
 Joel Dunn
 Kevin Harris
 Robert Hassell
 Will Deaton
 Latasha Hall
 Kena Cofield-Jones
 Keyana Walston
 Chase Norwood
 Greg Cotten
 Jayson Dawkins
 Brad Kerr
 Peter Varney
 Tariq Al-Harbi
 Tim Bunt
 Richard J. Rose

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem Richard Joyner called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and called on City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney to introduce the agenda items.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney stated the meeting will follow the agenda as printed and outlined the agenda items as: 811 and 815-821 Hammond Street; Strategic Plan Affordable Housing Update; Crime Statistics; Residential Production Grant and a Closed Session for a matter concerning attorney-client privilege.

1. 811 and 815-821 HAMMOND STREET - Peter Varney

Interim Director of Community & Business Development, Peter Varney, told the City Council that on May 10, 2021, a recommendation to adopt a resolution authorizing an upset bid process came before Council for the sale of the property at 811 and 815-821 Hammond Street. He reported the associated proposed Home Purchase Agreement with Kevin Jones has been modified to reflect the Council's housing affordability goals.

He provided background information relative to the property indicating that the City had received the property as a donation, after it has been occupied as rental property and then been vacant for a period of time. He reported when he came back to work for the City in his interim position he was asked to dispose of the property and suggested the concept of a home purchase agreement to sell the property at a nominal price with guidelines for the buyer to rehabilitate the property.

Mr. Varney presented a PowerPoint presentation showing photographs of the property. He provided the Council with a revised Resolution and Home Purchase Agreement and advised the City Council that the main revisions to the Home Purchase Agreement are contained in paragraph three. They were outlined as:

- Affordable Housing Restrictions and Requirements: deed shall contain restrictive covenants requiring the houses be occupied for at least ten (10) years by households in which the annual income is not more than eighty (80) percent of the area median income. The agreement will be secured by a promissory note and deed of trust in the amounts of \$12,110 for 811 Hammond Street and \$9,700 for 815-821 Hammond Street and the failure of one or both houses being occupied by eligible households shall constitute an event of default causing the notes to become due and payable if said failure is not cured in compliance with the agreement.

Mr. Varney added that compliance will be monitored by the Department of Community & Business Development annually. He recommended adoption of the Resolution to authorize the upset bid process and responded to questions from Councilmembers.

He noted the home purchase process had been used in the past in 2011; however, the affordable housing requirement was not used. Council was advised that approximately 50-52 properties are owned by the City or the Redevelopment Commission and about 36 are for sale. Councilmember Knight requested that Council be provided a list of the properties available for purchase.

Mr. Varney and the City Manager responded to questions from Councilmembers. Mr. Varney noted the intent is to find someone who wants to renovate the houses in order to save them and provide safe, decent and affordable housing. The City Manager reported that consideration of the Resolution will be on the agenda for the next regular Council meeting for consideration.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Information only; no formal action

2. STRATEGIC PLAN AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE - Jayson Dawkins

Policy Analyst Jayson Dawkins presented a PowerPoint presentation providing an update on affordable housing strategic recommendations. The purpose of the plan was identified as:

- To create a menu of potential options to address the absence of affordable housing in the City;
- Preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock; and
- To improve the homeownership and rental market.

He presented the Council with a list of housing supply statistics for the City compared with the State. Council was advised that staff continues work on implementation of the recommendations in the Affordable Housing Strategic Plan and Council was provided an update on progress to include:

- Financial Support Recommendations:
 - o Staff continues to analyze existing and future debt capacity and affordability with the Interim Finance Director relative to passing a General Obligation Bond
- Land Assembly Recommendations:
 - o Staff is working to compile an inventory of vacant properties near major transit stations to study the viability of placing housing in those corridors;
 - o The process has begun to identify eligible properties for implementation of tax/lien foreclosure (process to originate in targeted neighborhoods);
 - o The Community Code Supervisor has met with his counterpart in Greensboro to discuss the viability of implementing

Greensboro's pilot program in the City. The main concerns involved:

- the length of the Receivership program being a 2-year program;
 - potential difficulty identifying properties with no existing taxes or liens;
 - potential eligibility of finding receivers to fit the state criteria; and
 - The City would have no say in the receiver's decision to sell or retain a property
- Planning Improvement Recommendations:
 - Recommendations have been drafted and will be considered by the Planning Board at its July 13, 2021, meeting;
 - City staff plans to schedule an interview on CityTV19 within the next two months and prepare updates to the City Code
 - Innovative Recommendations:
 - Staff is continuing research relative to utilizing solar energy for new construction and home rehabilitation and utilizing green building practices for new construction and home rehabilitative and will form an inter-departmental team to study how the research can effectively impact and improve housing

A detailed list of recommendations for financial support, land assembly, planning improvement and innovation was provided in the PowerPoint presentation.

Council was also advised the work on implementing the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and Community Land Trust (CLT) continues as follows:

- Housing Trust Fund:
 - Staff has reviewed both the Asheville and Charlotte models for implementation strategies and plans to present organizational documents including bylaws and articles of incorporation for Council consideration at the July 26, 2021, City Council meeting
- Community Land Trust:
 - Staff continues to work with Dr. Jim Johnson and Professor Jeanne Bonds from UNC-Chapel Hill for program implementation and will continue the process of identifying potential development projects for the Community Land Trust;
 - Bylaws and articles of incorporation; the proposed structure of tripartite Governing Board and hiring plan will be presented to Council soon for consideration and, upon approval, a CLT Board of Directors will need to be appointed by Council to serve in an advisory role

Councilmember Blackwell requested time for the Council to review and digest the recommendations provided relative to a Community Land Trust.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney reported that Davenport and Company (the City's financial advisors) will likely provide a report in August relative to the general obligation bond. The Manager responded to questions from Councilmembers relative to the process for the bond.

Councilmember Daughtridge said that based upon information received at the retreat, Asheville has an impressive team relative to the Community Land Trust with experience in banking and housing and questioned what the criteria will be for the Board. The Manager said the purpose of hearing from Asheville was to connect with a community that had already created a Community Land Trust and added that the Board of Directors are the ones who hire the Executive Director based on established criteria. In response to a question from Councilmember Daughtridge, the Manager stated that the Community Land Trust Board of Directors will be autonomous to the City Council and there will be a memorandum of understanding between the City and the Land Trust, but it

will operate similar to a non-profit. Mr. Daughtridge stated he is glad to hear it will be autonomous.

Mayor Pro Tem Joyner voiced a desire for the community to be involved saying he does not want to see institutional control. Councilmember Blackwell stated that is also his concern going back to the presentation from Southeast DC where people who never lived in the community and have no loyalty to the people who created that particular community are controlling land and development. He says Council can look at the structure and make their own decisions because this Council is not limited to only doing what others have done.

Mr. Blackwell added there must be people who understand the professional process because that will ensure and maintain sustainability but there also needs to be people in a majority voice who live in the community. He said people from the community might not know how to operate on a sophisticated board, but they know their community, their commitment and the people who live there and it is his opinion that there needs to be a focus on working with the people from the community to help them build their own capacity to manage and lead themselves. He said he is agreeable with a third-party entity but not agreeable with banks controlling what happens in neighborhoods.

Councilmember Knight voiced agreement stating at one point there was discussion about the Board including a Council appointment from each Ward and said he would like Council to have the opportunity to make sure the Board is not controlled by those who do not live in the community. He said he has been on boards where there were people from the majority, but they become the minority with no voice.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Information only; no formal action

3. CRIME STATISTICS - Robert Hassell

Police Chief Robert Hassell presented a summary of city-wide crime numbers. It was noted that the presentation covers crime incidents throughout the City currently and in comparison, with the prior year during the same time period. The Council was advised that crime numbers are tracked by the FBI and shared with the Bureau of Justice Statistics for tracking purposes and the presentation includes investigation outcomes for violent crimes and related arrests. The presentation also included maps depicting areas of shots fired, incidences of aggravated assault and murder and highlighted efforts and successes of the Police Department to combat violent crime.

An overview of Chief Hassell’s PowerPoint presentation includes:

- National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Part 1 crime comparisons by type were provided. Total crime numbers by months and years were reported as:

Crimes/NIBRS Part 1	June 2020	June 2021	+/-	YTD 2020	YTD 2021	+/-
Total	154	166	12	938	884	-54

- June 2021 crime numbers for murders, aggravated assault and shooting into occupied building(s)/vehicle(s) (map of location provided):
 - o Victims with injuries = 20
 - o Victims without injuries = 21
 - o Total victims = 41
 - o Cases cleared by arrest = 8
 - o Inactive cases = 4
 - o Open cases = 10
 - o Gang related = 1
 - o Exceptionally cleared (clearance without arrest) = 2

- Aggravated assault cases and investigations:
 - Aggravated assault cases = 24
 - Aggravated assault victims = 37
 - Number cases with multiple victims = 8
 - Aggravated assault arrests = 9
 - Aggravated assault cases cleared = 12

- Shotspotter and Citizen calls City-wide:
 - Shots fired = 74
 - Calls resulting in shell casings found = 32
 - Number shell casings found = 206
 - Number of Firearms Seized = 38
 - Number firearms seized (year to date) = 220
 - Weapon violation arrests = 6

- Community Involvement:
 - **Police Athletic/Activity League** - membership application sent to National Organization
 - **Rocky Mount Housing Authority Graduation Parade** - partnered with City and school leaders to honor 2021 graduating Housing Authority Residents
 - **Active Shooter Training** - continuing training of City employees on survival techniques for active shooter incidents; includes lecturing and practical exercises
 - **Junior Police Academy** - will be July 19-23, 2021; 12 participants
 - **Job Fair** - Tuesday, July 20, 2021 @ 11 a.m. - Booker T. Theatre

Chief Hassell responded to comments from Councilmembers and reported there has been an increase in crime across the country. He added overall property crime has scaled down while violent crime has scaled upward. He told the Council the Department will be preparing public service announcements to educate the public on gun safety, the importance of securing their homes and encouraging the public not to leave personal items in parked cars.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received report; no formal action

4. **RESIDENTIAL PRODUCTION GRANT** - Kevin Harris

Downtown Development Manager Kevin Harris told the City Council that economic productivity of the Downtown hinges upon a built environment capable of supporting business and residential growth. He added that sustaining that growth requires significant commitment by private investors in building rehabilitation and construction. He stated aging buildings, fire suppression requirements and outdated electrical systems are just a few of the challenges of urban revitalization.

Council was advised that the Downtown Residential Production Grant (RPG) is intended to promote downtown living and increase the residential capacity of the Downtown and encourage property owners to consider reuse of their upper floors for lofts, apartments or condominiums. He said investors in new construction or building rehabilitation projects that create new residential units or renovate abandoned units will be eligible for a substantial rebate on development costs.

Mr. Harris provided the City Council with the proposed policy, provided background information and outlined the policy goals to be to:

- Promote renovation and reuse of upper floors in existing or historic buildings for residential use;
- Encourage new residential construction on suitable vacant lots;
- Increase Downtown living to expand the market base for restaurants and retail establishments and attract new business to the Downtown; and
- Increase the tax base.

He outlined the demand for units and identified the grant guidelines and applicant criteria as:

GUIDELINES:

- Reimbursement to applicant of \$7,500 per unit; \$150,000 maximum (20 units); \$225,000 budgeted in FY 2022 (30 units)
- Maximum residential grant cannot exceed 20% of overall development costs;
- Total Downtown incentive grants (combined) cannot exceed 35% of overall development costs (excluding Development Incentive Grant);
- Must be located within Downtown Core;
- Locations within Downtown Transitional Area will be considered if they include at least 6 residential units (map provided);
- New construction and building rehabilitation are eligible (single or mixed use);
- May include renovations to existing/abandoned units (renovations must be substantial to the extent the completed units are of a finished quality and ready for occupancy);
- New and renovated units must be consistent with overall quality standards;
- Grant reimbursement based upon number of new residential units created or substantially upgraded (\$7,500 per unit); and
- Applicant/owner will be eligible to receive up to \$150,000 cumulative in Residential Production awards, for one or more projects

APPLICANT CRITERIA:

- Feasibility and suitability of rehabilitation, reuse or development plan;
- Impact to tax base and overall economic impact anticipated as result of project;
- Consistency of interior upfit with regard to quality, durability and amenities;
- Overall conformance with grant goals and guidelines; and
- Other factors specific to the project deemed relevant

The Council was advised that public comment on the policy will be received on July 26, 2021, and the program will open to applicants on August 2, 2021.

Mr. Harris provided the Council with existing Downtown Incentives to include the following and explained each:

- Downtown Building Assistance Program
- Accelerated Façade Improvement
- Roof Replacement and Repair
- Downtown Development Incentive

The Downtown Development Manager responded to questions from Councilmembers. He clarified that both sides of the streets are included, and the practice is to work both sides of the boundary line. Discussion was held as to how to get the information relative to the grant to the public.

It was explained that an applicant can apply more than once but the maximum one applicant can receive is \$150,000 regardless of the number of properties. Discussion was held relative to the cap on the grant. Councilmember Blackwell stated that no one is being given anything, but the grants will make investments stretch further. He added that the Downtown is hot on the weekends.

The City Manager was asked to reconsider the limitations of the policy. Councilmember Daughtridge stated the RATIO plan was received but

never adopted adding it is not talked about. He voiced concern that tax dollars are being used and he is not aware there is a Downtown plan. He questioned the process relative to administration of this grant and asked if there is a plan for the Downtown. Mr. Harris reported that the RATIO plan is often referred to and some components of the plan are used, and it is helpful. He said discussion is being held relative to a Downtown plan (and surrounding area) and several prior plans will influence the Downtown plan.

Mr. Harris said applications come to him and he works with the Department of Community Development and final approval comes from the Manager. Councilmember Daughtride inquired if the CCRP is no longer used and was advised that the CCRP has not approved grants for a long period of time; however, they are kept abreast of activities and incentives. He reported that the CCRP has not met since the pandemic started but has plans to meet next week.

Discussion continued and Councilmember Blackwell stated under the current management the Downtown has changed from "tumbleweeds" to being a location that people are considering purchasing property. He added that while there is much to do, much has been done. Discussion among Councilmembers continued, and Mr. Blackwell stated the RATIO plan was flawed due to the consultants not being willing to receive input from the community. He said he is proud of the Downtown Office.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney confirmed the consensus from Council is to remove the cap for the Residential Production Grant. She added a public hearing is expected to be held relative to the policy on July 26.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Remove lifetime cap for Residential Production Grant and provide a revised policy for Council consideration.

CLOSED SESSION

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney requested a closed session for discussion relative to a matter concerning attorney-client privilege.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Daughtride and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 6:42 p.m.

The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as **ESM-582** at the end of **Minute Book 37** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT. The Mayor Pro Tem convened the Committee in regular session at 7:05 and, without opposition, adjourned the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Councilmember Daughtride asked if the City Council approves the minutes of the Committee of the Whole today if that removes the lifetime cap for the Residential Production Grant. The City Clerk clarified the policy should come back to Council for review following the recommended amendment.

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

Mayor Roberson noted it has been requested that a presentation to the Rocky Mount Fire Department by North Carolina Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal, Mike Causey, be added to the agenda.

Councilmember Blackwell requested that consideration of an ordinance ordering the community code inspector to proceed with demolition of a dilapidated dwelling at 511 Magnolia Street be added to the agenda.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the agenda be amended, as requested.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

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

- Began her report by thanking members of the Rocky Mount Fire Department's Swiftwater Emergency Rescue Team for their assistance to neighbors in the western part of the state who experienced flooding and loss of life and property during recent rain associated with Tropical Storm Fred. She stated a team of 12 Rocky Mount Fire Department members were deployed for four days at the North Carolina Emergency Management Western Branch Office in Conover before returning home safely Sunday, August 22. She thanked the Rocky Mount Fire Department for its service to the community and state.
- Reported there is only one more Summer Night Lights event remaining in the 2021 series. The final event for this summer will be held from 6-8 p.m. on August 27 at Grover Lucas Park. The event is free and offers field games, family fun, music and hot dog snack packs. Attendees will have an opportunity to meet members of the Rocky Mount Police Department. For more information, contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 252-467-4902.
- Noted music enthusiasts should not forget that the Parks and Recreation Department will hold an End of Summer Celebration this Saturday, August 28 at Martin Luther King Jr. Park. The event will begin at 5 p.m. and feature inflatables for children, various food truck options and DJs. The featured act will be the Junkyard Band, which has a decades-long history as a member of the famous Def Jam Records. Visit the City's social media outlets as well as rockymountnc.gov for more information.
- Stated that the 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, and for which 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 or contact the Business Services Center at 972-1250.
- Advised that Emergency Rental Assistance is now available via Community Development Block Grant COVID-19 funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Eligible families must have been financially impacted by COVID-19 due to job loss, reduction in hours or pay, furlough or other documented pandemic-related hardships. The maximum assistance is \$4,704 per household. Funds are limited and are on a first-come, first-served basis. Rental payments will be made directly to landlord or property management. For more information, call 252-442-8553 or email housingcenter@embarqmail.com. Applicants may also apply at www.rmecdc.org.
- Reminded all that the Tar River Transit service has extended its offering of 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. All appointments need to be scheduled the day before the trip. Free rides will be available until at least August 31. Visit tarrivertransit.org for more information.

- Stated that residents' voices and opinions are needed with a pair of surveys. She encouraged residents to log onto www.rockymountresilience.com to complete the Natural Hazards Resiliency Plan. The survey will take less than five minutes to complete and will play a major role in helping the City evaluate and prepare for natural and human-caused disasters like floods and cyberattacks as well as aging infrastructure and economic issues. Direct links to the survey are available on the City's Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor pages.
- Invited all to visit www.ncbroadband.gov and complete a 5-minute survey that will inform research and policy recommendations in improving adequate internet access and speeds for the Rocky Mount community and many others. She stated the stance in the City of Rocky Mount, as written in a recent editorial to media outlets, is that the City desires the opportunity for local governments to build publicly owned, citywide networks that can provide broadband service to residents and businesses. She stated the survey can be found at ncbroadband.gov.
- Reported that tickets are available for the 24th annual Down East Viking Football Classic, which will be held Saturday, September 4 at the Rocky Mount Sports Complex between Elizabeth City State University and Fayetteville State University. Tickets may be purchased online at rockymountnc.gov by visiting the calendar of events or those interested may stop by the Booker T. Washington Community Center from 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Tailgating and RV spots are also available for purchase at the Booker T. Washington Community Center, located at 727 Pennsylvania Avenue in Rocky Mount.

The City Manager called on Parks and Recreation Director Joel Dunn to provide more information relative to the Down East Viking Football Classic. Mr. Dunn reported that 70 of 100 tailgating spots have been sold. He stated that actions are being taken relative to sanitizing in compliance with COVID-19 measures and a vaccine clinic will be held onsite the day of the event. He added the majority of those in attendance will be in the tailgating area. He stated social distancing measures will be recognized by the bands and cheerleaders and seating for family units will be available should they desire.

Councilmember Knight questioned if federal funding from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) is being considered for use in recognizing essential workers, especially the sanitation and street departments who have worked long hours while understaffed through the pandemic. He said he is sure the Manager has heard this through her round table discussions. City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney responded that she and staff have been working on this and departments have been asked to identify essential workers who worked throughout the pandemic unceasingly. She said that work is underway, and it is her intent to bring information relative to this back to Council during the September Committee of the Whole meeting adding it is hopeful ARP funds can be used, but it is important to be compliant with all regulations.

The City Manager said the City has been able to supplement staff in the Sanitation Department through the use of temporary services. She said it is difficult even for temporary service agencies to supply the

City's needs and this is happening throughout the state and nation. Ms. Small-Toney added there will be some interruptions in service, but the public can be assured that Tim Farmer is on top of the issue. She said she is aware there was an issue on Friday where trash was not picked up in a timely manner but that has been corrected. She said this is the result of not having sufficient staff.

Councilmember Knight said it is known that the Sanitation Department has been overworked for the past two years. He said assistance from temporary agencies is not working to resolve the problem and staff is burned out. He said the City needs to do a better job and Mr. Farmer is not the one to make the ultimate decision relative to hiring. He said it is incumbent on this Council to ensure that employees are being treated fairly adding that Alexander Evans who started the sanitation strike in the early 1980's was recently celebrated and to disregard the present situation is not right. He requested the Manager and staff take a deep dive to ensure the Council's wishes are being carried out and that all departments are being appreciated.

Ms. Small-Toney reported that the City has been undergoing a pay and classification study for all workers which was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. She said she made the decision to pay employees throughout the pandemic, whether they went home or not for reasons similar to the ones outlined by Councilmember Knight. She said this administration and staff is conscious and supportive of staff and are now finalizing the pay study and it is her intent to bring results of that study before Council at the October Committee of the Whole meeting and to recommend its implementation. She reported that the study compares salary for a variety of positions to ensure the City is at market rate and it is also her intent to recommend a cost-of-living adjustment across the board for all City employees along with implementation of the pay plan. She said she hopes this will occur before the first of the year. She stated utilities and public works are included and she is also concerned about the evaluation process. She said she sees all evaluations and it is clear to her that the lower paid employees tend to hover around the lower end of the pay increases. Ms. Small-Toney said she plans to make recommendations for changes in how evaluations are performed.

Councilmember Daughtridge noted it was brought up that a service interruption occurred on Friday due to an equipment failure that has nothing to do with staff not doing their jobs. He said he would like to see better communication to citizens who are impacted because people pay fees to have their trash collected adding people put their trash at the street and failure to pick it up could become a health issue. He said the City has a department of Communications and added because he was contacted, he took it upon himself to post information on his social

media page and received numerous emails because people were concerned. He said the City owes a duty to the public to keep them informed.

Councilmember Daughtridge told the Manager he requested a spreadsheet showing open positions over two weeks ago and inquired when he might expect to receive a response. She said she is unsure, but staff will follow up. The Manager said the Communications Department began the process of notification when they learned of the issue relative to the equipment malfunction.

Councilmember Knight stated the sanitation workers are overworked and understaffed and some equipment is not functioning as it should and when these conditions exist someone's garbage may be missed. He said the City Manager had a study performed relative to the Public Works Department of some things she had discovered before her tenure at the City and Council has not yet seen that study. He said to have a study and not correct issues does not resolve the problem. He said the City takes care of its electric department and appreciates their service but also appreciates those who pick up recycling and trash. He requested that when information is brought to Council about the pay study that information is also brought about the other study performed so some of the institutional issues can be corrected.

Ms. Small-Toney said staff has completed the study referred to and have implemented the recommendations. She said it is her recollection that the Council authorized the purchase of equipment for the Sanitation Department at the last meeting and it is her hope that equipment will be on the road fairly soon.

The Mayor reported that Mr. Pike has withdrawn his rezoning petition relative to 141 Cobb Farm Village Lane.

ROCKY MOUNT FIRE DEPARTMENT/125TH ANNIVERSARY (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)

Mayor C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. welcomed North Carolina Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal, Mike Causey, to present the Rocky Mount Fire Department with a certificate in recognition of the Fire Department's 125th anniversary.

Mr. Causey said it seemed only a short time ago he was in Rocky Mount to present the Fire Department with its class-one designation, a designation held by less than one half of one percent of all fire departments in the United States. He applauded the Rocky Mount Fire Department and all first responders for receipt of this prestigious award.

Mr. Causey recognized the Rocky Mount Fire Department for sending its Swiftwater Team to the western part of the state recently to assist storm victims and said it was heartwarming to see those from other parts of North Carolina and other states who came to assist.

Mr. Causey recognized members of the Fire Department in attendance and presented them with a certificate in honor of the Department's 125th anniversary.

Mayor Roberson thanked Mr. Causey for coming to Rocky Mount to make the presentation and he, along with the City Manager, Fire Chief Corey Mercer and members of the Fire Department joined Mr. Causey for a photograph.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Mayor outlined guidelines for public petitions and opened the meeting for petitions from the public. There being no public petitions, the Mayor closed the public petitions portion of the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. AD VALOREM TAX RELEASES: (recommended for approval)

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

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

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BILL NO.</u>	<u>NAME/ADDRESS</u>	<u>TAX</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
<u>NASH COUNTY</u>				
2019	1382	PELICANS SNOBALLS 1410 N WESLEYAN BLVD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	77.06 12.52	CITY INT
		TOTAL RELEASE:	89.58	

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>EDGEcombe COUNTY</u>				
2018	186	WILLIAMS, EDWARD CARLTON 1836 NEVILLE LN ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	120.72 12.07 33.53	CITY PEN INT
		TOTAL RELEASE:	166.32	
2019	62	WILLIAMS, EDWARD CARLTON 1836 NEVILLE LN ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	108.65 10.87 19.43	CITY PEN INT
		TOTAL RELEASE:	138.95	
2020	399	WILLIAMS, EDWARD CARLTON 1836 NEVILLE LN ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	97.79 9.78 7.80	CITY PEN INT
		TOTAL RELEASE:	115.37	

B. FY 2021-2022 PROJECT ORDINANCE/AMENDMENTS: (recommended for adoption)

Consideration was given to the following Project Ordinances/Amendments for FY 2021-2022:

- Project Ordinance/Amendment:
 - 1) **Urgent Repair Project** - appropriates funds from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (\$100,000) and General Fund (\$150,000)
 - 2) **FY 2021 Transit System Planning Project** - appropriates additional grant funding relative to planning operations for Tar River Transit (Urban Transit Planning TPL21 - \$10,790)

C. FISCAL YEAR 2021 TAX SETTLEMENT (recommended for adoption)

The City Council received a resolution from the Tax Collector of taxes collected for the Fiscal Year 2021 and authorizing the Tax Collector to collect 2021 taxes.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the recommendations relative to the Consent Agenda items be approved inclusive of approval of the tax releases and adoption of the following ordinances and resolution:

- a. **Ordinance No. O-2021-69** entitled **GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/ 2021-2022 URGENT REPAIR PROJECT**;
- b. **Ordinance No. O-2021-70** entitled **GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT/FY 2021 TRANSIT SYSTEM PLANNING PROJECT**; and
- c. **Resolution No. R-2021-39** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING SETTLEMENT OF FY 2020-21 TAXES DUE AND COLLECTED**

MATCHING GRANT/AKC REUNITE ADOPT A K-9 COP

The City Council was advised that staff wishes to apply for a \$7,500 grant through the AKC Reunite Adopt A K-9 Cop Grant to be used to assist with funding the cost to replace a retiring police canine. Council was advised that the cost to replace a canine is approximately \$10,000. It was noted that, if received, the grant requires a local match and funding in the amount of \$2,500 is available for the match.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Daughtride and unanimously carried that staff be authorized to submit a grant application; that the Mayor, City Clerk or appropriate staff be authorized to execute required documentation, including the grant application, subsequent grant agreement and any certifications and/or assurances on behalf of the City.

ANNEXATION NO. 324 - 677 FOUNTAIN SCHOOL ROAD

The City Council received a petition from Vickie Shipley for annexation of a contiguous parcel at 677 Fountain School Road, Battleboro, NC.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Bullock and unanimously carried that receipt of the petition be acknowledged and that **Resolution No. R-2021-40** entitled **RESOLUTION ORDERING THE CITY CLERK TO INVESTIGATE THE SUFFICIENCY OF A PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT/ANNEXATION NO. 324 - 677 FOUNTAIN SCHOOL ROAD** be adopted.

ANNEXATION NO. 325 - THOMAS BETTS PARKWAY AND PEELE ROAD

The City Council received a petition from Peter Varney on behalf of the City of Rocky Mount for annexation of a contiguous parcel on Thomas Betts Parkway and Peele Road identified as PIN No. 384200922115.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Bullock and unanimously carried that receipt of the petition be acknowledged and that **Resolution No. R-2021-41** entitled

RESOLUTION ORDERING THE CITY CLERK TO INVESTIGATE THE SUFFICIENCY OF A PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT/ANNEXATION NO. 325 - THOMAS BETTS PARKWAY AND PEELE ROAD - PIN NO. 384200922115 be adopted.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPLIANT NPDES MS4 STORMWATER PROGRAM

The City Council was presented with a resolution affirming the City's support of implementation of a compliant NPDES MS4 Stormwater Program. The Council was advised that on June 21, 2021, the City underwent an audit of the City's MS4 Stormwater Program by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), and findings included a requirement for adoption of a resolution demonstrating the City's support for the Stormwater Program.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2021-42** entitled **RESOLUTION AFFIRMING THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT'S CITY COUNCIL SUPPORT REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPLIANT NPDES MS4 STORMWATER PROGRAM** be adopted.

SEWER ASSESSMENT CONTRACT/2551 JASPER STREET

The City Council received a sewer assessment contract with Lynda D. Doyle for sewer service to 2551 Jasper Street. Council was advised that the contract provides for sewer connection fees of \$4,575 (prepayment of \$1,948.98 and for the remaining fees of \$2,626.02 to be assessed against the property).

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the assessment contract with Lynda D. Doyle for sewer service to 2551 Jasper Street (**C-2021-30**) be approved and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the same on behalf of the City. This contract will be recorded in the Office of the Edgecombe County Register of Deeds.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES/ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS

Councilmembers made the following nominations for appointments and/or reappointments:

- **Animal Care and Control Advisory Board** (term expires June 30, 2024):
 - Pace Winstead (Mayoral reappointment)
- **Historic Preservation Commission** (terms expire June 30, 2025)
 - Roslyn Haynes - reappointment
 - Bianca Davis - reappointment
- **Housing Authority**
 - Lea Henry - reappointment (term expires June 30, 2026)
 - Annette Williams, public housing member - appointment (unexpired term expires June 30, 2024)
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission** (terms expire June 30, 2024)
 - Katrice Johnson Brown - reappointment
 - Thomas L. Everette - reappointment

- **Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities** (terms expire June 30, 2023)
 - o Lee E. Gaskins - reappointment
 - o Gloria Valentine Davis - reappointment
- **STEP Board** (term expires June 30, 2023)
 - o Lige Daughtridge

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the appointments, as outlined above, be approved.

DEMOLITION ORDINANCE/511 MAGNOLIA STREET (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)

The City Council previously received an ordinance ordering the Community Code Inspector to proceed with demolition of the following substandard properties, which was removed from the August 8, 2021, agenda:

- a) 511 Magnolia Street
- b) 320 Olive Street
- c) 409/411 Arlington Street
- d) 334 Carolina Avenue

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the City Council consider the demolition of 511 Magnolia Street (ONLY) and **Ordinance No. O-2021-71** entitled **ORDINANCE ORDERING THE COMMUNITY CODE INSPECTOR TO PROCEED TO DEMOLISH CERTAIN DILAPIDATED STRUCTURES PURSUANT TO THE HOUSING CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted. This Ordinance orders the demolition of 511 Magnolia Street ONLY.

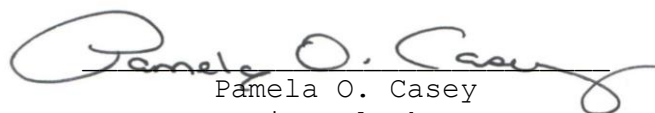
CLOSED SESSION

A closed session was requested to discuss a matter concerning attorney-client privilege and matters concerning personnel and economic development were added to the agenda in the open meeting. The minutes of the closed session shall be placed on file as **ESM-587a and ESM-587b** at the end of Minute Book No. 37 upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into closed session at 4:46 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor convened the City in regular session at 6:05 p.m. and there being no further business for regular session, adjourned the meeting.


Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk