

September 27, 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, T.J. Walker**, Lige Daughtridge, W.B. Bullock and Christine Carroll Miller.

**Councilmember Walker responded to the roll call remotely. No vote is recorded for Councilmember Walker throughout this meeting pursuant to NCGS 166a-19.24(d), as he could not be heard or seen casting a vote following roll call.

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; Amanda James, Superintendent, Water Resources; Kena Cofield-Jones, Human Resources Director; Gregory Cotten, Chief Technology Officer; Jayson Dawkins, Policy Analyst; Tracey Drewery, Assistant Fire Chief; Charles Bunn, III, Battalion Chief; Will Deaton, Development Services; Corey Mercer, Fire Chief; Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Peter F. Varney, Interim Community & Business Development Director; Donald Perry, Assistant City Engineer - Water Resources; Darryl Strother, Operations Manager - Electric; Tim Farmer, Operations Manager - Public Works Department; Jeffery Walston, Human Relations Specialist; 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 4:01 p.m. and requested a moment of individual silent prayer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and unanimously carried that the minutes of regular scheduled meetings of the City Council held August 9 and August 23, 2021, be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

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

Mayor Roberson noted it has been requested that a closed session for economic development/attorney-client privilege be added to the agenda and questioned if there are any other amendments to the agenda.

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

*Councilmember Blackwell arrived

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

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

- Began her report by congratulating the City organization and the Human Resources Department. She said the work and dedication of the Human Resources Department LiveWell Employee Wellness Program was recognized by healthiestemployers.com adding that the City was the only government organization named a finalist in the mid-sized category for Healthiest Employers of the Triangle. She thanked staff and employees who recognized the value of encouraging a healthy lifestyle.
- Reported that the City is providing an opportunity for honest dialogue, input and feedback from the community regarding the design and upfitting of the National Guard Armory, located at 600 Walnut Street. She invited Ward Four residents and community stakeholders to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas and to hear from others about the future of Ward Four, the Armory and the community by attending an information session from 6-8 p.m. on Wednesday, September 29 at the South Rocky Mount Community Center. She encouraged all to join members of City staff and Ward 4 Councilman T.J. Walker to provide input. Face coverings were encouraged as the City continues to follow CDC health guidelines in City facilities.
- Announced that tickets are on sale for the City's production of "The Nerd," which will be performed over the course of six nights beginning Friday, October 1 at 7:30 p.m. She stated that five additional shows will run through October 10 at the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences. The Manager welcomed all to enjoy local actors who tell the comical story of an unassuming architect who becomes host to an unexpected houseguest who saved his life in Vietnam adding tickets are available by calling the Imperial Centre at 972-1266 or by visiting imperialcentre.org.
- Stated that assistance is available for income-eligible City residents and utility customers financially impacted by COVID-19. She stated to help with the application process, the Business and Collections Services and Community and Business Development Departments hosted an in-person Information and Application Session today from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and an additional session will be held Wednesday, October 6, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Booker T. Theater in Downtown Rocky Mount. Ms. Small-Toney advised there are documents applicants might need to bring to the sessions and encouraged all to visit rockymountnc.gov and click on the Business and Collections Services page for a list of those documents. These funds are established by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The Manager invited residents and customers to call 972-1553 for more information.
- Reported the City is roughly a week and a half from hosting the Eastern Carolina BBQ Throwdown, which will be held Friday, October 8 and Saturday, October 9 on the lawn of the Helen P. Gay Rocky Mount Historic Train Station. A kickoff to the event will take place at 5 p.m. on Friday, October 8 and will feature a Kid's Zone, food vendors, a beer garden and a musical performance from On The Edge. All were invited to return Saturday, October 9 for BBQ and musical acts by Cooper Greer, the Will McBride Group and Trial By Fire. It was announced there will be a People's Choice tasting event and BBQ awards ceremony and Rocky Mount Public Utilities will have an exhibit area in addition to the beer garden and food vendors. Visit downtownrockymount.com for more information;

- Stated this past Saturday she had the opportunity to join the Berkshire community to celebrate their second project on Lincoln Drive. Photographs of the project before/after were shown. She said the intent is to build a new house. She added that through the efforts of the community, along with Mayor Pro Tem Joyner, they have begun work on another project. She stated she has said repeatedly that this is a national model, but even more important and closer to home, it is a local model as well and shows what can happen in a neighborhood and in a community when the residents band together and work on a project as significant as this.
- Provided an update on where the City is relative to solid waste collections saying she is happy to report collections are now near normal in terms of processes and collections thanks to Public Works Operation Manager, Tim Farmer, and the hard-working dedicated solid waste collection workers. She encouraged anyone with concerns to call the City and staff will be sure to make the collection one the same day.

Mayor Roberson stated he has received a message that those attending remotely are unable to hear.

PUBLIC POWER AND PUBLIC NATURAL GAS WEEK

The Mayor read a proclamation proclaiming October 3-9, 2021, as Public Power and Public Natural Gas Week and presented the proclamation to Director of Energy Resources Chris Beschler. Mayor Roberson and the City Manager joined Mr. Beschler for a photograph.

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

The Mayor presented a proclamation declaring October 2021 as Disability Employment Awareness Month to Human Relations Director Archie Jones and Human Relations Specialist Jeffery Walston. The Mayor and City Manager joined Mr. Jones and Mr. Walston for a photograph.

FIRE PREVENTION MONTH

Mayor Roberson read a proclamation proclaiming October 2021 as Fire Prevention Month in the City of Rocky Mount and presented the proclamation to Fire Chief Corey Mercer and the following members of the Rocky Mount Fire Department: Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Tracey Drewery, Assistant Fire Chief; and Charles Bunn, III, Battalion Chief. The Mayor and City Manager joined Chief Mercer and members of the Fire Department for a photograph.

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:

- ***Samuel Battle:***
 - Said he is speaking to all the African Americans present and said according to the census Wards One, Two, Three and Four have lost residents;
 - Said everyone is talking about white flight, but this is black fight;
 - Said Wards Five, Six and Seven gained residents, including black residents;
 - Said he has been saying African Americans are getting out of Edgecombe County because it is unsafe and there is nothing there and people want the best for their children;
 - Said the City is losing police officers and City employees;

- Said the Councilmembers cannot work together to change the City and that is why people will run against them in the election;
 - Said he is told races need to stick together but he does not care about that – he cares about his grandchildren and is fighting for them; added there is no pharmacy on the Edgecombe County side of the City and the fair left as well;
 - Said there are sexual allegations, and it will come out sooner or later
- *Nathlyn Ohree:*
- Said she is a proud resident of Edgecombe County and has been for over 30 years;
 - Said she once considered living in Nash County but decided to stay on the Edgecombe side;
 - Said she is here to encourage the City Council to continue to work as a team.;
 - Said they cannot accomplish anything without the cooperation of the community and without the civilians of the City;
 - Said Rocky Mount is blessed in the midst of an atmosphere of uproar all across the nation and around the world and this is a praying community;
 - Said there is a church on almost every corner, and though the doors have been closed, the communication lines are open via telephone and online media;
 - Said we don't know what the future holds but we do know who holds the future and it is God; said we are in his hands, and we thank Him for choosing you and assigning you the task that has been put upon your shoulders;
 - Said, as President Kennedy once said, citizens should ask not what their City Council can do for them, but what they can do for their City Council
- *Jules Harris:*
- Said he is a Marine Corps combat veteran and introduced his son, Judah Harris;
 - Said he was coming today to talk about what Judah has done;
 - Said Judah is from Rocky Mount and represents Rocky Mount and is the number one kid in the nation;
 - Said for two years in a row, he has won every national championship and international championship that could be won in the United States;
 - Said last Friday they received a message that Judah was accepted to represent Team USA, in the Dominican Republic this year;
 - Said he is asking the City to help support Judah so they can go to the Dominican Republic and represent Team USA and represent Rocky Mount;
 - Said everybody says Rocky Mount is not doing a lot of great things but people don't see what is done behind closed doors;
 - Asked that the City get behind them and help show what the youth can do;
 - Said he is Judah's trainer for strength and conditioning coach for El Toro judo and is the player development coach for Black Ice Judo out of Atlanta;
 - Said he would like to bring that to Rocky Mount and help the City see what it can do, how it can bring discipline to young boys and bring the City together as a whole

Mr. Harris responded to questions from Councilmembers and advised:

- Judah is number one in Judo;
- If they go to <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Judo/Results/2021/April/24/USA-Judo-Youth-National-Championships> they will see Judah's name;
- Judah is 12 years old and fights heavyweight;
- Judah has competed in Orlando and Fort Lauderdale, Florida;
- He is his son's trainer, and he hopes to get certified as a personal trainer;
- It is his job to make sure his son is not only a great judo player, but a great citizen and man and tells Judah he can be anything he wants to be;
- Checks can be made to Black Ice Judo; and
- Judah's accomplishments have been covered by the local media.

Councilmember Knight requested the City Manager be in touch with Mr. Harris and Ms. Small-Toney stated she was just about to ask the Director of Parks and Recreation to meet with him.

Councilmembers expressed support for Mr. Harris and Judah.

o **Troy Davis:**

- Said he had a false alarm at Davis Lofts recently and the Rocky Mount Fire Department arrived at his facility within three minutes of the alarm call, and he wants to recognize them;
- Said Chief Mercer is doing an awesome job;
- Said other City management is always chasing the latest and greatest projects to hide the fact that nothing is getting done;
- Questioned the status of projects such as the 50 units of workforce housing that is supposed to go Downtown, the Downtown hotel development, new parking deck, repair of the existing Downtown parking lot, renovation of the train depot and others and said it seems like the City is always starting projects and nothing materializes;
- Said the window of opportunity will not be there forever and time is of the essence and this management has proven that it cannot get anything done;
- Said he has sent in a public records request for all open positions and has had many people contact him on Facebook saying they have applied for jobs in the City and said he has not heard anything from his request;
- Said at the last City Council meeting COVID was blamed for opportunities missed within City management and said nobody wants to work for the City management;
- Said the citizens of Rocky Mount can clearly see through this and want change; and
- Said “we the people” demand that this City Manager be terminated effective immediately, or be fired by the City Council that the citizens of Rocky Mount elected

There being no other public comments/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>EDGECOMBE COUNTY</u>				
2021	280	CALHOUN, CECIL WAYNE 3951 MEADOWBROOK RD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	13.08	CITY OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	13.08	
2021	12	LLOYD, CHRISTOPHER 975 COBBLE RIDGE RD NASHVILLE, NC 27856	40.00	DOG NO DOGS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	40.00	
2021	18223	KNIGHT, LEON JR KNIGHT, LEON III 206 COLEMAN AVE ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	85.63	CITY ELDERLY/DISABLED EXEMPTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	85.63	

2016	22981	SWINTON, DERIUS D DAUGHTRIDGE LD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	89.84	CITY	VALUATION CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	89.84		
2017	22941	SWINTON, DERIUS D DAUGHTRIDGE LD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	98.01	CITY	VALUATION CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	98.01		
2021	22238	WHITMORE, PATRICIA LOT 2 BARNES ST ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	10.00	DOG	NO DOGS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	10.00		

NASH COUNTY

2021	2080	BULLUCK, MARK MELVIN JR PO BOX 8981 ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	10.00	DOG	NO DOGS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	10.00		
2021	2117	CAUDLE, BRAD PO BOX 547 BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	35.55	CITY	OWNER CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	35.55		
2021	2251	YOUNGS TRUCK CENTER INC ADVANTAGE TRUCK CENTER PO BOX 560007 CHARLOTTE, NC 28256	19.57	PEN	LATE LIST REMOVAL
		TOTAL RELEASE:	19.57		

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>				
2021	402	BRINKLEY, BROOKLYN LATRISE 1716 FLETCHER DRIVE ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	124.81 12.48	CITY PEN
		TOTAL RELEASE:	137.29	
2021	7848	GARDNER, HARVARD BATCHELOR ESTATE GARDNER, JEROME B EXECUTOR 520 N FAIRVIEW RD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	412.66	CITY
		TOTAL RELEASE:	412.66	OWNER CORRECTION
2021	24680	JENKINS, MARY P JENKINS, REGGIE LOT 3, BLK F BIRCHFIELD S/D BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	110.46	CITY
		TOTAL RELEASE:	110.46	ELDERLY/DISABLED EXEMPTION

2021	24027	PARHAM, CATHERINE W WEAVER, CARSON EUGENE JR 124 HUNTING LODGE RD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	536.43	CITY	OWNER CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	536.43		
2021	21736	SMITH, JAMES R 116 WASHINGTON PL ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	308.25	CITY	ELDERLY/DISABLED EXEMPTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	308.25		
2018	22925	SWINTON, DERIUS D DAUGHTRIDGE LD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	101.72	CITY	VALUATION CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	101.72		
2019	22905	SWINTON, DERIUS D DAUGHTRIDGE LD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	101.72	CITY	VALUATION CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	101.72		
2020	22907	SWINTON, DERIUS D DAUGHTRIDGE LD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	101.72	CITY	VALUATION CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	101.72		
2021	7968	WHITAKER, JO ANN HARRELL WHITAKER, ARLANDUS TIONT HARRELL 109 S LINDEN PL ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	139.16	CITY	ELDERLY/DISABLED EXEMPTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	139.16		

NASH COUNTY

2021	10028	ROCKY MOUNT RECYCLERS INC 816 S HALIFAX RD BLDG ONLY ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803	1304.86	CITY	EXEMPT PROPERTY
		TOTAL RELEASE:	1304.86		
2021	10027	WARD GARRY PROPERTIES LLC 816 S HALIFAX RD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803	1686.35	CITY	EXEMPT PROPERTY
		TOTAL RELEASE:	1686.35		
2021	10017	WARD GARRY PROPERTIES LLC 4601 COMMUNITY DR ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	848.63	CITY	EXEMPT PROPERTY
		TOTAL RELEASE:	848.63		
2021	1153	WILLIAMS, CHRISTOPHER REBECCA 932 PAMELA LN ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803	129.88	CITY	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	129.88		

B. K-9 RETIREMENT

The Council was advised that Police K-9 Soco is seven (7) years old and displaying limitations in his performance and ability in his duties

as a police K-9 and the Chief of Police has recommended that K-9 Soco be declared surplus, retired and awarded to Senior Police Officer Brandon Thomas and that the City Manager be authorized to execute the retirement letter for K-9 Police dog Soco on behalf of the City in accordance with the provisions of N.C.G.S. 160A-266(c).

C. TEMPORARY STREET CLOSING (recommended for approval):

- Request from Brad Kerr, Director of Public Works, for permission to close the following streets for the Annual Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down from Friday, October 8, 2021, at 12:00 p.m. until Saturday, October 9, 2021, at 8:00 p.m. (ordinance adoption requirement of NCDOT standards):
 1. South Church Street (US 301 Business North) from Andrews Street to Nash Street;
 2. Hammond Street from South Franklin Street to Southwest Main Street;
 3. Coastline Street from South Church Street to Hammond Street; and
 4. Southwest Main Street from Nash Street to Hammond Street

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the recommendations outlined in the Consent Agenda be approved inclusive of approval of the tax releases and/or refunds, retirement of Police dog Soco and adoption of **Ordinance No. O-2021-77** entitled **ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE EASTERN CAROLINA BBQ THROWDOWN.**

FY 2023 SECTION 5307, 5310, 5311 AND 5339 COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM GRANTS/PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor C. Sanders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr. opened a public hearing relative to FY 2023 Section 5307, 5310, 5311 and 5339 Community Transportation Program Grants for funding of \$622,298 through the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Program, for a portion of the Tar River Transit administrative, operating and capital expenses. Council was advised the grant will require a local match of \$159,792.

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

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the Transit Grant application(s) be approved; that **Resolution No. R-2021-45** entitled **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM RESOLUTION FY 2023** be adopted; and that the City Manager, Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute any required documentation or certifications, including the subsequent grant agreement(s) on behalf of the City.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR REDISTRICTING/PUBLIC HEARING

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the proposed redistricting guiding principles for the City's electoral wards.

o **Mysha Lynch:**

- Said redistricting is very important in terms of fair voting, the state of the City and gathering for all people in Rocky Mount;

- Said it was voted against in the Supreme Court several years ago for the gerrymandering to be handled in North Carolina and the fact that we're in 2021 and it has finally been implemented due to the census said she wants to ensure that equity, people and communities are kept in mind and that gerrymandering is not allowed to continue and that the problem is not made worse by decisions made;
 - Encouraged Council to be the force that fixes, eradicates the problem and ensures the future is brighter than it is today
- *Susan Perry Cole:*
- Said she lives in Rocky Mount and is a member of the Community Academy which is a group of concerned neighborhood residents who have come together to improve housing conditions in racially segregated blighted communities experiencing disinvestment;
 - Said she speaks to the proposed guidelines or criteria under consideration for adoption by the City Council which can be used to guide the drawing of the City's ward boundaries;
 - Began with a brief reference to the political context that existed in 1983 when a federal lawsuit brought by Legal Aid of North Carolina, Green vs. City of Rocky Mount, was filed under the Voting Rights Act, challenging the method of electing members of the Rocky Mount City Council;
 - Said prior to 1983 Rocky Mount's system for electing members of the City Council consisted of a Ward residency requirement for each candidate coupled with city-wide or at-large voting by all eligible voters of the City as a whole;
 - Said the cost of a City Council candidate running in a city-wide contest was significant, with the added burden of overcoming racially polarized voting patterns in the City;
 - Said historically, various Black candidates ran unsuccessful campaigns for election to the City Council, and only one of these candidates was ever successful - Reverend George Dudley, former head of Rocky Mount's Voter Improvement League;
 - Said he was elected to serve on the City Council from 1972 to 1983 and was the first Black to serve on the City Council in 70 years;
 - Added in 1983, when the federal lawsuit was filed, an administrative complaint was also lodged with the US Justice Department under the Voting Rights Act challenging the City's then existing voting practices as discriminatory;
 - Said as a result of these interventions a seven-member true Ward system was recreated, in which each City Council candidate is required to satisfy a ward residency requirement with voting limited to eligible voters residing in an individual ward;
 - Said three of the seven wards were configured as safe with Black residents constituting a sufficient share of the electorate so that they could be expected to cast ballots and elect the candidate of their choice;
 - Said later by 2004, Rocky Mount voters were able to elect four Blacks out of seven members to the City Council;
 - Said relative to the nine guiding principles presented by redistricting attorney, Caroline Mackie, during the Committee of the Whole meeting on September 13, she is expressing support for eight adding she opposes the principle which states existing district lines shouldn't be considered in an era in which voting procedures are under legislative modification in many states and demands for election recounts continue in some locales;
 - Said ordinary community residents must participate in the City's redistricting process and provide input to ensure these procedures are open, transparent and fair and citizen participation is one way each City resident can help protect the integrity of our precious democratic system

○ **Bronson Williams:**

- Said he had a struggle dealing with the blank slate tabula rasa - how you can create boundaries without considering the current situation of the Ward system;
- Said he does not know if there's some standard practice used but those things should be taken in consideration as wards are being developed;
- Said he hopes in the next 10 years that additional dollars can be allocated to the census process because he does not believe that Rocky Mount lost that many people adding, he believes a lot of people did not participate in the census count;
- Said a campaign should begin, even now, to educate about the importance of a 100% complete count process in the next 10 years adding this will not happen just by happenstance;
- Said as we deal with the process the City is fortunate to have Councilmembers that have gone through the process and the City can lean on that leadership and experience in dealing with the matters of redistricting, so the districts are fair and balanced to elect people in the upcoming election

Mayor Roberson asked the City Manager to speak relative to the census process adding the City Council allocated additional dollars for the process this past year.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney reported that a team lead by former Councilmember Lois Watkins with part-time and volunteer staff was funded by the City to encourage completion of census forms. She said she remembers the participation rate being considerably higher than surrounding areas. She called on Ms. Watkins for comment.

Ms. Watkins said for the most part the City was ahead of all surrounding communities and Edgecombe County and ran neck and neck with Nash County. She said she understands from the Human Relations Director that the City was counted with Edgecombe and Nash Counties and not counted as the City of Rocky Mount, but they have been unable to obtain the data.

The City Manager said she will look into that because there will need to be a City count in order for the City to qualify for HUD funding. She said she believe the percentage of response by around 63%. Ms. Watkins said it was in line with ten years ago, but they felt it should have been higher.

Mayor Pro Tem asked the City Manager if there is a way to educate residents of the importance and responsibility of completing the census every ten years.

Ms. Small-Toney stated a lot happens within the ten-year period and said as the City gets closer to the next census, ten years from now, efforts can be made three years out to start a process and work with neighborhood associations to educate residents and encourage participation adding federal funding is dependent on the census count as well as a number of governments in the area and an accurate count is beneficial.

○ **Tom Harris:**

- Said he thinks it would be good to review the guiding principles so the public will know what the Council will be voting on

Mayor Roberson requested the City Attorney to re-state the guiding principles.

Councilmember Miller questioned if the guiding principles are also on the City's website. Mr. Rose stated he thinks they are and Councilmember Daughtridge confirmed the proposed guiding principles are online and included in the agenda for today's meeting.

Mr. Rose said the Resolution before Council today for consideration includes ten of the eleven proposed guiding principles, adding the principle regarding the blank slate was omitted. He outlined the proposed guiding principles adding they were published in the newspaper and shown on the screen during the last City Council meeting:

1. Equal population, as required by state and federal law;
2. Minority voting strength is not to be diluted, but race should not unnecessarily predominate, as required by law;
3. In order to minimize voter confusion, districts should retain their current configuration, to the extent possible ("core preservation");
4. Follow natural boundaries and physical features, such as roads or waterways, to the extent possible;
5. Use precincts as building blocks for the districts, to the extent possible;
6. Recognize and respect neighborhood boundaries;
7. Recognize and respect communities of interest, to be defined by the Council with public input;
8. Avoid the pairing of incumbents in the same district;
9. Consider areas of potential future population growth; and
10. Districts should be reasonably compact, to the extent possible.

Councilmember Knight thanked Ms. Lynch, Ms. Cole and Mr. Williams for coming out today and for speaking and being a part of this democratic process. He said people are destroyed due to the lack of knowledge. He voiced appreciation to Ms. Sue Perry Cole for bringing history to the meeting and said we should not forget where we came from as a City. Mr. Knight appreciated Ms. Cole for helping to lead the fight along with the late Naomi Green that allowed him and his colleagues to serve on the City Council. He said at one point they were not able to serve, but, through litigation and advocacy of the citizens of Rocky Mount who stood for democracy they are here to serve and said he wanted to publicly thank them for that.

Mr. Knight stated it is very important to hear from citizens and it is known that litigation helped change the political landscape in the City to allow African American representation to be a part of the political arena. He appreciated the history being shared to remind all of where Rocky Mount came from and where it is today, and said he wanted to pay homage and respect to those individuals.

Mayor Roberson thanked all speakers for being a part of the process saying it is important that every member of the public be able to speak their mind and voice what they believe in to represent the common good for all.

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

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2021-46** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT ADOPTING GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR REDISTRICTING THE CITY'S ELECTORAL WARDS** be adopted. This resolution adopts the guiding principles to be used in redrawing the electoral wards for the City's municipal elections.

RESIDENTIAL LEASE AGREEMENT/134 NANDINA COURT

Consideration was given to a residential lease agreement with Bobby Peele for City-owned property at 134 Nandina Court. The property is a high-efficiency apartment in Edgecombe Meadows consisting of approximately 1,000 square feet. The Council was advised that the main terms of the lease agreement are:

- Monthly rent of \$340 or \$4,200 annually;
- 12-month lease to end July 31, 2022

Councilmember Daughtridge questioned how many residential properties are owned by the City, what standards are in place and how the amount of the rent is determined. City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney assured the Council that the residential properties are up to code and reasonably price adding the City's ownership of residential properties predates her time with the City. She stated that the City's residential tenant manager, Cooper & Associates, has managed the residential properties for quite some time. Ms. Small-Toney added that rent is determined like any other rent by looking at the area and the size of the unit and a number of other factors. She stated it is her understanding that the Douglas Block property was renovated with the idea of being able to sustain the African American entrepreneurial ship that occurred in that area and to maintain architectural and community integrity and both residential and commercial properties were put in place to encourage people to return and be a part of the renovation and revitalization of that area. The Manager added that the management team takes care of maintenance of the rental properties, receives a commission and rental funds are deposited into the City's general fund.

Councilmember Knight noted this property is located in Ward 1 and was acquired by the City with Neighborhood Stabilization funding and has been renovated. He added the rent is affordable and the property helps to stabilize the community. Mr. Knight said that Cooper & Associates have a good reputation in the community.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the lease agreement with Bobby Peele be approved. The lease agreement is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **C-2021-31**.

SURPLUS PROPERTY/ROCKY MOUNT REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The City Council was advised that the City of Rocky Mount's Redevelopment Commission holds deeds for 603 Cokey Road, 825 and 831 Clark Street and 310 Pennsylvania Avenue previously owned by the South

East North Carolina Community Development Corporation (SENCCDC). Interim Director of Community and Business Development, Peter Varney, reported that the Redevelopment Commission acquired the properties in 2016 using Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds after the City had demolished the residential structures. Mr. Varney advised that the department is working to close out the NSP grant awarded to the City in 2008 and needs to dispose of the properties but also restrict ownership to new owners whose income does not exceed 80% of the area median income for the area.

Council was provided with a resolution delegating authority and responsibility to the Redevelopment Commission to pursue disposition of the properties, as outlined.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2021-47** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DIRECTING THE ROCKY MOUNT REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TO PURSUE DISPOSAL OF CERTAIN PROPERTY** be adopted. This resolution authorizes the Redevelopment Commission to pursue disposal of the property with guidance and assistance from the Department of Business and Community Development; to conduct activities within the amounts of funding appropriated by the City for the project; and provides that the Commission will forward the minutes of its meeting to the City Council to allow the Councilmembers to follow the progress of the Commission.

BUILDING REUSE GRANT/PROJECT FUSION 2

The City Council was provided with a resolution authorizing submission of the grant application for Project Fusion 2 to the North Carolina Department of Commerce for funding (\$300,000) through the Rural Building Reuse Program. The Council was advised that a local manufacturing company has made plans to expand its manufacturing and distribution operation as a result of the recent acquisition of two smaller production companies. They were further advised that the company:

- Was incorporated in 1908 and is publicly traded;
- Has several divisions in other states;
- Has 108 employees at its Rocky Mount location;
- Plans to spend approximately \$8,645,000 to upfit the manufacturing space; and
- Plans to hire an additional 73 employees.

It was noted that the City and the Carolinas Gateway Partnership will arrange for a local cash match of 5% of the grant amount (\$15,000) to be used for planning and grant administration.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2021-47a** entitled **AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE BUILDING REUSE PROGRAM - "PROJECT FUSION 2 BUILDING REUSE"** be adopted. This resolution provides that the City has

substantially complied or will substantially comply with all State and local laws, rules, regulations and ordinances applicable to the project and to the grants pertaining thereto and that Rochelle D. Small-Toney, City Manager, is authorized to execute any additional documents pertaining to the grant application as requested.

FY 2022 INSTALLMENT FINANCING/CONSTRUCTION OF FIRE STATION 2

The City Council was provided with a resolution declaring the official intent of the City to reimburse incurred and future expenditures associated with the construction of Fire Station 2 in preparation for FY 2022 installment financing. Council was advised that the cost of the project is \$4,100,000 and was approved in the annual budget.

Councilmember Knight stated that he has some suggestions relative to the fire station that he would like to share with the City Manager and requested action relative to adoption of the resolution be tabled. Discussion was held.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and carried by a vote of 5-1 (Councilmember Daughtridge opposed) that consideration of the resolution be tabled.

FY 2020 DOWN EAST HOME CONSORTIUM (DEHC) CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER)

The City Council was advised that the Down East Home Consortium (DEHC) Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) for CDBG and HOME investment partnership programs is due to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on or before September 30, 2021. The Council was provided with a copy of the report which provides an assessment of the City's progress in carrying out its FY 2018-2021 Three-Year Consolidated Plan and includes accomplishments made towards the City's July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021, program year housing goals and objectives.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) be approved for submission to HUD on behalf of the City.

CDBG - CARES FUNDING REALLOCATION/PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council was advised that the following CDGB Public Service Awards were approved by Council in June 2021:

- Buck Leonard Association - \$21,000;
- Rocky Mount-Edgecombe CDC - \$30,000;
- United Community Ministries - \$7,000; and
- Ripple Effects - \$19,163

It was noted that Council deferred funding for United Community Ministries, the Mercer Foundation and Ripple Effects in anticipation of release of HOME-American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) funds. The City Council was advised that HUD has awarded \$1,476,477 in HOME-ARP fund to the Down

East HOME Consortium and the Community Development Department is awaiting training on the use of the funds.

Council was further advised that in 2020 \$409,806 in CDBG-CARES funding was allocated to the Business and Collections Services Department to fund a Utility Assistance Program for customers who had become delinquent in payment of utility bills due to COVID-19 and of these funds \$397,009 remains available and can be used by public service agencies.

It was recommended that the funding be used to fulfill the City's pledge to the agencies for whom funding was deferred as follows, including an allocation of \$2,500 to the Lighthouse HOME at 1016 Eastern Avenue for repair/replacement of a sewer waste line clogged by tree roots:

- a) United Community Ministries (Community Shelter) - \$30,000;
- b) Mercer Foundation - \$28,425;
- c) Ripple Effects - \$16,000; and
- d) Lighthouse HOME - new allocation = \$2,500

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the funding allocations/re-allocations be approved; that the City Manager and City Clerk to be authorized to execute an agreement with the Lighthouse HOME on behalf of the City; and that the following project amendment be adopted:

- **Ordinance No. O-2021-78** entitled **GRANT PROJECT AMENDMENT/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT CARES ACT FUNDING PROJECT (\$638,048)**

BIDS/HOLIDAY DECORATIONS (CITY LAKE AND BATTLEBORO COMMUNITY)

The City Council received the tabulation of bids received for City Lake and Battleboro Tree Holiday Decorations. Bids were received and opened on September 16, 2021, after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2021-26**.

Discussion was held with regard to holiday decorations and installation. Councilmember Knight questioned if ice skating will be available this season and Parks and Recreation Director Joel Dunn stated the portable board purchased by the City some years ago served its purpose but is no longer available.

Councilmember Blackwell stated a desire to ensure the City is festive and beautiful during the holiday season adding he would like to see a collaboration with Rocky Mount Mills to see the City ablaze with lights. He suggested private businesses be encouraged to decorate. He added that holiday lights in the Battleboro community is also important.

Councilmember Miller noted there is an effort in the Northgreen community to encourage residents to decorate for the holidays and suggested this could be a challenge to other neighborhoods.

Councilmember Knight agreed with a coordination for holiday lighting between the City and Rocky Mount Mills.

Mr. Dunn reported he has been on conference calls this week with OIC and Rocky Mount Mills and a coordinated effort is already underway adding the desire is to encourage people to come Downtown and efforts are being made to support and not compete with private businesses for holiday events. City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney added a route is being established to run from Rocky Mount Mills to the Downtown which will be announced very soon.

Councilmember Joyner suggested communities be encouraged to decorate for the holiday season and questioned if funding set aside for community associations for beautification can be used for this effort. The City Manager stated the community associations can use the funding however they desire.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the bid for City Lake and Battleboro Tree Holiday Decoration be awarded to Mosca Design, Inc., as the lowest responsive responsible bidder, at a total cost of \$152,626.80 and that the Purchasing Division be authorized to issue a purchase order for the decorations in accordance with the Council's award.

BIDS/TA50 ARTICULATING TELESCOPIC AERIAL DEVICE WITH MATERIAL HANDLING (INSULATED) AND ONE (1) DH50 50' FULLY HYDRAULIC DERRICK, REAR MOUNT

The City Council received a recommendation for the purchase of one (1) TA50 Articulating Telescopic Aerial Device with Material Handling (Insulated) and one (1) DH50 50' Fully Hydraulic Derrick, Rear Mount at a total cost of \$546,537, through Sourcewell, a competitive group purchasing program which allows purchases to be made through competitive bidding and offers competitively obtained purchasing services at discount prices to two or more public agencies, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-129(e) (3). Sourcewell advertised as required by law and bid documentation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2021-27(a and b)**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Altec Industries, Inc. at a total cost of \$546,537 pursuant to Sourcewell contract #012418-ALT as follows and that staff be authorized to issue a purchase order for the trucks (for Energy Resources) in accordance with the Council's award:

- One (1) TA50 Articulating Telescopic Aerial Device with Material Handling (Insulated) - \$242,612; and
- One (1) DH50 50' Fully Hydraulic Derrick, Rear Mount - \$303,925.

BIDS/ONE (1) MCLAUGHLIN VACUUM EXCAVATION SYSTEM

The City Council received a recommendation for the purchase of one (1) McLaughlin Vacuum Excavation System, through Sourcewell, a competitive group purchasing program which allows purchases to be made through competitive bidding and offers competitively obtained purchasing services at discount prices to two or more public agencies, pursuant to

N.C.G.S. 143-129(e) (3). Sourcewell advertised as required by law and bid documentation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2021-28**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Vermeer Corporation pursuant to Sourcewell contract #012418-VRM at a total cost of \$98,270 and that staff be authorized to issue a purchase order for the equipment in accordance with the Council's award.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES/APPOINTMENTS

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

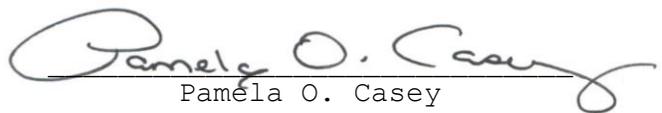
CLOSED SESSION (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)

It was requested that a closed session be added to discuss matters concerning economic development and attorney-client privilege. The minutes of the closed session shall be placed on file as **ESM-589** 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 Knight and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into closed session at 5:19 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor convened the City in regular session at 5:48 p.m. and there being no further business for regular session and without objection adjourned the meeting.


Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk