

November 8, 2021

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

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

Staff present: Rochelle Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Jessie Nunery, Interim Communications, Marketing and Public Relations Director; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Chris Beschler, Director of Energy Resources; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Will Deaton, Development Services Director; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Gregory Cotten, Chief Technology Officer; Joel Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director; Latasha Hall, Director of Business and Collections Services; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Tracey Drewery, Assistant Chief of Administration & Planning (Fire Department); Keyana Walston, Management Analyst; Corey Mercer, Fire Chief; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation; Charles Bunn, III, Battalion Chief; Darvin Moore, Division Chief; Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Brenton Bent, Water Resources Director; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Cornelia McGee, Community Development Administrator; A.B. Bangura, Finance Consultant (The Robert Bobb Group) and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

NOTE: Public participation limited relative to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19); meeting was accessible remotely via FaceBook and the City's YouTube Channel.

Security Officers: Police Sergeant Keith Miller and Senior Police Officer Shawn Battle.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and requested all to stand for a moment of silent prayer.

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

Mayor Roberson asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda adding he is aware of the need to add a closed session for a personnel matter.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he would like to add discussion relative to holiday cards and suggested in lieu of holiday cards being sent on behalf of the Mayor and each member of the City Council that a contribution be made to make a positive impact in the community and suggested Meals on Wheels and United Community Ministries as the recipients of the funds. Councilmember Miller agreed with the suggestion.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and unanimously carried that consideration be given to making a donation to a local charity in lieu of sending Christmas cards from the Mayor and each Councilmember.

Councilmember Knight stated those are two worthy organizations but there are other worthy organizations in the community as well.

Councilmember Miller questioned if the Christmas cards have been printed or addressed and the response was in the negative.

Mayor Roberson stated these matters will be added to today's agenda.

NOTE: It was noted that those attending via Facebook have indicated there is an issue with the sound.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Knight, and unanimously carried that the minutes of a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held September 27, 2021, be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

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

- Began her report by again announcing that the City of Rocky Mount has been named a 2020-2021 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize winner. She said she will officially accept the award on the City's behalf during a virtual ceremony tomorrow afternoon. She invited all to visit the City's website at, rockymountnc.gov, to learn more about this prestigious honor, as Rocky Mount was only one of 10 cities in the country to earn this honor. She said those interested may also visit www.rwjf.org to find out more about the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and other communities honored. She encouraged citizens to stay connected to the City's social media pages in the near future as a pair of videos as well as short stories will be told regarding the community's commitment to a culture of health.
- Encouraged citizens to mark their calendars for America Recycles Day, which will be held from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturday, November 13 at Golden East Crossing Mall. The Manager said there are a number of items the public may bring to be disposed of safely, including documents, electronics, paint and more adding this is a free event. She noted that a full list of items is available at rockymountnc.gov/keep-america-beautiful and added the public may call 252-467-4960 if they have questions.
- Announced that the Rocky Mount Event Center is bringing a nationally known artist to the Event Center for a concert in December. She said Brooke Simpson, who recently was featured on "America's Got Talent" and previously was a finalist on "The Voice", will perform at 8 p.m. on Saturday, December 11. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with opening acts soon to be announced. Simpson's performance will be part of a full day at the Event Center, which will also hold its inaugural North Carolina Holiday Makers Market event, beginning at 9 a.m. The Makers Market event will feature a Yoga Class, Downtown and local business vendors, carriage rides, face painting, hayrides and performances from local high school bands, and dance groups. General admission tickets for the Brooke Simpson concert are \$20, while VIP tickets, which include a Meet and Greet with Simpson, are \$40. Stay connected with the Rocky Mount Event Center Facebook page and the City's social media platforms for more information.

- Reported there are a number of ways citizens can celebrate the upcoming holidays with the City of Rocky Mount. She said events will begin with the City Lake Lighting on Thursday, December 2nd at 6 p.m., followed by the Rocky Mount Christmas Parade to be held on Sunday, December 5th from 3-5 p.m. in Downtown Rocky Mount. The Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences will hold a Winter Wonderland event on Sunday, December 12th from 1-5 p.m. Finally, the Imperial Centre will be the home of the Sanders Family Christmas production, with six (6) live shows beginning December 3rd. Details are available at rockymountnc.gov and imperialcentre.org.
- Said she is pleased to announce the City will be offering Downtown Holiday Shuttles from Friday, November 26 through New Year's Day 2022. Shuttles will run Thursdays-Saturdays from 4-11 p.m. and Sundays from 4-9 p.m. Stay connected to the City's website, rockymountnc.gov, for future information.
- Stated with the Thanksgiving holiday upcoming, the Rocky Mount Fire Department will hold a Turkey Frying Safety Event on Friday, November 19th from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Lowe's Home Improvement, located at 700 N. Wesleyan Boulevard. The event will feature fire truck demonstrations, free samples and more. Stay updated on the event by visiting rockymountnc.gov as well as the Fire Department's Facebook page.
- Stated that the City's Community and Business Development Department is assisting residents through the application process of the Housing Repair Program, which runs through November 12. Eligible homeowners may be able to qualify for a grant of up to \$12,500 for rehabilitation improvements for houses at least 50 years old. To apply, pick up an application on the first floor of City Hall or call 972-1100 to request a copy by mail. Citizens may also download the appropriate forms at rockymountnc.gov.
- Announced that applications are also available for the Small Business Assistance Block Grant program through CARES Act funding. An applicant checklist and required documentation details are available at rockymountnc.gov on the City's Community and Business Development page at rockymountnc.gov; and
- Reported that Emergency Rental and Utility 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. For more information, call 252-442-8553 or email housingcenter@embarqmail.com or cas@rockymountnc.gov.

Councilmember Daughtridge announced that tomorrow (Tuesday, November 9, 2021) from 3 to 5 p.m. a public input meeting for a proposed park in Ward 5 will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. He encouraged anyone interested to attend the meeting and provide input. He thanked the Manager and Parks and Recreation staff, particularly, Director Joel Dunn, for assistance in preparing for this meeting and noted he will have invitation cards available after the meeting for those interested.

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:

- **Troy Davis:**
 - Appreciated Peter Varney for his understanding of the City’s housing needs and for the time he has spent coming back to work for the City;
 - Stated that City management has continued to fail the City noting that job reclassifications must be approved by the City Council pursuant to the City’s Charter;
 - Said that City management has continued to say employees cannot be hired due to pay and COVID issues but said the real problem is a morale problem and that is why long-serving employees are leaving the City of Rocky Mount.;
 - Said the Council and citizens need to take a deep dive to look into the true issues and they are not COVID or pay but about how employees are treated because a dictator is running the City;

Mayor Roberson cautioned Mr. Davis to adhere to the guidelines.

- Said a situation exists where someone is telling employees they cannot talk to Councilmembers; and
 - Offered his telephone number to employees who may wish to speak to him saying he will listen and bring their complaints to the Council
- **Bronson Williams:**
 - Said he had the opportunity to attend the team building event last week at the Booker T. Theater and was able to learn a few things about the collaboration and efforts being made by the City Council to better work together as a team;
 - Questioned the City’s definition of “wealth building” adding he had heard about a Wealth Building Division being created and if citizen input is being allowed and considered;
 - Said he expects Council will adopt a new ward map this evening relative to the redistricting; he noted one of the maps does not meet the guidelines for redistricting in that it places two Councilmembers in the same ward; and
 - Supported the map prepared by the Community Academy saying in his opinion it has the interest of the entire community in mind
- **Robert Davis:**
 - Said he lives in the Meadowbrook area of Rocky Mount and has lived there for some time;
 - Voiced support for the Community Academy map adding he thinks it shows inclusion and represents everyone in the City;
 - Said he hopes Council will unanimously adopt the Community Academy map and said that will show the Council is 100% for the City; and
 - Said it is time for the citizens of Rocky Mount to be a group of people that's about the people and adoption of the Community Academy map will show that
- **John Purcell:**
 - Voiced concern for the amount of the fee (\$300,000) being considered for the consultant relative to the Community Land Trust (CLT) saying that is a lot of money;
 - Questioned if the City has tapped into local resources of small business owners adding there are many intelligent people in the community and the opportunity exists for a public/private partnership;
 - Said he is from the Maryland/DC area and public/private partnerships work well there and costs and expenses can be shared so they are not totally on the City and taxpayers;
 - Said he is curious about the new initiative called Restoration Rocky Mount especially since his company is called The Restoration Place of Rocky Mount;
 - Said he is personally aware that some of the initiatives identified such as childcare development programs are already being done by private citizens;

- Said private citizens are doing a great job at some of the housing revitalization programs in the City;
 - Said it makes more sense to give the small business owners in the community an opportunity to come to the table and have discussion with the City to see if there's something that can be done together before bringing in an outside consultant who is going to come in and collect the money then go on about their business while the City is stuck with trying to figure out how to put all those things in action;
 - Said he is not clear about what the terms of a consultant's contract would be. He questioned who will educate citizens about how a land trust works and if there will be a marketing campaign and public meetings; and
 - Said Baltimore, Maryland has had a community land trust for years adding he does not think the Rocky Mount community understands the impact, adding the importance of including small business owners
- ***Nehemiah Smith, Jr.:***
 - Said Greek philosopher Aristotle said “poverty is the parent of crime and revolution”; and later Mahatma Gandhi would say “poverty is the worst form of violence”;
 - Said he received a call from a caseworker recently telling him about the poor living conditions of one of their patients adding the person's health issues were being exacerbated by their poor living conditions;
 - Said when the caseworker told the apartment manager the City had been called the apartment manager told the caseworker not to worry about it because the City would call her, and nothing would happen; said he is glad the caseworker called him because he wants to make sure that something happens;
 - Said the City should not do just a one-time inspection when conditions such as these exist;
 - Said it is horrible when children or anyone lives in this type of situation;
 - Said when he received the call, he decided to report the matter to the City Council adding he hopes the manager at the Cokey Road apartments hears he did so;
 - Said the City is talking about affordable housing but needs to talk about making sure existing housing is livable because it is expected that rent be paid every month, but some landlords are not providing proper services and people are suffering; and
 - Said that is unacceptable in the City of Rocky Mount and the City needs to address the problem

Councilmember Joyner requested the City Manager respond by outlining the City's process when concerns/complaints are received from the public. Ms. Small-Toney stated that Archie Jones, the Director of Human Relations, works with apartment owners and/or managers to find solutions to problems identified adding the City will look into the complaint from this evening.

Councilmember Joyner requested that the City Council be updated on this matter.

- ***Curmilus Dancy:***
 - Said Councilmember Daughtride questioned the validity of the Community Academy map and the City Attorney stated it met the criteria; and
 - Said citizens have the option to present their own map and it appears a citizen is saying that any map presented by anyone or any group that is not a law firm is biased and based on ulterior motives and said he believes the comment is an insult to the Black community members who presented the community map, is biased, and based on ulterior motives

- **Samuel Battle:**
 - Stated that all should receive the same respect in Council meetings and someone who spoke before him called the name of an individual and nothing was said;
 - Said a lot of people don't understand the Community Land Trust, especially the older community and voiced opposition to the process of the Land Trust wherein a house is purchased but not the land;
 - Said every American family wants to own a house and also the land and voiced support of a housing bond to rebuild the City;
 - Voiced opposition to the Community Land Trust (CLT);
 - Said Council needs to do the right thing for citizens; and
 - Said more Police Officers need to be hired and the salary for Police Officers increased

- **Adrienne Copeland:**
 - Voiced opposition to demolishing houses that can be repaired;
 - Said she is currently repairing three (3) houses and it is worth it to fix them up; said if houses are over 50 years old, they're probably historic and made with superior building products and materials that you can't get now, and it is going to cost more to tear them down due to asbestos and lead remediation;
 - Said the Rocky Mount Redevelopment Commission has taken bids for five (5) properties, three (3) are vacant and there are restrictions on the properties;
 - Questioned where the incentive is for someone to invest in the properties saying she does not see the incentive;
 - Suggested that an alternative is for the City to foreclosure on properties and deed the property to someone who sees the value, wants to repair them and are willing to take on the risk adding the City needs to get out of the way with restrictions and constraints and work with developers;
 - Said the City can't do it all and needs to quit trying to do it all and do what it can but let investors lead developers to come in and do the work together and not hinder development with all the restrictions;
 - Said she understands the City wants to have affordable housing and that is the job of the City, but the City should also let anyone else that wants to create affordable housing do so; and
 - Said mortgages cannot be obtained for Community Land Trust housing

CONSENT AGENDA

A. AWARD OF DUTY SIDEARM: (recommended for adoption)

The City Council received a recommendation from Police Chief Robert Hassell that the duty sidearm and badge of Police Sergeant Stephen Christopher Hicks be awarded to him in recognition of twenty-seven (27) years of service upon his retirement effective November 1, 2021.

B. GRANT APPLICATION/AKC REUNITE ADOPT A K-9 COP: (recommended for adoption)

The City Council was advised that staff is requesting authorization to apply for a grant in the amount of \$7,500 through the AKC Reunite Adopt A K-9 Cop and for authorization for the Mayor, City Clerk, City Attorney, or other appropriate individuals to execute any required documentation, certifications, and the subsequent grant agreement on behalf of the City. It was noted that the grant requires a \$2,500 local match.

C. FY 2021-2022 BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: (recommended for adoption)

The City Council was advised that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is recognizing the City as a 2020-2021 Culture of Health Prize Winner and awarding a \$25,000 cash prize without any restrictions or reporting requirements along with an additional \$25,000 for marketing receipt of the prize for a total award of \$50,000. The Council was further advised that the City intends to apply these funds towards continuation of the City's Community Wealth Building efforts and adoption of a budget amendment is required to appropriate the funds (\$50,000).

D. GRANT APPLICATION/FEMA BUILDING RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES (BRIC)

The City Council was advised that staff is requesting authorization to submit an application for the North Carolina's FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant. It was noted that Council authorized staff to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to apply for the BRIC grant in September of 2021 and on October 22, 2021, the City was notified that the Downtown Drainage Improvement Project was selected by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) for inclusion in the grant process and funding is being requested as follows:

- Total project = \$10,805,000;
- BRIC grant = \$7,564,000 (70%);
- City of Rocky Mount costs = \$3,241,000 (30%)

The Council was further advised that final design and project construction expenses are programmed in the CIP and project expenses incurred prior to the grant award are considered eligible match expenses.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Walker and unanimously carried that the recommendation of the Chief of Police for award of duty sidearm and badge to Police Sergeant Stephen Christopher Hicks be approved; that staff be authorized to submit the grant applications and that the local match(s) be approved and that the Mayor, City Clerk, City Attorney and/or other appropriate staff be authorized to execute any required documentation and/or certifications, including subsequent grant agreements on behalf of the City; and that **Ordinance No. O-2021-87** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 FOR COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING** (appropriates grant funds from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) - \$50,000).

RESOLUTION ADOPTING ELECTORAL WARD BOUNDARIES (REDISTRICTING)

The City Council received the two resolutions for consideration relative to adopting electoral ward boundaries for the City of Rocky Mount for consideration:

- Resolution 1: adoption of Alternative B; and
- Resolution 2: adoption of Community Academy Alternative.

Mayor Roberson proposed that the City Council consider Alternative Plans A, B, and C as produced by the consultants (The Local Redistricting Service) and the Community Academy Alternative map to eliminate two of the maps. Councilmember Miller asked for the process to be clarified and the Mayor restated his proposal.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner and seconded by Councilmember Miller that the Community Academy Alternative map (Plan D) be approved for consideration.

Councilmember Daughtridge questioned if the guiding principles adopted by the Council were adhered to in the preparation of the Community Academy Alternative map. He added that the City Council unanimously agreed to retain The Local Redistricting Service and approved the guiding principles, and these guiding principles were used to prepare the maps submitted by The Local Redistricting Service. He stated he heard comments made at the meeting at the Event Center to try to discredit the consultants and right after that discussion was held relative to preparing a community map. Mr. Daughtridge said he does not have a problem with any map but wants to be sure the guiding principles adopted by Council were followed in the preparation of all maps. He added there has been a lot of conversation about keeping Ward 1 entirely in Edgecombe County as well as keeping Ward 2 out of certain neighborhoods near Wesleyan College. Mr. Daughtridge said the reason for redrawing the maps was because each ward was required to be in compliance with the 5%+/- population requirement. He added population loss, especially in Wards 1 and 2, is the reason the map had to be redrawn. Mr. Daughtridge said he was concerned when he heard the main reason for adding an additional map was to keep two specific wards together.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he is fine with whatever map is adopted but added he did not like the way the discussion went to try to discredit The Local Districting Service (Poyner Spruill) when the Council unanimously agreed to retain them to draw the maps. He stated when the Council considered retaining the group Councilmember Knight was quick to defend the work of Ms. Mackie and there were questions in the next meeting relative to The Local Districting Service. He said he thinks everything has been done on the up and up with Maps A, B, and C and as far as he knows the guiding principles were followed in preparing Map D.

He said his concern is that the City Council needs to come together and part of coming together is not tearing each other down each other and hearing one another's viewpoints because they all come with different experiences. Mr. Daughtridge stated the process troubled him greatly but ultimately, he thinks it was done on the up and up and he is happy to support whichever map is chosen.

Councilmember Knight asked the City Attorney if the Community Academy Alternative map meets the requirements of the guiding principles and City Attorney Richard J. Rose responded that he thinks it does. He clarified that two resolutions were prepared for consideration because it appeared from his discussion with Council that they were focusing on Alternative B and the Community Academy Alternative map. He reminded the Council there is a motion on the floor.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell, and unanimously carried that debate be closed (called for the question).

The Motion made by Councilmember Joyner and seconded by Councilmember Miller that the Community Academy Alternative map (Plan D) be approved for consideration was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Knight said during the redistricting process information was posted on social media and some Councilmembers heard from the community that certain people were going to run against certain Councilmembers or that certain people would be in certain wards before the maps were provided to the Council. He stated that is the reason he asked the questions that he asked and indicated he was satisfied with the answers received. He stated that Map A provided by The Local Redistricting Service did not meet the requirements because Councilmember Walker was left out of his own ward and others were concerned with the map that divided Northgreen. Mr. Knight stated the Community Map keeps Northgreen together and that is his reason for voting to have Map D, the Community Academy Alternative Map, included.

Councilmember Miller stated her reason for voting to have the Community Academy Alternative Map included is that Northgreen is the largest single neighborhood in the entire City and one of the maps provided by The Local Districting Service divided it into two separate wards. She said Northgreen has been an organized neighborhood since it was initially organized, has an active and diverse homeowners' association, and is trying to work for the improvement of the neighborhood. She said she is pleased with the vote, that she does not intend to run for re-election. Councilmember Miller added that what matters is that the person who is elected works for the betterment of the entire City Council and for the betterment of Northgreen and the entire City and encouraged all candidates running for election to work together.

Councilmember Blackwell thanked the City Council and the entire community for being very deliberate about creating opportunity and space for public input, comment and substantive discussion adding that Rocky Mount was the only body in this entire region to welcome community input multiple times. He reminded all that everyone had

several weeks to come down, communicate and advocate for what they wanted, and the City Council has been very transparent. He thanked all who were engaged in and participated in the process. Mr. Blackwell stated that Caroline Mackie was very clear in explaining the process and in explaining that the City Council could choose to select one of their maps, or another map saying he asked for clarity on this while she was speaking. He added that in a redistricting process it is not just the elected officials who can come up with plans or ideas and said he thinks it is a benefit of a participative democracy to have the opportunity for others to bring ideas. He thanked the Community Academy for taking the time to talk to people across the City, attending all redistricting Council meetings, listening to all commentary, and providing an additional map which was the best plan. Mr. Blackwell stated this is the third redistricting process he has participated in and the first time the City Council has been able to vote for a plan that was not prepared by a consultant hired by the City. He said, in his opinion, that is cutting edge, innovative and should be celebrated. Councilmember Blackwell thanked the entire City Council for having faith and confidence in the citizens to come up with a way to be organized so they could vote as they desired adding that, ultimately, the power of the people is their vote.

Councilmember Joyner echoed the sentiments of other Councilmembers, thanked the Council for working together and considering all the maps and unanimously making the best decision in voting to support the community.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2021-53** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT ADOPTING ELECTORAL WARD BOUNDARIES** be adopted. This Resolution adopts the Community Academy Alternative map (Plan D) as the official map of the electoral wards of the City of Rocky Mount, until such time as officially revised by the City Council, will be used for the next election of the members of the City Council and for each subsequent election until the boundaries are altered according to law and a copy of this resolution, with exhibits, shall be provided to the Nash and Edgecombe County Boards of Elections with the request that the Boards of Elections notify residents of changes in the districts (wards) in which they vote.

OVERVIEW OF FY 2021 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mayor C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. announced the next item before the Council is a presentation by Martin-Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A. of the City's Fiscal Year 2021 Audited Financial Statements.

Kari Dunlap of Martin-Starnes & Associates told the City Council she has had the pleasure of working with Nicki [Gurganus]

and Finance staff for the 2021 Fiscal Year audit. She provided a high-level brief PowerPoint presentation of the annual financial audit highlights to include the following:

Audit Highlights:

- o An unmodified opinion on the financial statements was issued, which is the goal of the audit;
- o Staff was cooperative throughout the year
- General Fund Only:
 - o Today's presentation focuses on the General Fund (summaries of enterprise funds were also provided);
 - o Revenues were up \$2.9M (about 4.4%);
 - o Expenditures were down \$2.3M (about 3.5%);
 - o Available fund balance as a percent of expenditures net of Powell Bill increased from 31% in 2020 to 38% (minimum threshold used by the LGC is 25%);
 - o Ad valorem taxes increased by about \$1M or 4% from 2020 (from \$27,730,817 to \$28,732,213);
 - o Local Option Sales Tax (largest revenue) increased by \$1.2M or about 9% from 2020 (\$13,490,989 to \$14,707,055);
 - o Intergovernmental Revenues (excludes local option sales tax and Powell Bill; third largest revenue source) increased 4.6% from \$8,127,110 in 2020 to \$8,501,446; and
 - o Sales and Service Revenues decreased slightly (6%) from \$10,300,303 in 2020 to \$9,719,476
- Enterprise Funds:
 - o Electric Fund:
 - Revenues increased from \$75,554,826 to \$79,754,682;
 - Expenditures decreased by \$1,648,873 (due to continued conservative spending practices); and
 - Available fund balance = \$11,423,006 (decrease of \$1,774,699 from prior year)
 - o Gas Fund:
 - Revenues increased from \$21,612,648 to \$22,026,911 (increase in sales);
 - Expenditures decreased by \$1,638,211 (due to continued conservative spending practices); and
 - Available fund balance = \$9,436,764 (decrease from prior year of \$126,342)
 - o Water Fund:
 - Revenues decreased from \$11,960,538 to \$11,561,209 (due to reductions in NCDOT reimbursements);
 - Expenditures decreased by \$472,865 (due to continued conservative spending practices); and
 - Available fund balance = \$8,271,627 (increase of \$551,388 from prior year)
 - o Sewer Fund:
 - Revenues increased from \$15,363,577 to \$15,493,390 (increase in utility sales; offsets reductions in NCDOT reimbursements);
 - Expenditures increased by \$1,388,131 (due to capital expenditures); and
 - Available fund balance = \$5,121,644 (increase from prior year of \$794,016)
 - o Stormwater Fund:
 - Revenues decreased from \$4,875,791 to \$4,212,451 (due to grant and lease procedure reductions);

- Expenditures decreased by \$1,576,434 (due to conservative spending practices and reduction in capital expenditures); and
- Available fund balance = \$4,716,126 (increase from prior year of \$1,099,865)

Ms. Dunlap told the City Council that the Local Government Commission (LGC) requires completion of a data input worksheet that compares cities with similar population groups and provided the following general performance indicators:

- General Performance Indicators:
 - o No "red flags" were identified (nothing alarming);
 - o Timely audit submission;
 - o Stable property tax valuation and collection percentage;
 - o Water, sewer and electric net income and cash to expense ratio (no negative indicators; cash to expense ratio is greater than 16% (2 months of spending); water/sewer well above at 64% and electric at 56%);
 - o Net income, excluding depreciation and debt service is positive and both water/sewer and electric funds were positive

Ms. Dunlap invited questions from the Mayor and Councilmembers.

Councilmember Daughtridge requested that in future years Council be provided with the audit at least a week prior to the meeting in order to be prepared to ask meaningful questions and suggested the audit presentation be made in a Committee of the Whole meeting. Ms. Dunlap responded that there are time restrictions but added in the future they will work to make sure a PDF of the audit is shared with the Mayor and Councilmembers as soon as they have LGC approval. She invited Councilmembers to contact her should they have questions or concerns.

Councilmember Blackwell questioned if the audit had revealed anything of concern if the firm would be obligated to report those findings to the Council and Ms. Dunlap responded by saying that is a current requirement, though has not been a requirement in the past. She confirmed that no such findings were indicated.

The Mayor suggested that once Council has had the opportunity to review the audit, if there are any questions or concerns, that a discussion be held relative to additional conversation with the auditor. He thanked City staff and the City Manager for the work done to result in the clean audit.

ANNEXATION NO. 324/677 FOUNTAIN SCHOOL ROAD

The City Clerk provided the City Council with a resolution certifying the petition for Annexation No. 324 - 677 Fountain School Road as sufficient pursuant to G.S. 160A-31 to proceed with annexation of the contiguous parcel.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that the Department of Development Services be instructed to prepare the required

feasibility study on the proposed annexation and that the following resolutions be adopted:

- a. **Resolution No. R-2021-54** entitled **RESOLUTION OF CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION OF THE SUFFICIENCY OF PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA BY CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT/ANNEXATION NO. 324 - 677 FOUNTAIN SCHOOL ROAD**; and
- b. **Resolution No. R-2021-55** entitled **RESOLUTION CALLING A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE CITY LIMITS OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT TO INCLUDE ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA/ANNEXATION NO. 324 - 677 FOUNTAIN SCHOOL ROAD** (schedules public hearing for December 13, 2021).

ANNEXATION NO. 325/THOMAS A. BETTS PARKWAY AND PEELE ROAD - PIN 384200922115

The City Clerk provided the City Council with a resolution certifying the petition for Annexation No. 325 - Thomas A. Betts Parkway and Peele Road - PIN 384200922115 as sufficient pursuant to G.S. 160A-31 to proceed with annexation of the contiguous parcel.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that the Department of Development Services be instructed to prepare the required feasibility study on the proposed annexation and that the following resolutions be adopted:

- a. **Resolution No. R-2021-56** entitled **RESOLUTION OF CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION OF THE SUFFICIENCY OF PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA BY CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT/ANNEXATION NO. 325/THOMAS A. BETTS PARKWAY AND PEELE ROAD - PIN 384200922115**; and
- b. **Resolution No. R-2021-57** entitled **RESOLUTION CALLING A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE CITY LIMITS OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT TO INCLUDE ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA/ANNEXATION NO. 325/THOMAS A. BETTS PARKWAY AND PEELE ROAD - PIN 3842009221153786** (schedules public hearing for December 13, 2021).

ANNEXATION AND UTILITY (WATER) SERVICE AGREEMENT

The City Council received an Annexation and Utility (water) Service Agreement (including Irrevocable Petition for Annexation of Property) for water service outside the City limits to 566 Shellcastle Road.

Council was advised that the property owner has paid the standard annexation petition fee and has agreed to be bound by all provisions of the Irrevocable Annexation Petition; however, the property is not a good candidate for annexation at this time.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the Annexation Petition be received and annexation postponed; that the Annexation and Utility (water) Service Agreement for water service to 566 Shellcastle Road be approved, subject to payment of required privilege and connection fees, and that the City Manager be authorized to execute the Agreement (**C-2021-34**) with Bobby Ray

Davis for water service to 566 Shellcastle Road on behalf of the City.

RESIDENTIAL LEASE AGREEMENT/134 NANDINA COURT

The City Council was advised that a residential lease for 134 Nandina Court was approved by Council on October 11, 2021; however, the tenant backed out of the lease prior to finalization.

Consideration was given to a residential lease agreement with Sherbosnia Bridgers for the 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 \$4,080 annually;
- 12-month lease

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell, and unanimously carried that the lease agreement with Sherbosnia Bridgers be approved. The lease agreement is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **C-2021-35**.

TEMPORARY EASEMENT AND VOLUNTARY PROPERTY DONATION/BENVENUE ROAD ROUNDABOUT

The City Council was provided with a temporary easement and voluntary property donation form associated with construction of the Benvenue Road roundabout at the intersection of Battle Park Lane and the US 64 ramp granting temporary construction and drainage easements to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Council was advised that the easements are located on the Battle Park property and consist of a 0.023-acre temporary drainage easement and 0.041-acre temporary construction easement. It was noted that the project is scheduled to be let in February 2022.

Councilmember Knight stated conversation has previously been held relative to two roundabouts being constructed at the same time and questioned when the roundabout on the Edgecombe side of the City is planned for construction. Public Works Director Brad Kerr stated there are other projects that may incorporate roundabouts and will be installed through the NCDOT regular Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) process. He noted that the Benvenue Road roundabout project advanced rapidly through the process due to traffic volume and safety issues at that particular intersection. Mr. Kerr responded to questions from Councilmember Knight and stated he can provide a list of projects that have been submitted through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STRP) prioritization process. Mr. Knight stated there have been a lot of accidents at the intersection of East Grand and Atlantic Avenues.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that the Temporary Easement and Voluntary Property Donation agreements (**C-2021-36**) (WBS ELEMENT 46884.2.1; TIP/PARCEL U-5947 002) with the North Carolina

Department of Transportation (NCDOT) be approved and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the agreements and any other required documentation on behalf of the City.

FIRST AMENDMENT TO HOME RECONCILIATION AGREEMENT

The City Council was provided with a First Amendment to the HOME Reinvestment Partnership Fund Reconciliation Agreement between the City, Nash County, Edgecombe County, and the Town of Tarboro approved by Council on October 11, 2021. The agreement provides for the return of HOME funds to the members of the Down East HOME Consortium that were spent by the City during the years of 2013 through 2016.

The City Council was advised that the Town of Sharpsburg has chosen to administer the HOME reconciliation and HOME FY 2021-2022 funds through the Town's administrative staff with guidance and assistance from the City and the First Amendment reduces the allocation of funds to Nash County from \$1,201,429 to \$1,032,138 and adds the Town of Sharpsburg with an allocation of \$169,291.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell, and unanimously carried that the First Amendment to the HOME Reinvestment Partnership Fund Reconciliation Agreement be approved and that the City Manager and City Clerk be authorized to execute the same on behalf of the City. The amendment shall be filed with the original agreement identified as **(C-2021-32)** in the Office of the City Clerk.

ENGINEERING SERVICES TASK ORDERS NO. 1 AND 2/FALLS ROAD STREETScape DESIGN

The City Council was provided with Task Orders No. 1 and 2 on a contract with Kimley-Horn for engineering services associated with the Falls Road Streetscape Design as follows:

TASK ORDER 1 - \$99,364:

- Rehabilitation of Loading Dock Structure

TASK ORDER 2 - \$224,644:

- Conceptual Design of Falls Road Streetscape/Depot Park

Councilmember Knight questioned the status and cost of rehabilitation of the loading dock. City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney requested Public Works Director Brad Kerr provide detail relative to the preliminary work already done associated with this project. Mr. Kerr provided detail and reported that the bid package for the renovation will include plans for the work to be done in a way that will be long-term, though currently work has been and is being done to stabilize the structure.

Councilmember Knight stated there has been concern and interest relative the completion of the Downtown Streetscape particularly in areas near the Event Center and in areas that have poor lighting and questioned the timeline for completion. He said there is a lot of

energy in the Downtown and business are thriving and asked that attention be given to that area. He asked when the Downtown Streetscape including cutting back of trees and lighting will be completed. Councilmember Knight said the streetscape project is a priority and added that the area between the Event Center and Five Point looks horrible.

Public Works Director Brad Kerr said there are several things in the works and information will be provided soon.

Councilmember Blackwell agreed adding it is his assumption that the streetscape redevelopment includes lighting. He said the President of the Rocky Mount Chamber, David Farris, recently mentioned to him at Washington Street should be an entire street of restaurants and retail establishments, but the area is very dark in the evenings. He said there is a buzz happening about how cool Downtown Rocky Mount is and there is considerable foot traffic there on the weekends. He continued to describe the area and the need for more lighting. Mr. Blackwell suggested the dumpsters at both ends of Washington Street be addressed saying the dumpsters have holes in them and it is not just a matter of people littering that causes the area to look bad but debris when the trash is emptied litters the area. He thanked the Manager for the work being done indicating Council wants to see more.

Councilmember Blackwell stated Council asked some months ago about engaging a lobbyist to advise the City of potential federal dollars that might be available noting the streetscape started with a \$5M grant and asked if the City will receive an update.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney assured Council that staff stays in close contact with lobbyist, Ron Hamm, who keeps the City advised of available funding.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that Council has held discussion relative to equity and equality adding he cannot think of anything more equitable than providing safe water, for which the City prides itself. He added that the City has an aging infrastructure. He urged that Council not forget about the need for safe water, a properly working sewer system and other City infrastructure while focusing on affordable housing.

Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation, reported that the bill package is almost ready to be presented to the President and there has been ongoing discussion during the process. He said it is hoped the results will soon be known saying the City will be ready to respond. He said Rocky Mount has "a lot of irons in the fire."

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell, and unanimously carried that Task Orders No. 1 and 2 with Kimley-Horn **(C-2021-37)** be approved, and that the

Mayor or City Manager and City Clerk be authorized to execute the Task Orders on behalf of the City.

BID/TUBULAR STEEL POLES

The City Council received the tabulation of bids received for tubular steel poles. Quotes were received and opened on October 13, 2021, after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented including newspaper advertising and the solicitation posted on the City's purchasing webpage, North Carolina Historically Underutilized Business website and the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System website. The bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2021-41**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell, and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Rohn Products at a total cost of \$315,500 and that the Purchasing Division be authorized to issue a purchase order for the equipment in accordance with the Council's award.

BID/ONE (1) CENTERMOUNT BACKHOE

The City Council received a recommendation to purchase one (1) centermount backhoe through the Sourcewell Group Purchasing Program, a competitive group purchasing program that serves education and government agencies nationally through competitive bidding and offers competitively obtained purchasing solutions, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-129(e) (3).

The Water Resources Department is requesting the purchase of one (1) centermount backhoe based on contract #040319-JCB-Medium Duty and Compact Construction Equipment with Related Attachments, Accessories and Supplies, a bid awarded by Sourcewell.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell, and unanimously carried that the purchase of one (1) centermount backhoe at a total cost of \$102,097.80 from JCB, Inc. be approved and that the Purchasing Division be authorized to issue a purchase order for the equipment in accordance with the Council's award. The bid documentation for this purchase is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2021-42**.

APPOINTMENTS

Councilmember Walker nominated Councilmember Blackwell to be appointed to the Transportation Advisory Committee for a term to expire on June 30, 2023 and said appointment was approved without objection.

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

CHRISTMAS CARDS (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)

Mayor C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. stated that a request was made to add consideration of a donation of funds allocated for Christmas

cards for the Mayor and Council to Meals on Wheels and United Community Ministries.

Councilmember Knight stated that the idea of sending Christmas cards came from him and Councilmember Blackwell following attendance of a National League of Cities' conference where they learned many Councilmembers in various cities were sending out greetings. He said donations to non-profits should occur anyway whether cards or sent or not. He said the Christmas cards signify a thank you to the community and the funding comes from the Council's allocation. Mr. Knight said other non-profits should be considered as well and requested a list of non-profits be provided for consideration.

Comments were made and discussion held. Councilmember Knight suggested that Council should know the cost of sending the cards before making a decision relative to this matter. Councilmember Blackwell agreed and requested that the City Manager provide the Council with detail relative to the cost of Christmas cards.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell, and carried by a vote of 6-1 (Councilmember Daughtridge opposed) that consideration of donating funds allocated for Christmas cards be tabled.

City Attorney Richard J. Rose pointed out in order for the Council to appropriate funding to an organization, non-profit or good cause the funds must be for an activity the City is authorized to engage in and that carries out a public purpose. He noted the organizations suggested by Councilmember Daughtridge meet the required criteria. Councilmember Daughtridge said there is a reason those two organizations were suggested during the holiday season.

Councilmember Daughtridge said he is aware it is not appropriate for elected officials to place their photo on information being sent out to the public when using state funds but questioned if that rule applies for municipalities adding he thinks the money allocated for Christmas cards could be better spent to help others and again stated his opposition to sending cards from the Mayor and Councilmembers. He stated he personally paid for the cards sent out to promote a Ward 5 park and based upon the number of cards he sent the estimated costs for the Christmas cards would be approximately \$22,000. In response to the question posed by Councilmember Daughtridge, the City Attorney said that is an issue that would have to be looked at and added he is not aware Councilmembers are prevented from sending cards with their photos (using City funds).

Conversation relative to Christmas cards continued. It was requested that the City Manager and City Attorney provide information to the Council, as requested, at the next meeting.

TEMPORARY STREET CLOSING (ADDED IN OPEN MEETING)

Councilmember Joyner requested that consideration be given to the following temporary street closures:

- Request by North End Baptist Church to close 928 East Highland on November 20, 2021, from 1 to 5 p.m.; and
- Request by the Community Action Committee to close the intersection of Branch and Albemarle Streets on November 20, 2021, from 1 to 5 p.m.

City Attorney Richard J. Rose asked Public Works Director, Brad Kerr, if ordinances are now required for temporary street closures pursuant to State law and a discussion was held. Mr. Rose added if an ordinance is required it needs to be provided to Council in written form.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney suggested the temporary street closings be placed on the agenda for consideration at the Special Called Council meeting to be scheduled.

SPECIAL CALLED CITY COUNCIL MEETING (ADDED IN OPEN MEETING)

Following discussion, by consensus, the City Council scheduled a Special Called City Council meeting for Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 4 p.m. to be held in the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber on the third floor of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building for the purpose of consideration of the City's pay and classification plan, Community Land Trust, temporary street closings and any other business as may come before the Council.

CLOSED SESSION (ADDED IN OPEN MEETING)

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 8:42 p.m. for discussion relative to a matter concerning personnel. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as a part of ESM-592 at the end of Minute Book No. 37 upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

REGULAR SESSION

The Mayor convened the meeting in regular session at 9:49 p.m. and there being no further business, the Council meeting was adjourned.

Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk