

March 14, 2022

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

*joining remotely

Staff present: Peter F. Varney, Interim City Manager; Kim Batts, Deputy City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Chris Beschler, Director of Energy Resources; Joel Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Will Deaton, Director of the Department of Development Services; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Gregory Cotten, Chief Technology Officer; Latasha Hall, Director of Business and Collections Services; Tracey Drewery, Assistant Chief of Administration & Planning (Fire Department); Corey Mercer, Fire Chief; Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation; Kevin Harris, Downtown Development Manager; Brenton Bent, Water Resources Director; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Chynice Chapman, purchasing manager; Cornelia McGee, Interim Community and Business Development Director; Kena Cofield-Jones, Director of Human Resources; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk 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 Stephen Walker and Senior Police Officer Shawn Battle.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m. and requested all to stand for a moment of silent prayer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the minutes of a Regular Rescheduled Committee of the Whole Meeting held February 14, 2022 (Attachment A), Special Called Committee of the Whole Meeting held February 28, 2022 (Attachment B), and a Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting held February 28, 2022, be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY INTERIM CITY MANAGER

Interim City Manager Peter F. Varney provided the following community update. The Interim City Manager:

- Stated information was just received from the Governor's office that the state received a \$4 million workforce grant to help the QVC workers; not a lot of details yet, but look to be going to use some of the money for career services, training, and other supportive services the employees impacted by the fire;
- Reminder that open enrollment for city employees and for city council members begins on March 28th and ends on April 8th and some vendors have changed;
- Reported there had been virtual meetings held about the loading dock project that the City engaged Kimley-Horn as a consultant on; work includes streetscape plan for the Falls Road section from Church Street up to the loading dock; reminded everyone comments could still be made by going to the City's website and clicking on the link at the bottom of the page; there will be bids soliciting some work to be done around April
- Informed everyone of a ribbon-cutting scheduled for March 15th at one o'clock at the Senior Center; the City received a grant from the American Heart Association and used those funds to install new exercise equipment;
- Stated the removal of the invasive plants in Battle Park is almost complete; the Forestry Service has been engaged to help remove the remainder and they are planning a controlled burn; no date set but the park will be closed for about a half day when the burn is performed;
- Updated Mayor and Council on property acquired at Peele and Betts Road; stated property is ready to market and could probably fit a 200,000 square foot shell building on the northern side of the property and a 100,000 square foot shell building on the southern portion of that site;
- Informed Mayor and Council he was still working on the request to see which of the boards and commissions are meeting and whether the meetings are in-person, virtually or not meeting at all; stated he has almost completed the inventory and will provide it as soon as it is completed

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:

- ***Ernest Taylor***
 - Stated he came on behalf of the Environmental Service Department
 - Stated they play a big part in keeping the City clean
 - Feels they have been treated unfairly over the years
 - Stated they have concerns with not having enough workers, poor equipment, yearly evaluations and being unfairly paid
 - Stated he is thankful for the City Manager talking with them, but he would appreciate any efforts that could be made to help with the issues in a timely manner
- ***Linwood Williams***
 - Told a story about problem-solving in a small town
 - Stated the moral to his story was to make sure you listen to every person when making decisions
- ***Adrienne Copland***
 - Stated that on November 9, 2020, \$43,830 in funding was allocated for a housing incentive grant for 623 Branch Street
 - Stated that on December 13, 2021, \$161,500 was approved for 623 Branch Street through a housing replacement program to demolish the house and build a new one
 - Asked what happened to the \$43,830 that was first approved and is it now free to be used for different housing incentive programs?

Interim City Manager Varney advised Ms. Copland that some of the funds were allocated to cover the cost of architectural design and the rest is available to the project. He stated once bids are

completed the project would be brought back before City Council.
project.

- ***Dr. Kim E. Koo***
 - Stated climate change is a concern and it normally impacts poorer communities first
 - Stated she wanted the City to take this into consideration when planning for future buildings or new structures
 - Stated measures to mitigate climate change should be implemented such as solar panels, charging stations encouraging electric vehicles and placing bicycle racks for those who want to give up driving
 - Stated encouragement and assistance for conversion to renewable energy needs to be looked into because it will reduce utility bills
- ***Theresa Stokes***
 - Stated she has many concerns but wants to speak about a double wide mobile home that has been placed in an area where conventional homes and a school are built
 - Stated mobile homes bring down property values and this mobile home was pulled onto a lot in front of Fairview Elementary School and beside residential homes
 - Stated just because you take the wheels off and use a brick underpinning, it is still a mobile home
 - Stated she did not want to see her neighborhood mixed with mobile homes and if there are plans for any future projects like this, she is asking they reconsider and keep it from happening
 - Asked for installation of crossing lights to be considered at East Grand Avenue and Raleigh Boulevard
 - Stated that Edgecombe County is part of Rocky Mount and is important also
- ***Ray Braswell***
 - Representing the Meadowbrook Association Homeowners
 - Concerns relative to Denton Street pool area
 - Would like to see the technologies that are available, like electronic cameras, be installed so they can watch their community better
 - Stated they would like some lights, fence around the parking lot and speed bumps
- ***Morrie Minges***
 - Stated she wants to reiterate her request for someone to clean up the Ebony and Ivory building
 - Stated she feels like the pedestrian crossing over the railroad tracks will cost a lot of money and feels the crossing is really not needed
 - Asked why Council didn't question whether or not representation was at the utility committee

Interim City Manager Varney responded that it is his understanding that the cost to demolish the Ebony and Ivory building would be around \$100,000. He stated, subject to Council approval, if funding could be allocated in the upcoming budget, the demolition may be possible, and the costs would be assessed against the property. He also addressed the pedestrian crossing and stated that the City would be looking to get funding from federal partners. He invited anyone to come downtown during the weekend to see that there are many people walking through the area due to tournaments being held at the Event Center. He stated it is very difficult for individuals parked on the Nash side of the tracks to get across when the train is blocking the intersections.

- ***Samuel Battle***

- Stated he never hears the attorney say anything about what Council is doing
- Stated he feels more money is going into the Edgecombe County side of downtown rather than the Nash County side
- Stated he would like for City Council to be required to take drug tests
- Stated that Tarboro, Sycamore, Hill, Marigold, and Madison streets are all terrible and need repaving
- Asked Interim City Manager Varney what happened to the Ratio plan
- Stated crime was still high
- Stated that air conditioning needs to be installed in Booker T. Washington gym

Interim City Manager Varney stated he wasn't here when the ratio plan was done but recalls it was received but not adopted. He stated he was told it had to do with the fact that comments received by public were not incorporated into the study.

Mayor Roberson closed the public petitions portion of the meeting. He thanked Mr. Varney for being willing to speak on all the issues that came before them. He stated he would like to remind the public the purpose of this portion of the meeting is to allow citizens to voice concerns to Mayor and Council, not a time to pose questions and receive responses.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Council received the minutes and recommendations from a Planning Board meeting held February 8, 2022. Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Walker, and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that receipt of the Planning Board minutes be acknowledged. The minutes are on file in the office of the City Clerk.

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

A. PUBLIC HEARING/REZONING REQUEST

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following rezoning request recommended for approval and found in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- Request by Nick Kukulinkski, on behalf of BH Bunn, Jr. Trust, to rezone ±34.33 acres at Raper Drive (PIN 384112757458) from A-1 to revised R-6

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services, gave an overview of the request.

Mayor Roberson recognized the following for questions/comments related to the proposed rezoning:

- ~ Tevis Harris
 - Stated he owns property in the area and is concerned about possible runoff onto his property due to the fact his property is situated at a significantly lower elevation than the property proposed to be rezoned
 - Asked if the engineers had considered the runoff

Councilmember Knight asked if there was support or opposition to the rezoning at the Planning Board Meeting.

Mr. Deaton stated there were no comments from the public in support or opposition for this rezoning at the February 8, 2022, Planning Board Meeting.

Discussion was held relative to possible ways to enhance citizen notification with regards to large area rezonings.

Brad Kerr, Director of Public Works, was asked to address what recourse there is if someone has excess runoff occurring on their property. Mr. Kerr informed Mayor and Council that anyone with drainage concerns could contact Public Works and staff would come evaluate the situations. He stated if it was an issue that required City action it would be taken care of and if it was a private drainage issue then they would provide guidance on ways to remedy the situation. Mr. Kerr stated as far as the development process, stormwater regulations are much more enhanced than they used to be, and they look very closely at all developments to ensure they meet the State's stormwater requirements.

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

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock; no second was heard. Motion failed.

B. PUBLIC HEARING/REZONING REQUEST

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following rezoning request recommended for approval and found in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- Request by Sandra J. Tharrington to rezone ±28.92 acres at Bethlehem Road (PIN 374906377954) from R-10 to revised R-6

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services, gave an overview of the request.

Councilmember Knight asked if there was support or opposition to the rezoning at the Planning Board Meeting.

Mr. Deaton stated there was individual that expressed a drainage concern but was not opposed to the rezoning at the February 8, 2022, Planning Board Meeting.

No one from the public appeared and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed (*Donnie Tharrington was recognized for public comment but he declined to speak at that time*).

Motion was made by Councilmember Walker, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that **Ordinance No. O-2022-17** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND MAP OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

C. PUBLIC HEARING/REZONING REQUEST

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following rezoning request recommended for approval and found in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- Request by Rod Holloman, on behalf of Goldrock Road, LLC, to rezone ±27.42 acres at 601, 635 and 657 Goldrock Road from A-1 to revised R-6MFA

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services, gave an overview of the request.

Mayor Roberson recognized the following for questions/comments related to the proposed rezoning:

~ Robert Doyle

- Stated he lives adjacent to property proposed for rezoning and he purchased the property was the aesthetics
- Stated he would like for the property to remain zoned as it is because of the various wildlife that are home to the area
- Stated his home is a foster care facility and he is concerned about how the rezoning could affect the children he is responsible for

~ Deborah Joyner

- Presented a petition of opposition from many property owners adjacent to the proposed property to be rezoned
- Expressed concerns with flooding that already occurs for some of the property owners

Discussion was held on whether community meetings were held with the residents to address their concerns and if changes should occur to the process.

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

No motion was heard.

DEMOLITION ORDINANCE

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

- 1216-1218 Beckman Street
- 308 Ambler Avenue
- 815 Redgate Avenue

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight, and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that **Ordinance No. O-2022-18** entitled **ORDINANCE ORDERING THE COMMUNITY CODE INSPECTOR TO PROCEED TO DEMOLISH CERTAIN DILAPIDATED STRUCTURES PURSUANT TO THE HOUSING CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

The City Council received a citizen's request to amend Administrative Policy No. XI.I Entitled "Policy: Boards, Commissions and Committees Appointments" to allow service on more than one (1) Board, Commission or Committee.

Councilmember Blackwell stated he does understand the perspective the request was made from, but in order to ensure that all citizens have an opportunity to serve on a City Board, Commission or Committee, he has to support the policy staying as it is. He stated changing the policy could open the door to one or two

citizens serving on several committees which would limit others from being able to serve.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that Administrative Policy No. XI.I Entitled "Policy: Boards, Commissions and Committees Appointments" be affirmed and remain the same.

SURPLUS PROPERTY DISPOSAL/ELECTRONIC AUCTION

The City Council received a list of personal property proposed to be declared surplus and sold at electronic auction. The list shall be placed on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2022-8**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Walker, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) **Resolution No. R-2022-9** entitled **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF CERTAIN PERSONAL PROPERTY AT ELECTRONIC AUCTION** be adopted.

WATER ASSESSMENT CONTRACT

The City Council received a water assessment contract with Shirley Pearl Williams for water service to 300 Rouse Road [PIN 377926246600]. Council was advised that the connection fees for this property are \$4,265, that the customer has prepaid \$1,000 and the contract requires the remaining fees of \$3,265 to be assessed against the property.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Miller, and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the assessment contract with Shirley Pearl Williams for water service to 300 Rouse Road [PIN 377926246600] (**C-2022-11**) be approved and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the same on behalf of the City.

CORE NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

The City Council received a proposal from Katalyst for core network improvements @ total cost of \$266,515.78.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the proposal from Katalyst (**BD-2022-9**) be accepted and authorize the Purchasing Division to issue a purchase order and execute bid documents in accordance with Council's award.

SOLE-SOURCE PURCHASE/LASER SCANNER SYSTEM

The City Council received a proposal for the "sole-source" purchase for a Leica Laser Scanner System pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e)(6) based on standardization or compatibility. The information furnished by the Purchasing Division supporting the

recommendation will be placed on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2022-10**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the "sole-source" purchase for the Leica Laser Scanner System at a total cost of \$48,490.25 be approved and that the Purchasing Division be authorized to issue a purchase order for the system in accordance with the Council's award.

APPOINTMENTS

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

EMINENT DOMAIN - PROPERTY ACQUISITION/816 S. GRACE STREET

The City Council was advised that part of the rebuild of Fire Station #2 includes adding an expanded community room. The addition requires acquisition of adjacent property to accommodate parking. The property located at 816 S. Grace Street is owned by Alice Sherrod Heirs and some of the heirs are unknown.

Interim City Manager Peter F. Varney recommended exercising the power of eminent domain to acquire the property needed to accommodate the parking for Fire Station #2.

Motion was made by Councilmember Walker, seconded by Councilmember Knight, and carried by roll call vote (6 ayes/1 nay - Councilmember Bullock opposed) that **Resolution No. R-2022-10** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT PROVIDING FOR THE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN INTERESTS IN REAL PROPERTY** be adopted.

COUNCIL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

Councilmember Knight requested for Interim City Manager Varney to contact him in reference to the issues mentioned from the Meadowbrook Neighborhood constituents.

Councilmember Blackwell asked is there were zoning requirements that relate to the manufactured/mobile homes in the city limits.

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services, stated there are zoning regulations but the modular home standards are set by the State. He stated the City cannot regulate aesthetics as long as it meets the standards set by the State unless it is in a historic district.

Councilmember Knight stated he felt the City's policy should be reviewed so concerns expressed by citizens could be addressed by councilmembers when they are asked.

Councilmember Blackwell stated this shows affordable housing is needed. He stated that an individual may have limited funds, but they still want to find a nice neighborhood to live in and raise their family. He stated the individual that is doing the best they can for their family is not being criticized, but he does want to

make sure what is happening in the neighborhoods is good for everyone.

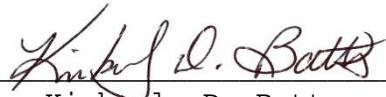
CLOSED SESSION/ATTORNEY CLIENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and unanimously carried that the City Council go into a Closed Session at 8:34 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-598** at the end of **Minute Book 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor convened the City Council in regular session at 8:57 p.m.

There being no further business for regular session the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.



Kimberly D. Batts
Deputy City Clerk/
Acting City Clerk

Attachment A

MINUTES OF A REGULAR RESCHEDULED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2022, AT 4:00 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING WITH MAYOR PRO TEM T.J. WALKER PRESIDING:

NOTE: Participation limited relative to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

T.J. Walker, Mayor Pro Tem
André D. Knight*
Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
Richard Joyner
Lige Daughtridge
W.B. Bullock
Christine Carroll Miller
Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.

*Participating remotely

OTHERS PRESENT:

UNC School of Government -
 Carl Stenberg
 Kim Nelson
Mark III -
 Mark Browder

STAFF PRESENT:

Peter F. Varney
Pamela O. Casey
Kim Batts
Jessie Nunery
Mark Adcox
Abdul Baloch
Elton Daniels
Kirk Brown
Brenton Bent
Archie Jones
Robert Hassell
Greg Cotten
Chris Beschler
Ken Hunter
Latasha Hall
Corey Mercer
Jamey Cooke
Brad Kerr
Kena Cofield-Jones
Richard J. Rose

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem T.J. Walker called the meeting to order in the City Council Chamber at 4:00 p.m. and announced that the City Council will move the Committee of the Whole meetings for the remainder of the year into the Committee Room. Mayor Pro Tem Walker verified Councilmember Knight's connection was clear and extended prayers for a quick recovery. He then called on Interim City Manager Peter F. Varney to introduce the first agenda item.

CITY MANAGER RECRUITMENT - Carl Stenberg and Kim Nelson

Interim City Manager Peter F. Varney introduced Carl Stenberg from the UNC School of Government. Mr. Stenberg stated he had worked with a number of previous city managers here and was pleased to be back. He introduced his colleague, Kim Nelson, who also works with city and county managers across North Carolina and the country. He informed Council that they felt the best way to help at this juncture was to allow Council to steer the conversation around questions they may have about the important search they are beginning. He stated he had left a book published by the School of Government, "Getting the Right Fit" with Interim Manager Varney. He stated that in order to find a new city manager that is the right fit, a search firm would need to know the Council's expectations, priorities, and assessments of competencies for the city manager.

Ms. Nelson stated the search was the first step in finding a manager that could serve for a considerable amount of time and provide stability to the community. She informed Council she thinks there are some challenges to finding a good pool of candidates and they are happy to talk to Council about what those challenges are.

She highlighted the following:

- There has been some negative publicity that the community has experienced and the first thing a candidate will do is Google any community they are considering applying with - the job

announcement needs to address any controversies because the potential manager is going to be looking for a community that is a good fit for them as well; and

- Some managers do not want like easy jobs and want to work in a place they can walk away from feeling they made it better than it was - she feels this is the kind of manager needed in Rocky Mount.

Mr. Stenberg added that one of the first challenges he sees is identifying, as a council, what the expectations in terms of qualities and competencies are for the next city manager. He stated many times there are different priorities and expectations, but in order for the search firm to even be able to write a job description, those areas must be articulated. He stated they are not easy or quick conversations to have but he feels they are important to have early in the process.

Ms. Nelson added it is important not to assume anything and to ensure there is a consensus through conversation first.

Councilmember Joyner asked if these things would need to be done ahead of time or if a search firm would help.

Mr. Stenberg informed Council that one of the questions they would need to ask potential search firms is what kind of service packages they offer and the cost of those packages. He stated that some firms will interview council members individually or collectively to try to develop the profile for the ideal candidate for Rocky Mount.

Ms. Nelson reminded Council they could specify the services they would like a search firm to provide if they are going to do an RFP. She stated the choice of the search firm is very important and that some search firms can be very heavy-handed with councils and push to steer the process rather than aid and therefore due diligence aside from just cost in reference to the contract is important. She recommended the following areas for consideration:

- How does the firm measure their success?
- Is their goal to put a body in the seat or is it putting a stable manager in that position who can stay in the community for at least five years?
- What is their percentage rate of putting a stable manager in the position not their percentage rate of getting a person hired on the first go round?

Mr. Stenberg informed Council that they had given Interim City Manager Varney a worksheet that might be helpful when interviewing search firms. He stated some of the questions are as follows:

- What is the firm's success rate?
- What's the timeline for the search?
- How fast is their fast track? (he stated a typical fast track is about 4 months while a typical search is about 6-7 months)
- Who's going to be the lead consultant?
- Is there going to be a go to person on the council?
- How are the fees and expenses structured?
- What is it going to cost?
- What is the firm's experience in local government searches?

Mr. Stenberg stated he felt one of the comfort factors is going to be how much experience they have in dealing with local government managers.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he feels transparency is important and asked how open the search can be to the general public.

Mr. Stenberg responded that transparency is critical, but it can be a little awkward in searches like this. He stated that when it comes

to the pool of semifinalists, some will be fully employed managers, some of whom may be reluctant for their employers to know they are interviewing for another position. This is one area where the search consultant can add real value in terms of figuring out how to communicate with the candidates while maintaining the importance of transparency, but also remaining sensitive to concerns the candidate may have about information getting out to their current employers.

Ms. Nelson informed Council that sometimes people will withdraw their names if they are made public too early in the process.

Mr. Stenberg stated if Council is going to invite community input, they will have to identify the candidates at some point.

Mr. Stenberg and Ms. Nelson responded to questions from the Mayor and Council relative to estimates for time frames and informed them due to different processes that are used that it would be very difficult to place any specific time frames.

Ms. Nelson responded to Councilmember Daughtridge's question relative to the upcoming election by stating that once the process becomes public Council could engage election candidates if they choose.

Discussion was held relevant to how previous searches were conducted.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker stated in lieu of the discussion, he would like to suggest a special called meeting be called for Council to come together to discuss expectations and the process.

Councilmember Miller requested that Council be provided with a worksheet that would gather qualities they are looking for in a city manager.

Councilmember Knight suggested the Special Called Committee of the Whole be scheduled for 2:00 P.M. on February 28, 2022.

Discussion ensued. By consensus, it was recommended that a Special Called Committee of the Whole be scheduled for February 28, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received information; Recommended Special Called Committee of the Whole be scheduled for February 28, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.

EXTEND MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH AETNA - Kena Cofield-Jones and Mark Browder, Mark III

Kena Cofield-Jones, Human Resources Director, introduced Mark Browder from Mark III to present information relative to an extension of the City's Master Services Agreement with Aetna Life Insurance Company, the City of Rocky Mount's current health plan provider.

Mark Browder stated the following:

- The Plan Years 2019 - 2020 and 2020 - 2021 performed very well, with a net negative trend of 3%
- The 2021- 2022 Plan Year is seeing a surge in high claimants
- While there is a significant increase in high claimants, there is no funding increase needed from the City or employees
- Based on claims, there is an opportunity to improve benefits for the HSA Plan:
 - ◆ Increase City Fund (HSA/HRA) contributions
 - ◆ Based on Plan performance, reducing HSA Dependent Premiums in the HSA Plan is possible

Mr. Browder stated there had been a significant increase in high claimants. He stated some of it was Covid driven, but the dominant claim is oncology or cancer within the city's population. He stated that due to the high claimants, Aetna's reimbursements to the City are large at this time. He said that is why the proposal from Aetna for the stop loss insurance today shows a substantial increase in the premium and is reflective of the reimbursements they have paid. Mr. Browder stated that the stop loss contract will be bid out this year also to ensure the City receives the best rate possible. He informed Council that when companies bid on the stop loss contract, they will be looking at 3 years of claim activity with the emphasis on the most recent 12 months.

Mr. Browder explained that the stop loss coverage is purchased by the City to protect against high claims. He stated the City is financially responsible for claims up to \$125,000 and when they exceed \$125,000 the stop loss company assumes responsibility for the claim.

Councilmember Daughtridge asked what percentage of increase Aetna has proposed at this time for the stop loss contract. Mr. Browder informed him the proposed increase was a 33% increase, but it has been slightly reduced to 29%.

Mr. Browder addressed questions from Council relative to previous rebate amounts from Blue Cross Blue Shield and Aetna.

Mr. Browder informed Council that when looking at ways to make benefits better for employees while staying within budget, they decided the goal should be to reward the plan that performed the best. He stated the plans and average claims submissions were as follows:

Plan History	PPO Active	PPO Retiree	HSA Active	HSA Retiree
2018-2019	\$ 1,018.95	\$ 1,253.31	\$ 377.35	\$ 949.44
2019-2020	\$ 904.07	\$ 1,603.63	\$ 467.84	\$ 1,193.97
2020-2021	\$ 1,260.39	\$ 1,752.51	\$ 413.99	\$ 738.76
2021-2022	\$ 1,320.81	\$ 1,676.24	\$ 592.70	\$ 947.73
Average	\$ 1,125.06	\$ 1,571.42	\$ 462.97	\$ 957.48

He stated since the HSA plan has significantly outperformed the PPO plan that is where they see benefits could be improved. He gave the following recommendations to improve benefits to employees:

- Increase the City contribution to the HSA/HRA Plan from \$600 - \$750;
- Reduce HSA Dependent Premiums by 20% based on Plan performance; and
- Add a child tier (this would allow an employee that only has one child to have a rate for "employee and child" vs "employee and children")

Mr. Browder then explained the following:

- Employees will remain eligible to receive a \$350 incentive if they meet the waist circumference
- Employees currently receive a \$600 HSA contribution - proposal is to increase the contribution to \$750
- By adding the 5th tier, employee and child, the amount an employee with only one child would pay per month on the HSA Plan would decrease to \$229.69 from \$378.37

Council was advised that Aetna's Administrative fee would not increase and the Wellness Allowance per year would increase from \$50,000 to \$60,000.

Mr. Browder informed Council that an extensive bid process was conducted for all Voluntary Benefits. The process resulted in significant improvements in premiums, benefits, and a wholesale change in some of the voluntary benefits. He stated one important piece is that all the voluntary products have guarantee issue.

Mr. Browder responded to questions from Council.

Councilmember Blackwell thanked everyone for their work and stated he would like to see celebration of the accomplishments that have been achieved. He stated he realizes much of the talk is about areas of improvement, but he feels it is significant to acknowledge the wins.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received information; no formal action

Mayor Pro Tem Walker informed Council that he would like to continue with his previous suggestion of not having the presenters review the power points slide by slide. He stated since the Council receives the information prior to the meeting, they can ask any questions to the presenter and reference whatever slide is needed.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker called on Assistant City Manager Elton Daniels to respond to questions regarding the Red Light Cameras. He stated if Council has questions for Mr. Daniels to please let him know if it pertains to a particular slide.

RED LIGHT CAMERAS - Elton Daniels

Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager, informed Council that the City offered this program back in 2002 and ran it until about 2008. He stated the reason the city backed out at the time is because legislation changed causing the proceeds from the program go to the school system. He stated that legislation is still in place and there are currently four cities in North Carolina that operate under the red-light program. He stated only the City of Wilmington still operates under the original legislation and the other three municipalities, Greenville, Raleigh, and Fayetteville, have special legislation in which they give the net proceeds to the school.

Mr. Daniels responded to questions from Mayor and Council in reference to accident data. He referenced the following data:

Data regarding Motor Vehicle Accident location in Rocky Mount (2016-2019)

1. Grace St @ Sunset Ave - 25 crashes
2. Church St @ Sunset Ave - 15 crashes
3. Benvenue Rd @ Jeffreys Rd - 14 crashes
4. E. Grand Ave @ Atlantic Ave - 14 crashes
5. Wesleyan Blvd @ Bishop Rd - 13 crashes
6. Atlantic Ave @ E. Thomas St - 12 crashes
7. Winstead Ave @ English Rd - 10 crashes
8. Wesleyan Blvd @ Lowe's Crossover - 9 crashes
9. Wesleyan Blvd @ Rowe Dr - 9 crashes
10. Wesleyan Blvd @ Jeffreys Rd - 9 crashes

Discussion ensued relative to recovery of cost and where funds from the program would be spent.

Councilmember Knight asked at what point the red-light cameras became a priority. He stated he only recalled a citizen coming to ask about the cameras 2-3 times and he does not feel it would be the correct measure to control traffic. He stated he felt it would cause more issues since it appears the camera cannot distinguish who the driver is since it only records the license plate number.

Councilmember Miller stated that she understood there could be issues with the cameras, but she felt they could possibly help stop accidents such as T-bone collisions.

Councilmember Joyner asked if there were any alternatives that could be looked at that would be effective and maybe not as punitive.

Mr. Daniels stated he and the Police Chief had spoken about that

and called on Chief Hassell to review a few other options. Chief Hassell stated one option is to increase traffic control. He stated another option was used in another location that synchronized signal light changes and that location experienced a 40% reduction in traffic accidents. Chief Hassell stated he would need a little more time to research further alternatives to bring back to Council.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he was open to alternatives but also feels it is a shared responsibility to reduce the traffic accidents in Rocky Mount.

Councilmember Bullock stated he was in support of the red-light cameras, and he feels they worked when they were in place in the past.

Councilmember Blackwell asked what could be done in neighborhoods that do not have traffic lights, such as Edgemont. He noted there are traffic issues in those neighborhoods also. He stated traffic calming measures need to be looked at in the inner-city neighborhoods as well.

Councilmember Knight stated that the Springfield-Leggett Road Neighborhood Association has been begging for a traffic signal due to the number of accidents that have occurred there. He stated that NCDOT denied their request. He requested a comprehensive plan or study be done before establishing any traffic cameras. Councilmember Knight stated for the record that the Springfield-Leggett Road Neighborhood Association has been denied several times when they have requested a signal light at the corner of Springfield Road and Leggett Road. He stated he is not in favor of the red-light cameras.

Councilmember Miller questioned the status of a petition, signed by the neighborhood presidents, to lower speeds in all residential areas was previously given to the City Council

Mayor Pro Tem Walker stated a comprehensive approach to public safety, inclusive of Red Light Cameras, Traffic Lights and Speed Cushions will solve the concerns mentioned today.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Request for Staff to look at Comprehensive Approach to Public Safety inclusive of Red Light Cameras, Traffic Lights and Speed Cushions

CRIME STATISTICS - Chief Robert Hassell

Police Chief Robert Hassell presented a summary of city-wide crime numbers to the City Council for January 2022. It was noted that the presentation covers crime incidents throughout the City currently and in comparison with the prior year during the same time period. The Council was advised that crime numbers are tracked by the FBI and shared with the Bureau of Justice Statistics for tracking purposes and the presentation includes investigation outcomes for violent crimes and related arrests. The presentation also included maps depicting areas of shots fired, incidences of aggravated assault and murder and highlighted efforts and successes of the Police Department to combat violent crime.

An overview of PowerPoint presentation provided to Mayor and Council includes:

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

Crimes/NIBRS Part 1	January 2021	January 2022	+/-	YTD 2020	YTD 2021	+/-
Total	160	154	-6	160	154	-6

- January 2022 crime numbers for murders, aggravated assault and shooting into occupied building(s)/vehicle(s) (map of locations provided):

- o Aggravated assault cases and investigations:
 - Aggravated assault cases = 10
 - Aggravated assault victims = 18
 - Number cases with multiple victims = 3
 - Aggravated assault arrests = 3
 - Aggravated assault cases cleared = 2
- o Case Dispositions (total = 10):
 - Cases cleared by arrest = 1
 - Exceptionally Cleared = 1
 - Inactive cases = 3
 - Open cases = 5
- o Crime Report:
 - Murder, aggravated assault and shooting into occupied building/vehicle: total victims = 19
 - *Victims with injuries = 8
 - *Victims without injuries = 11
- o ShotSpotter and Citizen calls City-wide:
 - Shots fired = 71
 - Calls resulting in shell casings found = 41
 - Number shell casings found = 239
 - Number of Firearms Seized = 32
 - Number firearms seized (year to date) = 32
 - Weapon violation arrests = 7
- Community Involvement:
 - o **Police Athletic/Activity League** - 13-15-year-old male basketball league is finishing their tournament; planning new activities to include bowling, art, book clubs and cooking

Chief Hassell reported that they are working on efforts to create community awareness to help citizens with ways to help protect their property.

Councilmember Blackwell stated there was a serious incident in the Holly Street Community and thanked Chief Hassell for the plan he is putting in place to address that.

Chief Hassell responded to questions from Councilmembers.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received report; no formal action

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL UPDATE: Kenneth Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation

Kenneth Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation, stated he had a few items he would like to report on. Those items are as follows:

- The operating ratio is at 1.4% due to the continued excellent work by the Business and Collection Services Office in terms of property tax collections
- It also shows continued good performance with sales tax as well as other revenues received
- Our departments are all in line on expenditures
- Staffing challenges did create salary savings that were able to be applied to the COLA increase this year and other factors
- With respect to city employment - still recovering jobs - city employment grew overall by 2.7% from December 2020 to December 2021 - still about 1.6%, below the start of the pandemic in February 2020
- Do not have data yet that reflects the impact of the QVC fire - will be reflected likely into January and February

Councilmember Blackwell asked how we compare with others in the state on unemployment.

Mr. Hunter stated unemployment numbers remain at the normal rate for the area.

Mr. Hunter provided Council with an operational report on the utilization of the event center and briefly reviewed the information on the slide. Mr. Hunter responded to questions from Council.

Discussion was held relative to the economic impact the Event Center is having on the area.

Councilmember Knight stated that Council has not heard from David Joyner or SFM since there has been new management. He said he is pleased with how well things are going but would like to see a presentation from them in the near future.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received report; no formal action

QVC FIRE VIDEO: - Chief Corey Mercer and Battalion Chief Jamey Cooke

Battalion Chief Jamey Cooke presented information relative to the QVC Building/Building Systems; response and impacts as follows:

- QVC Background Information
 - o 1.5 Million Square Feet (Building)
 - o Approximately 300 Acres (total site)
 - o Approximately 2000 Employees (+/-) Seasonal and Contract
 - o Built in 1999-2001
 - o Opened in September 2001
 - o Fully Sprinklered
 - o Fire Alarm (went to security, security sent maintenance to verify)
 - o 24 Hour Operations
 - o 30% of QVC Global Operations
- RMFD Response
 - o Initial- Battalion Chief, Safety Officer, Ladder 10, and Rescue 1 (Chief Mercer arrived within an hour of first arriving RMFD unit)
 - o Saturday morning four additional staff members arrived to include the Assistant Chief, two additional Battalion Chiefs, and the department's Public Information Officer
 - o Saturday afternoon switched out crews
 - o RMFD continued to maintain a response for the duration of the incident
 - o Total of 10 days consisting of over 722.5 total Hours
 - o 55 Personnel
 - ◆ Total Response
 - ◇ Agencies from 20 counties
 - ◇ 101 total agencies
 - ◇ 74 Fire Departments
 - ◇ 3 EMS Agencies
 - ◇ ATF National Response Team (NRT) *Across the country
 - ◇ NC Forestry Service Helicopter (other assets)
 - ◇ NCEM- Director and Area Coordinator (other assets)
 - ◇ NC Insurance Commissioner
 - ◇ NC OSFM
 - ◇ NC Director of Public Safety
 - ◇ NCSHP
- Water System & Issues
 - o QVC was equipped with a standard sprinkler system that was designed for high rack storage by FM Global
 - o It was powered by two 3,000 GPM diesel fire pumps with a 250,000 gallon on-site water tank
 - o The facility was supplied by a 12" municipal water main with a 1-million-gallon elevated tank less than one mile away and a 3-million-gallon vault that supplied the grid
 - o There were a total of 20-yard hydrants and 1 municipal hydrant on site

- o Almost 5 million gallons of water was used within the first 24 hours of the incident
- o 4 million gallons of that water came out of the vault and elevated tower that supplies the area where QVC was located
- o Shortly after arriving on scene water supplies became an issue
- o The operation was reevaluated, and we moved to tanker shuttles
- Fire Victim
 - o After multiple confirmations that all QVC staff was accounted for, the ECSO started receiving reports around 1030 on 12/18/2021 that there was a subject unaccounted for
 - o After several hours, these reports were confirmed, and crews began a search and recovery mission for a male subject
 - o The search was halted during the nighttime hours due to the dangers of the building
 - o The following morning at 0700 the search was continued, and the victim was located at 1145 on 12/19/2021
 - o The victim was located in the work area he was assigned approximately 181 feet from a doorway
- Difficulties Encountered
 - o The fire had a large head start
 - o The main natural gas line was damaged during the roof collapse causing a fire hazard on the northeast corner
 - o Limited knowledge of the building by all
 - o It was difficult to keep QVC staff in the command post
 - o There were no current pre-plans of the facility
 - o There was a lack of experienced command staff on scene
- Facts About the Fire
 - o At the height of the event, we had over 60 firetrucks shuttling water from locations up to 6 miles away
 - o The embers from the fire started a woods fire that burned almost three acres
 - o 3 aerial devices and the sprinkler system were supplied constantly during the event with tanker shuttle operations
- Drones were used extensively throughout the entire incident
 - o To identify hot spots
 - o To survey damage
 - o To document the scene during and after the fire was out
 - o Used during investigation
 - o To document response efforts
 - o Able to give command, company executives, and community leaders an overview of incident
- Investigation
 - o NCOSFM contacted early Saturday Morning due to size and dollar loss
 - o NCSBI
 - o Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
 - o National Response Team (Size, complexity, fatality, economic loss)
 - o NC Department of Insurance Special Investigations Unit
 - o Edgecombe County Sheriff's Office
 - o Rocky Mount Police Department
 - o ATF National Response Team
 - 60 personnel from across the country
 - Electrical Engineers
 - Fire Suppression Systems Engineers
 - Building Systems Engineers
 - Construction Engineers
 - Heavy Equipment Operators
 - Accelerant K9's
 - Intelligence Specialist
 - o Over 300 interviews conducted in 3-4 days
 - o Conducted an Origin and Cause Investigation
 - o Located Area of Origin
 - o Hundreds of hours of video surveillance watched
 - o Several Samples sent to ATF Lab in Atlanta GA for analysis

- o Several Leads followed up on
- o Fire ruled Undetermined as of now
- Impacts
 - o Building and Contents-\$550 million loss
 - o Approximately 2000 Jobs Lost
 - o This QVC location is listed as closed as of now
 - o Total Economic Impact- Unknown
 - o 1 Fatality

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

CLOSED SESSION: PROPERTY ACQUISITION, ATTORNEY-CLIENT, AND PERSONNEL

Mayor Pro Tem Walker requested the closed session on the COW agenda be moved to the end of the Regular City Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Without objection, the Mayor Pro Tem adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

A printed copy of the PowerPoint presentations are on file in the office of the City Clerk.

Kim Batts
Deputy City Clerk/
Acting City Clerk

Attachment B

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2022, IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, THIRD FLOOR OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING WITH MAYOR PRO TEM T.J. WALKER PRESIDING:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

T.J. Walker, Mayor Pro Tem
 André D. Knight**
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV*
 Richard Joyner
 Lige Daughtridge
 W.B. Bullock
 Christine Carroll Miller
 Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Peter F. Varney
 Pamela O. Casey
 Mark Adcox
 Kirk Brown
 Ken Hunter
 Elton Daniels
 Will Deaton
 Corey Mercer
 Greg Cotten
 Kena Cofield-Jones
 Latasha Hall
 Richard J. Rose

SECURITY OFFICERS:

Shawn Battle, Senior Police Officer

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem T.J. Walker called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. and thanked all present and those viewing the meeting remotely. He noted today's meeting was called for the purpose of holding discussion relative to the search for a City Manager and called on Interim City Manager Peter F. Varney to lead discussion.

CITY MANAGER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Interim City Manager Varney provided the City Council with a guide for discussion for determining the next steps in the recruitment process for the City Manager along with a booklet from the UNC School of Government entitled "Getting the Right Fit: The Governing Board's Role in Hiring a Manager."

Mr. Varney stated that Council had indicated before they proceeded with engaging a search firm or issuing a request for proposals (RFP) they desired to hold a meeting to discuss Council's expectations for a City Manager. He listed the nineteen (19) core competencies identified by the International City Manager's Association (ICMA) as:

Staff Effectiveness	Policy Facilitation	Functional & Operational Expertise and Planning
Citizen Service	Performance Measurement/Management & Quality Assurance	Initiative, Risk Taking, Vision, Creativity & Innovation
Technological Literacy	Democratic Advocacy & Citizen Participation	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Budgeting	Financial Analysis	Human Resources Management
Strategic Planning	Advocacy & Interpersonal Communication	Presentation Skills
Media Relations	Integrity	Personal Development
Board Relations		

It was noted that Councilmembers were asked to rank the core competencies as high, moderate, or low and most ranked all nineteen core competencies as high with some ranking some competencies as very high.

*Councilmember Blackwell arrived**

Mr. Varney suggested that the City Council spend time discussing the City's challenges, issues, and strengths and hold a separate conversation relative to the Council's vision. A summary of the Mayor's and each Councilmember's views were shared, and Mr. Varney explained that of the nineteen (19) core competencies nine (9) were ranked high or very high.

Discussion was held and each core competency explained. The City Council was asked to further consider and narrow the list of highest rated core competencies. Following discussion some competencies were combined and the following were identified as most important:

- Integrity;
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion;
- Human Resources Management/Staff Effectiveness; and
- Functional & Operational Expertise & Planning/Performance Measurement/Management & Quality Assurance

Further discussion relative to traits desired in a City Manager was held. By consensus, the City Council agreed they wish to see clear evidence of the highest-ranking core competencies in a new City Manager. Discussion continued and a desire was expressed to have a manager with clear competency in managing utilities including gas and electric.

The following was outlined as the "Vision" for the City following individual conversations with Councilmembers:

- Strategic (Big Picture) Viewpoint:
 - Development of Strategic Plan
 - Update Comprehensive Plan and Develop Additional Plans
 - Rebrand and market City as the "Greater Rocky Mount Region"
 - Improve educational opportunity for young people
- Recurring Elements:
 - Downtown development
 - Inner-city neighborhood redevelopment
 - Economic development
 - Education
 - Infrastructure
 - Financial capacity

It was discussed that the City is recognized as a community powerhouse for the area and while it is not the county seat, it is made up of a strong community of people. Mr. Varney stated he was surprised as the amount of discussion held around educational opportunity as education is not a City function.

Challenges and Major Issues identified by Council were listed as:

Challenges:

- Restore trust, credibility, and confidence in City government;
- Seek opportunities for bringing people together;
- Elevate household incomes;
- Seek consensus on vision for the City;
- Apply concept of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to all that we do (view all we do through the lens of diversity);
- Employee recruitment and retention;
- Infrastructure maintenance (streets and recreation facilities); and
- Maintain relationship between elected leadership and City staff characterized by open communication, trust, and confidence

Mr. Varney told the Council many members listed race relations and how to come together as a community of people who share this place as a challenge. Further conversation relative to race relations was held. Councilmember Blackwell pointed to data collected relative to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Partnership award and

stated sometimes issues around race are uncomfortable, but the bottom line is it is true there are issues. He added he is not looking for a manager who is unable to address those issues.

Councilmembers discussed the racial makeup of wards and Councilmember Bullock noted change cannot occur overnight. Councilmember Blackwell added that is why it is important to have the perspective of equity and while it may take a whole generation to change, current leadership can move change forward and perhaps the City can become a model for the rest of the south and the rest of the country.

Mayor Roberson added that the concept of equity and inclusion needs to be applied without the fear of saying the word "race."

Mayor Pro Tem Walker stated it may be helpful to prioritize the challenges identified.

Major issues for the City listed by Councilmembers include:

Major issues:

- Lack of shared vision;
- Education;
- Downtown development;
- Tobacco Town development;
- Linking Rocky Mount Mills to Downtown;
- Inner-city neighborhood redevelopment (housing);
- Long-term financial capacity;
- Strong executive leadership
- Assistance for underserved areas;
- More homeowner occupancy needed for inner-city neighborhoods;
- Individual responsibility, self-respect, and community pride; and
- Open communication between management and employees.

It was noted that Councilmember Knight** had joined the meeting remotely.

Mayor Roberson agreed with the desire to see evidence of competencies which will become the best filter. He voiced a desire to see higher incomes in the City. Discussion was held.

Broadband was identified as another challenge/issue. Councilmember Miller stated that good manners seems to also be an issue saying that people are not respectful of others using the examples of running red lights and cutting people off at intersections.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker noted that not everyone completed the census and data cannot track people who are suffering. Councilmember Blackwell agreed and added there is a need for a City Manager to work with the community. Mr. Varney told the Council the search firm will likely request information relative to the racial makeup of the City along with disparities and challenges.

Mr. Varney provided information about Tobacco Town. He stated that the City has made great progress with redevelopment of the Imperial Centre, Veterans Memorial Park, and the Douglas Block though there are other things to be done. Discussion was held relative to sites for commercial recruitment and the desire for the City to be a destination point for expansion. Councilmember Blackwell added that the City is poised for industrial and commercial growth.

Discussion was held relative to a desire for enhanced education and intergovernmental cooperation.

Strengths of the City of Rocky Mount were outlined as:

City strengths:

- Resilience;
- Infrastructure;
- Fire Department;
- Policy Department;
- Cultural Arts (museum, library, theatre, arts center);
- Historically good leadership;
- Location (crossroads of I-95 and US 64);
- Council-Manager form of government;
- City is not too large, not too small; easy to build and sustain relationships across wide spectrum;
- Park system;
- Sports Complex and Event Center;
- Transportation network;
- Strong civil groups and nonprofit agencies; and
- Presence of higher education (location of North Carolina Wesleyan and 2 Community Colleges)

Interim City Manager Varney guided discussion to the City's strengths. Councilmembers discussed ways of building unity within the City. Councilmember Miller stated that in previous years summer interfaith worship services have joined people of different races and religions together. Councilmember Blackwell noted Rocky Mount has a large international population and many people who grew up in Rocky Mount have gone on to make a large impact across the nation and the world. He added that many people have City pride and feel good about where they grew up and migrate back home, adding this could be a marketing strategy.

In the one-on-one conversations with the Interim City Manager a number of miscellaneous comments were made with Councilmembers indicating additional traits/talents they would like to see in a City Manager. A list of the remarks indicating desires for traits and qualities Councilmembers wish to see in a City Manager are as follows:

Miscellaneous remarks:

- Is strong at team management (with Council and staff);
- Empowers employees;
- Is vibrant and energetic;
- Is strong at strategic planning;
- Treats all Councilmembers the same;
- Gets things done;
- Manages people well;
- Is resourceful;
- Willing to delegate;
- Will embrace the community;
- Is not led by a political agenda;
- Works well with all people;
- Offers clarity and insight when it is apparent there is a lack of understanding;
- Is able to set boundaries;
- Is comfortable facilitating and receiving diverse opinions;
- Knows the City and can answer questions about the City;
- Comes from the Southeastern United States;
- Is impartial with respect to Wards;
- Does not play favorites;
- Can build consensus;
- Does not rubber stamp department head recommendations; and
- Knows the City's operations well enough to question departmental managers.

Councilmember Miller stated for the first time in months there is no trash at the curb at her residence and inquired if the new equipment has been delivered. Interim Manager Varney advised that the equipment is still on back order and that the City must budget heavily for equipment in the future due to a large number of needs. Councilmember Joyner recognized and thanked Parks and Recreation staff who have been assisting Environmental Services staff. Mr. Varney told the Council back in the time when the community was asked to rate City services Environmental Services and the Fire Department always received the highest marks of any departments. He said the City is not where it should be at this time in relation to Environmental Services mostly due to short staffing and old equipment that needs to be replaced.

Mr. Varney advised the Council that the next challenge will be to draft an RFP to describe the City of Rocky Mount community, to include Council's priorities for a City Manager and invite interested search firms to submit proposals. He suggested Council identify two (2) or three (3) preferred firms and noted that Mr. Stenberg and Ms. Nelson suggested using a national firm. He added that Council would then interview search firms. Local and national search firms were identified to include:

Search firms:

- The Mercer Group (been in business since the 1970's);
- Ralph Anderson & Associates;
- Janice Allen Jackson & Associates (MWBE business);
- Developmental Associates (aided the City in selection of City Managers Penny and Small-Toney; includes emotional intelligence assessment);
- Baker-Tilly (MWBE utilized business);
- Colin Baenziger Associates;
- GovHR USA (lists Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on its website; working relationship with Janice Allen Jackson & Associates); and
- Polihire (works with historically under-utilized; MWBE businesses)

Councilmember Miller offered that Development Associates have also in the past held a session to include community members in the interview panel. Councilmember Blackwell stated he likes some of the processes utilized by Developmental Associates but suggested the need for a larger pool of candidates. Councilmembers held further discussion. Councilmember Daughtride expressed the need for expedience. Mr. Varney told the Council an RFP will be drafted and interviews scheduled for search firms to meet with Councilmembers, as discussed.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. By consensus, Council agreed that Polihire, GovHR USA and Baker-Tilly be considered as Nationwide search firms and that Development Associates be considered as a local search firm for the selection of the City Manager.

CITY COUNCIL RETREAT

Mayor Pro Tem Walker recommended the City Council retreat be held at North Carolina Central University in April 2022. Discussion was held relative to the upcoming election, and it was suggested the retreat be held later in the year. By consensus, Council agreed to holding a local one-day retreat to discuss Council priorities and the City Manager recruitment and postpone consideration of a date in the fall for a longer City Council retreat.

Remarks were made by Councilmember Knight to include:

- Some people are not comfortable with African American leadership at the top level and the creation of certain social media sites like Rocky Mount Concerned Citizens and Love Rocky Mount were created;

- Councilmembers know what their priorities are, where underserved communities are, and where development is needed;
- As a Council, members do not trust each other and until that issue is resolved it will be hard to move anything forward in the City;
- Councilmembers need to agree on priorities despite comments from naysayers;
- When the quality of life is improved for poor people, the quality of life for everyone is improved;
- It was the vision of Council and former City Manager Penny to grow and develop the City from within the core (Downtown); and
- There is evidence that with significant investment, the Event Center and restoration of life in the Douglas Block has been realized in the inner-city communities downtown.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker suggested the one-day retreat in April be used for setting priorities and building trust and that a longer retreat be scheduled at a later date to occur in the fall or winter.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. By consensus, the City Council agreed to hold a local one-day retreat in April 2022 and to postpone consideration of an out-of-town retreat to be held in the fall.

SECURITY (TECHNOLOGY)

Councilmember Joyner stated that Bridgestone Firestone has had a cyber-attack with a total shut down of operations. He questioned where the City stands relative to security.

Interim City Manager Peter F. Varney reported that staff will be bringing information to Council in the near future with a recommendation to increase defenses.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and unanimously carried the Committee return to regular session at 4:00 p.m. and the Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned.

Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk