

June 27, 2022

The City Council of the City of Rocky Mount met this day in a regular session scheduled for 4:00 p.m. in the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building with Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr. presiding.

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

*\*Participated remotely*

Staff present: Peter F. Varney, Interim City Manager; Kim Batts, Deputy City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Will Deaton, Director of Development Services; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Brenton Bent, Water Resources Director; 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; Darvin Moore, Division Chief; Lorenza Wilkins, Human Resources Benefits Manager; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Kevin Harris, Downtown Development Manager; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Jessie Nunery, Communications Specialist; Cornelia McGee, Interim Community and Business Development Director; Kena Cofield-Jones, Director of Human Resources; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Summer Interns: Scott Boyd, Leo Jaffe, and Jakub Jurasek; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

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

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and requested all to stand for a moment of silent prayer.

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

Mayor Roberson inquired if there were any changes/additions to the agenda and stated there was a request to remove item 10 in order to ensure the notice period has been fully met.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and carried by a roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays); that the agenda be amended, as requested.

**COMMUNITY UPDATE BY INTERIM CITY MANAGER**

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

- Stated Public Works was able to make the full collection of routes for garbage and recycling, but is still struggling with yard waste; stated there were crews out over the weekend collecting yard waste and they were able to pick up a lot but still not able to get it all

- Stated job offers that had been made that include four (4) operators, six (6) field techs, one (1) transfer station supervisor and one (1) administrative assistant which will hopefully help make progress with solid waste collection
- Spoken with Crowder Gulf, firm used for disaster relief, to see if the City could contract with them for a couple of crews to help during July, August and September to pick up bulky waste and yard waste; downside is that if a hurricane happens somewhere then the crews would not be available
- Stated that Polyhire has stated they are seeing an increase in the number of applicants for the City Manager position and they have also received a number of applications for the Finance Director position
- Stated that at the July 11<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole meeting they will be looking at Boards, Commissions and Committees; there are 17 boards and commissions and we want to focus on filling any vacancies; advised anyone who is interested in serving to be in touch with the City Clerk's Office or their City Council representative
- Reminded everyone that June 30<sup>th</sup> Downtown Live will feature the Band of Oz on the lawn at the Imperial Centre @ 6 p.m.; Friday, July 1<sup>st</sup> in observance of Independence Day Celebration @ the Rocky Mount Sports Complex beginning at 6 p.m.; City Hall will be closed on Monday, July 4<sup>th</sup>; July 8<sup>th</sup> – Lawn Chair theater will feature the Disney movie Lucca
- Stated the Emmanuel Health Group held a successful Prostate Awareness Bike Ride over the weekend

Councilmember Knight stated that he would like the City Council to consider having a resolution drafted that states they City of Rocky Mount would like early voting sites for every municipal election, including runoffs; the City be formally notified in advance of any board meetings that the location of early voting sites or precincts would be changed; that the City Manager and City Clerk monitor board of election meetings prior to election and during the municipal election season. He also stated he would like to have the resolution sent to the Nash, Edgecombe and State Board of Elections.

Mayor Roberson asked if Councilmember Knight would like the resolution to be added for consideration at this meeting or at the next scheduled meeting.

Councilmember Knight stated he would like the resolution to be considered at the next scheduled City Council meeting.

#### **PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Mayor opened the meeting for petitions from the public and outlined guidelines for public petitions. He informed citizens if they listed on their sign in sheet, they were there for a public hearing that he would wait until the public hearing to recognize them. He called on the following individuals for public comment and a summary of comments is outlined below:

#### ***Crystal Wimes-Anderson***

- Stated she would like to meet with Environmental Services because she is upset about the process for yard waste collection and she feels things could be improved
- Stated she feels if we are paying contractors for towing service that we should hold them accountable and they should have to clean up all the glass from an accident
- Stated she wants to make sure the people are being considered when allowing Dollar General to be built in areas
- Stated she attended a meeting about the tobacco ban and being a nurse makes her want to agree with the ban but in looking at things deeper she sees the potential issues that

could arise for citizens and she would like for City Council to look at ways to help them

***Nehemiah Smith, Jr.***

- Stated there is debris on the 1600 block of Virginian Street that has not been picked up in a month
- Referenced a Frederick Douglass speech that spoke of what the 4<sup>th</sup> of July meant to the American slave
- Stated a press release said a young man was going to sing “Lift Every Voice and Sing”, a sacred African American hymn that became the Black National Anthem in 1917, at the Independence Celebration
- Stated it is disrespectful to attempt to combine American Liberty with Black Freedom

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. FY 2022-2023 ORDINANCES: (recommended for approval)**

Consideration was given to the following Ordinances for FY 2021 - 2022 and FY 2022-2023:

- Project Ordinances FY 2022-2023
  - 1) Tar River Transit (\$5,287,593 - requires matching appropriations of \$358,507):
    - a. Urban Operating - \$1,205,733;
    - b. Urban Capital - \$1,016,625
    - c. Transit Planning - \$53,950;
    - d. Rural Operating - \$2,690,200;
    - e. Rural Capital - \$71,085
    - f. Rural Feeder - \$250,000
  - 2) Community Development:
    - a. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - \$460,426
    - b. HOME Investment Partnership Grant Project - \$505,813 (requires matching appropriation of \$50,000)
- Project Ordinance Amendments:
  - 3) Rural Transit Operating CARES Act Project - appropriates additional funds received from NC Department of Transportation (\$400,000)
  - 4) Battle Park Renovation - appropriates funds in the General Capital Projects Fund (\$260,000)
- Budget Ordinance Amendment FY21-22
  - 5) City Health Insurance Fund - appropriates \$4,700,000 in the Self-Insurance Service Fund for the purposes of covering health insurance claims by the City in the current fiscal year (funding derived from Stop Loss Reimbursements already received by the City)

**B. DONATION FROM THE JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL (JCPC) (recommended for approval)**

Consideration was given to accept a donation from the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) to Support Youth Activities with the Rocky Mount Police Department; and to a FY2021-2022 Budget Ordinance Amendment appropriating funds in the General Fund for donation (\$1,000).

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the Consent Agenda be approved inclusive of approval of the adoption of the following Ordinances and approval of the donation from the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC):

- a. Ordinance No. O-2022-33 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2023 TRANSIT OPERATING PROJECT;
- b. Ordinance No. O-2022-34 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2023 URBAN TRANSIT CAPITAL PROJECT;
- c. Ordinance No. O-2022-35 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2023 TRANSIT SYSTEM PLANNING PROJECT;
- d. Ordinance No. O-2022-36 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2023 RURAL TRANSIT OPERATING PROJECT;
- e. Ordinance No. O-2022-37 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2023 RURAL TRANSIT CAPITAL PROJECT;
- f. Ordinance No. O-2022-38 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2023 RURAL TRANSIT SYSTEM FEEDER PROJECT;
- e. Ordinance No. O-2022-39 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2022-2023 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) ENTITLEMENT GRANT PROJECT;
- f. Ordinance No. O-2022-40 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT/FY 2022-2023 HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROJECT;
- g. Ordinance No. O-2022-41 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT/RURAL TRANSIT OPERATING CARES ACT PROJECT;
- h. Ordinance No. O-2022-42 entitled GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT/BATTLE PARK RENOVATION;
- i. Ordinance No. O-2022-43 entitled ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR FY 2021-2022 FOR CITY HEALTH INSURANCE; and
- j. Ordinance No. O-2022-44 entitled ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR FY 2021-2022 FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT YOUTH PROGRAMS

#### **FY 2022-2023 BUDGET ORDINANCE/FEES & CHARGES/POSITION CLASSIFICATION**

Consideration was given to the FY 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance which establishes appropriations for FY 2022-2023 and sets the ad valorem rate at \$0.685 per \$100 of taxable assessed value; and to recommendations for amendments to the following fees and charges:

- Department of Public Works:
  - Policy No. X.8.5 Solid Waste Transfer Station Tipping Fee
- Department of Water Resources:
  - Policy No. X.9.2 Water & Sewer Retail Rates
  - Policy No. X.9.3 Water and Sewer Wholesale Rates
- Department of Human Resources:
  - Revision to Positions Classification and Pay Table II; and funding for 22 new positions

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and carried by a vote of 6-1 (Councilmember Daughtride opposed) that **Ordinance No. O-2022-45** entitled **CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT 2022-2023 BUDGET ORDINANCE**; **Resolution No. R-2022-26** entitled **RESOLUTION AMENDING CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES FOR FEES AND CHARGES**; **Ordinance No. O-2022-46** entitled **ORDINANCE ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO WATER AND SEWER RETAIL RATES** and **Resolution No. R-2022-27** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING AMENDMENTS/ADDITIONS TO POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN** be adopted.

The above ordinance and resolutions adopt the FY 2022-2023 budget maintaining the City's current tax rate at \$0.685 per \$100 valuation, amend/approve certain fees and charges and amends City's Pay and Classification Plan to revise Table II and to fund twenty-two (22) new positions as follows:

**New positions and assigned ranges:**

Department/Division	Classification	Range	No. Positions
City Clerk/City Clerk	Deputy City Clerk	16	1
Finance/Accounting	Accountant I	17	1
Business & Collections Services	Loan Collection Officer	18	1
Technology Services/Project Management	Help Desk Coordinator	21	1
Technology Services/Project Management	Applications Analyst (Career Ladder)	20-22	1
Technology Services/Project Management	Business Systems Analyst	21	1
Technology Services/Project Management	IT Technician (Career Ladder)	12-16	1
Police/Support Services	Forensic Ballistics Examiner	15	1
Police/Support Services	Quality Control and Training Coordinator	17	1
Police/Uniform Services	Police Officer	14	4
Energy Resources/Energy Services	Energy Services Manager	24	1
Energy Resources/Energy Services	Load Management Technical Supervisor	20	1
Energy Resources/Energy Resources Engineering	Associate Electrical Engineer	21	2
Energy Resources/Gas Distribution	Pipeline Inspector	16	1
Energy Resources/ Gas Distribution	Staking Engineer (Career Ladder)	16-20	1
Energy Resources/ Gas Distribution	Gas Worker (Career Ladder)	10-12	3

**City Council Comments**

- Councilmember Daughtridge:
  - stated he would like to explain why he is voting no to the budget
  - stated it has nothing to do with his confidence in the leadership of Interim Manager Peter Varney and he supports and appreciates his willingness to steer the City until the next City Manager is found
  - stated Mr. Varney is only carrying out instructions from the City Council
  - stated the Rocky Mount Vision Statement says the citizens enjoy and value the benefits of efficient, cost-effective and responsive public services and he feels the City is failing the taxpayers and citizens
  - stated he is in favor of increasing the pay for staff and is in favor of affordable housing by transforming neighborhoods a block at time in partnership with the private sector
  - stated he feels the budget is bloated and worries the basics of City Government are being ignored during uncertain times with the highest amount of inflation in four decades
  - stated the inability to collect trash and yard waste because trucks were not purchased and the closure of the Denton Street Pool due to lack of maintenance are just two examples of areas being ignored; these oversights are not apparent until it's too late
  - stated he is concerned about what else has been ignored such as ensuring enough equipment to maintain the electric grid; fire trucks/police equipment; are there issues with water pipes and sewer lines; conditions of buildings and street paving
  - stated he feels there are many great things in the budget such as staff raises and funding for a ladder truck for the Fire Department, but he cannot agree to a budget he feels allows for bloated spending at the expense of providing the basic tools to staff so they can provide essential services and protection for ALL our citizens across the entire city

- Councilmember Knight
  - Stated he feels citizens have seen a return on the taxpayers' dollars and investment in underserved communities that were neglected for almost 100 years and had no representation
  - Stated some of the increases in fees is due to increases in third party services
  - Stated the issue of equipment not being purchased was due to a previous administration decision that the City Council was not aware of and as soon as it was known, the Interim City Manager was directed to move forward with working to get new equipment
  - Stated he feels the citizens he represents in Ward 1, as well as citizens that are not in Ward 1, are very appreciative of the things they have seen this City Council do
  - Stated the transformation they are working on for the City is not to only see Ward 5 and Ward 6 rise, it is for all of Rocky Mount to rise
  - Stated he is in support of the budget
  
- Councilmember Blackwell
  - Stated he agrees with Councilmember Knight's sentiments and feels this budget is reflective of work that has yet to be done; with corrections that needed to be made from times past and is consistent with any budget that the City Council has seen
  - Stated he and Councilmember Daughtridge have a fundamental disagreement with perspective of investment and who gets benefit of it, but they try to work it out as best as they can
  - Stated he feels mistakes of the past cannot be held against the future and the City has the money to do the things that need to be done
  - Stated the community has educated themselves on the initiatives that have been embarked on and transformation has been seen in neighborhoods that have been neglected for generations
  - Stated the programs offered by the City help citizens own and repair homes for themselves, not just to renovate a home or flip it, and that benefits the communities
  
- Councilmember Joyner
  - Stated he concurs with Councilmember Knight and Blackwell
  - Thanked Human Relations and others because he is seeing the community organizations become excited about investing in their own communities
  - Stated this budget reflects the desires of the communities that have been neglected for a long time
  - Stated he is pleased that staff is working with the communities, so they are able to take the information about the programs offered to their neighbors
  
- Councilmember Miller
  - Stated she feels the City must be as cost effective as possible with any money that is spent
  - Stated the City has made investments in buildings and equipment but has failed to maintain those things which is a waste money
  - Stated the entire City needs to be moving forward and not just some areas that have been said to be neglected
  - Stated private investment is what has been done in various areas and the City cannot be expected to keep up every property in the City

**FY 2022-2023 BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT - OIC YOUTH CONNECT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

The City Council was advised that funding has been provided for several years to OIC for their Youth Connect Internship Program. It was stated the initiative provides paid internships to local high school and college-aged students during the summer months.

Councilmember Knight and Councilmember Blackwell recused themselves from the vote due to their service on OIC's board and Recusal Statements are on file in the City Clerk's Office.

Councilmember Blackwell state the Director of Education Services and the Program Manager from OIC were in the audience if there were any questions about the program.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Walker, and by a roll call vote (2 ayes/3 nays - Councilmembers Daughtridge, Bullock and Miller opposed) the Budget Ordinance Amendment for OIC Youth Connect Internship Program in the amount of \$50,000 was denied.

**City Council Comments**

- Councilmember Blackwell
  - Stated he appreciated the clarity on the position being take with OIC and he understands the posture he needs to take moving forward
  - Stated none of this money has ever been used for administration at OIC and is only used to support the summer youth program
  - Stated the key partners are UNC School of Medicine and UNC School of Pharmacy
  - Stated OIC would find the funding somewhere else to ensure the youth in the area did not suffer
- Councilmember Knight
  - Stated some of the Council members should be ashamed
  - Stated OIC helps the youth with summer jobs and keeps kids off the street
  - Stated the money OIC gets from the City is for youth development and does not go to the CEO or to any board chair
- Councilmember Joyner
  - Stated he hopes the votes do not represent the personal opinions about individual that will cause children to suffer
  - Stated he feels it is wrong to deny something that provides meaningful ways to keep the youth off the streets in the summer

**DEMOLITION ORDINANCE**

The City Council received an ordinance ordering the Community Code Inspector to proceed with demolition of the following substandard properties (*action was deferred from June 13, 2022 City Council Meeting*):

- 413 N. Pine Street
- 415 N. Pine Street
- 835 W. Thomas Street

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that **Ordinance No. O-2022-47** entitled **ORDINANCE ORDERING THE COMMUNITY CODE INSPECTOR TO PROCEED TO DEMOLISH A CERTAIN DILAPIDATED STRUCTURE PURSUANT TO THE HOUSING CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

**LEASE/LICENSE AGREEMENT/GAY ROAD PROPERTY**

At the recommendation of Interim City Manager Peter F. Varney and by a vote of the City Council at the beginning of today's meeting, consideration of this item was removed from the agenda.

**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM ASSISTANCE POLICY AND PROCUREMENT AND DISBURSEMENT POLICY**

The City Council was provided with Administrative Policy No. II.29(a) entitled "Policy: Urgent Repair Program Assistance" and "Policy: Urgent Repair Program Procurement and Disbursement."

The Council was advised that the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency has approved \$132,000 for the City as a part of the FY 2022-2023 cycle of the Urgent Repair Program (URP22) and it is anticipated that Council will approve an additional \$150,000 for the Urgent Repair Program for a total of \$282,000 for the 2022-2023 URP22 program cycle.

It was explained that the Urgent Repair Program is one of four (4) housing programs offered by the City for homeowners at or below 50% of the Area Median Income and eligible repairs are those affecting the safe occupancy of the home such as flooring support structures, the roof, bathroom and doorway modifications for handicap accessibility and heating and cooling. Council was advised that approval and adoption of the policies detailing eligibility requirements, the selection process and overall program process along with the bidding and payment process is required.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that **Resolution No. R-2022-28** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING POLICY NO. II.29(A) ENTITLED "POLICY: URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM ASSISTANCE"** and **POLICY NO. II.29(B) ENTITLED "POLICY: URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM PROCUREMENT & DISBURSEMENT"** be adopted.

**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AMENDMENTS**

The City Council was presented with a Resolution approving Amendments to the following Administration Policies:

- Administrative Policy No. II.43(a) Entitled "Policy: Housing Repair Program Policy"
- Administrative Policy No. II.43(b) Entitled "Policy: Workforce Housing Repair Program Policy"
- Administrative Policy No. II.42 Entitled "Policy: Housing Rehab Matching Rebate Program Policy"



Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that **Resolution No. R-2022-29** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND AMENDMENTS** be adopted.

**PROPERTY DONATION/1605 GAY STREET**

Interim City Manager Peter Varney advised the City Council that the property at 1605 Gay Street has been offered for donation to the City and provided the Council with a vicinity map. The lot is vacant; has no outstanding liens and the City owns the lots on both sides of the property. He stated it is the recommendation of staff that the property be accepted and the City would maintain this lot as open space like the lots on each side of it.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the property at 1605 Gay Street be accepted and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute any required documentation.

**NEIGHBORHOOD RESTORATION & PRESERVATION INCENTIVE GRANT AGREEMENT**

The City Council was advised that the Buck Leonard Association for Sports & Human Enrichment, Inc. had requested assistance from the City to cover repairs to the Historic Buck Leonard Home Museum, located at 605 Atlantic Avenue. The agreement provides an incentive grant in the amount of \$20,000 to cover plumbing repairs, concrete driveway replacement and installation of a privacy fence.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell, and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the grant agreement (**C-2022-25**) with the Buck Leonard Association for Sports & Human Enrichment, Inc. be approved, and the Mayor and City Clerk execute the agreement on behalf of the City.

**BID/HOME REPLACEMENT-623 BRANCH STREET**

The City Council was advised that proposals were received for the replacement for the home located at 623 Branch Street owned by Mrs. Ethel Harper. The bid tabulation is on file in the Office of the City Clerk as **BD-2022-24**. It was recommended that the bid be awarded to F7 Development in the amount of \$206,069.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated according to the documentation in the agenda packet, it appears the costs per square foot is \$242.70, which is twice the median list home price in Edgecombe County.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell, and carried by roll call vote (5 ayes/2 nays - Councilmembers Daughtridge and Miller opposed) that the bid for the replacement of the home located at 623 Branch Street be awarded to F7 Development as recommended.

**APPOINTMENTS**

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

**CLOSED SESSION**

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 4:51 p.m. for discussion relative to matters concerning property acquisition and economic development. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as a part of **ESM-606** at the end of **Minute Book No. 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

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**REGULAR SESSION**

The Mayor convened the meeting in regular session at 5:18 p.m. and there being no further business, the City Council meeting was adjourned.

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Kimberly D. Batts  
Deputy City Clerk/  
Acting City Clerk