

April 24, 2023

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, Tom Harris and Jabaris Walker.

Staff present: Keith Rogers Jr., City Manager; Peter F. Varney, Interim Assistant City Manager; Kim Batts, City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Will Deaton, Director of the Department of Development Services; Joel Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director; 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, Interim Fire Chief; Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Darvin Moore, Division Chief; Kim Wittig, Administrative Fire Captain/PIO; James Costello, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent; Jim Connolly, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent; Michael Shaw, Fleet Maintenance Superintendent; Andrew Martin, Environmental Services Superintendent; Tim Farmer, Public Works Operations Manager; Nate Williams, Water and Sewer Superintendent; Amanda James, Water Quality Services Superintendent; Scott Miles, Assistant City Engineer - Water Resources; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Cornelia McGee, Community and Business Development Director; Kena Cofield-Jones, Director of Human Resources; Kream Mosley, Deputy City Clerk; Monica Brantley, Deputy City Clerk and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

Security Officers: Corporal Clay Wilder, Sergeant Chris Williams, and Senior Police Officer Shawn Battle.

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

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Jabaris Walker, and unanimously carried that the minutes of the following City Council meetings be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting:

- Regular Scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held December 12, 2022; and
- Regular Scheduled City Council meeting held December 12, 2022.

The minutes of the Regular Scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held December 12, 2022 are as follows:

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2023, AT 5:00 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM 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  
 Jabaris Walker  
 Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Telly Whitfield, Metronet  
 Marshall Quarles, Metronet  
 Kelly Parker, Metronet  
 Daniel Klus, Public Trust Advisors  
 David Joyner, Rocky Mount Event Center

STAFF PRESENT:

Peter F. Varney  
 Kim Batts  
 Archie Jones  
 Robert Hassell  
 Kenneth Hunter  
 Elton Daniels  
 Kirk Brown  
 Kena Cofield-Jones  
 Greg Cotten  
 Latasha Hall  
 Corey Mercer  
 Richard J. Rose  
 Brenton Bent  
 Cornelia McGee-Anthony

**OPENING OF MEETING**

Mayor Pro Tem T.J. Walker called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**METRONET - Ken Hunter**

Assistant to the City Manager for Budget & Evaluation Kenneth Hunter shared that Metronet would start work in the next several months on a new fiber optic service for residents and businesses throughout the city. He introduced Telly Whitfield, Governmental Affairs Director for Metronet. Mr. Whitfield said that Metronet is prepared to present a multimillion-dollar private investment into Rocky Mount. Metronet is the largest independent fiber optic company in the US. He said it's a 100% fiber to the home broadband company in 250 communities within 16 states. Metronet is in 26 communities in North Carolina.

Mr. Whitfield made the following presentation:

Why Fiber:

- Meet the demand with reliable fast internet speed
- Drives Economic Development
- Fiber Optics is the fastest way to transmit information today
- Multi-gig service. The up speed and down speed are the same.

Government Affairs role:

- Develop & Maintain Relationships
- Provide Internal Support - Relational, Strategic and Tactical - for "production, problem-solving & predictability"
- Facilitate Construction Communication
- Monitor the Market Place
- Get us to the Finish Line

Partnership:

- Provides transparency and accountability to City
- Prevent call volume to city centers
- Reduce surprises related to neighborhood construction activity
- Build goodwill and awareness with residents

Metronet's industry recognitions:

- Top 3 Fastest Internet Provider Nationwide
- Top 3 Fastest Fiber Provider Nationwide
- Number one Fastest Internet Provider in two states

Mr. Whitfield shared Metronet's plan:

Pre-Construction:

- Partnership and Collaboration with City and community stakeholders
- Pole Attachment Agreement & process
- Initial Build Design

Resident Communication:

- PR Activity
- Mailed Letters
- Postcards
- Individual Yard Signs
- Neighborhood Entrance Yard Signs

Construction:

- Asset placement follows existing utilities, both underground and aerial
- Project designed/organized by groups of 300-500 homes (neighborhoods) and businesses
- Partnership with city to provide daily list of locations and crew names
- Average 1 Supervisor per 3-5 construction crews
- Team is easily identifiable-Vehicle signs, picture badges, safety vests with Metronet logo
- Ground construction - all Metronet terminals are 100% flush mounted

Post Construction:

- Put the community back in a better place
- Restoration within 24-48 hours
  - Restore as they build

Construction Website:

- See where we're working
- Document questions or concerns
- Construction Process Education - Easement

Mr. Whitfield said that 32% of all residential sales are from direct sales. Screened associates will make door-to-door contact in neighborhoods for 90 days.

Mr. Whitfield mentioned the Affordable Connectivity Program allows eligible households to receive a credit up to \$30 a month towards internet service.

### **Council Questions/Comments:**

Councilmember Blackwell asked:

- Once a neighborhood is completed will they be able to receive services or have to wait for the entire city to be wired
- Is activity going to occur simultaneously in Nash and Edgecombe Counties
- Is the cost comparable, more expensive or less than what is currently available

Mr. Whitfield responded:

- When an LCP is completed and connected it is available for service.
- Metronet is comparable to the market with a better service

Marshall Quarles, Project Director for Metronet reiterated that customers will not have to wait for the entire market to be built. Service will be available as they continue to build. He also stated that he will be local and will ride through to engineer any changes.

Councilmember Harris asked:

- Will there will be simultaneous work with pole and underground distribution
- Do you know where you will be starting

Mr. Quarles said that a local area is categorized as an LCP. Metronet plans to start with aerial builds on Old Mill Road. He reported that there is very little underground. Maps have been provided to show how much aerial to underground work will be done.

Councilmember Daughtridge asked for the start date.

Mr. Quarles said they are looking to start in the next 2 months once they have solidified the pole attachments. They have identified the area where they want to beta test.

Councilmember Joyner asked if they do any local hiring.

Mr. Quarles said they've already hired locally. They currently employ 4 Outside Plant Field Supervisors. Mr. Whitfield said that the website will be up soon to apply for employment.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker asked if the City could capitalize using Metronet's conduits to resolve connectivity issues in areas that can't be reached.

Mr. Whitfield said that they are going to try to alleviate some of those challenges. The team can look at subsequent builds. He said that interest from the community makes it better for him to sell the build.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker asked if a citizen fact and frequently asked questions line directed to Metronet, pre and post construction, will be available. He stated he would like to avoid an influx of calls to the City.

Mr. Whitfield said that the website will be available, and FAQs will be listed.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker said that there is a large elderly constituent base and asked if there is a phone number and educational component available.

Mr. Whitfield said that he will work with City to develop an educational piece.

Ken Hunter stated that there will be discussions with Business and Collection services because he realizes that calls will be received. The goal is to transfer those calls to Metronet.

Mr. Quarles added that Metronet does community communication with door tagging and yard darts. A phone number is available and if people call, an email is sent directly to him.

Mayor Roberson asked how long it will take to cover the entire City.

Mr. Quarles said anywhere between a year to a year and a half. Rain, snow, colder days and equipment issues can slow things down.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if they were being conscientious and intentional in ensuring that building will occur in Nash and Edgecombe simultaneously. He stated that in the initial presentation the Nash/Edgecombe dynamic was discussed, and it was said that the wealthy communities would not be built first and the ones with less resources last.

Mr. Whitfield said that multiple layers and ensuring that the communities are touched in various forms was discussed. He will double check to make sure the Edgecombe and Nash perspective is there and get an answer to Ken Hunter. He said that this is the initial build and that the project is not fully designed yet. He wanted to make sure that all the council districts are represented.

Councilmember Blackwell asked Mr. Whitfield to confirm that Metronet is intentional about building up inner city communities simultaneously.

Mr. Whitfield responded absolutely, he sees this as an opportunity to build community with transformational assets and fiber.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker asked if they have any inner-outer loop maps available.

Mr. Quarles answered, yes and that they will make them available. The full footprint of the build has already been laid out and it shows where the placement is.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker what is the difference between the speed of what Metronet offers and the speed of Optimum.

Mr. Quarles responded that it works in compatibility with 6G. Speed differences will not be noticed, regardless of the number of devices you have on it. He said that the internet works as fast as your slowest device. Devices need to be compatible with the speed to see it implemented in the home.

Councilmember Knight said that he hopes to hear back regarding Councilmember Blackwell's question before moving forward. He mentioned challenges from other projects, referencing subcontractors and digging in yards. Councilmember Knight asked Mr. Varney if a Rocky Mount staff person is going to monitor the project.

Mr. Varney responded that several people will be. City employees will have to work ahead of Metronet to do locates.

Mr. Quarles said that Field Supervisors monitor the crews. He said that the crews do a solid restoration and that they also have contracts with local landscapers. In instances where a landscaper needs to be called out, it will be handled at no cost to the customer. He also stated that traffic controllers will be in the area if traffic needs to be redirected.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received report; no formal action.**

**IDLE FUND INVESTMENTS - Ken Hunter**

Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation reported that the City has \$96 million dollars across all funds currently held in investments. He was presented with an opportunity to improve the performance of the City's idle funds within the limitations of a municipality and in compliance with NCGS 159.30. The City can manage their investments or utilize the local

government investment pool. Mr. Hunter said that The City Manager has investment authority regarding adjusting how the funds are invested. Per statute and LGC requirements investments are allowed in secure short-term government or corporate investment vehicles. Maturity dates cannot be greater than 36 months. Up until 2020 NCCMT had two pools, one purely governmental with Treasury and Federal agency debt and a second that was mix of federal debt and well as other vehicles like commercial paper. They now only invest in Treasury and Agency debt.

Current Practice:

- Utilize Local Government Investment Pools (LGIPs)
- 100% invested in NC Capital Management Trust (NCCMT)
- Established in 1982, managed by Fidelity
- Portfolio as of November 2022 (All Treasury & Agency since 2020)
- 34.2% US Government Agency Debt
- 29.7% US Treasury Debt (T-Bills & Notes)
- 36.1% US Treasury Repurchase Agreements
- 7-Day Yield: 4:14% (as of 1/4/2023)
- Management Fee: 0.16%

Mr. Hunter reported that up until recently that was the only local government investment pool in North Carolina. He was approached by Dan Klus from Public Trust Advisors. Public Trust Advisors were going to establish a new local government pool, called The North Carolina Cooperative Liquid Assets Security Systems (NC Class). It is based on a model that they used in several states to provide support to local governments.

Proposal:

- NC Cooperative Liquid Assets Security System (NC CLASS)
- Managed by Public Trust
- Broader Diversification
- 14.5% US Treasuries & Agencies
- 62.5% Commercial Paper
- 15.0% Repurchase Agreements
- 8.0% Bank Deposits & Cash Equivalents
- Management Fee: 0.15% (Will be initially waived)

Advantages & Risks:

- Advantages
- Broader diversification of portfolio
- Potential investment in higher-yield securities
- Same liquidity availability as with NCCMT
- NC CLASS would be AAAM rated (highest available)
- Anticipate 4.58% 7-Day Yield
- Risks are insignificant

Mr. Hunter stated that his recommendation is to adopt a resolution that would authorize participation in NC Class. He said that Lincoln County and Hope Mills have already signed on and New Bern will be voting later in the month. Rocky Mount would be the fourth jurisdiction to join the fund. That would be the formation of the interlocal agreement.

Mr. Hunter recommends transferring 10% of the \$96 million available. He said that would give a chance to compare it to NCCMT and monitor its performance. The holding can be adjusted as warranted. He said that interest earnings on these funds are a source of revenue and will allow additional money for City operations.

Mr. Hunter shared that there is a third option available:

- North Carolina Investment Pool (NCIP)

- Established in 2021 by Wake & Buncombe Counties
- Managed by PFM Asset Management
- Consistent structure to NC CLASS
- AAAM rated (highest available)
- 7-Day Yield: 4.50% (as of 1/4/2023)

**Council Questions/Comments:**

Councilmember Daughtridge asked if the City can go through the Treasurer's office.

Ken Hunter said that he wasn't aware of that and would get an answer.

Councilmember Daughtridge asked:

- How long will the management fee be waived
- Is there an option to reduce the time and reduce the base points charged

Mr. Klus responded that anytime you're starting something new, you want a solid base of diversified initial investors. He said from a competitive standpoint the fee would probably be waived the first year or two, if not in its entirety of a significant matter.

Mr. Klus answered yes. He said The Board of Trustees has full discretion on proposing the fees. The .15 written in the fund documents is the maximum charge. They recognize that public entities are looking at the net return. If they see that in North Carolina the competitive advantage of having the fee closer to 5 base points, three years from now they can advise the Board to keep it there.

Councilmember Daughtridge said that in the presentation 62.5 percent is diversification in commercial paper and in the slide before that one it doesn't list commercial paper.

Mr. Klus said that it moves, if they don't feel like the risk adjusted return makes sense in commercial paper in could be 0%. They have the flexibility to go up to the percentage where they are still diversified yet providing the best return for the fund.

Councilmember Daughtridge said that's a large exposure.

Mr. Klaus responded that it's an asset class with a broad range of CP issuers.

Councilmember Daughtridge asked what the investments in the asset class are.

Mr. Klus responded Coca Cola, Proctor and Gamble, General Electric and any A1P1 issuer CP. The percentage total is 62 but it's diversified over all the CP issuers.

Councilmember Daughtridge asked:

- What about liquidity under stressful times
- What is the return of investment as opposed to the yield
- Have you compared the two over the same period

Mr. Klus responded that there is daily liquidity. They have never had a liquidity event with the funds they operate. He said that a public entity who invested today could get their entire amount plus interest the next day.

Mr. Klus said interest is compounded daily. They post the actual one day and seven-day effective yield. That is the return on the investment.

Ken Hunter responded they were compared prior to the presentation. He said he will compare further, in terms of looking at it across multiple metrics to see how they perform comparatively.

Councilmember Harris said if \$10 million dollars was put in on January 8, 2022, since then interest rates have more than doubled and prime rate has gone from 3.25 to 7.5, he commented that yield was one thing, but what is the value of the portfolio.

Mr. Klus answered that the portfolio is valued daily at a stable \$1. He said that only interest is recorded. A \$10 million dollar investment is a \$10 million today plus whatever interest is earned overnight.

Councilmember Harris asked what the yield would have been over the last 12 months.

Mr. Klus said using one of the states they are in he believes 1.6 would be the 10-month yield. The fund has a 60-day weighted average maturity. The daily yield would be around 4.0.

Councilmember Harris asked Mr. Hunter what the return was on the NCCMT the last 12 months.

Ken Hunter responded he will go back and look at the numbers and give that information based on the average based holding for the last calendar year.

Councilmember Blackwell asked Mr. Klaus for some information on his company.

Mr. Klus provided the following information about Public Trust Advisors:

- Serve as the investment advisor and administrator of NC Class.
- Work with public entities around the country on creating overnight investment programs.
- Manage 50 billion of the assets for over 6,000 public entities nationwide.
- Have 11 billion in separately managed portfolios where the policy allows up to 36 months.
- 10 billion public entities who want further than overnight
  - 9, 12, 18 months space on an average maturity
- Fiduciaries and not brokers.
- Charge no fees for any public entity to invest money
  - No ACH or wire fees
- Vehicle for Finance Directors and City Managers.

Councilmember Blackwell asked what the shortest investment with a strategy could be.

Mr. Klus responded technically overnight.

Councilmember Blackwell said that depends on the goals for the cash available, the interest desired or if they want to go further.

Mr. Klus said absolutely, the program is set up to have no minimum requirements. It's designed to give tremendous flexibility.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if the state law has adapted to the market so that participation is available.

Ken Hunter responded that the law hasn't changed, there are now other entities entering the market. He spoke with the LGC and the attorneys at McGuire Woods. A significant amount of vetting was



done and he feels like this was a good option. He said that the third fund he mentioned seemed like it was created to serve two parties and wasn't marketed outward.

Councilmember Blackwell asked where the elected oversight is and if Council has to approve the total amount of the transfer to invest or if the investors just move the money.

Ken Hunter stated there is an existing balance. Each month the money that is received from the local option sales tax goes into the account. Interest is earned on an overnight basis. In the first half of the fiscal year timing issues exist between when revenue from property taxes is collected and money that must be spent. Funds may have to be withdrawn and that affects the balance. He said that it is a passive approach and if Council would like, he can look at how other jurisdictions are handling it and offer suggestions.

Councilmember Knight asked which municipalities they are in.

Mr. Klus answered that resolutions have been signed for NC Class by Lincoln County and the town of Hope Mills. The city of New Bern is presenting the resolution for approval January 24th and the city of Hickory is evaluating it. They have approached the cities of Charlotte and Raleigh. He said that no public entity will be forced to use it.

Councilmember Knight asked if the City Council should consider this now or wait for a permanent Finance Director.

Peter Varney, Interim City Manager said he is inclined to continue evaluating it and go forward. He said that it appears to be a safe, well-managed investment. There is a board of trustees that will have local representation.

Councilmember Knight asked how the board of trustees is selected.

Mr. Klus answered that the bylaws state that two trustees are necessary to get NC Class launched. They are in place and the initial board of trustees can decide. The board can be as large as 13 people. It's at the discretion of local government for representation on the trustees, how often and how many to add.

Councilmember Joyner asked Ken Hunter what the benefits of NC Class are.

Mr. Hunter said that he is going to confirm, but it would be a higher future return. The goal is to generate more money and interest.

Mayor Roberson said that the recommendation is clearly a process to try to generate more income.

Councilmember Harris asked if Charlotte and Raleigh are only using NCCMT.

Mr. Klus responded that Charlotte is a large enough entity to have staff to buy CP on their own. They do use NCCMT for some of their monies.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received report; no formal action.**

**FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL REVIEW: CITY/FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL REVIEW: EVENT CENTER - Ken Hunter**

Assistant to the City Manager for Budget & Evaluation Kenneth Hunter presented the first quarter report, which is July 1, 2022 to

September 30, 2022. He said that he expects to be able to report the second quarter next month and be back on track with quarterly reporting. Mr. Hunter reported that sales tax performance is about 15% ahead of last year. He feels the City is in a comfortable position and presented the following updates:

General Fund:

- Revenues continue positive direction for start of Fiscal Year
  - Local Option Sales Tax continues to grow
  - Strong increases in Sales & Services revenues
    - Solid waste
    - Parks & Recreation
    - Event Center
- Anticipated, manageable expenditure increases
  - Impact of pay increase
  - Operating cost increase due to inflation
  - Increased capital outlay (equipment replacement)

Mr. Hunter shared that the General Fund Operating Ratio for FY 20-FY 22 had a 3-year average of .857. The main contributor for being under one is that collection of ad valorem tax revenues from, real and personal property start the second quarter. He said that number will flip to well over one after the end of the second quarter.

Enterprise Funds:

- Electric & Gas
  - Sales higher for both utilities
  - Significant increase in wholesale Gas costs
- Water & Sewer
  - Sales up in Water & Sewer, reflecting increased usage & adjusted rates
  - Continued increase in capital project activity
- Stormwater
  - Revenues meeting expectations
  - Planned, significant capital project activity underway

Outlook:

- Revenue Monitoring Continues
  - Anticipate finishing FY 2023 in line with budgeted forecasts
  - Ad Valorem Taxes are key (primary collected in 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter)
- Monitoring Expenditures with respect to Inflation
  - Fuel
  - Consumables
  - Capital Equipment
- Staff working on Proposed CIP for Fiscal Years 2024-2028
- Benchmarking data collection underway
- FY 2024 Budget Development begins later this month

Ken Hunter gave an overview of the Event Center Performance

Financial Performance

	FY 2023 Amended	FY 2023 Q1 Year-to-Date
Revenues	1,986,810	376,740
Cost of Goods Sold	1,621,770	359,065
Facility Expenses	1,012,410	281,160
<b>Net Operating Margin</b>	<b>(\$647,370)</b>	<b>(\$265,485)</b>
Tax Credit Expenses	427,000	86,750
Debt Service	3,065,050	-
Capital Outlay	156,942	6,473
<b>Net Total Margin</b>	<b>(\$4,296,362)</b>	<b>(\$358,709)</b>

- First Quarter financial performance reflects normal activities for this period in operations
  - Less activity than other times of the year
- Net Operating Margin
  - Loss will reduce in FY 2024 and FY 2025
  - Positive for FY 2026
- Capital Outlay
  - Ongoing facility improvements
  - Equipment
  - Included in CIP

Operational Performance

	Calendar Year 2021	Calendar Year 2022	Change
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>52,398</b>	<b>77,011</b>	<b>24,613 (47%)</b>
<b>Total Economic Impact (Est)</b>	<b>\$9,132,348</b>	<b>\$14,956,388</b>	<b>\$5,824,040 (64%)</b>
Events Hosted			
Major Sporting Events		21	
Concerts & Conferences		7	
Banquets & Other Rentals		223	
<b>Total Events</b>		<b>251</b>	

Councilmember Harris said that he is interested in seeing actual budgeted revenues.

Mr. Hunter said that how the budget is distributed on a quarterly basis is available and will be shared in the Q2 report.

Councilmember Joyner asked for a projection of downtown lodging’s impact.

Mr. Hunter said a rough conservative estimate for a 100-room hotel could be 7 million a year. He considered 4.5 million in hotels with restaurants, conference space, other activities and incidentals. He said conceivably 7 million dollars with economic, tax and job impact.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker asked:

- How aggressive has the approach been to hotels and individuals
- Is the Event Center being marketed for concerts

Mr. Varney replied that a hotel feasibility study has been commissioned and should be back 75 to 90 days.

David Joyner responded that the Sports Facility Company operates several venues that have concert apparatus. He stated that he has been conservative because there isn’t a budget to pay for talent. With tournaments, conferences and corporate events, market study work is done. He said that allows them to haggle because he knows how they performed in other markets. Mr. Joyner said that another factor is the time of the year. The gym is expensive to take up. The first half of the year is tournament season. Mr. Joyner reported that last weekend The Event Center hosted 80 teams with 960 players and participants. He said that 1753 people bought tickets at the door. The Event Center keeps concessions and bar sales. In addition to \$53,000 in parking and the rental cost. He said a plated dinner event was in the ballroom at the same time. Mr. Joyner said if someone wanted to have a concert, they have to pay for the floor conversion unless they wait until August when it’s taken up. He said that they strategically push music events when the floor is taken up. He feels the biggest misnomer with concerts is we can’t confidently tell them how many tickets they’re going to sell. He said this is a smaller market so more is done with marketing and billboards. He shared that they are getting calls for festivals. Mr. Joyner said that they are marketing to get non-sporting business to help for the weekend and off season.

Councilmember Blackwell how many people are asking for more hotel spaces in Rocky Mount.

Mr. Joyner said that it comes up the most with corporate events. When you go to most conferences the hotel is typically there. He said that event holders have mentioned that the hotels are a little far away. He thanked Mr. Varney and Mr. Daniels for their help with being creative with transit. Mr. Joyner said that he's selling the experience not just the facility. Mr. Joyner stated from a selling standpoint it will be helpful immediately.

Councilmember Knight asked:

- What percentage of people are turned away because of affordability
- How do you work with non-profits and local citizens

Mr. Joyner said that the majority of the 223 events were local. Nonprofits, churches and organizations. He said they try to work with people and a small percentage gets turned away. He shared that after conversations a proposal made, not knowing if they can pay it or not. Mr. Joyner said that their job is to maximize revenue. There are parameters, but they do their best to work with people. He said that competition during peak season makes it harder.

Councilmember Knight feels more can be done with the entertainment piece. He thinks promoters may not understand pricing and negotiations.

Mr. Joyner said that entertainment events are usually at clubs or event halls. He said the operation is different. Security adds an additional piece. He said that clubs will split alcohol sales and all that revenue goes to the City. He said that parking can be negotiated.

Councilmember Blackwell requested a quarterly Event Center presentation from David Joyner to hear what needs to be done to gain more opportunities.

Councilmember Harris asked that the plan to reach the goal of covering operating expenses in 3 years be shared.

Councilmember Joyner expressed his appreciation, because he saw the efforts that were made to ensure people walking downtown after the event were safe.

Mr. Joyner stated it shows they use their feedback to figure out how to create a better experience.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.    *Received report; no formal action.***

**CRIME REPORT - Robert Hassell**

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.    *Item not addressed.***

**TRAVEL POLICY FOR MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL - Peter Varney**

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.    *Item not addressed.***

**NC LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES VOTING DELEGATE - Peter Varney**

Mr. Varney stated that Mayor Pro Tem Walker currently serves as the District Representative with the league.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker stated he would be willing to serve as the voting delegate and asked that the Councilmembers get the priority items to him.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION.** *By consensus, the City Council approved Mayor Pro Tem Walker as the NC League of Municipalities Voting Delegate.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

Without objection, the Mayor Pro Tem adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

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

**APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

Mayor Roberson stated he had received a request to amend the agenda to:

- Add a closed session relative to Personnel and Economic Development

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

**COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER**

City Manager Keith Rogers Jr. provided the following community update. The City Manager reported that:

- The City will host a Homelessness Roundtable from 10 – 11 a.m. on Tuesday at the Environmental Services Complex, 1221 Thorpe Road; a representative from the NC Coalition to End Homelessness will be there to facilitate a discussion with local agencies and the community regarding homelessness in our area
- Councilmember Joyner will host a Ward 3 meeting this Thursday from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Victory in Christ Ministry located at 1200 Old Wilson Road
- City's annual Arbor Day Celebration will take place at 10 a.m. on Friday, at the Rocky Mount Historic Tree Park located at 962 Bethlehem Road
- First Friday event will kickoff downtown on May 5<sup>th</sup>; there will be various businesses that will be taking part; live music and games
- for additional details, please visit the downtown website: [downtownrockymount.com](http://downtownrockymount.com)

**PUBLIC WORKS WEEK**

Mayor Roberson read a Proclamation proclaiming the week of May 21 through 27, 2023 as Public Works Week in the City of Rocky Mount and called upon all civic organizations and citizens to acquaint themselves with the issues involved in providing public works and to honor the men and women in public works whose dedication, diligence and professionalism keep our City a thriving community. The Mayor presented the proclamation to Brad Kerr, Public Works Director, and Brenton Bent, Water Resources Director, and staff of the Public Works and Water Resources Departments, and joined them for a photograph.

**PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Mayor opened the meeting for petitions from the public and outlined guidelines for public petitions. He called on the following

individuals for public comment and a brief summary of comments is outlined below:

***Michael Wayne -***

- Stated he is a fire captain here today to speak on behalf of the members of the department regarding the current state of their salary and benefits
- Stated that they fully support the recent 36% increase in starting salary at the Police Department, but they respond to the same dangerous calls that the Police Department does yet there has always been a gap in salary and benefits
- Stated in the past 3 and a half years, they have lost 20 employees to those departments which are paying more and have better benefits
- Stated they were veteran employees with 8 to 10 years of service who left to take an entry level position paying more
- Stated the 20 people who left for higher pay created vacancies in the Fire Department, but they still managed to provide complete coverage and led the City's emergency management efforts during the COVID pandemic

***Jeremy Wells -***

- Stated they he has been with the Rocky Mount Fire Department for a long time and as a supervisor he is making just a little over what the entry level officers will now be making
- Stated that many of them are now faced with big decisions as to whether to seek employment elsewhere where they will be fairly compensated for their levels of training and expertise
- Stated that they came to Rocky Mount Fire Department thinking that they would serve their full fire service career here but these recent gaps in salary and benefits have them all questioning if that was a wise choice

***Dr. Kim Koo -***

- Stated that citizens hear about deals that significantly impact them that are made behind closed doors without discussion or their consent like the proposed \$20 million dollars Judicial Center
- Stated that the local paper is very selective in what it wants to publish, it suppresses certain voices while amplifying others
- Stated that Americans should be humbler, spend less time telling others how to behave and spend more time correcting the disasters devastating our country

***Susan Perry Cole***

- Stated she came to again voice opposition on behalf of some Rocky Mount taxpayers to the City's possible investment in replacement of the Judicial Center building with an estimated cost of \$30 million
- Stated she also wants to express concern about the recent decision made to increase the starting salary of Rocky Mount Police Department to \$60,000 and would like to know how existing employees in other City departments maintain confidence that they are being paid a fair and reasonable wage when the increase was only granted to the Police Department personnel
- Stated that she is disturbed by recent news reports indicating that the Mayor intends to increase his enforcement of the rules of decorum against members of the City Council
- Stated that reprimanding elected officials who dare to forcefully speak out and give voice to views of citizens is undemocratic and unprecedented

***JoAn Jones -***

- Stated that a lot of the properties remain dilapidated and abandoned and it causes crime to continue in areas, particularly one on the corner of Grand Avenue and Atlantic Avenue
- Stated she has been unable to purchase the property because it is owned by heirs, and she wants it because it is not maintained, and it breeds failure
- She would like someone to request that Edgecombe County create an ordinance where residents and everyone else may purchase these properties

***Adrienne Copland -***

- Stated she would like to talk about the reporting of the crimes, particularly an article that was published on March 26<sup>th</sup> in reference to crimes that occurred on March 25<sup>th</sup>
- Stated that same article referenced a disturbance the prior weekend that the Telegram did not obtain from law enforcement services
- Stated she was unable to find any other information regarding a disturbance on March 18<sup>th</sup> and she finds it quite alarming that it was not put on the app
- Stated she would like to see every incident being put in the app in a timely manner and nothing being censored
- Stated she would like to know why the City of Rocky Mount radios for the Police traffic is scrambled while other departments are not

***Dr. Lisa Nelson Robinson***

- Stated she is in defense of the City Councilmembers being able to speak loudly and passionately about their record and push back on any negative narrative or misinformation
- Stated she is not for the \$30 million-dollar Judicial Center because she thinks the City should invest the money in getting to the root cause of crime and addressing it
- Stated that the media, certain parties, and the Rocky Mount Telegram like to falsely portray Rocky Mount being dangerous
- Stated she wants to talk about the positive, she wants the City Council to focus on solutions together and to not shut down people who speak truth forcefully because censorship does not work

***Mumtaz Shaik -***

- Stated at the last meeting a Councilman stood up to defend himself and his black colleagues after being accused of dereliction of duty by a member of the public, in the delivery of his defense he demonstrated confidence, eloquence, clarity of thought and he spoke the truth
- Stated that he followed the rules of free speech and did all the right things, yet he was singled out for lack of decorum and lack of courtesy
- Stated that it is indisputable that the lack of decorum and courtesy towards the City Council and the residents of Rocky Mount were demonstrated when some Council members attempted to sneak off to the state legislature to raise millions of dollars for the Judicial Center

***Darlene Spencer Harris***

- Stated that she is totally against the \$30 million dollars that must be invested into the Judicial Center
- Stated that the last meeting, our Councilmember that was elected by the people felt it was necessary for him to speak the truth to the public because there are lies that have been told
- Stated the Mayor had an apology printed in the paper, but she feels the Councilman's behavior was acceptable in her eyes as he was exercising freedom of speech
- Stated that if we don't have unity and inclusion, none of the goals that we are trying to accomplish will ever be reached

***Crystal Wimes-Anderson -***

- Stated she would like our City to start praying about things that we have going on because there's a lot of back and forth and black and white issues
- Stated that in the last 2 years she has been in this City, she has seen so much bickering and not much being done, and we need to learn to sit at the table and talk to each other and try to understand where each person is coming from
- Stated she just wants to thank the Parks and Recreation Department, Police Department, and everyone that came together and showed them a good time at the event this past weekend

***Curmilus Dancy -***

- Stated that people can attack the Council and no one stops them but when the public simply claps for something positive, it appears they are out of order
- Stated if the media would wait for a press release from the City or the Police Department then all of this wouldn't be going on, but everybody is rushing to try and put it out there first
- Stated he finds it interesting that certain people come to the podium to speak with the intention of turning people against the Council

***Cooper Blackwell -***

- Stated it is very important that we protect freedom of speech and we stand behind equity, workers pay, as well as stand behind leaders that are committed to serving our community
- Stated that we cannot be afraid of change, we cannot be afraid of conversation that is going to better us as a community
- Stated it is imperative that we pay attention to what is being said and the Council is a representative to the people and of the concerns that people have

***Troy Davis -***

- Stated he appreciates the raise for the Police Department because hopefully it will allow some of those vacancies to be filled
- Stated it was said that the City invested millions of dollars in him, and he would like to clarify and thank the City for investing \$900,00 in his mission to create clean, safe, and affordable housing
- Stated he received approximately 10% funding from the City to add to over \$9 million invested out of his own pocket

***Nehemiah Smith -***

- Stated the truth is in this current political climate, we are more concerned with wins and losses than solutions
- Stated instead of griping we should rally around our legislators to restore our sheriff's authority to issue gun permits, rally behind improving healthcare outcome and affordable housing for all, better health provisions and food security, and a sound public education system
- Stated he appreciates the fire department as well as the police department and he understands that we need to recruit other people but not at the expense of the dignity of our other employees
- Stated the fire department means as much to us as the police, the sanitation department, and everyone who works and does a great job for this City as it takes more than the police to keep the City safe and clean

***Bronson Williams -***



- Stated that just last year the City Council looked at a \$4.7 million dollar comp plan for the City
- Stated that staff that has been here for a long time should know that this City Council is about equitable outcomes and he does not think they're going to stop now
- Stated that it is the responsibility of the Council to be sure that we have adequate space for the Judicial Center and if we've outgrown it, it may not be the popular thing, but it may be the necessary thing

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that the Consent Agenda be approved, as amended, and that the following items on the Consent Agenda [Items 9(A) through 9(H)], be approved as follows and more specifically:

#### **A. RESOLUTION ENDORSING SUBMISSION OF NCDQ LOCAL ASSISTANCE FOR STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT (LASII) GRANT**

That **Resolution No. R-2023-24** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION FOR A LOCAL ASSISTANCE FOR STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT (LASII) GRANT** be adopted. The resolution endorses the submission of a grant application for a Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investment (LASII) grant in the amount of \$400,000 to fund a watershed study in the Edgemont Neighborhood. It was noted the project goals are to:

- Identify, inventory and assess the condition of stormwater pipes located under structures or within the foundation structural bearing envelope in the Edgemont Neighborhood
- Resolve the conflicts with solutions that improve water quality, reduce flooding and enhance the local neighborhood
- Prioritize the projects based on criticality and project benefits

#### **B. DEPOSITORY**

That **Resolution No. R-2023-25** entitled **MASTER RESOLUTION AND AUTHORIZATION FOR DEPOSITORY ACCOUNTS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT SERVICES** be adopted.

The City Council was advised the request was to add the interim Finance Director as an additional primary banking representative with the City Manager Keith Rogers Jr.

Council was advised that the authorized banking representative is the primary City contact granted authority on the PNC bank accounts and may delegate access and authority to others. The authorized representative may also make additions, deletions and other changes as needed based on municipal operational needs and changes in personnel responsible for banking transactions.

#### **C1. ANNEXATION NO. 330/MASON & PEARCE PROPERTY [S. HALIFAX RD.] PIN(s) 373911670078U, 373911760759U, 373912766624U, 373912769624, 373912861673U, 373910453202U, 373911651836U (CONTIGUOUS)**

That the following resolutions be adopted:

- Resolution No. R-2023-26 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. 330 - MASON & PEARCE PROPERTY (S. HALIFAX RD.) PIN(s) 373911670078U, 373911760759U, 373912766624U, 373912769624, 373912861673U, 373910453202U, 373911651836U (CONTIGUOUS); and
- Resolution No. R-2023-27 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. 330 - MASON & PEARCE PROPERTY (S. HALIFAX RD.) PIN(s) 373911670078U, 373911760759U, 373912766624U, 373912769624, 373912861673U, 373910453202U, 373911651836U (CONTIGUOUS); (schedules public hearing for May 8, 2023)

City Council was advised the resolutions certify the sufficiency of the petition pursuant to NCGS 160A-58.1 and call for a public hearing to be scheduled for the annexation.

It was noted that the Department of Development Services be instructed to prepare a feasibility study in connection with the annexation.

**C2. ANNEXATION NO. 331/ARROW ROAD (CONTIGUOUS)**

That the following resolutions be adopted:

- Resolution No. R-2023-28 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. 331 - ARROW ROAD (CONTIGUOUS); and
- Resolution No. R-2023-29 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. 331 - ARROW ROAD (CONTIGUOUS); (schedules public hearing for May 8, 2023)

City Council was advised the resolutions certify the sufficiency of the petition pursuant to NCGS 160A-58.1 and call for a public hearing to be scheduled for the annexation.

It was noted that the Department of Development Services be instructed to prepare a feasibility study in connection with the annexation.

**D. MODIFIED ELECTRIC SERVICE AGREEMENT/HUBBELL LENOIR CITY, INC. (HUBBELL)**

That a modified contract with Hubbell Lenoir City, Inc. (Hubbell)[formerly known as PenCell Plastics] that outlines the terms and conditions for the purchase of electric power be approved and placed on file in the City Clerk's office with (C-2008-33).

The City Council was advised that the contract increases the demand from 900 kilowatts to 2,000 kilowatts and will be billed under the City's Electric Rate Schedule - Large General Service (LGS).

**E. PROPERTY ACQUISITION - 332 AND 407 NORTH HOWELL STREET**

That acquisition of 332 and 407 North Howell Street be approved for the negotiated amounts listed below and that the Mayor or the City Manager be authorized to execute any documents necessary for the acquisitions.

The City Council was informed the properties are being acquired as part of redevelopment plans for the North Tillery Street, Gay Street and North Howell Street area of the Happy Hill neighborhood.

The City Council was provided with the following information:

- 332 North Howell Street - tax valuation is \$17,630; delinquent taxes are \$1,234.13; assessments are \$5,527.95
  - o City has negotiated acquiring the property for \$6,500
- 407 North Howell Street - tax valuation is \$15,200; delinquent taxes are \$81.48; grass mowing liens are \$1,087.04
  - o City has negotiated acquiring the property for \$6,500

**F. PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENT - WITHERSRAVENEL**

That an engineering services agreement with WithersRavenel (**C-2023-6**) to complete designs for the extension of water and sewer to the Peele Road Industrial site and to provide design and construction oversight for plans to prepare the northern site for development be approved @ a total cost of \$576,300 and that the Mayor be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the City. *(It was noted that the agreement contains task orders 1,2,3 and 6).*

The City Council was informed that in January 2023, the City was awarded a Golden LEAF Foundation SITE grant in the amount of \$1.5 million to extend the water and sewer lines to the Peele Road Industrial site.

**G. SURPLUS PROPERTY/406 BEAL STREET**

That **Resolution No. R-2023-30** entitled **RESOLUTION DECLARING REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 406 BEAL STREET AS SURPLUS PROPERTY** be adopted.

The resolution provided the following information to City Council:

- the City of Rocky Mount and Nash County have received a quit claim deed to property located at 406 Beal Street, Rocky Mount, North Carolina the ("Property") executed by Ethanuel Williams in accordance with the terms of a Consent Judgement settling a lawsuit between Wells Fargo Bank acting as Trustee for Morgan Stanley ABS Capital I Inc. Trust and Ethanuel Williams; and
- the Property is valued for tax purpose at \$40,150.00 (land value is \$16,250.00 and building value is \$23,900.00); and
- the Property has grass cutting assessments and unpaid City and County taxes in combined amount of approximately \$9,500.00; and
- North Carolina General Statute 160A - 268 permits local government to sell real property by advertisement and sealed bid; and
- the City and the County have agreed that it is in the best interest of both jurisdictions to dispose of the property and split the sale proceeds after the liens have been paid at closing; and
- the City and County have agreed to allow the City to dispose of the Property by soliciting sealed bids from prospective buyers.
- The Property is hereby declared surplus to the needs of the City

of Rocky Mount.

- The sale of the Property is deemed to be in the best interest of the City.
- The Property will be sold by advertising for sealed bids and will be sold to the highest bidder.
- The minimum acceptable sale price shall be \$30,000.00.
- The Mayor and City Clerk are hereby authorized to execute the deed and any other documents necessary to accomplish the disposal of the Property.
- The City Manager shall report to the City Council the results of the disposition of the Property.

The City Clerk shall publish notice of the information contained in the resolution pursuant to NCGS 160A-268.

**H1. REBID - DIRT STREET PROJECT LEWY LANE & TRIPLE COURT (recommended for approval):**

That the rebid for Dirt Street Project Lewy Lane & Triple Court be awarded to FSC III, LLC, dba Fred Smith Co. @ total cost of \$710,512.50 plus a five percent (5%) contingency in the amount of \$35,500 and that the Mayor and the City Clerk be authorized to execute the contract on behalf of the City. The bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2023-10**.

**H1. REBID - DIRT STREET PROJECT EMERALD-CORAL-TOPAZ (recommended for approval):**

That the rebid for Dirt Street Project Emerald-Coral-Topaz awarded to Weaver's Asphalt & Maintenance Co. @ total cost of \$1,288,155.00 plus a four-point three percent (4.3%) contingency in the amount of \$56,000 and that the Mayor and the City Clerk be authorized to execute the contract on behalf of the City. The bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2023-11**.

**INSTALLMENT PURCHASE CONTRACT FOR FY 2023 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS/ PUBLIC HEARING**

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to filing an application to the Local Government Commission for approval of an installment purchase contract for construction of improvements.

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

The City Council was provided with copies of the tabulation of proposals received on April 5, 2023 for financing a total of \$3,125,000 for the following construction projects:

Denton Street Pool Improvements	\$1,650,000
Business Services Center Improvements	\$1,100,000
Warehouse Improvements	\$375,000
TOTAL	\$3,125,000

The Council was advised that the most favorable rate was received from Webster Bank, National Association which proposes to finance the construction improvements for the Denton Street Pool Improvements (\$1,650,000); Business Services Center Improvements

(\$1,100,000) and Warehouse Improvements (\$375,000) at the fixed interest rate of 3.935% for 120 months.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the proposal of Webster Bank, National Association be accepted and that **Resolution No. R-2023-31** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING A PROPOSAL FROM WEBSTER BANK, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO ENTER INTO AN INSTALLMENT PURCHASE CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED \$3,125,000 IN ORDER TO FINANCE DENTON STREET POOL IMPROVEMENTS, BUSINESS SERVICES CENTER IMPROVEMENTS, AND WAREHOUSE IMPROVEMENTS AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF RELATED INSTRUMENTS, AND DETERMINING OTHER MATTERS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH** be adopted.

This resolution authorizes the City Manager and the Interim Director of Finance and any other officer of the City who shall have power to execute contracts on behalf of the City, and each of them, to execute the Agreement required in connection with the financing; and authorizes the City Clerk of the City, and any other officer of the City who shall have power to do so, to affix the official seal of the City to said Agreement and to attest the same.

Councilmember Harris thanked the Finance Department for their due diligence.

Councilmember Knight asked if the Denton Street Pool would be ready by the summer.

City Manager, Keith Rogers Jr., stated he would follow up with Councilmember Knight after the meeting.

The Mayor was informed that retired Fire Chief Corey Mercer had requested to speak and that Arnie Jones was present to speak. The Mayor stated he would allow them to speak.

***Corey Mercer -***

- Stated he would like to hear how we will sustain this increase in salary to the Police Department without any other cuts or tax increase
- Stated they are very much deserving of this increase, the concern is not that they should not get the increase, but that public safety operates as one unit, it moves in unison in every shooting, accident, homicide, suicide, and assault, they both respond
- Stated he feels the disparity between Fire and Police salaries is reckless
- Stated in just 50 days, we have regressed 20 years and made a separation of fire and police all over again
- Stated fire has been overlooked for being innovative and forward thinking when it comes to life saving measures
- Stated he would like public safety to be considered as one and to address the equity and pay

***Arnie Jones -***

- Stated he is speaking on behalf of Environmental Services, sanitation as it seems they are being overlooked
- Stated they have not seen any changes in their department; they are undermanaged and do not have the resources they should have

- Stated the pay should reflect what they do as they are an important part of the City; they keep the City going just as much as the fire department and the police department

Councilmember Knight stated there had been speculation going around that the employees should not come to the meeting to speak. He stated he wanted to ensure that there would be no retaliation in accordance with the City's grievance policy. He stated it takes courage for the employees to come forward with their concerns and he feels they should be heard.

Councilmember Joyner stated he feels sure the Mayor or the City Manager will speak to the items of response and that every department in the City is valued.

Councilmember T.J. Walker thanked everyone for coming to speak and asked if there was someone that could provide a quick answer to when the last time a pay plan and study in the City of Rocky Mount was executed and approved.

Councilmember Blackwell stated someone in Finance and Human Resources should have this information. He stated that two (2) pay studies were commissioned under Mrs. Small-Toney and asked if they ever received them, were able to discuss them, or able to review them. He stated they are spoken of frequently, but it is up to staff to present them to the City Council. He asked City Manager Rogers if his leadership could answer.

City Manager Rogers stated his number one goal is to always make sure the City is a great place to work. He stated out of respect for the organization he will not entertain department versus department. He stated recently there was an opportunity, due to savings from vacancies in one department, to move forward with a recommendation to ensure that a significant number of vacancies could be filled in the organization that he has inherited. He stated that a class and compensation study is underway and he is committed to coming back with meaningful recommendations. City Manager Rogers stated that he is not able to speak about the details of the study at this time, not out of lack of knowledge but out of respect for the workforce. He stated the employees do need to be communicated with effectively without trying to litigate all of the various employee issues in a public forum. He stated he is committed to providing an update regarding the class and compensation study that will have an impact to all the employees in the entire workforce.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that he appreciated the response that everyone's department will be reviewed with sincerity and market accurate information. He stated that it is important to have a budget that can be sustained without unnecessary tax increase. He stated that that every member of the City of Rocky Mount team has a right to be heard and appreciates that there were no disrespectful comments. Councilmember Blackwell asked City Manager Rogers if he

could give the employees confidence that they will not be retaliated against for speaking out.

City Manager Rogers stated the City is not an organization that retaliates against people that are exercising their rights.

Councilmember Harris stated he was glad City Manager Rogers was on the team and that there are many challenges ahead, but everyone is going to work hard address them.

Mayor Roberson stated he appreciates the fire department, police department, sanitation department and each and every member of the City of Rocky Mount. He also stated that everybody on this this council that he has spoken to has expressed a sincere desire to make sure that everybody is treated as opportunely and equitably as possible.

**CLOSED SESSION (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)**

A Closed Session was requested relative to matters concerning personnel and property acquisition.

Motion was made by Councilmember T.J. Walker, seconded by Councilmember Harris and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 5:14 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-629** at the end of **Minute Book 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, by consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.



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Kim Batts  
City Clerk