

May 22, 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 Pro Tem T.J. Walker, Jr. presiding.

Councilmembers present: Richard Joyner, T.J. Walker, Jr., Lige Daughtridge, Tom Harris and Jabaris Walker.

Members absent: Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr; Councilmembers André D. Knight and Reuben C. Blackwell, IV.

Staff present: Keith Rogers Jr., City Manager; Kim Batts, City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; JoSeth Bocook, Interim 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; 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 Pro Tem 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:

- Special Called Committee of the Whole meeting held January 23, 2023; and
- Regular Scheduled City Council meeting held January 23, 2023.

The minutes of the Special Called Committee of the Whole meeting held January 23, 2023 are as follows:

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2023, IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING WITH MAYOR ROBERSON PRESIDING:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

André D. Knight
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
 Richard Joyner
 Lige Daughtridge
 Tom Harris
 Jabaris Walker
 Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.

Member Absent: T.J. Walker

STAFF PRESENT:

Peter F. Varney
 Kim Batts
 Richard J. Rose
 Robert Hassell
 Kenneth Hunter
 Elton Daniels
 Kirk Brown
 Greg Cotten
 Cornelia McGee-Anthony
 Kream Mosley
 Monica Brantley
 Kena Cofield-Jones
 Abdul Baloch
 Latasha Hall
 Selena Crudup-Richardson

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Roberson called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. Kirk Brown introduced new Media Relations Specialist, Selena Crudup-Richardson.

CRIME STATISTICS - ROBERT HASSELL

Chief Robert Hassell presented a summary of city-wide crime numbers to the City Council for December 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 the 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	December 2021	December 2022	+/-	YTD 2021	YTD 2022	+/-
Total	141	144	3	1794	1917	123

- December 2022 crime numbers for murders, aggravated assault and shooting into occupied building(s)/vehicle(s) (map of locations provided):
 - Aggravated assault cases and investigations:
 - Aggravated assault cases = 12
 - Aggravated assault victims = 22
 - Number cases with multiple victims = 6
 - Aggravated assault arrests = 1
 - Aggravated assault cases cleared = 1
 - Case Dispositions (total = 12):
 - Cases cleared by arrest = 1
 - Inactive cases = 3
 - Open cases = 8

- o Crime Report:
 - Murder, aggravated assault and shooting into occupied building/vehicle: total victims = 26
 - *Victims with injuries = 13
 - *Victims without injuries = 13
- o ShotSpotter and Citizen calls City-wide:
 - Shots fired = 45
 - Calls resulting in shell casings found = 18
 - Number shell casings found = 157
 - Number shell casings found (year to date) = 2,895
 - Number of Firearms Seized = 24
 - Number firearms seized (year to date) = 457
 - Weapon violation arrests = 0
- 2022 Homicide Crime Report:
 - Total of Incidents = 17
 - Total of Victims = 20
 - Total of Closed Cases = 15

Chief Hassell reported that of the 17 incidents, 58% were domestic related. He also provided the following percentages on age:

- 30% of the 20 victims were under 17 years old
- 10% - 18 to 21
- 15% - 22 to 29
- 30% - 30 to 39

Offenders charged with committing the homicides:

- 37% - 18 to 21
- 21% - 22 to 29

Councilmember Questions/Comments:

Councilmember Blackwell asked if there was any relationship between the number of violent crimes and deaths to gangs and gang activity.

Chief Hassell responded that there are 2 drive-bys that have not been closed, so he can't say those are gang related. He believes none of the others had any connections with gangs. He said that drugs and alcohol were factors in some of the incidents.

Mayor Roberson asked if there is an increase in the number of domestic violence cases.

Chief Hassell said that he didn't have the information on hand but would get numbers for the last 3 years to present to Council.

Mayor Roberson stated he felt it would be helpful to look at trends and try to get the number down. He acknowledged that the job of the police is to be reactive, but it would be in everyone's best interest to find initiatives.

Chief Hassell shared that they have been tracking incidents involving validated gang members over the past 3 to 4 years. He said that the numbers have been tracking downward. He thought an awareness presentation would be beneficial after speaking with someone who suspected her grandsons were gang members. He said that prevention and intervention are important, and he wants to educate the community. He expressed his hope that the Gang Awareness meeting would be well attended.

Councilmember Harris asked that Chief Hassell include the numbers for drug arrest trends in his 3-year report.

Chief Hassell stated he would look at updating the slides to address drug activity.

Councilmember Joyner said that he hopes the community organizations will be given the support, education, tools and assets they need. He wants communities to be given the opportunity to operate with institutional support not institutional takeover.

Chief Hassell said that he is making sure that his department is accessible for community watch and neighborhood meetings.

Councilmember Harris said that he was pleased that the DARE program was reinstated.

Councilmember Knight shared that he received a recording of shots being fired that didn't sound like regular shots.

Chief Hassell said that he heard an audio recording from a citizen with what sounded like a fully automatic assault rifle. He mentioned previously reporting a handgun that was illegally altered and made fully automatic.

Councilmember Joyner said that a request should be made to the state for a municipality to be able to ban assault weapons.

Chief Hassell said that he is a member of Metro Chiefs Association and they are looking at working with legislators to look at possibly stiffening laws. He said that someone caught with a gun just fired in the city can only be charged with discharging a weapon in the City limits, which is a city code violation. He stated they would like to see a stricter punishment since that sort of activity puts others' lives in danger.

Councilmember Harris asked if the guns were confiscated.

Chief Hassell confirmed the firearms are confiscated.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if the penalty could be increased if the weapon is an automatic weapon.

Chief Hassell responded that any weapon fired in the city is reckless endangerment of the public. He would like something more punitive than a city ordinance violation.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he wanted to help clarify Councilmember Blackwell's question. He asked if the gun confiscated was an automatic weapon and illegal, would it automatically be escalated?

Chief Hassell confirmed that automatic and illegal weapons would be automatically escalated.

Chief Hassell said that a gun that is altered is turned over to ATF Task Force officers. They work with their federal partners to see if more time would be given in state or federal court. Chief Hassell also reported that every month ATF Task Force officers work with ATF, the District Attorney's Office and the US Attorney's Office to identify offenders whose cases meet the criteria to go federal.

Councilmember Daughtridge asked if there was an issue with individuals 18 or younger being found with guns.

Chief Hassell replied that if the question was the number of guns found on individuals 18 or younger, he would have to get back to Council with those numbers.

Chief Hassell stated there are different reasons why guns are seized. He said that some were found by citizens, domestic violence situations taken for safekeeping and instances of crimes being committed.

Other Police Stats:

- Calls for Service - 7,391
- On-View Arrests & Warrant Service - 68
- Traffic Accidents - 148
- Accident Property Damage - \$706,800
- Traffic Stops - 621
- Citations Issued - 134
- Warnings Issued - 75

Community Events:

- PALS Basketball Game
- Cops and Kids Toy Giveaway
- Rocky Mount Christmas Parade
- Guys with Ties at Baskerville Elementary

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received report; no formal action

TRAVEL POLICY FOR MAYOR AND COUNCIL - Peter Varney

Interim City Manager Peter Varney proposed that the Mayor and City Council Members follow the same policy that applies to City employees with the following changes:

- Out-of-town travel by the Mayor or members of the City Council for the purposes shown below are approved. All other out of town travel by the Mayor or members of the City Council requires approval by the City Council.
- Any classes, programs or meetings at the North Carolina School of Government in Chapel Hill, North Carolina or any other location hosted by the School of Government.
- Annual meetings of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, ElectriCities, National League of Cities or U.S. Conference of Mayors.
- The meeting of any committee or board to which the Mayor or any City Council member may be appointed or elected representing the City or the region in which the City is located such as a member of the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency or a representative of Region 5 for the North Carolina League of Municipalities Legislative Advisory Committee.
- Any travel to Raleigh or Washington, D.C. to meet with legislators or representatives of administrative agencies such as DOT or DENR.
- Any conferences or training events that are specially listed in the adopted budget.
- The City Clerk will arrange for the most economical and reasonable mode of transportation for long-distance travel by the Mayor or member of the City Council.
- The City will reimburse the cost of travel by the Mayor or members of the City Council using personally owned vehicles.

- The City Clerk will gather receipts and documentation for travel by the Mayor and member of the City Council and will submit the appropriate forms required to secure reimbursement.

Councilmember Comments/Questions:

Councilmember Knight asked if travel to NCBEMO could be added.

Mr. Varney said that he thought it was a subset of the National League, but it could be identified specifically.

Councilmember Blackwell asked about Economic Development activities.

Mr. Varney said that travel related to economic development activities could be added.

Councilmember Daughtridg asked for suggestions regarding working with the adopted budget and the number of options available for attendance.

Mr. Varney responded that annually there are amounts budgeted for conferences and school. He said the policy identifies those that have been pre-approved.

Councilmember Daughtridg stated that the budget is not unlimited.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that there have always been enough funds in the budget. He said the individuals who would like to attend additional conferences have to get the majority to agree.

Councilmember Daughtridg asked if the budget has been depleted, how will it be determined if someone can go to an approved event.

Mr. Varney said that he thinks that can be worked out.

Councilmember Blackwell stated in the past there has been surplus. He feels the bottom line is coming back with ideas to improve efficiency or quality of life for the citizens.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that many measures that were learned from traveling through the years have been adopted. He stated a number of improvements, initiatives and programs came from interfacing with other cities and city officials around the country.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received report; no formal action

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Roberson requested a motion for City Council to enter into a closed session for Attorney Client Privilege.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridg, and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 5:09 p.m.

The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as **ESM-626** at the end of **Minute Book 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

ADJOURNMENT

Without objection, the Mayor Roberson adjourned the meeting at 5:59 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 Pro Tem called on Councilmember Daughtridge to state the item he would like to request to be added to the agenda.

Councilmember Daughtridge requested the following item be added to the agenda for discussion:

- Requested that the City Manager draft a letter and the City Clerk draft a resolution to be approved at the next meeting

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he could read the information to be included at the time the item is addressed.

By consensus, the agenda was amended, as requested.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

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

- Stated City Council meetings are now being broadcast live on our Public Access TV Channel, channel 19 on Optimum cable
- Stated Council meetings can also be seen on our city's website as well as the city's YouTube page.
- Stated the city's Public Works and Water Resources departments are hosting an equipment show from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday at the Environmental Services Complex located at 1221 Thorpe Road
- Stated this is an exciting and ideal opportunity for families and children to get a close-up look at some of our city equipment including our trucks, bulldozers, tractors, and other equipment
- Downtown Live returns to the Imperial Centre on the lawn at 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 25, the music will be provided by Part Time Party Time band.
- Stated the newly renovated Denton Street Pool opens this weekend, residents will notice a host of improvements to the pool including new diving boards and waterslides, we have also replastered and updated the filtration system.
- Stated the early season hours for the pool through June 11th are 1:30 p.m. through 5:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays
- Stated Black Panther: Wakanda Forever will be shown at our next Lawn Chair Theatre on Friday June 2nd on the lawn at the Imperial Centre beginning at dusk
- Stated the next First Friday Celebration is set for Friday, June 2nd from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., and will be held in downtown Rocky Mount; will feature live music, food, games, and more
- Stated there will be a job fair open house from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 14th, and encouraged everyone to come out to see what opportunities are available for employment with the City of Rocky Mount; there will also be a prize drawing

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:

Mumtaz Shaik -

- Stated that judging from the paltry salary of sanitation workers, she feels they are undervalued and underprivileged as a group working for the City
- Stated that trash collection and waste disposal are vital for the protection of people, animals, and the environment
- Stated these men should be considered as part of a larger group of providers of public safety as it is not the responsibility of one department only

Dr. Kim Koo -

- Stated that most of the U.S. population live from paycheck to paycheck
- Stated she is asking the Council to make raising the impoverished people in Rocky Mount out of poverty as the number one priority going forward
- Stated concerted efforts must be put to recruit and train the unemployed and the City needs to negotiate terms that are favorable to the overall growth of the economy here
- Stated that consultants are always hired for projects at a great expense to the taxpayers; she feels if another study is contemplated the unemployed should be paid to do the necessary surveys which can be pulled together by the consultants

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and unanimously carried that the Consent Agenda, items A - F, be approved as follows and more specifically:

A. TEMPORARY STREET CLOSING (recommended for approval):

Request from the Emmanuel Chapel Original Free Will Baptist Church for temporary closure of the 600 Block of Henry Street - Saturday, June 10, 2023 - 10 am to 2 pm for Community Day Event was approved.

B. FIREWORKS DISPLAYS REQUESTS

The following requests for the fireworks displays were approved:

- The City of Rocky Mount - at 550 Independence Drive (Sports Complex) scheduled for July 3, 2023;
- Englewood Baptist Church - on Church Property at 1350 South Winstead Avenue scheduled for July 4, 2023; and
- Rise Church - at 3520 Bishop Road scheduled for July 2, 2023

C. 2023 COMMUNITY WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING GRANT

That receipt of the 2023 Community Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant be authorized in the amount of \$5,500 and that the Mayor, City Clerk, and City Attorney be authorized to execute any required documentation and/or certifications and subsequent grant agreement on behalf of the City. It was noted that the grant purpose is to fund public education efforts and there is a 20 percent match in the amount of \$1,100.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY X.7.38

That Administrative Policy No. X.7.38, which establishes rates for electric vehicle charging, be approved and that **ORDINANCE NO. O-2023-69** entitled **ORDINANCE APPROVING ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY NO. X.7.38 ENTITLED "POLICY: ELECTRIC RATE SCHEDULE - ELECTRIC VEHICLE LEVEL II CHARGING RATES"** be adopted.

E. REBID - BREAKAWAY LIGHT POLES

That the rebid for Preventative Maintenance on City Owned Generators for 2023 be awarded to Gregory Poole Equipment Co. @ total cost of \$95,387.11 and a purchase order issued in accordance with City Council's award. The bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2023-13**.

F. BUDGET REVIEW FY 2024

The City Council approved the following proposed schedule for FY 2024 budget review and work sessions:

Date & Time	Description	Topics Covered	Location
Monday, May 22 4 p.m.	Presentation of City Manager Proposed FY 2023-2024 Budget Delivered to Council	General Presentation	Council Chambers
Wednesday, May 24 7 p.m.	Virtual Town Hall on Proposed Budget		Zoom and YouTube
Thursday, May 25, 4 p.m.	Council Worksession		Committee Room
Wednesday, May 31, 4 p.m.	Council Worksession		Committee Room
<i>Additional dates if necessary</i>			
Monday, June 12, 7 p.m.	Budget Public Hearing (during Regular Council Meeting)	Public Hearing	Council Chamber
Monday, June 26, 4 p.m.	Budget Adoption (during Regular Council Meeting)	Adoption of Budget Ordinance	Council Chamber

PUBLIC HEARING/REZONING REQUEST

The Mayor Pro Tem 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 James D. Gailliard as representative for the property owner Word Tabernacle Church to rezone four parcels [PINs 373920809143, 373800991544, 373800906177, 373920908350] having a total area of ±59.41 acres addressed as 9041 and 9053 West Mount Drive from Nash County R-30 to O-I

Mayor Pro Tem Walker noted the public hearing was continued from the May 9, 2023 City Council meeting and opened the public hearing.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker recognized the following who wished to speak on the item:

Kyle Johnson –

- Stated the goal of the church is to impact the people by empowering them to thrive by developing a tangible place on West Mount Drive where people can go to socialize, exercise, find adequate housing, memorialize loved ones who have passed on and create memories
- Stated not only does he believe in the work of the church but also in the heart of the organization as the goal is to create a space that does the most good for the most people including the local community
- Stated the church has a track record of positive impacts and their hope is that the City Council will help them help people by voting to rezone this area
- Stated while people come to a special event and to a venue space for a single event, it exposes people to a region and this wedding and restaurant space will provide positive exposure for the City

No one else from the public came forward and Mayor Pro Tem Walker declared the public hearing closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember T.J. Walker, and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2023-70** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND MAP OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

PUBLIC HEARING/REZONING REQUEST

The Mayor Pro Tem 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 James D. Gailliard as representative for the property owner Word Tabernacle Church to rezone the ±7.11 acre parcel located at 9121 West Mount Drive from Nash County R-30 to O-I2

Mayor Pro Tem Walker noted the public hearing was continued from the May 9, 2023 City Council meeting.

The Mayor Pro Tem opened the public hearing and no one appeared.

The Mayor Pro Tem closed the public hearing.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2023-71** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND MAP OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

LETTER/RESOLUTION (added in open meeting)

Mayor Pro Tem Walker stated this item was added today for letter to our local legislation. Mayor Pro Tem Walker recognized Councilmember Daughtridge to relay the requested actions.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated the following requests:

- for the City Manager to write a letter asking the Nash County Commissioners to not put forth any legislation that target the City of Rocky Mount solely or collectively whether for annexations or any other issues without a prior resolution approved by the Nash County Commissioners and officially delivered to the City Council for review
- for the City Clerk, with input from the City Council, to draft a resolution that can be reviewed at the next City Council meeting similar to the letter to be sent to the Nash County Commissioners
- for the City Manager to write another letter to the local legislation to not vote for any legislation to limit or restrict the annexation authority that is currently legal in the State of North Carolina and also that local legislators not to put forth legislation limiting the powers of the City of Rocky Mount as currently allowed by law, including voluntary annexation

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that Senate Bill 169 was put forth by our local legislation which would prevent the City of Rocky Mount and other municipalities in Nash County from being able to proceed with satellite annexations. He expressed his appreciation to Mayor Roberson for sending a letter to each Mayor of the 12 municipalities within Nash County informing them of this legislation as well as the City Council.

Councilmember Joyner made a motion to approve the recommendations from Councilmember Daughtridge.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker requested to add opposing Senate Bills 675 and 248 to the letters.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he was not as familiar with Senate Bill 675 and requested to place a hold on adding it to the letters.

Councilmember Joyner amended his motion to add Senate Bill 248 to the letters opposing Senate Bill 169, motion was seconded by Councilmember Jabaris Walker and unanimously carried that the City Manager be instructed to draft letters to the Nash County Commissioners and the local legislation opposing Senate Bills 169 and 248 and that the City Clerk, with input from the City Council, draft a resolution that can be reviewed at the next City Council meeting.

Council Comments

Councilmember Harris requested to note that he had previously expressed a concern related to making sure that the individuals who owned the properties on West Mount Drive would be responsible for any cost if sewer was to be run from the existing City line out to where the properties are located. He stated that concern has been addressed with an agreement being in place.

City Manager's Proposed FY 2024 Annual Fiscal Plan

City Manager Keith Rogers Jr. stated he was pleased to present the proposed fiscal plan for 2024 as well as the five-year capital improvement for fiscal year 2024-2028. He thanked the City staff, particularly Ken Hunter, the assistant to the City Manager, for the diligent efforts he and his team have committed to this budget not only this year but each and every year. The City Manager presented the following:

SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

- Built on sound fiscal practices
- Balanced Budget: Revenues = Expenditures
- Structurally Balanced - achieved with one-time revenues being dedicated only in support of non-recurring expenditures and to pay down debt
- Enterprise Fund Integrity - use of fund balance and transfer from Enterprise funds are in alignment with adopted financial policies to preserve our financial integrity
- Budget as a policy document - provides a broader financial picture inclusive of debt service, fund balance, capital transfers as well as performance measures

Mr. Rogers stated the City's adherence to best practices ultimately benefits the residents and this year's budget documents have been created in accordance with the program guidelines for the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget presentation award. He explained that GFOA established a

distinguished budget presentation awards program in 1984 to encourage and assist state and local governments in preparing budget documents of the very highest quality that reflect both the guidelines established by the National Advisory Council on state and local budgeting, and GFOA's own best practices. He stated that governments succeeding in achieving these guidelines are then recognized through the award program. He added that the City of Rocky Mount has not received this award distinction since 2021, but he believes that this year's documents are award worthy and will put the city back amongst the elite with this recognition.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

City Manager Rogers stated in crafting this year's budget, there were multiple considerations that were consolidated into the two-prong theme for fiscal year 24, investing in our organization and planning for the future today. He stated that the ratings listed below are very good ratings for a city of our size, financial position, and economic condition. He explained that across the three primary rating agencies our bond rating is very important for many reasons, but primarily it impacts our cost of doing business, mainly financing capital projects.

City of Rocky Mount Ratings are in bold print

Moody's Investor Services	Standard & Poor's	Fitch Ratings
Aaa	AAA	AAA
Aa1	AA+	AA+
Aa2	AA	AA
Aa3	AA-	AA-
A1	A+	A+
A2	A	A
A3	A-	A-
Baa1	BB+	BB+
Baa2	BBB	BBB
Baa3	BBB-	BBB-
	Non Investment Grade	

FUND BALANCE SUMMARY

Mr. Rogers stated that there are established guidelines for preserving an adequate fund balance in each of the City's operating funds to maintain financial stability as well as providing prudent management for the reserves. This budget maintains the responsible maintenance of fund balance within our policy guidelines and well above the minimum prescribed by North Carolina law.

Focus Areas:

- Best in Class Government
- Customer Service
- Public Health & Safety
- Economic Vitality
- Quality of Life

Mr. Rogers explained that these focus areas provide the foundation for performance-based budgeting and will serve as a conduit for effective service delivery. He stated that this coming fiscal year he will work with the City's executive team to update and refine strategic performance goals for each agency of the City and develop a standardized method for reporting our progress. He continued by stating that this will include participation with the North Carolina Benchmarking Project administered by the UNC School of Government.

City Manager Rogers stated the total proposed budget for FY 2024 is an eight (8) percent increase from the budget that was adopted for the current fiscal year and the funding level was achieved without any increase to the City's property tax rate which remains at 68.5 cents per 100 of assessed value. He explained that last fall City Council received the results of a cost-of-service analysis dealing with the operational and capital needs of our water and sewer utilities which included a recommended increase in rates for water and sewer services, this proposed fiscal plan includes the initiation of these rate adjustments.

OVERVIEW

- Total Proposed FY 2024 Budget: \$258,587,000
 - 8.0% increase from FY 2023
 - No increase to property tax (remains 68.5 cents/\$100 assessed value)
- 7.5% increase in Water. Increase for average residential customer - \$1.56 per month
- 8.5% increase in Sewer. Increase for average residential customer - \$1.56 per month
- 2.5% increase in Solid Waste Transfer Station fee. No impact to residential customer

City Manager Rogers provided the following summary:

FUND SUMMARY

Fund	FY 2023 Adopted	FY 2024 Proposed	\$ Dif.	% Dif.
General	84,004,050	92,985,000	8,980,950	10.7%
Surface Transportation (Powell Bill)	3,447,000	2,827,000	(620,000)	-18.0%
Emergency Telephone	250,000	250,000	-	0.0%
Electric	84,984,700	91,007,000	6,022,300	7.1%
Gas	26,475,000	27,000,000	525,000	2.0%
Water	15,843,360	19,280,000	3,436,640	21.7%
Sewer	18,883,000	18,743,000	(140,000)	-0.7%
Stormwater	5,470,000	6,495,000	1,025,000	18.7%
Total	\$239,357,110	\$258,587,000	\$19,229,890	8.0%

Mr. Rogers stated the proposed budget in the coming fiscal year for the general fund operation is nearly \$93 million, which is a 10.7% increase from the level that was adopted for the current fiscal year. He stated in the upcoming budget work sessions the forecast of revenues across sources that enable the City to balance

this budget without raising taxes or increasing the appropriation of unassigned fund balance will be reviewed.

City Manager Rogers stated that emerging from the COVID-19 global health pandemic, the employment landscape has evolved significantly. He explained that the competition for qualified workers and the unique demands of employee retention make investing in our organization a top priority this budget year. He stated these factors were compounded by the long-awaited review of the classification and compensation structure that has been under review and is now complete.

City Manager Rogers provided the following information:

INVESTMENT IN OUR ORGANIZATION

- Implementation of Classification & Compensation Plan Recommendations
 - Raise minimum hourly rate to NC Living Wage (\$16.83/hour for 2,080 equivalency)
 - Includes market-driven, competitive pay grades - including 3 distinct pay plans for general government, public safety and energy services
 - Increases career ladder opportunities
- Continues "pay for performance" adjustments

Mr. Rogers added that the City's employees are the most valuable resource and he will continue in his ongoing commitment to ensuring that they feel that value.

Mr. Rogers stated that this is also a pivotal time for the City of Rocky Mount and the City must be prepared to respond to the opportunities for growing the population base and taking advantage of the continued above average growth experience in our neighboring Research Triangle area. He explained that the City has remained committed to increasing and sustaining affordable housing options, particularly for families earning less than one hundred percent of the area median income. He added that the City has long recognized the benefits of having a robust and vibrant downtown.

The City Manager provided the following information:

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE-TODAY

- \$1,000,000 appropriation to address key planning needs
 - Citywide Comprehensive Plan Update
 - Downtown Master Plan
 - Comprehensive Housing Plan

Mr. Rogers stated that he believes that this undertaking will allow the City to capitalize on the momentum of today as well as provide a blueprint for future growth. He stated that while planning, the City would continue to fund the strategic investments in these priority areas. He explained the proposed budget maintains the \$1.2 million in annual funding for housing related programs and initiatives and provides \$600,000 for downtown focused initiatives.

He added that the City's fiscal plan is responsible and sustainable, and he believes it addresses present needs while also positioning the City strategically for the future.

City Manager Rogers stated the budget documents are available for viewing on the City's website and a printed copy is available for viewing in the City Clerk's Office and Braswell Memorial Library.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker thanked the City Manager for his leadership. Mayor Pro Tem Walker offered condolences to Kenneth Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation on the loss of his mother.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, by consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.



Kim Batts
City Clerk