

September 25, 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.

*joining remotely

Staff present: Keith Rogers Jr., City Manager; Kim Batts, City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Emilie Pinkston, Director of the Department of Development Services; JoSeth Bocook, Deputy Director of the Department of Development Services; Joel Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Gregory Cotten, Chief Technology Officer; Latasha Hall, Director of Business and Collections Services; Darvin Moore, Fire Chief; Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Kirk Brown, Communications and Marketing Director; 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 Harris, and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the minutes of the Regular Scheduled City Council meeting held May 22, 2023 be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Mayor Roberson stated a request was made by Councilmember Knight to add the following items to the agenda:

- Consideration of a 15% increase for sanitation workers
- Consideration of a 6% COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) for City of Rocky Mount employees who did not receive at least 5% increase after the pay study implementation

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and the motion to amend the agenda as requested failed by a vote of 3-4 (Councilmembers Knight, Blackwell, Joyner ayes; Councilmembers T.J. Walker, Daughtridge, Harris and Jabaris Walker nays).

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

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

- Stated the comedy Clue on Stage will be performed at the Imperial Centre next week, showtimes are 7:30 p.m. for the Thursday through Saturday shows and a 2 p.m. matinee for the Sunday October 8th show.
- Stated on October 6th, the public is encouraged to attend the Faith & Blue Prayer ceremony for our police department and it will begin at 10 a.m.
- Stated the First Friday celebration in Downtown Rocky Mount will take place on October 6th at 5 p.m.; there will be a variety of activities taking place; for more details visit downtownrockymount.com.

Councilmember Knight asked if there is an update on fire station number 2, if it is still moving forward.

City Manager Rogers responded the project is still moving forward and there will be an update provided at an upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting.

Councilmember Knight asked if there is a restriction on staff speaking with Councilmembers when they request public information from them. He stated for example if he is in a meeting with constituents and if the constituent asks a Councilmember how many officers are employed and he asks the chief, is the chief allowed to give that information.

City Manager Rogers responded he is not sure about that example but if Council has specific questions, he would be happy to get him some answers.

Councilmember Knight asked City Attorney Jep Rose if it is public information, should it be withheld from Council and how Councilmembers should proceed with that.

City Attorney Rose responded if it is public information, it should not be withheld and the City Manager can set up a procedure for that.

Councilmember Knight asked City Manager Rogers if that procedure is in place because he is not familiar with it.

City Manager responded if he has any questions to let him know and he will make sure that Council gets the answers they are looking for.

Councilmember Knight requested to receive the procedure in writing.

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:

Richard Petway

- Stated he is here to ask why this City voted down giving the City employees a raise

- Stated he understands that the City Manager came into office and gave both the police and fire departments significant increases, but he does not understand why other City employees had to wait over 90 days and were still denied
- Stated the fire and police departments do deserve a raise but so does every employee of the City of Rocky Mount

Clay Turner

- Stated he is here today to support a pay raise for the City sanitation workers
- Stated in his neighborhood there is more of a need for citizens to have good paying jobs and to have a community that believes in and shows that all labor has dignity rather than a rookie cop riding around making \$60,000 a year
- Stated there does not need to be a study for months more to figure out what the market is or how little the City can get away with paying an overwhelmingly black sanitation workforce
- Stated the police were given a minimum starting salary of \$60,000 in one night, which was deserved, but it puts us out of line with the rest of the state
- Stated sanitation workers are being paid less than what they are in Raleigh and Durham

Dr. Thomas L. Walker

- Stated he is here to speak to Council about the importance of supporting all of the City workers, but especially the sanitation workers
- Stated he has been Pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church since 1970 and he has seen a lot of things come and go in this City
- Stated that back in the 1960s they struggled getting representatives on this Council that the people felt would be more sensitive to their needs
- Stated it is hard hat workers that run the City, if the City Manager does not show up for work it goes unnoticed but if the sanitation workers do not pick up trash in this City it is a problem
- Asked why a 15% raise for the sanitation workers seems so significant to some
- Stated they are at the bottom and we can continue to accept that or take action to bring them up
- Stated he will be right out there on his walker walking with the sanitation workers if something is not done to help them

James Wren

- Stated he is here today in support of the pay raise for the sanitation workers
- Stated he is the past president of UE 150 Chapter of the Rocky Mount Engine Plant and the vice president of the Phoenix Historic Society of Edgecombe County
- Stated the sanitation workers and the workers of Rocky Mount need fair treatment
- Stated if the police can get a 36% increase without discussion then sanitation workers should be supported also
- Stated he would like Council to reconsider the motion made by Councilmember Knight to consider a pay increase

Nathlyn Ohree

- Stated she has been praying for the City Council to come to a mutual agreement with the sanitation workers
- Stated she was glad to hear about the consideration for the other City workers
- Stated the City workers are an inspiration to the citizens

Arnie Jones

- Stated at a previous Council Meeting it was said that in 90 days they would hear back and they would be taken care of but they never heard anything back
- Stated they just want answers because they work hard and they want their due respect
- Asked Council to please stop overlooking the sanitation workers

Curmilus Dancy

- Stated he is amazed about how some people have addressed the Council about a wage increase for the sanitation workers
- Stated he has heard some comparison in wages with Durham and Raleigh, but no comparison was made for the police when they got their increase
- Stated he feels the issue is about supporting the new City Manager and being against Councilmember Knight

Council Comments

Knight -

- Stated that listening to Dr. Walker and the others that have come out to support sanitation workers has been really taxing on him since the last Council meeting
- Stated that it is a shame that this City can brag about the super majority but cannot get an increase passed for the sanitation workers and other City employees
- Stated it is sad when items that were not on the agenda for \$200,000 can be approved and the manager can be given the authorization to go up to \$100,000 to buy land at an auction but cannot even consider the sanitation workers and other City employees that did not receive anything from the comp study

Blackwell -

- Stated he is quarantined due to COVID and is very thankful to be able to speak
- Said when Dr. King came to Rocky Mount he stated that the time is always right to do what is right
- Stated poor people cannot wait as our economy is built upon everyone having the opportunity to be valued with their lives and their life's work
- Stated if all 8 of them can come to an agreement unofficially about the Casino, it is hard for him to understand why they cannot all come to an agreement that every worker at every level at the City of Rocky Mount should be valued
- Stated workers in general are striking because they cannot live in the City where they work because they are not being paid a salary that has kept up competitively with the real estate markets that happen in a growing economy
- Stated they go through great lengths in Rocky Mount to invest in the future and to have a more robust and inclusive economy that makes room for everyone
- Stated if necessary, this would be taken up at every meeting until a wage is passed that is reflective of the dignity and the hard work the sanitation workers are putting in and every member of City staff
- Stated wages are a thing that Council has input on
- Stated the City Manager showed everyone that they do not have to wait and compare themselves with other people, if it is not working then we can adjust it and fix it
- Stated he believes the citizens of Rocky Mount are in support and he feels it is time to do the right thing and increase these wages

- Thanked Councilmember Knight for bringing this up and keeping their conscience activated with the fact that it is always time to do the right thing

Joyner -

- Requested a report from the City Manager/staff that shows what the budgetary impact would be if they were to approve the 15% increase and 6% COLA

Knight -

- Stated he agrees with Councilmember Joyner and he has asked for that report for the last 100 days and has not received that information
- Stated he thought staff was working within those 90 days to bring those numbers back to Council so they can see the financial impact on the budget; if it is affordable; and possibly scale back or hold projects that are not a priority so they can take care of the workers

Jabaris Walker -

- Stated that he agrees with Councilmembers Joyner and Knight and would like to see what impact the 15% increase and 6% COLA would have on the budget since this been an issue for a while now
- Asked the City Manager to look at some numbers to see what the financial impact would be and bring it back to Council

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Jabaris Walker, and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that the Consent Agenda [Items 8(A) through 8(K), be approved as follows and more specifically:

A. AD VALOREM TAX RELEASES:

That the following tax releases be acknowledged and approved for release and/or refund:

SCHEDULE A - acknowledge receipt of report of the following taxes under \$100 approved for release and/or refund by the City Manager:

YEAR	BILL	NAME/ADDRESS	TAX		COMMENT
EDGECOMBE COUNTY					
2021	17835	213 MADISON TRUST PINNACLE TRUST SERVICES AS TRUST 312 MADISON ST ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	31.95 3.59	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	35.54		
2023	584	EVANS, RUBY S. 145 DANIELS AVE BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	7.81	CITY	VALUATION CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	7.81		
2022	18026	MAC CRESCENT NO 2 LLC 423-25 PENN AVE ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	2.74 .02	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	2.76		
2023	24548	WJH LLC FLAGMARSH HILLS ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	82.20	CITY	LISTING ERROR
		TOTAL RELEASE:	82.20		

2023	24549	WJH LLC FLAGMARSH HILLS ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	82.20	CITY	LISTING ERROR
		TOTAL RELEASE:	82.20		

NASH COUNTY

2023	1000146	DUNCAN PARNELL INC PO BOX 35649 CHARLOTTE, NC 28235	78.44	PEN	LATE LIST REMOVAL
		TOTAL RELEASE:	78.44		

2023	2064	KRISPY KREME DOUGHNUT CORPORATION C/O DUCHARME, MCMILLEN & ASSOCIATES PO BOX 80615 INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46280	77.13	PEN	LATE LIST REMOVAL
		TOTAL RELEASE:	77.13		

2023	1812	PITTS, ROBERT 3545 OXFORDSHIRE RD NASHVILLE, NC 27856	35.35	CITY	VALUATION CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	35.35		

2023	2102	WOOD, JEAN L 504 CANARY DR ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803	40.00	DOG	INCORRECT DOGS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	40.00		

SCHEDULE B - acknowledge receipt of report of the following taxes over \$100 approved for release and/or refund by the City Council:

YEAR	BILL	NAME/ADDRESS	TAX	COMMENT	
<i>EDGECOMBE COUNTY</i>					
2023	672	ADAMS PEANUT COMPANY 333 N GREENE ST STE 500 GREENSBORO, NC 27401	488.61	CITY	OWNER CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	488.61		
2023	23107	CAMPBELL, BRENDA PT LOTS 38 \$ 58, LAKE SHORE PARK ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	186.24	CITY	ELDERLY/DISABLED EXEMPTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	186.24		
2023	8117	DIXON, HYMAN JR HEIRS 612 MARLEE CT ROCKY MOUNT NC 27801	308.25	CITY	ELDERLY/DISABLED EXEMPTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	308.25		
2021	234	HARROLD & ASSOCIATES II DDS PA 101 WAYFARER CT ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	677.80	CITY	OWNER
			67.78	PEN	CORRECTION
			126.75	INT	
		TOTAL RELEASE:	872.33		
2022	444	HARROLD & ASSOCIATES II DDS PA 101 WAYFARER CT ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	617.40	CITY	OWNER
			61.74	PEN	CORRECTION
			54.33	INT	
			60.00	GARN	
		TOTAL RELEASE:	793.47		
2023	128	HARROLD & ASSOCIATES II DDS PA 101 WAYFARER CT ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	574.15	CITY	OWNER
			57.42	PEN	CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	631.57		
<i>NASH COUNTY</i>					
2023	21431	HAMPTON GREG R & KAREN L 79 BEESTON FIELDS ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	308.25	CITY	ELDERLY/DISABLED EXEMPTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	308.25		

2023	1056	HOTLINE EXPRESS LLC 5860 DAUGHTRIUDGE RD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803 TOTAL RELEASE:	229.26 229.26	CITY	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS
2023	2332	PETSMART LLC ROCKY MOUNT PETSMART 609 PO BOX 4900 DEPT 350 SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85261 TOTAL RELEASE:	140.58 140.58	PEN	LATE LIST REMOVAL
2022	2264	SOMERSET COURT ROCKY MOUNT C/O AFFINITY LIVING GROUP PO BOX 2568 HICKORY, NC 28603 TOTAL RELEASE:	1245.88 99.67 1345.55	CITY INT	VALUATION CORRECTION
2023	1928	SOMERSET COURT ROCKY MOUNT C/O AFFINITY LIVING GROUP PO BOX 2568 HICKORY, NC 28603 TOTAL RELEASE:	1219.73 1219.73	CITY	VALUATION CORRECTION
2023	11430	SUAREZ, EVE A & MARIE E VEGA 1417 JEREMY LN ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803 TOTAL RELEASE:	807.68 807.68	CITY	ELDERLY/DISABLED EXEMPTION

B. TEMPORARY STREET CLOSING (recommended for approval):

- Request from Brad Kerr, Director of Public Works, for permission to close the following streets for the Annual Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down from Friday, October 13, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. until Saturday, October 14, 2023, at 8:00 p.m. (ordinance adoption requirement of NCDOT standards):
 1. South Church Street (US 301 Business North) from Andrews Street to Nash Street;
 2. Hammond Street from South Franklin Street to Southwest Main Street;
 3. Coastline Street from South Church Street to Hammond Street; and
 4. Southwest Main Street from Nash Street to Hammond Street

Ordinance No. O-2023-107 entitled **ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE EASTERN CAROLINA BBQ THROWDOWN** was adopted.

C. ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY GARDENS ADVISORY BOARD

The City Council was advised that neighborhood groups and other citizens had expressed interest in the creation of a Community Gardens Advisory Board. It was noted that the advisory board could help explore community gardens as a vehicle to accomplish City Council priorities for community health, access to healthy foods, the promotion of an active lifestyle, and positive neighborhood activities.

Resolution No. R-2023-57 entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY GARDENS ADVISORY BOARD, TO APPOINT INITIAL MEMBERS, TO SET FORTH TERMS FOR STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES** was adopted.

D. WATER ASSESSMENT CONTRACT

The City Council received a water assessment contract with Leonard Cofield and Sylvia A. Cofield for water service to 2405 Meadowbrook Road [PIN 387004538300]. Council was advised that the connection fees for this property are \$4,265, that the customer has prepaid \$265, and the contract requires the remaining fees of \$4,000 to be assessed against the property.

By consent, the assessment contract with Leonard Cofield and Sylvia A. Cofield for water service to 2405 Meadowbrook Road [PIN 387004538300] **(C-2023-14)** was approved and the Mayor and City Clerk authorized to execute the same on behalf of the City.

E. DEPOSITORY

That **Resolution No. R-2023-58** 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 Finance Director, Krystal Hunter 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.

F. FY 2024 INSTALLMENT FINANCING/REIMBURSEMENT RESOLUTION - CONSTRUCTION OF CERTAIN IMPROVEMENTS

The City Council was provided with a reimbursement resolution declaring the City's official intent to reimburse expenditures incurred in connection with the construction of certain improvements to be included in FY 2024 installment financing as follows:

Construction of Certain Improvements - (Vehicle Storage Building - \$225,000)

The Council was advised that it is customary for the City to purchase items to be financed in advance and subsequently reimburse the expenditures with financing and the U. S. Treasury requires that a resolution declaring the City's intent to reimburse expenditures be adopted in advance.

Resolution No. R-2023-59 entitled **RESOLUTION DECLARING OFFICIAL INTENT OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT TO REIMBURSE EXPENDITURES MADE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CERTAIN IMPROVEMENTS** was adopted.

G. FY 2024 INSTALLMENT FINANCING/REIMBURSEMENT RESOLUTION - EQUIPMENT

The City Council was provided with a reimbursement resolution declaring the City's official intent to reimburse expenditures incurred in connection with the replacement of equipment to be included in FY 2024 installment financing as follows:

Replacement of Equipment - (Tractor/Mower; Knuckle Boom Loader; Pac Mac 8 yd. Mini Rear Loader; two (2) Labrie Automizer Sideloaders; and a Rubber Tire Backhoe - \$1,402,000)

The Council was advised that it is customary for the City to purchase items to be financed in advance and subsequently reimburse the expenditures with financing and the U. S. Treasury requires that a resolution declaring the City's intent to reimburse expenditures be adopted in advance.

Resolution No. R-2023-60 entitled **RESOLUTION DECLARING OFFICIAL INTENT OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT TO REIMBURSE EXPENDITURES MADE FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF EQUIPMENT** was adopted.

H. FY 2022 DOWN EAST HOME CONSORTIUM (DEHC) CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER)

The City Council was advised that the Down East Home Consortium (DEHC) Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) for CDBG and HOME investment partnership programs is due to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on or before September 29, 2023. The Council was provided with a copy of the report which provides an assessment of the City's progress in carrying out its FY 2021-2023 Three-Year Consolidated Plan and includes accomplishments made towards the City's July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023, program year housing goals and objectives.

The Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) was approved for submission to HUD on behalf of the City.

I. RE-BID/FY 2024 ROAD RESURFACING

The City Council received proposals for the FY 2024 road resurfacing project. Proposals were received and opened on August 29, 2023 after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2023-19**. The solicitation was also posted on the City's purchasing webpage, the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System website and the North Carolina Historically Underutilized Business Opportunity webpage.

The bid was awarded to Fred Smith Company at a total cost of \$2,774,774.20, plus a 5% contingency and the Mayor and City Clerk were authorized to execute the bid contract on behalf of the City. It was noted that Fred Smith Company proposed 25% MWBE participation (\$700,000).

Ordinance No. O-2023-108 entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 FOR ROAD RESURFACING** appropriating additional funds in the Fund Balance of the Powell Bill Fund (\$1,637,000) was adopted.

J. SOLE SOURCE WAYFINDING SIGNS

The City Council received a request for approval for a sole source brand specific waiver of competition to purchase wayfinding

signs. The Purchasing Division recommends the waiver of competition in accordance with the "sole-source" purchase pursuant to G.S. 143-129(e) (6) based on standardization or compatibility. The information furnished by the Purchasing Division supporting the recommendation will be placed on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2023-20**. It was noted that the City Council awarded a bid to Rite Lite Signs, Inc. in 2019 for wayfinding signs; the original design is the exclusive property of Rite Lite Signs, Inc. and is protected by federal copyright laws.

The "sole-source" purchase for the wayfinding signs from Rite Lite Signs, Inc. @ total cost of \$31,640.70 was approved and the Purchasing Division was authorized to issue a purchase order in accordance with the Council's award.

K. PROPERTY ACQUISITION - 406 AND 403 NORTH HOWELL STREET AND AN UN-ADDRESSED PARCEL THAT FRONTS MIDDLE SREET

City Council was informed that city staff was requesting authorization to acquire properties in order to complete an ongoing project to improve drainage in the Happy Hill neighborhood.

The City Council was provided with the following information:

- 406 North Howell Street - tax valuation is \$9,200
→ City staff has negotiated acquiring the property for \$10,500
- 403 North Howell Street - tax valuation is \$5,520; delinquent taxes are \$786.77; assessments are \$7,321.20
→ City has not been able to make contact with owner after many attempts
- Lot on Middle Street - tax valuation is \$2,870
→ City is in process of contacting the owners

City Council authorized staff to proceed with the following:

- 1) acquisition of 406 North Howell Street @ the negotiated price of \$10,500;
- 2) move forward with tax foreclosure proceedings for 403 North Howell Street; and
- 3) for staff to continue efforts to negotiate the purchase of the un-addressed parcel that fronts Middle Street

The Mayor or the City Manager were authorized to execute any documents necessary for the acquisitions.

APPOINTMENTS

Councilmember Daughtridge nominated Susan Folta for the Ward 5 vacancy on the Workforce Housing Advisory Commission. Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Harris, and unanimously carried by roll call vote (7 ayes/0 nays) that Susan Folta be appointed to the Ward 5 vacancy on the Workforce Housing Advisory Committee. This unexpired term expires June 30, 2024.

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

Councilmember Knight thanked Mr. Phillips for the work he is doing to bring awareness and advocate for Sickle Cell disease which affects a lot of African Americans.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, by consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.



Kim Batts
City Clerk