

April 3, 2023

The City Council of the City of Rocky Mount met this day in a regular session scheduled for 7:00 p.m. in the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building with Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr. presiding.

Councilmembers present: André D. Knight, Reuben C. Blackwell, IV., Richard Joyner, T.J. Walker, Jr., Lige Daughtridge, 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; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Kevin Harris, Downtown Development Manager; 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 (*officers from the Police Department were present for the recognition of former Police Chaplains, Reverend Chris Jordan and Reverend Howard Kendrick*).

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

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and requested all in attendance to stand for a moment of silent prayer adding this would be a good time to remember former Police Chaplains, Reverend Chris Jordan and Reverend Howard Kendrick.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Harris, 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 (incorporated as attachment A); and
- Regular Scheduled City Council meeting held December 12, 2022.

APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

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

- remove consideration of Item 9(L) from the agenda.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, 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's Easter Eggstravaganza will be taking place this Saturday (April 8) at Sunset Park and will begin at noon and go until 3 p.m. There will be Easter egg hunts for various groups, free rides on the Park's train and carousel, as well as inflatable play toys. Food trucks will also be present with food items in which people can partake;
- The City's Summer Job Fair is taking place on Wednesday, April 12th, at First Baptist Church Family Center at 200 South Church Street beginning at 10 a.m. and ending at 2 p.m. Applications will be accepted, and interviews will be held for summer jobs including lifeguards, camp counselors, camp directors, assistant camp directors, bus drivers, and scorekeepers;
- The City will be celebrating Community Development month as well as Fair Housing Month during the month of April. Several events will be taking place this month to raise awareness for affordable housing programs, homebuyer education, and other fair housing projects; and
- Reminded all there will be a Ward 7 meeting at the Dunn Center tomorrow night (Tuesday, April 4) beginning at 6 p.m. in the Carlton Boardroom.

Councilmember Knight requested the City Manager provide an update relative to two recent hires he has made.

City Manager Keith Rogers Jr. reported that he made an appointment for an Interim Finance Director and an Interim Finance Manager last week. He added that Herb Tillery will be serving as the City's Interim Finance Director. He said that Mr. Tillery has an extensive military career and background and has held several executive positions in Washington DC government, as well as not-for-profit agencies. He stated that Paula Carbone will filling the Interim Finance Manager position. Mr. Rogers said that Mrs. Carbone has been with the City for about ten (10) years and has been supporting the Finance Department. He added that the urgency of the appointments was to ensure proper segregation of financial operations and to not have the City's Auditor serve as Finance Director. Mr. Rogers stated he is looking forward to both individuals providing excellent leadership as the City continues recruitment for the permanent positions.

Councilmember Knight thanked the City Manager for making the appointment of Interim Finance Director and clarified the appointment of Interim Finance Manager is a temporary appointment. The City Manager advised that the appointment to the position of

Interim Finance Manager is a temporary appointment and added that the position of Accounting Manager is also open for recruitment. Councilmember Knight stated that the City's previous administration had created some positions without the City Council's knowledge or approval and that is the reason he was asking if the appointments were temporary. He requested Council be updated as the permanent positions are filled.

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING THE ROCKY MOUNT HIGH SCHOOL LADY GRYPHONS' BASKETBALL TEAM ON THEIR OUTSTANDING SEASON

The Mayor welcomed and congratulated the Rocky Mount High School Lady Gryphons' basketball team on their outstanding season and read aloud a Resolution honoring the team.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Jabaris Walker, and unanimously carried that the following **Resolution R-2023-21** entitled **RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING THE ROCKY MOUNT HIGH SCHOOL LADY GRYPHONS' BASKETBALL TEAM ON THEIR OUTSTANDING SEASON** be adopted:

**RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING
THE ROCKY MOUNT HIGH SCHOOL LADY GRYPHONS BASKETBALL TEAM
ON THEIR OUTSTANDING SEASON**

WHEREAS, the Rocky Mount High School Lady Gryphons Basketball team completed their season 30-2, establishing themselves as a top competitor; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Gryphons were undefeated in conference play making them 2023 Conference Champions; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Gryphons clinched the regular-season title in the Big East 2A/3A Conference with a victory over Franklinton at home on Senior Night; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Gryphons claimed the title of Regional Champions by defeating Cape Fear in the NCHSAA Class 3A East Regional final; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Gryphons had an outstanding season, finishing as the State Runner Up in the 2023 NCHSAA 3A State Championship; and

WHEREAS, a successful season such as this brought pride not only to the Rocky Mount High School Lady Gryphons themselves, but also to their families, their school and their community; and

WHEREAS, while there were outstanding individual players on this Eastern Regional Championship team, the success is credited to a total team effort from the following team members: Cletaysha Johnson, Key Shay Mizzell, Kaitlin White, Dee Graham, McKinley Battle, Kira Jones Nyla Powell, Amia Bryant, Madison Mitchell, Caroline Thiel, Paris Evans, Trinity Dunn, Shileyia Williams and Aniya Cotton; and

WHEREAS, also contributing to the team's success was their head coach, Pamela Gainey; assistant coaches, Mark Davis, Latoya Howard, Tasha Wilson, and Juanita Davis; team managers, Arnez Barnes, Christian Buck, Joseph Deaner, Kaitlyn Evans, Emani Mercer and Braylie Phillips; trainers, Darrell McCalop and Pam Thompson and their school administration, parents and families who provided unwavering support.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Mayor C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. and the Rocky Mount City Council hereby congratulate the Rocky Mount High School Lady Gryphons Basketball team and its coaches for their outstanding season, conference and regional championships; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be spread upon the pages of the minutes of this proceeding and a copy shall be presented to each team member, the coaches and staff and others who were instrumental in the success of their season.

Adopted this the 3rd day of April, 2023.

The Mayor presented the resolution to Head Coach Pamela Gainey and the team and the City Council joined the Mayor and team for a photograph.

FAIR HOUSING MONTH

Mayor Roberson read a Proclamation proclaiming the month of April 2023 as Fair Housing Month in the City of Rocky Mount. The Mayor presented the Proclamation to Human Relations Director Archie Jones and members of his staff and joined them for a photograph.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MONTH

Mayor Roberson read a Proclamation proclaiming the month of April 2023 as Community Development Month in the City of Rocky Mount. The Mayor presented the Proclamation to Community Development Director Cornelia L. McGee and joined her for a photograph.

PRESENTATION OF PLAQUES HONORING THE MEMORY OF FORMER ROCKY MOUNT POLICE DEPARTMENT CHAPLAINS, PASTOR CHRIS JORDAN AND PASTOR HOWARD KENDRICK

Mayor Roberson stated this is an opportunity to honor former Police Department Chaplains, Pastor Chris Jordan and Pastor Howard Kendrick, and called on Police Chief Robert Hassell for comment.

Chief Hassell noted that both Pastor Jordan and Pastor Kendrick served the Police Department for over thirty (30) years and also provided service to the Rocky Mount area and surrounding communities. He said their impact on the Police Department will be felt long into the future. Chief Hassell thanked the families of the Pastors for sharing their loved ones with the Police Department and presented memorial plaques to each family.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that the newspaper inadvertently took about a month to recognize the passing of Pastor Chris Jordan and noted that Pastor Jordan started the chaplaincy program in the City of Rocky Mount and worked hand in hand with Pastor Kendrick in service to the Rocky Mount Police Department and the community. He stated that both Pastors will be deeply missed and thanked their families for sharing these two (2) gentlemen with the City of Rocky Mount. Members of the Police Department stood in recognition of Pastors Jordan and Kendrick.

The Mayor, Police Chief, and City Councilmembers joined the family members for a photograph.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Mayor Roberson recognized and welcomed Representative (North Carolina House) Shelly Willingham who was in attendance and thanked him for his presence at the meeting.

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:

Daymond Hooper -

- Told the Council he spoke to them a couple weeks ago about his children's chickens noting they had over 1,900 signatures in support of their petition to allow chickens in the City limits at that time and now have over 2,600 signatures. He stated 23 counties and cities in North Carolina allow chickens including Fayetteville, Fort Bragg, Raleigh, and Durham adding that the City's ordinance hasn't been looked at in over ten (10) years. He asked that the City review the ordinance and allow people to have backyard chickens;
- Stated there is a lot of benefit to having backyard chickens. He cited some of the benefits and provided the Council with a packet of information; and
- Stated he is still having issues at the house and does not want there to be any negativity relative to the request but wants his children to be happy

Councilmembers Joyner, Blackwell and Knight asked clarifying questions and Mr. Hooper stated that Animal Control continues to come to his house. Councilmember Knight requested that Animal Control not visit Mr. Hooper's residence until the City can find a solution. The City Manager stated the City's current ordinance does not allow for backyard chickens adding that staff is currently taking a look at what needs to be done to find a comprehensive solution. He told the Council that ultimately any proposed solution will need to come back to the City Council for approval.

Susan Perry Cole –

- Voiced opposition on behalf of some Rocky Mount taxpayers to the City's possible investment in the replacement of the Judicial Center building at an estimated cost of \$35M adding that an item addressing this financing topic was included in the published agenda for tonight's meeting;
- Stated that the Judicial Center replacement was discussed publicly during the April 2020 Rocky Mount City Council retreat and since that time dialogue has continued among some City taxpayers who have expressed opposition to Rocky Mount incurring a debt obligation to finance the costs of replacing the Judicial Center;
- Outlined arguments supporting opposition to such financing to include recent failures of banking lenders, a deteriorating economic outlook, and recession fears;
- Said her second point relates to the importance of transparency, accountability and good democratic governance and stated that advancing the Judicial Center replacement without public hearings or public consent is shocking and unconscionable; and
- Supported existing priorities, like increasing the supply of safe and efficient, affordable housing

Phillip Mills –

- Voiced strong support for allowing backyard chickens in the City limits adding there are three (3) pets ducks owned by the City at City Lake

Mayor Roberson stated the City Council has committed to a review of the current Ordinance relative to backyard chickens.

Dr. Kim Koo –

- Voiced opposition to Item 9(L) under the Consent Agenda (construction of a new Judicial Center) and said listing this matter under the Consent Agenda was devious and deceitful adding it should be voted on as a separate item for scrutiny, discussion, and robust debate;
- Outlined reasons the citizens of Rocky Mount need to oppose construction of a new Judicial Center as: 1) completely undemocratic; in spite of the multiple appeals to have a public hearing an attempt was made to sneak it in for approval without public consent; 2) the citizens of Rocky Mount are going to have to pay an extra \$1.5 million dollars per year for the monstrosity on top of the utility bill burden; 3) the only way to afford the construction is by raising taxes; 4) the building expenses will be covered by financing through municipal bonds with a high inflation rate; 5) less funding will be available for poverty alleviation like housing and other welfare services which will lead to cuts to socially necessary services; 6) the Judicial Center will squeeze more money out of the people charged such as fines or fees; and 7) it will do nothing to prevent crime and only increases the space to condemn more poor people, more people of color, and may actually increase deaths if people continue to see a merciless system getting more brutal

John Hill –

- Voiced concern about people who do not obey City ordinances relative to motor vehicles, particularly, as to speeding;
- Said he has been to several community meetings during the past ten (10) years where speeding concerns have been discussed and speed bumps have still not been put in place; and
- Suggested cameras be used as one way to monitor speeding

Councilmember Knight agreed that there has been discussion about cushions or speed bumps in the Hillsdale community for some time and said he has publicly made a request for them. He said he has just had a conversation with Sharon Evans, Vice-President of the Hillsdale Community, to receive an update. Mr. Knight said that Interim City Manager Peter Varney and Human Relations Director Archie Jones are aware of the concern as well. He voiced a desire that staff look into the matter adding it has been discussed for ten (10) months or more.

Councilmember Blackwell added that he has gotten a number of complaints about the intersection at Virginia Street and Myrtle Avenue, which turns into Leggett Road, and said in the last couple of weeks there have been two (2) bad accidents there. He said he challenged the Transportation Department for wanting to put a roundabout one block away from a dangerous intersection and said the

concentration does not need to be at Carolina Avenue and Virginia Street but needs to be at Virginia Street and Myrtle Avenue and asked that staff also follow up on this matter.

City Manager Rogers responded by saying he will speak with Transportation Engineers to get an update and provide follow up to Council.

Councilmember Harris thanked Mr. Hill for bringing this issue to the attention of Council adding that in addition to speeding there is a city-wide issue of excessive noise coming from souped-up vehicles, trucks, ATVs, and motorcycles.

Councilmember Joyner questioned what the City's policy is with regard to four-wheelers and dirt bikes on City streets indicating they can be seen all over the City and sometimes cutting through people's yards.

The City Manager stated he is aware of the concerns relative to ATVs and dirt bikes and said he will make sure that issue is illuminated and will work with the Police Chief to see what can be done about enhanced enforcement.

Councilmember T.J. Walker told the Council that there needs to be an alternative for young people who utilize ATVs and dirt bikes.

Darlene Spencer-Harris –

- Agreed that speeding is a serious problem that causes many accidents;
- Voiced opposition to Item 9 (L) on the Consent Agenda relative to construction of a new Judicial Center adding interest rates will be high if bonds are purchased and citizens are already struggling to pay high utility bills;
- Voiced opposition to taxing electricity and gas; and
- Requested that something be done about speeding on Arlington Street and broken/unlevel sidewalks

Councilmember Knight stated he does not think the City controls utility taxes and added that utility rates are 14% lower now due to the action of the City Council relative to the buy-out with Duke Power.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that he concurs with the comment made by Councilman Knight regarding utility sales tax saying that tax is imposed by the General Assembly. He questioned if the reference is to the facilities charge listed on the bill and said he assumes the City Council will be looking at that but will also have to look at the financial impact on the City. He said he is willing to do so and added he thinks it would be a healthy exercise. He agreed that the buy-out did lower rates but said right now natural gas price fluctuations are being experienced which are market driven. He stated that gas prices can impact utility bills, especially during the winter months. He said he hopes soon citizens will be able to compare their bills and added Rocky Mount has a

higher rate than a few cities/towns but in many cases are much lower to the tune of 14% to 16% lower. Mr. Daughtridge noted utility costs are a big part of everyone's budget and said he thinks there is some opportunity to look at a few of the charges.

Mumtaz Shaik –

- Welcomed City Manager Rogers to the City;
- Said this is the era of high inflation, bank failures, continued beating of war drums, sanctions and blockades, and basic necessities are hard to come by, especially for at least 50% of City residents who live from paycheck to paycheck on account of rising food prices, new and used car prices, high rental rates, and mortgage rates;
- Said SNAP benefits have been snapped off for families with children and seniors living in poverty, and governments everywhere need to start making sound decisions for sound outcomes;
- Said affordable housing is the responsibility of governments and not private individuals and private companies who put profits above people;
- Suggested trade skill programs be available for youth for jobs like masons, carpenters, and plumbers and added there is a dire shortage of CNAs, nurses, and truck drivers; and
- Spoke in opposition to the new Judicial Center and said, without a public hearing, approval of the construction would be undemocratic, and citizens would be forced to pay increased future taxes for a project they did not vote on

Troy Davis –

- Said it is great the City is recognizing Fair Housing month but nothing is fair about living on Branch Street, Clark Street, Pender Street, Arlington Street, or even Myrtle Avenue or the other thirteen (13) underserved communities;
- Said if just \$1M had been contributed each year the City could have made an impactful improvement;
- Suggested there is no need to talk about a housing bond when a price tag of \$35M is recommended for a Judicial Center to continue to lock up Black and Brown boys and girls in the City;
- Said \$35M divided by the thirteen (13) underserved communities is roughly \$2.6M per community;
- Stated \$35M is what this Council, full of mostly Black males, is talking about investing into a Judicial Center to lock up Black and Brown kids in this community adding the community has had enough of that and won't stand for it;
- Said the focus needs to be on affordable housing and on the landlords and slumlords that are not allowing people to live to their full potential adding there is one such landlord that has been in the City for his entire life who owned a house where kids died because a smoke detector was not provided; and
- Said there should be talk about the real issues that the community faces and not a Judicial Center

Councilmember Knight stated he took offense to Mr. Davis' comments. He further responded to Mr. Davis by making additional comments, which are summarized as follows:

- At least three (3) Councilmembers who represent the Edgecombe County side of the City (Councilmembers Knight, Blackwell, and Joyner) didn't approve of a resolution going to the General Assembly for \$35M;

- Housing has always been Council's priority and the City Council has invested in every project Mr. Davis has undertaken - millions of dollars (Davis Lofts - \$300,000; Starling Way – over \$200,000; East Grand apartments);
- There are houses scattered throughout the City that Mr. Davis has renovated and flipped, and raised the rent;
- Said how dare Mr. Davis come here and challenge the Council who have been fighting for housing;
- Said he (Knight) was not invited to go to Raleigh to present this resolution and was one (1) along with two (2) other Councilmembers that called the new City Manager and said he was being set up adding he (Knight) asked the City Clerk to pull the documents of Sue Perry [Cole], Dr. Koo, and many others who made statements requesting a new Judicial Center not be built instead of housing;
- It was 120 years before Rocky Mount had a black majority Council and that Council has pushed for housing and redevelopment of the Downtown;
- Questioned how Mr. Davis could challenge three (3) City Councilmembers when they have been fighting like against those who have starved the Edgecombe side of Rocky Mount;
- Said he is sick and tired of his own kind coming and blaming the black Councilmembers – blame those who have been here for generations;
- Said he asked the question of how the resolution got on the agenda and how it got to be a priority to go to the General Assembly without a discussion;
- When the representative was asked where the Councilmembers from the Edgecombe side were he was told, "Reuben was busy and Andre was working"; and said he wanted to say to those who went "don't speak for me if you didn't invite me";
- Said the black Council uplifts Mr. Davis and everybody in this City and gives them a chance;
- Said he is mad because every time the black Council tries to create incentives and grants they are being fought about transparency, but there was no transparency for the resolution being discussed today; and
- The City Manager gracefully said it will be removed from the agenda today.

Councilmember Knight continued his comments by outlining adversities he has faced, adding he fought to get a seat on the City Council and has been fighting ever since.

Applause was heard and Mayor Roberson requested there be no outbursts.

Councilmember Jabaris Walker stated that Mr. Davis had said "three Blacks" and wanted to clarify that he also was not invited to the meeting. He agreed there needs to be discussion relative to the Judicial Center and a public meeting.

Councilmember Blackwell agreed with the comments made by Councilmember Knight adding that the first time Council heard about funding for the Judicial Center was in a closed session about a possible bond referendum for affordable housing. He said the item was included on the agenda without a public discussion or public outcry. He added that every time this matter has come up before Council he and Councilmembers Knight and Joyner have opposed it. He said the Judicial Center is not the business of the City of Rocky Mount and Council does not oversee judicial proceedings. He stated the City's only role relative to the Judicial Center is to provide leased space and said he has a problem with the citizens of Rocky

Mount taking the primary responsibility for \$20M that cannot be recovered through lease payments. He suggested the City be a party to finding a solution to the dilemma but should not be the solution. Councilmember Blackwell stated the records will reflect that affordable housing has always been this Council's priority since 2003. He added that the item should never have been placed on the agenda and the Manager recognized that and pulled it from the agenda and now public conversations can be held. He said he opposes the City paying for a new Judicial Center, the City should pay for housing, Downtown development, youth, infrastructure, and roads/highway infrastructure. Mr. Blackwell added that is what the City of Rocky Mount is supposed to do. He stated if someone wants to know where a Councilmember stands they should ask that Councilmember directly.

Councilmember T.J. Walker acknowledged the comments made by Councilmembers Knight and Blackwell and added he believes that back in February of last year there was conversation around affordable housing and in January or February of this year he, as Mayor Pro Tem, specifically asked Councilmembers for a list of their priorities in order to provide them to the City's Legislators as they were working towards budget preparation. He said at that time he heard only one priority from this Council and it was for the Judicial Center. He said he is now hearing the priorities and asked if he did not receive information from all members as requested in his memo.

Councilmember Blackwell replied that whether they received the memo or not a public conversation should be held before the City goes to the General Assembly with a request and that protocol has been in place for the City Council for the twenty-three (23) years he has been serving on the Council. He added that in the past Legislators have been invited to meet with the City Council to speak to the Council as a whole and not just some Councilmembers. He stated that his priorities are very clear and he is not mute and knows how to talk and can articulate for himself and the people he represents. Mr. Blackwell added whether he missed an email or didn't respond to an email he has made his position very clear and, if Council is to have sincere dialogue with the General Assembly, a Committee of the Whole meeting should be scheduled and Council priorities and anything else can be placed on an agenda for the Council to discuss. He said the mystery is how priorities are set as a full Council.

Councilmember Knight said he is reading a memo in the package from Ken Hunter to City Manager Rogers dated March 27, 2023, requesting the resolution relative to the request to the General Assembly for an appropriation for a new Judicial Center be placed on

the agenda. He added that the memo states that Mayor Pro Tem T.J. Walker asked for comments from Councilmembers regarding the list of Legislative priorities at the February 13, 2023, Committee of the Whole meeting though the agenda item was not formally presented or discussed due to time constraints and further states that as far as Mr. Hunter is aware no comments were received. Mr. Knight said the memo states the item was not formally presented or discussed due to time constraints but noted in comments from Council voiced for the last ten (10) years housing has always been a priority. He said he wants to say to the Mayor Pro Tem, with due respect, that when some Councilmembers wanted to vote against Senate Bill 473 he stated that resolutions are just symbols to be hung on a wall and did not support the resolution against Senate Bill 473 because he felt that the resolution would have no effect. He asked if Mayor Pro Tem T.J. Walker supports the resolution requesting funding for the Judicial Center.

Councilmember T.J. Walker stated the item was a part of the Legislative Agenda priorities provided to Council in the Committee of the Whole package and the Judicial Center was the only item provided to him by Council as a priority. He asked why no one told him there were other priorities.

Discussion continued and it was again noted that while the item was on the Committee of the Whole agenda it was not discussed in the meeting. Councilmember T.J. Walker stated the item relative to the Judicial Center has been removed and is not on the agenda tonight and can be placed on a future agenda.

Councilmember Harris stated that he too requested that the City Manager remove this item from tonight's agenda. He said he also did not go to Raleigh and was not aware of the meeting in Raleigh. He stated that Council has an upcoming retreat and a part of that retreat will be a review of the City's CIP needs not just for the upcoming fiscal year, but for the next five (5) years. He added it is critical that the City Council have a very thorough understanding of the City's needs and how those needs will be paid for. He stated if the City is going to incur debt Council needs to know how that debt will be structured and added that there is a lot of work that needs to be done before the matter of the Judicial Center can proceed and that is why he asked that it to be removed from the agenda for tonight.

Councilmember Joyner stated that Branch, Arlington, and Pender Streets were mentioned and said these communities have been working extremely hard towards renovation, but funding has not allowed more work to be done. He stated that home ownership has always been his top priority adding that Councilmembers asked the City Manager to remove the item from tonight's agenda so that Council will have more

time to make sure it does not do anything without the community and citizens involvement. He thanked all who spoke for the lengthy conversation tonight and said it is a very passionate concern. Mr. Joyner said that Council has heard the concerns and hopes it can move forward with transparency, honesty, and openness.

Adrienne Copland –

- Stated that she could not believe what she just witnessed adding that Councilmembers should be ashamed of themselves;
- Said time and time again she has come to these meetings and Council has a whole page of rules about how citizens should conduct themselves in meetings and not address any Councilman in particular, and how a speaker could be thrown out, but the rules don't apply to Council;
- Said she can't believe the Council allowed a councilmember to address/yell at a citizen in that manner without interrupting or calling for point of order;
- Said this was not the first time a citizen has spoken and a Councilmember has responded, wherein the citizen did not get an opportunity for rebuttal;
- Said it used to be a policy that Councilmembers did not respond to citizen comment and said she thinks it needs to go back to that where citizen are contacted outside of the meeting; and
- Said she remembers years ago when a Councilmember was allowed to call Clint Williams trash to his face in public in the middle of a meeting and nothing was done

Crystal Wimes-Anderson –

- Said she has a two-page note to read for someone else (Brian) and read the prepared statement which complained about a demolition ordinance and responses by the City to efforts he made to bring the property into compliance adding he was bullied into making a cash bond;
- Apologized for a statement she made earlier today that she now feels may have negated someone's lived experiences; and
- Said the note she reads indicates that an offer to purchase the property for \$7,500 was received from Winslow Haggans on behalf of the Berkshire Community and feels there are those who will benefit should he lose his property

Moe Deloach –

- Said it bothers him how social media portrays the Downtown and said he is an investor in the Downtown;
- Said he has been meeting with the Police Chief about ideas for keeping the Downtown safe;
- Expressed appreciation to the City Councilmembers for the work they do;
- Asked for an update relative to a Downtown lighting study; and
- Requested the plumbing at the South Rocky Mount Community building be looked at due to flooding issues in the bathrooms and that a camera system be installed

Ernest Mooring –

- Said he is also a Downtown stakeholder and agrees with the comments by Mr. Deloach; and
- Thanked the Council and the City for the work they do and said he has been a Downtown stakeholder since 2012 and all are working as a team

Councilmember Knight stated that the citizen just stated that he yelled at another citizen and said he wanted to point out that that citizen yelled at five (5) black Councilmembers. He said he also wanted to make a point that the young lady making the statement had an outburst in one of Council's retreats and said to her that her "white privilege is over when it comes here."

The Mayor called for decorum.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that he agrees with the comments made by Ms. Copeland and said Council needs decorum in its meetings and it has been that way for a long time. He said we can disagree, but we can do it respectfully and that's how we should act. He stated it is his hope that moving forward that all will treat each other as they would want to be treated. Mr. Daughtridge said, as elected officials, the City Council is there to listen to people and needs to do better.

Councilmember T.J. Walker said he wanted to make sure the City Manager and staff heard the concerns about the camera system and plumbing at South Rocky Mount community center.

Councilmember Blackwell said people have been very intentional on social media in telling lies, exaggerating details, and creating havoc for people's families, and then expects Council to suppress their outrage. He added Council cannot answer all social media lies, though they do their best, but when the lies make it to the public it should not be a surprise when they are addressed in public by Council. He added that those folks supported a president who started this whole fever in our nation that found his way to Rocky Mount. Mr. Blackwell said decorum should be exercised everywhere. He stated that he does not know of any person in this City who has been vilified as much as Councilman Andre Knight. He stated people talk about him in public venues and say things on social media putting words in his mouth that he never uttered and create conspiracies where there aren't any and then expect him to be nice to them. Councilmember Blackwell said that is asking too much and if those in the community want Councilmembers to be decent and communicate respectfully then they should start doing it themselves. He suggested all hold each other mutually accountable.

Councilmember Jabaris Walker requested that the City Manager include the BTW Community Center in the request for a camera system and also look at the lighting in that area. Councilmembers Knight and Blackwell added that the bathrooms also need attention.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem T.J. Walker, 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(M)], be

approved as follows with the exception of Item 9(L) which was removed from the agenda) and more specifically:

A) **AD VALOREM TAX RELEASES (recommended for approval) :**

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:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BILL NO.</u>	<u>NAME/ADDRESS</u>	<u>TAX</u>		<u>COMMENT</u>
<u>EDGECOMBE COUNTY</u>					
2013	23251	UNKNOWN OWNER 7 BLK E AVALON BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	49.30 41.66	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	90.96		
2014	23238	UNKNOWN OWNER 7 BLK E AVALON BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	49.30 37.22	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	86.52		
2015	23196	UNKNOWN OWNER 7 BLK E AVALON BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	51.43 34.20	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	85.63		
2016	23195	UNKNOWN OWNER 7 BLK E AVALON BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	51.43 29.57	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	81.00		
2017	23154	UNKNOWN OWNER 7 BLK E AVALON BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	56.10 27.21	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	83.31		
2018	23136	UNKNOWN OWNER 7 BLK E AVALON BATTLEBORO, NC 27809	58.23 23.00	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	81.23		
<u>NASH COUNTY</u>					
2022	2141	PITTS, ROBERT 3545 OXFORDSHIRE RD NASHVILLE NC 27856	36.65 10.00	CITY DOG	VALUATION CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	46.65		
2020	1002131	TURNER, KELSEY LEE 2568 S OLD CARRIAGE RD ROCKY MOUNT NC 27803	37.13 14.85 9.23	CITY PEN INT	PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	61.21		
2020	1002132	TURNER, KELSEY LEE 2568 S OLD CARRIAGE RD ROCKY MOUNT NC 27803	34.73 10.42 8.01	CITY PEN INT	PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS

TOTAL RELEASE: 53.16

2020	1002133	TURNER, KELSEY LEE	32.54	CITY	PERSONAL PROPERTY
		2568 S OLD CARRIAGE RD	6.51	PEN	LOCATED OUTSIDE
		ROCKY MOUNT NC 27803	6.94	INT	CITY LIMITS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	45.99		

SCHEDULE B - approve release and/or refund of the following taxes over \$100:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BILL NO.</u>	<u>NAME/ADDRESS</u>	<u>TAX</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
<u>EDGECOMBE COUNTY</u>				
2022	22468	HARRISON, LILLIE H	321.70	CITY ELDERLY/DISABLED
		1700 MARTIN LUTHER KING DR	8.85	INT EXEMPTION
		ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801		
		TOTAL RELEASE:	330.55	
2019	383	WIGGINS, KEITH CRAIG	136.38	CITY PERSONAL PROPERTY
		1209 EASTERN AVE	13.64	PEN LOCATED OUTSIDE
		ROCKY MOUNT NC 27801	44.63	INT CITY LIMITS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	194.65	
2020	266	WIGGINS, KEITH CRAIG	122.75	CITY PERSONAL PROPERTY
		1209 EASTERN AVE	12.28	PEN LOCATED OUTSIDE
		ROCKY MOUNT NC 27801	28.02	INT CITY LIMITS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	163.05	
2021	46	WIGGINS, KEITH CRAIG	110.47	CITY PERSONAL PROPERTY
		1209 EASTERN AVE	11.05	PEN LOCATED OUTSIDE
		ROCKY MOUNT NC 27801	14.28	INT CITY LIMITS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	135.80	
2022	115	WIGGINS, KEITH CRAIG	99.42	CITY PERSONAL PROPERTY
		1209 EASTERN AVE	9.94	PEN LOCATED OUTSIDE
		ROCKY MOUNT NC 27801	3.00	INT CITY LIMITS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	112.36	

NASH COUNTY

2022	1000563	SIMPSON, LISA MAE	142.30	CITY	VALUATION
		PO BOX 935	3.91	INT	CORRECTION
		BATTLEBORO, NC 27809			
		TOTAL RELEASE:	146.21		

B) TEMPORARY STREET CLOSINGS (recommended for approval):

That that following temporary street/road closures be approved, and that **Ordinance No. O-2023-60** entitled **ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR STATION SQUARE SPRING AFFAIR FOOD TRUCK RODEO** be adopted:

- 1) Request from East End Missionary Baptist Church for permission to close the block of 928 East Highland

Avenue for an Easter Blast Event on April 8, 2023, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; and

- 2) Request from Public Works for Ordinance approving temporary street closure for Station Square Spring Affair Food Truck Rodeo (Closure: Nash Street from S. Church to SW Main Street on April 22, 2023, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) - ordinance adoption requirement of NCDOT standards

C) DONATION/ROCKY MOUNT POLICE EXPLORERS POST #774 (recommended for approval):

That the donation of \$3,000 from Key Stone Realty be accepted for use for Explorers Post #774 for assistance with the purchase of equipment, uniforms, activities and other needs and that **Ordinance No. O-2023-61** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 FOR INCREASED DONATIONS TO POLICE EXPLORERS** be adopted.

D) NORTH CAROLINA ATTORNEY GENERAL ENVIRONMENT ENHANCEMENT GRANT (recommended for approval):

That staff be authorized to submit the grant application for the North Carolina Attorney General Environment Enhancement Grant in the amount of \$222,221 to be used for funding for floodplain acquisition and conservation to enable the acquisition of vacant properties that could serve as a future greenway; total project = \$320,066/City share = \$97,845; and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute any required documentation and/or certifications and subsequent grant agreement on behalf of the City.

E) PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND GRANT (recommended for approval):

That staff be authorized to submit the grant application for the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) in the amount of \$500,000 to be used for Sunset Park renovations (requires 50/50 match; intentional overmatch of \$760,000 will help application score better and increase chance of funding approval); 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.

F) LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF) APPLICATION/SUNSET PARK (recommended for approval):

That staff be authorized to submit the grant application for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant in the amount of \$500,000 to be used for Sunset Park renovations (requires 50/50 match; staff recommends match of \$500,000 to enable the project to include numerous recreation amenities as well as trail connection which produces a higher scoring application); 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.

G) **NCDOT ENCROACHMENT AGREEMENTS: DELEGATION OF SIGNATURE AUTHORITY (recommended for approval):**

That the City Manager or his designee be authorized to execute NCDOT (North Carolina Department of Transportation) encroachment agreements on behalf of the City.

H) **DROUGHT MANAGEMENT POLICY REVISION (recommended for approval):**

That the revisions to Administrative Policy No. IX.18 for future management of water supplies be approved and that **RESOLUTION NO. R-2023-22** entitled **RESOLUTION FOR APPROVING WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE PLAN** be adopted. This resolution amends ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY NO. IX.18 entitled "POLICY: DROUGHT MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN."

I) **OPIOID SETTLEMENTS (recommended for approval):**

That **RESOLUTION NO. R-2023-23** entitled **RESOLUTION BY CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF OPIOID SETTLEMENTS AND APPROVING THE SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENT FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS BETWEEN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ON PROCEEDS RELATING TO THE SETTLEMENT OF OPIOID LITIGATION** be adopted. This resolution authorizes the City Manager or City Attorney to execute all documents necessary to enter into opioid settlement agreement with Walmart, Walgreens, CVS, Allergen, and Treva to execute the SAAF and provide such documents to Rubris, the Implementation Administrator.

J) **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/CITYSTART GRANT PROGRAM (recommended for approval):**

That the grant application and Memorandum of Understanding with Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund, Inc. (CFE Fund) to facilitate receipt of technical assistance and a \$75,000 financial award through the CityStart Grant program be approved **C-2023-5**; that staff be authorized to submit the application to CFE on behalf of the City; that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute any required documentation and/or certifications and subsequent grant agreement on behalf of the City; and that **Ordinance No. O-2023-62** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 FOR RECEIPT OF CITYSTART GRANT** be adopted.

K) **AMENDED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF AN INSTALLMENT FINANCING CONTRACT AUTHORIZED BY NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTE (160A-20) (recommended for approval):**

That an amendment to **RESOLUTION NO. R-2022-16** entitled **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR**

APPROVAL OF AN INSTALLMENT FINANCING CONTRACT AUTHORIZED BY NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTE (160A-20) (AMENDED) be adopted. This resolution amends resolution R-2022-16 introduced and adopted on April 25, 2022, for construction of certain improvements (general and wastewater improvements) at an estimated maximum amount of \$4,059,000; authorizes the City Attorney to render an opinion that the proposed project is authorized by law and is a purpose for which public funds may be expended; and authorizes the Mayor, City Manager, and Finance Director to act on behalf of the City in filing an application with the North Carolina Local Government Commission for approval of the Project, the proposed installment financing contract, and other actions. The amendment designates the installment financing contract as non-bank qualified and adds an amended date of 4-03-2023.

L) RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATE FUNDS (\$15,000,000) FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW JUDICIAL CENTER LOCATED IN ROCKY MOUNT NORTH CAROLINA (recommended for approval):

Item 9(L) was removed from the City Council agenda.

M) REBID - 15 KV CIRCUIT BREAKERS FOR SUBSTATION NO. 1 (recommended for approval):

That the rebid for 15 KV Circuit Breakers for Substation No. 1 be awarded to ABB in the amount of \$194,648 and that City staff be authorized to issue a purchase order and execute bid documents for the equipment in accordance with the Council's award. The bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2023-9**.

APPOINTMENTS

Councilmember Knight nominated Terry Anderson (Ward 7 resident) for the Ward 1 vacancy on the Tree Advisory Board. Motion was made by Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem T.J. Walker, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that Terry Anderson be appointed to the Ward 1 vacancy on the Tree Advisory Board. This unexpired term expires June 30, 2023.

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, by consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.



Kim Batts
City Clerk