

November 27, 2023

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

Councilmembers present: André D. Knight, Reuben C. Blackwell, IV, Richard Joyner, T.J. Walker, Jr., Lige Daughtridge, Tom Harris and Jabaris Walker.

Staff present: Keith Rogers Jr., City Manager; 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; Brenton Bent, Water Resources Director; 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; Amber Burgess, Administrative Assistant City Clerk's Office 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 that the minutes of the Regular Scheduled City Council meeting held July 10, 2023 be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

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

- Stated on Friday December 1st at 6 p.m. will be the City Lake lighting, there will be carriage rides, food trucks, free hot cocoa and inflatables for the children
- Stated on Sunday, December 3rd will be the annual Christmas parade beginning at 3 p.m. and there will also be a food truck rodeo at Station Square near the end of the parade route
- Stated on December 7th Elf the musical will be at the Imperial Center as well as a showing on December 10th

- Stated on December 10th at the Imperial Center will be the Winter Wonderland where there will be a visit from Santa, an interactive holiday show as well as arts and crafts for all

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:

** Councilmember T.J. Walker arrived*

Richard Petway

- Stated he is here to speak on the sanitation workers about fair wages
- Stated people are saying if you give the sanitation workers a raise that the taxes will go up
- Asked if the taxes went up when the City Manager got a \$75,000 increase or when the fire department or other departments received an increase
- Asked what is so different about giving the sanitation workers a raise

The Mayor stated he would go back to the presentations after the Public Petitions portion of the meeting.

Mumtaz Shaik

- Asked why this group is being punished that is helpless and lacks resources to fight back
- Stated there has been talk about lack of funds, fiscal responsibility, and market driven forces all three which were not applied to the spectacularly huge wage increases of 36% and 27% increases for first responders
- Stated the hostility between these two groups on the Council have provided a catalyst for the collective punishment of a group

Dr. Kim Koo

- Stated 2 weeks ago at the last City Council meeting a petitioner quoted the national average of pay for the sanitation workers in the United States and stated our workers are making more
- Stated the \$60,000 beginning pay for the newly hired policemen comes out to about \$28 an hour for a 40 hour week
- Asked why their work more valuable than the work of a sanitation worker

Cooper Blackwell

- Stated he is standing here again today on behalf of the NAACP to request for the City Council to approve a 15% increase for sanitation workers and a 6% cost of living increase
- Stated there are many workers in the sanitation department that are barely making \$36,000 a year
- Stated people do not have the money they need to support their families so they are asking for Council to agree to enable the people that are keeping our streets clean to support their families
- Stated it is interesting that there are people that have been here for 25 plus years and have not seen any type of substantial increase in their salary or position
- Stated a lot of the raises that have been mentioned came in 2022 when City Manager Rochelle Small Tony was here and started to make a more equitable pay system but it is not finished
- Stated that they need to complete the task and show how equitable our City can be and be a model for how to serve the community and how to reward people with fair compensation

Crystal Wimes-Anderson

- Stated City Council meetings are held twice a month and every time the same issues are being brought up
- Stated she wants the community to start realizing that they keep coming down here and the issues are not being addressed so she suggests they start sitting down as a community and being strategic about what they really want so it can be presented and understood
- Stated she would like to address other issues in the community such as development, youth, and our education system

Sharon McLaughlin

- Stated she is here to speak about the request for an appeal to deny the Maple Creek subdivision preliminary residential cluster development on Bethlehem Road.
- Stated it has been denied by the Planning Board but she is asking that Council approves it to be referred back to the Planning Board for further consideration
- Stated she believes that part of the decision was made because of the community input so they are asking that it be referred back to the Planning Board so the community can continue to share their input

Adrienne Copland

- Stated she was kind of surprised as she thought certain things would be requested to get added to the agenda
- Stated Council is doing a great job as they are getting hit from all directions for the increases for the sanitation workers; when sanitation was given an increase they got a fair share even though people define fair differently
- Asked Council to keep up the good work

Robert Michaud

- Stated he is hoping that Mapleton Creek goes back to the Planning Board as well
- Stated the residents have a lot of reasons such as the development of their area and their properties, they just want it to be a nice place
- Stated zoning is very important thing because there are a lot of things that you can get and the community wants to make sure that they are on board with it

Nehemiah Smith, Jr.

- Stated people must be careful as labeling something as injustice as it requires careful consideration because the term carries significant moral and societal implications
- Stated misusing the term may dilute its gravity leading to a desensitization to true injustices
- Stated we see injustice in the handling of our school systems, in the number of abandoned and dilapidated homes, yet the homeless shelters are full
- Stated the City gives a minimum of 10 days paid vacation, 96 paid sick leave, 9 to 11 paid holidays, Aetna consumer driven plan, 401k, tuition reimbursement so he would like to know where the injustice is
- Stated 51 of the firefighters did not get a raise and some police officers did not get a raise

ROCKY MOUNT TOASTMASTERS DAY

The Mayor read a Proclamation proclaiming December 1, 2023 as Rocky Mount Toastmasters Day in recognition of their 25th Club Anniversary. The Mayor presented the Proclamation to the Rocky Mount Toastmasters Club and the members joined him for a photograph.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Harris, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and unanimously carried that the Consent

Agenda [Items 9(A) through 9(I), be approved as follows and more specifically:

A. TEMPORARY STREET CLOSING

- Request from Brad Kerr, Director of Public Works, for permission to close the following streets for the Annual Christmas Parade on Sunday, December 3, 2023, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (ordinance adoption requirement of NCDOT standards):
 - Along the east side of Main Street from Marigold Street to E. Thomas Street, Thomas Street (US 64 Business West) from NE Main Street to N. Church Street and Church Street (US 301 Business) from W. Thomas Street to W. Bassett Street

Ordinance No. O-2023-119 entitled **ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE** was adopted.

B. 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
<i>EDGECOMBE COUNTY</i>				
2023	490	AMERSON, DAVID WARREN 2417 MEADOWBROOK RD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	11.04 1.10	CITY VALUATION PEN CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	12.14	

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	8903	SHEARIN, JAMES M II SHEARIN, AUDREY L 321 EASTFIELD DR ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	350.06	CITY OWNER CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	350.06	
<i>NASH COUNTY</i>				
2023	23641	HONEYWELL INTERNATIONAL INC C/O ALTUS GROUP US INC 3475 N WESLEYAN BLVD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	8,657.69	PEN LATE LIST REMOVAL
		TOTAL RELEASE:	8,657.69	
2023	3041	SHERROD, ALICE HEIRS THOMAS & SYLVIA MAJETTE 816 S GRACE ST ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27803	121.66	CITY OWNER CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	121.66	
2023	10004	VERIZON 767 WORD PLAZA ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	551.43 55.14	CITY DUPLICATE BILL PEN
		TOTAL RELEASE:	606.57	

C. GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM

The City Council was notified that the City was awarded its Urgent Repair Program Grant from the NC Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) for Fiscal Year 2024. Grant Project Ordinance appropriates \$282,000 in the Community Development Grant Fund for the 2023-2024 Urgent Repair Program (includes a grant from NC Housing Finance Agency of \$132,000, and a match from the General Fund of \$150,000 appropriated in the City's Adopted FY 2024 Annual Operating Budget).

Ordinance No. O-2023-120 entitled **GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE 2023-2024 URGENT REPAIR PROJECT** was adopted.

D. BUDGET ORDINANCE/CARRYFORWARD APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPENDITURES

The City Council was provided with a Budget Ordinance amending the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget to carry forward appropriations and expenditures for activities budgeted in the 2022-2023 fiscal year but not expensed (combined total of \$14,114,844).

Ordinance No. O-2023-121 entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 FOR CARRYFORWARD OF FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 ENCUMBERED FUNDS AND ROLLOVER OF UNSPENT FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 FUNDS** was adopted.

E. 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 - (three (3) Dump Trucks 6.5 yd and three (3) Flatbed Dump Trucks - \$668,500)

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-2023-70 entitled **RESOLUTION DECLARING OFFICIAL INTENT OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT TO REIMBURSE EXPENDITURES MADE FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF EQUIPMENT** was adopted.

F. MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT/SUNSET AVENUE OVERFLOW BRIDGE REMOVAL

The City Council was provided with a municipal agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for engineering services to design water and sewer relocations associated with NCDOT's planned removal of the obsolete overflow bridge on Sunset Avenue located between May Drive and the Tar River.

This agreement allows for the affected water and sewer line relocation to be incorporated into the roadway design documents. The cost to the City will be \$60,576.48 (\$24,836.36 for water infrastructure; \$35,740.12 for sewer infrastructure). The agreement (**C-2023-17**) was approved and the Mayor, City Clerk, and Finance

Director were authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the City.

G. RENEWAL OF WATER AND SEWER WHOLESAL PURCHASE AGREEMENTS/TOWN OF WHITAKERS

The City Council was provided with a renewal request for the water and sewer wholesale purchase agreements with the Town of Whitakers. The City of Rocky Mount entered into water and sewer wholesale purchase agreements with the Town of Whitakers on November 14, 1983 and the current agreements will expire December 19, 2023. The agreements contain the same quantity allocations as the 1983 agreements and other minor changes. The agreements are to be renewed for four (4) - ten (10) year terms with no adverse budgetary impact resulting from these agreements. The agreements were approved by the Town of Whitakers on November 6, 2023. It was noted that Rocky Mount has similar agreements for water and sewer purchases with other municipalities, including the Town of Nashville and Sharpsburg. The agreement **(C-2023-18)** was approved and the Mayor and City Clerk were authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the City.

H. PROPERTY DISPOSITION - 1006 COKEY ROAD

The City Council was notified that the City has received an offer from Glandon Forest Equity, LLC on behalf of Dollar General in the amount of \$200,000. The property is located at 1006 Cokey Road (formerly owned by Planters Oil Mill) on the Edgecombe County side of Rocky Mount and is currently vacant. The Planning Board previously approved a zoning amendment from I-2 (Heavy Industrial District) to B-5 (Service Business District) on the basis that the proposed rezoning of the site would have a positive growth impact on the area.

Resolution No. R-2023-71 entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT AUTHORIZING AN UPSET BID PROCESS FOR PROPERTY OWNED BY THE CITY LOCATED AT 1006 COKEY ROAD** was adopted. This resolution authorizes the City Clerk to advertise the offer for upset bids pursuant to G.S. 160A-269 and that if no upset bid is received pursuant to the notice, the offer from Glandon Forest Equity, LLC will be considered accepted and the appropriate City officials authorized to execute documents necessary for conveyance.

I. CITY COUNCIL MEETING/CANCELLATION

The City Council approved cancellation of the regular City Council meeting scheduled for December 25, 2023, due to it falling on a holiday when City offices are closed.

APPEAL OF PLANNING BOARD DECISION/MAPLE CREEK SUBDIVISION PRELIMINARY PLAT (RESIDENTIAL CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT)

The City Council was notified that the Planning Board reviewed the Maple Creek Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat (Residential

Cluster Development) at its September 12, 2023 meeting and denied the request. It was noted that no reasons were provided for the denial, and several neighboring property owners spoke in opposition to the request, citing concerns with flooding, property values, and property maintenance. The property owner filed an appeal of the Planning Board's decision to City Council in early October for consideration.

The recommended action was for the City Council to refer the subdivision plat back to the Planning Board for further consideration and to develop findings specifying the reason for its decision.

Motion was made by Councilmember Harris, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the appeal be referred back to the Planning Board.

CLOSED SESSION

A Closed Session was requested relative to matters concerning economic development.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 4:51 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-637a** at the end of **Minute Book 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

REGULAR SESSION

Mayor C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. convened the City Council meeting in regular session at 6:23 p.m.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the meeting be recessed at 6:24 p.m. to reconvene on Tuesday, November 28, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. for the purpose of entering into a closed session to continue discussion relative to a matter of economic development.

November 28, 2023

RECONVENED

Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr. reconvened the emergency City Council meeting in session at 3:36 p.m.

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; Kim Batts, City Clerk; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 3:37 p.m. to continue discussion of a matter concerning economic development. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as **ESM 637b**, at the end of **Minute Book 37**, upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

- * Councilmember Knight arrived at 3:38 p.m.
- * Councilmember Jabaris Walker arrived at 3:40 p.m.
- * Councilmember T.J. Walker, Jr. arrived at 3:50 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

Mayor C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. convened the City Council meeting in regular session at 4:35 p.m. There being no further business for discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Jabaris Walker and unanimously carried the meeting be adjourned.



Kim Batts
City Clerk