

April 22, 2024

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; Darvin Moore, Fire Chief; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Stephanie Taylor, Community Development Administrator; Todd Gardner, Transit Director; 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 4:10 p.m. and requested all in attendance to stand for a moment of silent prayer. He informed those in attendance that Reed Parrott, former president of Nash Community College, had passed on Sunday and asked that everyone keep his family in their thoughts.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, 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:

- Special Called Committee of the Whole meeting held October 23, 2023
- Regular Scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held November 13, 2023
- Regular Rescheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held December 11, 2023
- Regular Scheduled City Council meeting held November 27, 2023
- Regular Scheduled City Council meeting held December 11, 2023

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

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2023, AT 5:30 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING WITH MAYOR PRO TEM T.J. WALKER PRESIDING:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

STAFF PRESENT:

Keith Rogers
 Kim Batts
 Todd Gardner
 Robert Hassell
 Archie Jones
 Brad Kerr
 Elton Daniels
 Robin Cox

Others Present:

Mariate Echeverry, Micro Transit

Kena Cofield-Jones

Latasha Hall

Cornelia McGee-Anthony

Monica Brantley

Richard J. Rose

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem T.J. Walker called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and congratulated those Councilmembers who were recently reelected.

MICRO TRANSIT PRESENTATION - Mariate Echeverry

Ms. Echeverry Senior Transportation Planner presented the results of the Rocky Mount Microtransit Project study she was asked to develop.

Study Goals:

- Evaluate the Tar River Transit system
- Identify opportunities to implement Microtransit service in the service area
- Identify opportunities for improvements to the fixed route system to support the addition of Microtransit
- Identify additional opportunities to improve service delivery, i.e. hours of operation.

Components:

- Existing Conditions
- Service Assessment
- Public Engagement
- Recommendations
- Financial Plan
- Implementation Plan

Ms. Echeverry said that Microtransit is similar to Uber and Lyft but operates specifically for transit.

On-Demand Microtransit is a shared, technology-enabled public transportation system with flexible routing based on real-time demand and origin-destination patterns.

- It allows more mobility to places that are difficult to serve with fixed route.
- Addresses unmet needs for transportation in disadvantaged populations.
- Promotes transportation equity by providing multimodal services that are comparable to driving in terms of time, convenience and cost.
- Can be a more convenient and reliable option than traditional pre-scheduled demand response or infrequent fixed route service.
- Curb to Curb Service
- Operates within defined service zone
- Trips may be shared with other riders
- Trips must be booked
- Advanced reservations not required
- Booking options for riders without access to internet and/or banking
- Accessible vehicles mandated

Ms. Echeverry shared that the City of Wilson's ridership was declining, and they replaced their entire fixed route service with Microtransit.

She stated that Morrisville, Wilmington and Northeast Wake County use Microtransit and several cities in North Carolina are considering the

service.

Ms. Echeverry stated that The City of Rocky Mount currently operates 10 routes. She explained that on routes where there is strong ridership Microtransit will not work because too many vehicles will be needed, and it becomes expensive. She advised the Council that routes under the 12 passenger per hour threshold are candidates for Microtransit.

	Annual Riders	Annual Hours	Annual Pax/Hour
1-Meadowbrook	24,885	1,644	15.14
2-Oakwood	18,481	1,735	10.65
3-South Rocky Mount	25,184	1,775	14.19
4-Hillsdale	23,379	1,644	14.22
5-Golden East	59,968	3,162	18.97
6-Ravenwood	18,354	1,761	10.42
7-Sunset	51,133	3,120	16.39
8-NCC/Little Easonburg Shuttle	17,839	2,266	7.87
9-Battleboro/Goldrock Shuttle	9,439	2,878	3.28
10-Rocky Mount East	21,573	1,768	12.20
	270,235	21,753	12.42

Ms. Echeverry shared the Tar River Transit Demographics they looked at to propose recommendations:

- People of Color
- Below Poverty
- Zero-Vehicle Household
- Over 65
- Under 18
- Persons with Disabilities
- LEP

She was pleased to report that Rocky Mount's more vulnerable areas are very well served.

Ms. Echeverry informed the Council that 125 community members responded to the survey, and they spoke with 45 riders. In addition to them sitting down with businesses, educational institutions and neighborhoods to hear what they had to say.

Key Takeaways from Public Engagement

Stakeholder Focus Group:

- Insufficient bike/ped infrastructure near transit (especially near Nash Community College)
- TRT is in tune with citizen needs
- The public would benefit from more understandable marketing material from TRT
- Extending service hours/frequency would be helpful to employees and students

Survey:

- Want more service on Saturdays/Sundays as well as extended service hours and frequency
- There is a clear interest in Microtransit
- A majority of general public respondents commute by car alone
- Riders walk when transit is not available
- "Work" was the primary purpose of riders' trips on TRT
- "Errands and "Work" were the primary purpose of the general public's travel patterns

Service Recommendations

- Route 8 Microtransit Zone
- Route 9 Microtransit Zone
- Route 10 Microtransit Zone

Additional Recommendations

General:

- Increase hours of operation (Sunday service)
- Further develop partnerships (NC Wesleyan, Nash Community College, manufacturing plants, major employers) and work towards employer-assisted transit programs
- Implement proposed changes to fixed route service

Microtransit:

- Set system start-up date and determine a schedule
- Identify the Microtransit model to be implemented and planned level of service (designated pick-up locations, door to door, etc.)
- Negotiate and enter agreement with Microtransit service provider.

Financial Plan:

	Phase	Cost
Year Zero	Current	\$1,734,800
Phase 1	Year 1	\$2,810,916
	Year 2	\$2,867,134
Phase 2	Year 3	\$3,132,261
	Year 4	\$3,194,906
	Year 5	\$3,258,806
Phase 3	Year 6	\$3,459,233
Phase 4	Year 7	\$4,022,297

Next Steps:

- Microtransit Implementation
- Fixed-Route Implementation

Questions:

Councilmember Harris asked if they looked at any data for 2023 to have current ridership numbers and make the best possible decision.

Ms. Echeverry answered that ridership declined tremendously during Covid and when they were performing the study ridership was almost at the same level that it was before. She said they used 2019 because the current data is out of the norm.

Councilmember Harris inquired as to whether riders are currently being charged.

Todd Gardner, Transit System Manager responded that riders are being charged.

Councilmember Harris asked if the cost of the fixed route is comparable to Microtransit.

Ms. Echeverry responded that the people who use transit really need it and fares have to align with income levels. She said across the board they have seen the fares are the same as the fixed routes.

Councilmember Harris asked if they went out to Wesleyan and if there was a need for ridership.

Ms. Echeverry stated that Wesleyan was a part of the focus groups and at this point they don't see a need.

Councilmember Blackwell asked how a consumer books a trip.

Ms. Echeverry replied that there are several ways.

- App on the phone
 - The software allocates the trip
 - The bus can pick passengers up where they are, or the agency can set up virtual stops
- Call Center

Councilmember Blackwell asked if payment is extended when the ride is booked or made in the vehicle.

Ms. Echeverry stated that most systems allow payment in advance with deductions being made from the account. She said that there should be an option for riders to pay cash.

Councilmember Blackwell inquired when an RFP is designed, how will they provide those options.

Ms. Echeverry stated the RFP needs to include everything you want. She told the Council that Microtransit provides different services.

- Turn Key - Vehicles, drivers and software
- Software - App and Call Center

Her understanding is that the City's preference is to purchase the software.

Councilmember Blackwell summarized that if The City decided to go the RFP route that the vendor would provide an estimate of costs related to operating the whole system and delivering it on behalf of The City. If the City of Rocky Mount chose to purchase the software and reconfigure the current system delivery, levels of cost could be assumed because of the ridership. He asked if federal funds would cover revenue gaps if The City was unable to make the system operational.

Ms. Echeverry said that The City already receives federal funding and that won't change dramatically unless there's a dramatic change in the system. She shared that Wilson received some operating assistance with an innovation grant. She said that the City is going to have to make up for that revenue.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if enough information is available now to estimate what the gap would be.

Ms. Echeverry replied, in the affirmative and stated the numbers are provided in the report.

Councilmember Daughtridg asked if that was in addition to the \$2,251,000 received from the federal government and City's \$250,000 match.

Ms. Echeverry stated the numbers reflect the current service plus Microtransit.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if this would operate within the existing budget.

Ms. Echeverry said no.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that a strategy is needed to complement this change. He said that it's known what it would be to privatize part of it, because that wasn't asked.

Ms. Echeverry said NCDOT will be providing assistance for Microtransit through a program called Concept. She stated that the report mentions the 25-cent sales tax that the General Assembly allows counties to charge for transit.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that if only counties are allowed, the City would have to go to both counties and ask.

In response Councilmember Blackwell stated that the City is providing those services.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if Microtransit will replace some fixed routes or if they will operate together.

Ms. Echeverry stated that route 9 would be replaced, route 8 shortened, and a couple of routes would be consolidated for route 10.

Councilmember Blackwell asked what the average wait time is and what is the contact time prior to needing service.

Ms. Echeverry responded that it would depend on the contract negotiation with the provider. She stated there would be at least a 20-minute wait time and suggested making contact an hour before.

Councilmember Blackwell asked Todd Gardner what the strategy is for wait time management.

Mr. Gardner replied that would be worked out once the system is implemented. He shared that currently it's 24 hours, so there would be an improvement.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if this would do away with the vans.

Mr. Gardner said no.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that the buses and vans would still be operating and Microtransit would be another line of service. He asked if riders would have to wait for the bus to be full.

Mr. Gardner stated that smaller vehicles would be used if Microtransit is implemented. He said that he plans to use existing vehicles and may have to utilize some grant allocations to buy additional vehicles to accommodate the service.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that it's still a shared rider concept, trying to put as many people as possible in there within the route.

Mr. Gardner replied, yes. He said that with the service there will probably be two passengers per hour for those trips.

Ms. Echeverry added that smaller vehicles are being used because less people need to be carried to make it effective.

Councilmember Blackwell voiced that he did not see that there was any conversation with healthcare facilities.

Ms. Echeverry stated that she thinks they were invited to the focus group and the stakeholders who responded are listed in the report.

Mayor Roberson asked if he was in a Microtransit zone and needed to go somewhere on a fixed bus route if he would be taken to the destination or to a bus stop.

Ms. Echeverry answered that you can have specific transfer points for Microtransit into the fixed routes.

Mr. Gardner added, they would go to the destination instead of transferring.

Councilmember Blackwell asked that a copy of the full report be

provided.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker asked Mr. Gardner how he felt about the potential changes and his department's flexibility in implementing them.

Mr. Gardner stated that he feels his department has a leg up because they provide demand response and are familiar with the type of transportation. He added that they have a call center and are ready to implement an app to pay fares. He said Microtransit is an added component. Mr. Gardner feels the need for additional vehicles and funding to sustain the service may be barriers.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker asked Mr. Gardner if there will be a partiality RFP to transportation services that are already in existence to work directly with his department.

Mr. Gardner responded that if the route chosen is just purchasing the software, releasing the RFP would be an option. He stated that NCDOT and FTA are pushing transportation systems within the state to implement Microtransit. He reported that they will be releasing the RFP from a state level and transit systems can piggyback to purchase software, which would negate the RFP process.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker asked if transit wouldn't implement Microtransit and have an RFP to the private sector so they will be able to administer Microtransit as well.

Mr. Gardner said that there will either be an RFP or his department will piggyback on a state contract to purchase the software and operate the service.

Councilmember Knight asked if they were looking to incorporate the Kingsboro Industrial Park, McLane and Cheesecake Factory areas.

Mr. Gardner replied that service is already being provided to citizens in those areas through the Rural General Public program. He said Microtransit can be used as an additional mode of transportation. He shared that Universal Leaf is hiring and they received a lot of requests from passengers.

Councilmember Daughtride stated that Microtransit is exciting. He sees it saving time for citizens who could use it to get to work and grocery shopping. He asked if the City would keep their buses.

Mr. Gardner replied that the plan is to keep the existing fleet and if needed add smaller vehicles to accommodate the Microtransit concept.

Councilmember Daughtride asked if the current software is a module that can be added to or if new software must be purchased.

Mr. Gardner responded that Microtransit software will be in addition to what is currently being utilized.

Councilmember Daughtride feels the implementation of Microtransit would be economic development and address some issues with employment as it relates to people getting to work.

Councilmember Joyner stated that a challenge for the healthcare system is people not being able to get to appointments and he hopes this will address that need. He also asked if they spoke to the school system to help teachers new to the area without transportation. He said that Sara Lee has struggled with transportation as well.

Councilmember Jabaris Walker shared that he was in a meeting at Universal Leaf earlier and asked how can information that there is

transportation available to get to the people who are struggling.

Mr. Gardner replied that the service is through the Rural General Public Program and can be accessed through the Tar River Transit and City websites. He shared that there is transportation to and from Sara Lee in addition to a 6:00 pm to 12:00 am evening shuttle. He stated that a lot of their marketing is word of mouth, and they are looking at other ways to get the information out.

Councilmember Jabaris Walker suggested marketing to companies like Sara Lee, Universal Leaf and McLane to especially help the Re-Entry population.

Mr. Gardner stated that transit can reach out to those companies, so that they can relay to employees that the service is available.

3rd QUARTER CRIME STATISTICS - Robert Hassell

Councilmember Knight asked Chief Hassell if press releases were being done for all incidents in the City.

Chief Hassell responded that press releases are issued on the more serious crimes and not all incidents.

Chief Robert Hassell presented a summary of city-wide crime numbers to the City Council for 3rd Quarter of 2023. 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	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	+/-	% Change	Q1 + Q2 + Q3 2022	Q1 + Q2 + Q3 2023	+/-	% Change
Total	498	517	640	123	24%	1430	1655	225	16%

- 3rd Quarter 2023 crime numbers for murders, aggravated assault and shooting into occupied building(s)/vehicle(s) (map of locations provided):
- Aggravated Assault & Shooting into occupied cases and investigations:
 - Number cases = 66
 - Total victims = 82
 - Number cases with multiple victims = 12
 - Aggravated assault arrests = 18
 - Aggravated assault cases cleared = 27
- ShotSpotter and Citizen calls City-wide:
 - Shots fired/Heard = 241
 - Shots fired/Heard (year to date) = 658
 - Incidents with shell casings found = 96
 - Incidents with shell casings found (year to date) = 257
 - Number shell casings found = 886
 - Number shell casings found (year to date) = 2,245
 - Number of Firearms Seized = 127
 - Number of firearms Seized (year to date) = 360
 - Weapon violation arrests = 17

- Weapon violation arrests (year to date) = 49

- Virtual Call Center:

- Virtual CFS/Reports = 258
- Hours Saved from Patrol = 186

- Councilmember Blackwell asked how people get to the virtual call center.

- Chief Hassell responded that citizens calling 911, the administrative line or coming to the police department are transferred to the center if it meets the criteria.

- Other Police Stats:

- Calls for Service = 26,146
- Calls for Service YTD = 77,582
- On-View Arrests & Warrant Service = 408
- On-View Arrests & Warrant Service YTD = 1,328
- Traffic Accidents = 532
- Traffic Accidents YTD = 1,702
- Accident Property Damage = \$2,398,266
- Accident Property Damage YTD = \$7,724,718
- Traffic Stops = 1,866
- Traffic Stops YTD = 5,741
- Citations Issued = 855
- Citations Issued YTD = 2,438
- Warnings Issued = 1,462
- Warnings Issued = 4,626

- Councilmember Daughtridge asked if the calls for service numbers are strictly for RMPD or if it includes the Fire Department going first to EMS calls.

- Chief Hassell responded that about 20,000 would be Police Department calls and the remainder would be Fire and EMS calls.

- Violent Crime, Gang & Arrest Team:

- Warrants Served = 74
- Citations Issued = 15
- Calls for Service = 818
- CFS - Primary = 359
- Search Warrants = 7
- Gang Validations = 14
- Intelligence & Retaliation Reports = 5
- Contraband Seized:
 - Weapons = 27
 - Marijuana = 826.7 grams
 - Cocaine/Heroin = 76.6 grams

- Community Involvement:

- Attended = 18
- # of Officers/Staff Involved = 77
- # of Citizen Interactions = 1,177
- # Initiated = 15
- # of Officers/Staff Involved = 174
- # of Citizen Interactions = 5,401

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|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| . Lil Raleigh Day | . Bookbag Giveaway |
| . Happy Hill Community Day | . Community Day (In His Way Ministry) |
| . Coffee w/a Cop | . Rocky the Mount |
| . Cookies 'n Milk | . Touch a Trunk |
| . Cones & Cops | . Coffee, Conversations & Cops |
| . Pack-a-Patrol Car | . Sleep in Heavenly Peace (2x) |
| . Firearm Lock Giveaway | . PAL Bowling (3x) |
| . Summer Night Lights | . Community Meetings (8) |

. Back to School Community Bash

. National Night Out

Recruitment & Retention

- Recruitment Efforts:
 - Job Fairs
 - Internships
 - Social Media
 - Community Outreach
 - Team Approach
 - News Coverage
 - Hiring bonuses (Police & E911)
 - Recruitment incentive
 - Streamlined processes
 - Lateral entry
 - Recruitment video
 - Increased salary

- Retention Efforts:
 - Appearance policy revisions
 - Career development ladders
 - Incentive pay for specialized positions
 - Recruitment incentive
 - Mental health & wellness app
 - Night deferral
 - New uniform & exterior vest carrier
 - New technology
 - Additional support staff

- Our Results:
 - January
 - 52 vacancies
 - Negative hiring numbers 2+ years

 - October
 - 15 vacancies
 - 13 in BLET
 - Positive hiring numbers for current YTD

Councilmember Joyner asked if there are any guidelines regarding beards and hair.

Chief Hassell replied that he believes $\frac{3}{4}$ inch on the beard and there are limits on mustache and sideburns also.

Councilmember Harris asked how many officers have been able to take a patrol car home since the new implementation.

Chief Hassell responded that 20 officers have permanently assigned cars. He stated that officers who are on call or have continuous duty can also take a car home. He feels it's beneficial and helps with retention.

Councilmember Harris asked Chief Hassell if there was one thing that keeps him up at night.

Chief Hassell said making sure that the men and woman of the Rocky Mount Police Department know that he is here for them and be able to provide what they need to do their job and be safe.

Councilmember Harris asked if there were any technological needs.

Chief Hassell stated that there are a few projects already in the works that are going to help dramatically as far as technology is concerned.

Councilmember Daughtridge asked Chief Hassell what could be done about repeat offenders.

Chief Hassell stated that "three strikes and you're out" is still there for felonies and they work with the district attorney's office. He feels some individuals who reoffend on misdemeanors may need other services.

Councilmember Joyner asked as the holiday season as approaching if there has been an increase in break-ins at the mall and cars. He also inquired if there were issues with the homeless going into dilapidated homes and growth in juvenile crime.

Chief Hassell responded that they have seen an increase in juvenile offenders. He was excited to report that he is working with the state for grant funding to identify and help juvenile offenders. He said that occasionally individuals who are transient end up at the Police Department. His department connects them with the homeless shelter and work with community groups to get them the necessary ticket to their final destination. Chief Hassell stated that the police department still does the report card initiative, where if something valuable is seen left in a car they will leave a note to remove valuables. He said that the department is starting the After 9 social media campaign reminding people to be mindful of their surroundings, keep valuables out of eyesight and lock their car and house doors.

Councilmember Joyner thanked Chief Hassell for the faith-based meetings.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Information only; no formal action

ADJOURNMENT

Without objection, the Mayor Pro Tem adjourned the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

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

The minutes of the Regular Scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held November 13, 2023 are as follows:

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2023, AT 5:00 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING WITH MAYOR PRO TEM T.J. WALKER PRESIDING:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

T.J. Walker, Mayor Pro Tem
 André D. Knight*
 Richard Joyner
 Lige Daughtridge
 Jabaris Walker
 Tom Harris
 Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Keith Rogers
 Kim Batts
 Robert Hassell
 Elton Daniels
 Greg Cotten
 Cornelia McGee-Anthony
 Kirk Brown
 Kream Mosely
 Brenton Bent
 Richard J. Rose

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Reuben Blackwell

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ron Green

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem T.J. Walker called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. He congratulated Mayor Roberson on his reelection. He also congratulated

his opponent Theresa Alston Stokes for making history by being the first African American female and the first female to run for the office of the Mayor.

PARTNERSHIP UPDATE: BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF THE TAR RIVER REGION - Ron Green

Mr. Green congratulated the Mayor. He thanked the City of Rocky Mount for funding the Boys and Girl Club and their commitment to young people in Rocky Mount and the surrounding areas. He said that the Boys & Girls Club started in Rocky Mount and has expanded, and they are transforming young people across the county.

He stated that at the Steak and Burger event everyone got the opportunity to see the video they created to say thank you to donors and highlight and celebrate their kids. He said that he was going to talk about what The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tar River Region have done in Rocky Mount, with the funding received from the City and presented the Impact Report for 2022-2033.

Our Mission

To inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most to reach their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.

Our Vision

At the Boys & Girls Clubs we make sure that all club members are at or above grade level, practicing good character and citizenship and living healthy lifestyles.

Our Clubs

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tar River Region has an impressive history that began over 50 years ago with the establishment of the Boys Club in Rocky Mount, NC. The organization has since grown to serve thousands of young people between the ages of 5 and 18 in the Twin Counties in three locations (Rocky Mount, Tarboro and Nashville.

We are providing a world-class club experience that assures success is within the reach of every club member who walks through our doors, with all members on track to graduate from high school with a plan for the future, demonstrating good character and citizenship, and living a healthy lifestyle.

Priority Outcome Areas:

- Academic Success
- Health & Lifestyles
- Good Character & Citizenship
- Workforce Readiness

LABB CLUBHOUSE

- 100% of our members are on track to graduate from high school with a plan
- 89% of club members maintained a "C" or above GPA
- 87% Club members report that it is important for them to have positive friendships
- 89% Club members reported that they encourage others to make healthier food choices.
- 36,196 healthy meals & snacks served.
- New Club Director, Demetrius Whitehead
- He reported that pre-Covid they were averaging 140 kids attending daily and they are back at that number.

Mr. Green said there is a 2.6 overall GPA for the organization. He said The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tar River Region's scores are higher than the schools they serve. He shared that they are in discussions trying to get more clubs in the schools.

**Councilman Knight Arrived*

Highlight Programs:

Promise Academy

- Targeting young people in their clubs to take higher level math and sciences.

At-Promise Academy + Entrepreneurship

- 23 Students completed Planet Mogul Program 2022-2023
- All students generated viable business and entrepreneurship concepts
- 20+ more students interested in the Planet Mogul Program 2023-2024

Planet Mogul's primary focus is getting youth ready for the future by developing a diverse pipeline of entrepreneurs, community leaders and innovators prepared for the future workforce. The program focuses on teaching the art of purpose, vision and goal setting.

HERO Program

Partnership between the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tar River Region, The City of Rocky Mount and Williford Elementary School.

- Williford Elementary was traditionally considered a failing school
- 40 of the lowest performing students
→ Grades, chronic absenteeism or severe discipline problems
- Provides a hot meal and tutors
- Helps with school attendance and reduces chronic absenteeism
→ If you don't go to school, you can't come to the club
- Promotes academic success
- Builds character and citizenship
- Provides skills to live a healthy lifestyle
- Kindergarten through 3rd grade
- Each standard with those language arts and math; Two subjects focusing on average daily attendance
- 15 to 20% are receiving one on one tutoring
- The current G.P.A is 2.89

Extended Hours at the Club

At the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tar River Region, we understand that out-of-school time is critical to the youth in Rocky Mount. By extending our club's hours until 9 pm Monday through Thursday for our teens is a positive step towards a safe and constructive environment for our Club members. This action can help reduce the likelihood of youth engaging in criminal activities.

EA Sports Programming is offered as part of the extended hours program.

Project Dream Coming Soon

Mr. Green stated they had tried for years to find the right venue for the Workforce Readiness piece and said thank you for the gift. He feels it will be a game changer because they have been told that children aren't coming to Workforce Development programs ready. He shared that The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tar River Region are currently raising money for the facility and have written some grants. He said they will be focusing on Workforce Readiness with 14 to 18 year-olds. He reported that there will be a central feeding kitchen as well.

Mr. Green stated that the investment of \$1 to the Boys & Girls Club \$9.60 is returned to the economy and that's a 13.4 million investment annually back to our community.

Questions:

Councilmember Daughtridge thanked Mr. Green and asked if he was going to partner with other entities in workforce development.

Mr. Green replied they are filling the gap. He explained that the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tar River Region will provide workforce readiness not workforce development. He stated that they are going to work to get them to the point that they are ready to be developed. He has been told that kids are coming without the basic math, science or people skills, and are dropping out of their programs. He stated that the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tar River Region have written agreements with Nash County Schools in addition to Nash and Edgecombe Community College. He added that OIC does some things too and he is willing to work with them as well.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that the area that needs attention is attracting that age group and asked if more the Workforce Readiness is available.

Mr. Green responded that it has to be attractive to teens. He said there are 6 programs and industry clubs where there will be internships and apprenticeships.

Councilmember Joyner stated at the Ward 3 meeting parents talked about transportation and asked how Council can help him with kids who can't get there.

Mr. Green responded that there are some bus stops. He said there have been discussions of public transportation routes or setting up drop off and pick up points throughout the day. He stated they have to figure out how to get kids who want to come there.

Councilmember Jabaris Walker stated that OIC runs what he feels is the best re-entry program for 18-24 year-olds in the United States. He asked how Project Dream can connect with those in the re-entry program.

Mr. Green stated that the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tar River Region are in partnership with OIC in Wilson that Terry Ruffin wants to transition here. He thinks it's going to be important from the reentry side. He said because if you don't treat them like they have value and a future there's a possibility of going back to what they were before. He said they need to discuss what that opportunity could be.

Mayor Roberson thanked Mr. Green for what he is doing. He expressed that he thinks it's outstanding and said he stands ready to help.

Councilmember Joyner asked the City Manager to have Joel Dunn in Parks and Rec look at the areas where kids aren't being served to try and fill in some of the gaps.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that to his knowledge there was nothing in Ward 5, 6 or 7.

Councilmember Knight asked what is being done at the community centers. He said Council needs to hear from staff at South Rocky Mount and BTW to see what kind of impact they're having on children in that area. He feels Southeast Rocky Mount should remain priority, as it was one of the largest areas that didn't have a facility. He said he thought there was a park planned for Ward 5.

Councilmember Daughtridge responded that there was a study but to his knowledge there's no funding and he's not sure that it's in the CIP.

Councilmember Jabaris Walker commented that what BTW is doing with special needs is outstanding. He shared that someone from Charlotte came to model what they are doing.

Councilmember Harris agreed that existing facilities need to be in the best shape.

Councilmember Joyner said that Victory Presbyterian Church has a gym that's not being used, and The City should look to collaborate with churches.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Pro Tem requested for City Council to enter into a closed session for Attorney/Client Privilege.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Harris, and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 5:31 p.m.

The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as **ESM-636** at the end of **Minute Book 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor Pro Tem call the meeting back to open session and without objection, adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

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

The minutes of the Regular Rescheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held December 11, 2023 are as follows:

MINUTES OF A REGULAR RESCHEDULED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023, AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING WITH MAYOR C. SAUNDERS ROBERSON, JR. PRESIDING:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

André D. Knight
Richard Joyner
Lige Daughtridge
Tom Harris
Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Keith Rogers
Kim Batts
Nyki Hill
Elton Daniels
Monica Brantley
Richard J. Rose

Member absent:
T.J. Walker, Jr.
Jabaris Walker

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Roberson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

LAND ACQUISITION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - Ken Hunter

City Manager Keith Rogers presented the following timeline:

- Public Hearing & Council Approval (Tonight)
- Financing Proposals Received & Evaluated (late-December)
- Send Notice for Executing Options (by 12/31)
- Council Approval of Financing

- Close on Property (w/in 90 days of Executing Options)
- First Financing Payment (Interest-only, July 2024)

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Information only; no formal action
CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Roberson requested for City Council to enter into a closed session for Economic Development and Personnel.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. *Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Harris, and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 6:02 p.m.*

The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as **ESM-638** at the end of **Minute Book 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor Pro Tem called the meeting back to open session and without objection, adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

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

APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

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

- Add a closed session relative to Personnel

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Harris 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:

- Stated this Thursday April 25 from 6 to 8 p.m., our Human Relations department in conjunction with the Rocky Mount Housing Authority will be hosting a fair housing workshop
- Stated it will be at the Booker T. Theater and topics will include reasonable accommodation, home ownership, rental housing conditions and so much more
- Stated the Lawn Chair Theater is returning on May 3 and this summer it will be held rain or shine in the Booker T. Theater downtown
- Stated this season kicks off with the Super Mario Brothers movie and it starts at 6 p.m.

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:

Dr. Kim Koo

- Stated as the economic situation in the country worsens, attacks on the working class have increased and a prime example is the tremendous rise of harassments and indignities on the workers at the Tri County Industries (TCI)
- Stated since Margaret Sharpe took over management there has been an increase in workers dissatisfaction, allegations of corruption, nepotism in hiring, and harassments of all kinds have created a very toxic workplace causing more stress on the workers

- Stated the majority of the workers are African American and many have disabilities of sorts and not prone to complain
- Stated the wages of the workers have been stagnant, amounting to roughly \$7.50 to \$8 per hour
- Stated since TCI is located in Rocky Mount so wants Council to investigate seriously into this matter and if Ms. Sharpe is unable to change then she should be dismissed

Mumtaz Shaik

- Stated allegedly Tri County industries is under assault by management and reportedly its workplace culture is now one of racism, nepotism, favoritism, stagnating wages, firing black workers and hiring friends and family members
- Stated these allegations cannot be ignored and must be investigated

Wilma Sheares

- Stated she is a former employee of Tri County Industries with 20 years invested and she saw a lot of changes that occurred over the years
- Stated in the most recent years since Ms. Sharpe has been president, she has seen so many more disparities
- Stated policies are being written and people are being asked to follow them; workers have been written up for not doing so even though the policy has not stipulated a time for it to begin
- Stated the highest wages for some of the hourly staff is probably less than \$9 an hour and some have been employed there for many years with no wage increases

Mary Spires

- Stated the Bahá'ís of Rocky Mount have recently elected their local Spiritual Assembly
- Stated they wish to make a positive contribution in the community; presently they offer community neighborhood classes for children, youth and adults classes focused on building good moral character
- Stated they look forward to working with City government and with faith communities in the future
- Stated the booklet that they have included have examples of projects being done by small communities like theirs and larger ones; she asked that Council look through it

Robert Davis

- Stated he came to Rocky Mount in 1979 and he has seen people work too hard to try to get this City to go forward to have someone sit on a pedestal and destroy it
- Stated everyone has got to come together again and continue that path

Richard Petway

- Stated TCI has been a part of this community for as long as he can remember but yet they still have no credibility
- Stated people are coming in from somewhere else as opposed to being promoted from within
- Stated these are people that have disabilities and have been given a second chance to function in life and now someone is trying to take that away from them
- Stated this needs to be investigated as there have been people working out there for a long time still making \$7 and \$8 dollars per hour
- Stated there needs to be some kind of organization that goes out and inspects these companies and makes sure they are doing right by the employees

Nathlyn Ohree

- Commended the Parks and Recreation department for the outstanding presentation they gave at the library last week on improving our greenway system in the state of North Carolina

Curmilus Dancy

- Stated regarding the conversation about TCI and others, he thinks these complaints need to go to the Human Relations Commissions
- Stated he does not remember a time there was not a council retreat, so he would like to know what is going on with that

Mayor Roberson responded that the retreat this year has just simply been postponed and he thinks it will be happening sometime in the late summer or fall.

Moe Deloach

- Requested that Council ride over to Pender Street, where his dad has been pastored a church for the last 20 years; he stated just on that block, 8 out of 15 houses are boarded up
- Stated one house beside the church cannot be rehabbed
- Stated that area looks bad and it is not what people should have to see that want to worship at his dad’s church
- Stated as a business owner downtown he is grateful for the Event Center and it is amazing the amount of people that are coming to town
- Stated every weekend he gets someone coming into the restaurant saying how much potential downtown has and how excited they are to be in the City but they are concerned with the conditions of some of the buildings that are boarded up
- Asked about the process of enforcing some of the codes to hold some of these property owners accountable as it is time to clean up downtown

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember T.J. Walker, seconded by Councilmember Jabaris Walker, and unanimously carried that the Consent Agenda [Items 8(A) through 8(D)], 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
<i>NASH COUNTY</i>				
2023	19432	MITCHELL, MELVIN M 225 BROWNING LN ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	7.54	CITY VALUATION CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	7.54	

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>				
2019	5763	BAYVIEW FINANCIAL PROPERTY TRUST 11 BLK E HARGROVE PROP ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	152.55 25.17	CITY FORECLOSURE INT
		TOTAL RELEASE:	177.72	
2020	5757	BAYVIEW FINANCIAL PROPERTY TRUST 11 BLK E HARGROVE PROP ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	167.56 52.36	CITY FORECLOSURE INT
		TOTAL RELEASE:	219.92	

2021	5760	BAYVIEW FINANCIAL PROPERTY TRUST 11 BLK E HARGROVE PROP ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	167.56 37.28	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	204.84		
2019	5766	BAYVIEW FINANCIAL PROPERTY TRUST LT 10 BLK E HARGROVE PROP ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	169.61 27.99	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	197.60		
2020	5760	BAYVIEW FINANCIAL PROPERTY TRUST LT 10 BLK E HARGROVE PROP ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	434.45 135.77	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	570.22		
2021	5763	BAYVIEW FINANCIAL PROPERTY TRUST LT 10 BLK E HARGROVE PROP ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	434.45 96.67	CITY INT	FORECLOSURE
		TOTAL RELEASE:	531.12		

B. FY 2026 NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PRE-APPLICATION DOCUMENTS - TRANSIT

The City Council was provided with pre-application documents for the FY 2026 Community Transportation Program grant applications (Transit) for consideration. It was explained that the FY 2026 Community Transportation grants fund a portion of administration, operating and capital expenses incurred by Tar River Transit and the funding will assist in providing rural paratransit transportation to the general public as well as purchasing replacement vehicles within Transit's fleet.

It was noted that all pre-application documents must be approved by the City Council and executed by the Mayor before the Community Transportation Program grant application is available for submission.

The Pre-Application documents were approved and the Mayor was authorized to execute the documents on behalf of the City.

C. RESOLUTION/PFAS TREATMENT

The City Council received a request for approval to submit a grant application in the amount of \$500,000 to conduct a study on potential PFAS treatment at the City's water treatment plants. It was noted that a Council resolution is required before the grant application can be submitted and the deadline for the application is April 30, 2024.

Resolution No. R-2024-16 entitled **RESOLUTION FOR PFAS TREATMENT AT THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT WATER TREATMENT PLANTS** was approved and the Mayor and City Clerk were authorized to execute required documentation and certification, including subsequent grant, final applications and agreements. Staff was authorized to submit grant application on behalf of the City.

D. FEDERAL FY 2024 TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION'S CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES/FY 2025 SPECIAL SECTION 5333(B) WARRANTY FOR TRANSIT FUNDING/CERTIFICATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS ON LOBBYING

The City Council was provided with FY 2024 Certifications and Assurances for Transit grant funding; Special Section 5333 (b) Warranty for Transit Grant funding and Certification and Restrictions on Lobbying and advised that the certifications and assurances ensure the City will comply with all laws and regulations governing federally assisted program public transportation funds.

By consent, the Certifications and Assurances, Special Section Warranty and Certification and Restrictions on Lobbying were approved and the Mayor and City Attorney authorized to execute any required documentation on behalf of the City.

PUBLIC HEARING/PROPOSED FY 2024-2026 CONSOLIDATED PLAN/FY 2024 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

The City Council was advised in accordance with federal regulations at 24 CFR Part 91 the City of Rocky Mount and the Down East HOME Consortium (DEHC) has prepared a Consolidated Plan for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development and Planning program. The Consolidated Plan covers the three-year period from 2024 through 2026. As part of the Consolidated Plan process, an Annual Action Plan for program year 2024 has been prepared, which outlines how the City intends to expend an estimated \$536,904 in federal Community Development Block Grant funds (CDBG), and \$469,399 in HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds (HOME).

Mayor Roberson opened a public hearing to receive public comment relative to the proposed 2024-2026 Consolidated Plan/FY 2024 Annual Action Plan.

Dr. Kim Koo

- Stated she is a part of the group called Community Academy for Affordable Housing and their group has gone through a little bit of this consolidated plan and annual action plan
- Stated when she looked at it she noticed that it looks the same as the last 3 years, the same thing is being done over and over again expecting different results
- Stated the lack of funds, dependence on private developers, and the question of how you bring in investment to the community without gentrification are all issues
- Stated the City should not keep doing the same thing over and over again and think it is going to make a difference, the cities need to get together and demand more money from the federal and/or state government

Robert Davis

- Stated he has never seen people put together plans or processes that did not have an audit system
- Stated there needs to be an audit system in place to determine how effective the plan was before

Nathlyn Ohree

- Stated that she would just like for whatever is done to be consumer friendly
- Stated she listened to a community member recently who was approved for some home improvements, but the City stalled and did not communicate well so the person had to go back and get second quotes
- Asked that the City be more helpful to the consumer and give more friendly guidelines

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

MAYOR/COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Roberson stated he had spoken with Councilmember Knight and would like to take a moment to recognize Mrs. Nathlyn Ohree for her dedication to efforts to help improve the condition of her neighborhood and bringing pride to her community. Mrs. Ohree was presented a framed certificate and Councilmember Knight requested for a photo to be taken with Mrs. Ohree, the Meadowbrook Neighborhood Association President along with any other members of the Meadowbrook neighborhood present.

Councilmember T.J. Walker asked the Mayor if he could explain about the Down East HOME Consortium.

Mayor Roberson responded that he would attempt to explain it to the extent of his knowledge. He stated as he understands it, the City of Rocky Mount is a part of it along with the two counties that citizens reside in. He explained that it is a conduit where they receive HUD funding for very specific purposes, HOME is different from CDBG. He continued explaining that in receiving these monies, they are required to have a public hearing to hear the public input relative to how those dollars are spent then they move forward with it. He stated maybe the City Manager or someone here who knows a little bit more about the program in terms of the specificity could speak on it.

Councilmember T.J. Walker stated for those who are here tonight, the last Committee of the Whole meeting provided a more in-depth discussion about the processes and they could review that meeting on YouTube.

Councilmember Blackwell thanked Councilmember T.J. Walker for bringing that up. He stated that they did ask at the last Committee of the Whole for what actually has been done, a comparison between where the dollars have been invested, how many people have been served, and then what is left as far as a backlog or waiting list. He explained that Council was told there were people waiting but no waiting list, so it is important that they understand what the need is.

Councilmember Knight stated someone did contact him about a letter they received stating that they were approved, but due to the lack of funding, they were not able to receive the grant. He continued stating that when you look at the budget you see that money is still allocated for the program so he hopes staff can get the Council a list of those who were approved but did not receive the funding. He explained that they do not want the community to be

confused about what they see and what they read in terms of housing. He stated he read online about the City of Rocky Mount accepting a proposal for the Beal Street Development Project, but he does not have information about it. He stated he feels the City Council should be apprised about this so when they receive questions from their constituents, they can provide the correct answer. He stated he does not know if anyone can clarify but he is unsure about what specific monies are going to be used for that particular project.

Mayor Roberson responded that he is unaware but hopefully all of this will be disclosed and discussed in their budget process so they will have a better understanding and be able to better provide direction.

CLOSED SESSION (added in open meeting)

A closed session was requested relative to matters concerning personnel.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 4:48 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-643** at the end of **Minute Book 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, by consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 5:44 p.m.



Kim Batts
City Clerk