

Salisbury, North Carolina
June 20, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

PRESENT: Mayor Karen K. Alexander, Presiding; Mayor Pro Tem Tamara Sheffield, Council Members Harry McLaughlin, David Post, and Anthony Smith; City Manager Jim Greene, Jr., City Clerk Connie Snyder; and City Attorney J. Graham Corriher.

ABSENT: None.

Salisbury City Council met in Council Chambers in City Hall located at 217 South Main Street. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Alexander at 6:03 p.m. A moment of silence was taken.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Alexander led participants in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to adopt the Agenda as presented. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

RECOGNITION – COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Communications Director Linda McElroy noted the Communications Team took home first and second place awards from the North Carolina City and County Communicator's competition. She stated the Communications Team won first place Excellence in Communications awards for its external newsletter, *The Lamplighter*, and crisis communication regarding its coverage of a shooting that took place at Livingstone College. She noted the Communications Team also took home a second place award for the graphic design of the 2022 Reels and Riffs poster.

Council thanked the Communications Team for all it does to keep citizens informed.

BIKE MONTH UPDATE

Greenway, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Committee Member Mary Rosser and Traffic Engineering Coordinator Vickie Eddleman provided an update on events that took place in May during National Bike Month. Ms. Rosser stated an art contest was held and Ms. Ruby Corriher was selected as the art contest winner. Ms. Karyssa Price was the second place winner, Ms. Emily Wacaster was the 3rd place winner and honorable mentions were given to Mr. John Graham Corriher, Jr. and Ms. Addison Coldiron.

Council congratulated the contest winners and thanked Ms. Rosser and Ms. Eddleman for all they do for the City.

PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor to proclaim the following observance:

INDEPENDENT RETAILER MONTH

July 2023

CONSENT AGENDA

(a) Minutes

Approve Minutes of the special meeting of May 23, 2023.

(b) Budget Ordinance Amendment – Bell Tower Green, Inc.

Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2022-2023 budget in the amount of \$200,000 to appropriate a state directed grant for Bell Tower Green, Inc.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2022-2023 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE A GRANT FOR BELL TOWER GREEN.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 31 at Page No. 233, and is known as Ordinance 2023-42.)

(c) Budget Ordinance Amendment – Busker’s Bash

Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2022-2023 budget in the amount of \$1,500 to appropriate grant funds from the Rowan Arts Council to support the Busker’s Bash.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2022-2023 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE A DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT GRANT.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 31 at Page No. 234, and is known as Ordinance 2023-43.)

(d) Approval of Easement – Old Concord Road

Approve the easements for Project C-5603D, sidewalk on Old Concord Road from Ryan Street to Jake Alexander Boulevard. Construction is anticipated to begin late summer 2023. This project is funded through a North Carolina Department of Transportation Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant.

(e) Agreement – North Carolina Governor’s Highway Safety Program

Adopt a Resolution approving the Salisbury Police Department to enter into an agreement with the North Carolina Governor’s Highway Safety Program that will allow the Police Department to receive a \$25,000 no-match grant from the program to be used for traffic concerns.

NORTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR’S HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL RESOLUTION.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 17 at Page No. 25, and is known as Resolution 2023-18.)

(f) Budget Ordinance Amendment – Bell Tower Green Movie/Concert Series

Adopt a Budget Ordinance Amendment to the FY2022-2023 budget in the amount of \$5,000 for expenses related to the Bell Tower Green Movie/Concert Series.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2022-2023 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE SPONSORSHIP FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 31 at Page No. 235, and is known as Ordinance 2023-44.)

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Alexander opened the floor to receive public comments.

Mr. Eathan Chirico addressed Council regarding the Fire Department and public safety. He expressed concern regarding salary and retention of fire fighters.

Ms. Whitney Peckman expressed concern over the Police Department removing a Facebook post that included a Pride flag.

Salisbury Pride Board Member Andra Porter thanked Council for its support of Salisbury Pride including Mayor Alexander's issuance of a Pride Day Proclamation and Council's planned attendance of the Pride Festival. She then thanked the Salisbury Police Department for its support of Salisbury Pride.

Mr. Kim Porter thanked Council for supporting the LGBTQ+ community and all citizens.

Ms. Cheryl Goins referenced an article in the *Salisbury Post* regarding the Police Department removing a social media post supporting Pride. She indicated the Police Department serves the whole community regardless of race, sexual orientation, or social standing, and the Police Department has always supported the Pride festival.

Ms. Becky Lane noted several local businesses that showed their support of the LGBTQ+ community have received threats and harassment. She stated since the inception of the Salisbury Pride Organization it has had the full support of the Salisbury Police Department, and she thanked the Police Department and City leadership for all it does to keep the City safe.

Mr. Tim Coffey, Salisbury Pride Board Member, stated every interaction Salisbury Pride has had with the City and the Police Department has been positive. He thanked Council for its continued support of Salisbury Pride and its work to make Salisbury inclusive.

There being no one else to address Council, Mayor Alexander closed the public comment session.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE GRANT - CROW HOLDINGS PHASE 2

Rowan Economic Development Commission (EDC) Vice President Scott Shelton and Crow Holdings Development Associate Nick Thornton addressed Council regarding an economic development incentive grant request for Crow Holdings Phase 2.

Mr. Shelton noted Phase 1 of the project included a 713,000 square foot building with a capital investment of \$73 million. He added at its February 7, 2023 meeting Council approved a Level 2 three-year incentive grant equal to 90% of the new taxes to be paid on real property. He indicated Phase 1 of the project is under construction.

Mr. Shelton explained Crow Holdings is ready to proceed with Phase 2 which will consist of a 468,000 square foot building with a \$45 million capital investment. He stated the total investment by Crow Holdings for both phases is expected to be \$118 million and the company will invest additional funds into public road improvements.

City Manager Jim Greene thanked Crow Holdings for its investment in the community and he thanked the EDC for its work on the project.

Councilmember McLaughlin asked if there is an estimate for when a company would be in place and begin to hire employees. Mr. Thornton stated Crow Holdings is working with companies who would like to be operational by 2024.

Mr. Shelton reviewed the Phase 2 incentive grant request. He indicated the grant would be for three years and equivalent to 90% of the new taxes paid on real property resulting in a tax incentive grant valued at \$874,314 with the City receiving approximately \$2.3 million in net revenue.

Mr. Shelton stated once a job-creating tenant occupies the building, the company would like Council to consider an incentive grant for the tenant based on its taxable investments in business personal property along with job creation.

Councilmember Smith asked about the process to determine a tenant for the buildings. Mr. Thornton noted Crow Holdings will work closely with the EDC, the state, and leasing professionals Cushman and Wakefield regarding tenant leads.

Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing after due notice regarding economic development incentive grant request for Crow Holdings Phase 2.

There being no one to address Council, Mayor Alexander closed the public hearing

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to approve an economic incentive grant for Crow Holdings Phase 2 consisting of a local Level 2 Incentive grant equal to 90% of taxes paid on the taxable investment over a three year period, estimated to be \$874,000, for construction of a 468,000 square foot building with a \$45 million capital investment by the company. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

FY2023-2024 CITY BUDGET

City Manager Jim Greene and Finance Director Wade Furches addressed Council regarding the FY2023-2024 City budget. Mr. Greene noted at its last meeting Council requested follow-up on items including Fund Balance and a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for employees.

Mr. Furches noted Council was previously presented a balanced budget as required by State Statute, and he pointed out Council must approve a final budget by June 30, 2023.

Mr. Furches indicated staff originally presented a recommended budget of \$108,064,027 for the General and Enterprise Funds. He noted at the last meeting staff presented a list of projects that could be completed using an additional \$1 million of Fund Balance. He added there was also discussion regarding the possible use of Fund Balance to fund an additional 1% COLA that would

increase the COLA recommendation from 2% to 3%. He referenced future project that will require Fund Balance expenditures.

Mr. Furches referred to the fountain at Gateway Park, and he asked Public Works Director Chris Tester to provide an update on the project. Mr. Tester reviewed the history of the park, and he explained the current fountain is a replica of the original. He noted the water lines to the fountain are leaking and need to be replaced which will require removing the concrete as well as all the structure around the fountain and is estimated to cost \$20,000. He pointed out the fountain is leaking internally and would need to be shipped to a fountain repair shop in Alabama at an estimated cost of \$50,000. He noted staff will coordinate with community partners to look at alternate uses for the fountain and evaluate the cost.

Councilmember Post asked if funding to repair the fountain is included in the proposed budget. Mr. Greene explained the fountain was included in the list of projects that could be completed with additional Fund Balance. He added staff would like to evaluate options for the fountain with community partners and bring the options back to Council mid-year. By consensus, Council agreed.

Mr. Furches reviewed two recommended changes to the proposed budget: increasing the COLA for all employees to 3% with an implementation date of September 8, 2023 and replacing the windows in the City Office Building (COB). He explained the additional COLA would be funded by a \$.06 tax increase, which would generate \$238,000. He commented the 2% average merit pay is still included in the budget and would be implemented January 2024. He noted a 1% longevity bonus is included in the budget and the City will absorb health insurance premium increases. He explained using additional Fund Balance to replace windows at COB would increase efficiency. He added staff recommends waiting on additional projects until the final results of FY2023 are available. He stated with the recommended changes the proposed City-wide budget for the General and Enterprise Funds is \$108,695,411.

Mr. Furches commented staff is recommending a revised tax rate of \$.616 to fund the extra 1% COLA for employees. He noted an increase in stormwater fees of \$.40 per month, and he indicated there are no other fee increases in the proposed budget.

Councilmember Post stated he is concerned fees are not keeping up with inflation. He added he also has reservations when an outside vendor raises its rates and the City does not raise its rates for the consumers which could create higher rate increases in the future. Mr. Greene noted staff will monitor costs and the inflation rate carefully, and he pointed out there will be increases in recycling fees over the next two fiscal years. He added staff will continue to evaluate options and opportunities that will be brought back to Council for its consideration.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked everyone who has worked on the proposed budget. She added she is hopeful the 1% longevity bonus, the 3% COLA, and an opportunity for a merit raise sends a positive message to employees. She stated she fully supports the proposed budget.

Councilmember Smith commended staff for its work to balance the budget while looking out for the public good.

Councilmember McLaughlin thanked Mr. Greene his work to keep the public informed during the budget process.

Mayor Alexander noted the proposed budget is responsive and responsible to citizens and tax payers, and she thanked Mr. Greene for his leadership.

Thereupon, Councilmember Smith made a **motion** to adopt the budget Ordinance of the City of Salisbury for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2023, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2024.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 31 at Page No. 236-252, and is known as Ordinance 2023-45.)

CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT – FIRE STATION 3

Fire Chief Bob Parnell, Finance Director Wade Furches, and Architect Bill Burgin addressed Council regarding a construction contract with KMD Construction Company in the amount of \$8,078,000 for the construction of Fire Station 3.

Mr. Burgin noted the contracts have been issued to the low bidder, KMD Construction, who is working to obtain bonds and insurance. He added he has worked KMD Construction in the past, and he is confident they will do a good job for the City.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to authorize the City Manager to execute a construction contract with KMD Construction Company in the amount of \$8,078,000 for the construction of Fire Station 3. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

STAGGERED COUNCIL TERMS

City Attorney Graham Corriher noted at its May 16, 2023 meeting Council adopted a Resolution of Intent to consider changing the City Charter to increase the Council terms to four year staggered terms. He indicated at its meeting on June 6, 2023, Council held the required public hearing.

Mr. Corriher explained Council can take no action and keep things the way they are, it can change the length of terms without a referendum vote, or make the changes with a referendum vote that would be on the 2023 municipal ballot.

Councilmember Post asked about the cost of a referendum vote. Administrative Services Director Kelly Baker stated the cost is approximately \$9,000 to add a referendum vote on the ballot.

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to keep things as they are with two year terms.

Councilmember Post pointed out three public meetings took place and a public hearing was held. He noted less than 20 individuals attended the meetings, and he does not see a demand to change Council terms.

Councilmember Smith stated the City has a growing economy that is getting more complex, and elected officials need additional time to see the items that come before them to fruition. He clarified it is not a matter of personal opinion, it is a matter of paying attention to the community and wanting it to be safer, more efficient, and economically vibrant. Mr. Smith stated his goal is for the Council to have four year terms, but if the citizens vote for two-year terms he will support the decision.

Councilmember McLaughlin stated he prefers a referendum vote on Council terms.

Mayor Alexander and Councilmember Post voted AYE and Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield and Councilmembers McLaughlin and Smith voted NAY. (2-3) The motion failed.

Thereupon, Councilmember McLaughlin made a **motion** to adopt an Ordinance to create a separate election to establish four year staggered terms for the Mayor and City Council of the City of Salisbury, subject to a qualify vote of qualified voters in accordance with GS 160A-102.

Councilmember McLaughlin noted the City is growing and it is important to have longevity on the Council. He indicated staggered terms would eliminate the possibility of an entirely new Council being elected.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield noted Council should be empowered to make this decision. She pointed out there are 10 municipalities in Rowan County, and the City is one of two that currently have two year terms.

Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

ORDINANCE TO CREATE A SEPARATE ELECTION TO ESTABLISH FOUR YEAR STAGGERED TERMS FOR THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL, THE CITY OF SALISBURY, SUBJECT TO A QUALIFY VOTE OF QUALIFIED VOTERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH GS 160A-102.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 31 at Page No. 253, and is known as Ordinance 2023-46.)

Mayor Alexander asked when the Ordinance would take effect. Mr. Corriher noted Council term lengths will be placed on the ballot in 2023 and would take effect in 2025 with voter approval.

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to adopt a Resolution to call a special election for the purpose of submitting to a vote of the people, an ordinance adopted by the Salisbury City Council to establish four year staggered terms. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

RESOLUTION TO CALL A SPECIAL ELECTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUBMITTING TO A VOTE OF THE PEOPLE, AN ORDINANCE ADOPTED BY THE SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH FOUR YEAR STAGGERED TERMS.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 17 at Page No. 25, and is known as Resolution 2023-18.)

MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT EXPANSION

Downtown Development Director Sada Troutman stated a Municipal Service District (MSD) expansion came before Council at its June 6, 2023 meeting. She stated First Presbyterian Church owns three parcels that it requests be included in the MSD as allowed by NCGS 160A-538. She added the report required to support the proposed expansion has been available to the public, and a public hearing was held at Council's last meeting.

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to authorize the expansion of the Municipal Service District to include First Presbyterian Church. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

CONTRACT – ESP ASSOCIATES, INC.

Downtown Development Director Sada Troutman addressed Council regarding a contract with ESP Associates, Inc. in the amount of \$856,602 for the construction level design of Main Street improvements between Kerr and Horah Streets.

Ms. Troutman noted the streetscape project will provide multimodal safety and functionality, beautification, upgraded infrastructure and amenities, and economic development and competitiveness. She pointed out engaging with the public has been a key element of the process. She indicated in 2021, there were opportunities for the public to provide feedback on a Main Street streetscape including an online interactive map for people to leave comments.

Ms. Troutman pointed out Phase I was the Main Street restriping that changed the four lane cross section to a three lane cross section and changed some of the parking angles to increase pedestrian safety. She indicated Phase II resulted in conceptual drawings that include sidewalk

bump-outs at the intersections, replaces sidewalks, street trees, and trash and recycling options, and adds streetscape furniture, art, lighting, bike racks, and landscaping.

Ms. Troutman noted the conceptual drawings do not offer enough detail and the next step is to select a firm for construction level drawings. She stated in 2022 staff released requests for qualifications and received five responses and three firms were interviewed. She pointed out a seven person committee read and scored the proposals, interviewed the finalists, and selected ESP Associates. She stated the proposed contract addresses site evaluation and base mapping all the way through utility coordination and designing the construction documents. She noted the City Communications Team will be a part of the process and the company has committed to working with stakeholders regarding the construction timeline and impact. She stated the design work will begin in July and will take approximately 12 months to complete.

Ms. Troutman noted there is funding to cover approximately six blocks of the Main Street Streetscape Project. She indicated the groundwork that is being completed will help the City prepare for the construction process.

Ms. Troutman explained the total cost of the contract is \$856,602, and she pointed out \$650,000 was budgeted in the current fiscal year using ARPA funding. She added the \$206,000 difference will be paid through the General Fund and funding from Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU).

City Manager Jim Greene noted there are two items for Council's consideration the construction level design and the next item on Council's Agenda will be the grant for the construction. He indicated the grant will cover 80% of construction, but there is not a grant for the design phase of the project.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield noted the project is far reaching and will impact multiple departments.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with ESP Associates, Inc. in the amount of \$856,602 for the construction level design of Main Street improvements between Kerr and Horah Streets. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to adopt an Ordinance amending the FY2022-2023 budget Ordinance of the City of Salisbury, North Carolina to appropriate funds for construction level design. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FY2022-2023 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR CONSTRUCTION LEVEL DESIGN.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 31 at Page No. 253, and is known as Ordinance 2023-47.)

MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT – NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Downtown Development Director Sada Troutman addressed Council regarding a municipal agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation in the amount of \$9,283,444 for construction of Downtown Salisbury Main Street Improvements, Project HL-0064. She explained a grant has been awarded to the City from the Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for construction of the downtown Salisbury Main Street improvements between Kerr and Horah Streets. She stated once the construction design is completed there is a grant for the actual construction of the project. She noted the grant award will be a reimbursement from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to the City of eligible expenses up to \$7,426,755. She indicated the grant will require a City match of \$1,856,689, and the total agreement is \$9,283,444 that will go towards construction of those six blocks on Main Street. She added staff anticipates the local match being spread out over multiple fiscal years.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to approve a municipal agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation in the amount of \$9,283,444 for construction of Downtown Salisbury Main Street Improvements, Project HL-0064. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked the MPO for allowing the City to have access to the grant.

MICROTRANSIT UPDATE

City Manager Jim Greene stated microtransit is a priority for Council, and he pointed out the state did not receive all of the federal funding it anticipated which impacted microtransit moving forward in the City.

Transportation Director Rodney Harrison noted microtransit is an on-demand ride share service that will improve a rider's experience when using the City's public transportation system. He added transportation is changing and microtransit provides an opportunity to re-engineer public transportation while being flexible to meet the community's needs.

Mr. Harrison explained there are two partnership model Software-as-a-Service (SAAS) and Transportation-as-Service (TAAS). He stated SAAS uses software from a third party to offer on-demand service that the City would manage and operate with its own operators and vehicles. He added TAAS is a turnkey solution operated by a third party on behalf of the City that includes technology, operators, vehicles, drivers, and operation management.

Mr. Harrison noted at its January 28, 2022 Retreat Council adopted a priority to implement a microtransit pilot project to determine the viability of alternative transportation. He indicated at its June 7, 2022 meeting Council approved an in-house microtransit pilot project that would begin

in December using the SAAS model and then transitioning to the TAAS model if the North Carolina Department of Transportation Integrated Mobility Division (NCDOT-IMD) funding is awarded through the United States Department of Transportation's Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program (RURAL). He explained the pilot project would replace Route #3 and include some service to rural areas and ADA paratransit service.

Mr. Harrison indicated at January 26, 2023 Retreat AECOM presented a recommendation to replace routes 1, 2, and 3 and ADA paratransit service with microtransit using SAAS. He explained the City could lose up to \$200,000 in State Maintenance Assistant Program (SMAP) funding if microtransit is implemented system-wide which made implementing a pilot program more desirable.

Mr. Harrison stated the City was approved for a three-year \$2.8 million Mobility for Everyone Everywhere in North Carolina (MEE NC) grant for a TAAS pilot project and \$138,000 for a SAAS pilot project. He added the loss of SMAP and other grant funding is a concern, but SMAP funds will continue for at least two years. He commented the intent of NCDOT-IMD is to ensure transit systems do not lose SMAP funding. He pointed out the earliest start date is January 1, 2024, and he reviewed the launch process. He added AECOM estimated project implementation would take nine months when using the TAAS model.

Mr. Harrison reviewed the recommended pilot project:

- A pilot project that replaces Route #3 (Blue Route) and includes ADA paratransit service
- Microtransit service will not expand in rural areas
- The service will be offered using the TAAS Model
- Pick up and drop off must be within the service zone
- 20 minute wait time for pick-up
- 30 minute trip duration
- Connects with other two routes at the transfer site
- Door to door service only offered to ADA paratransit riders, all other riders will use virtual bus stops

Mr. Harrison asked Council to consider approving a TAAS microtransit pilot project using funding awarded through the NCDOT-IMD RURAL Grant Program and to authorize staff to proceed with a request for proposal to support the microtransit pilot project.

Councilmember McLaughlin asked how much funding the City would lose if it implemented SAAS as its pilot project. Mr. Harrison stated the City would receive \$138,000 in grant funding from NCDOT if it implements SAAS and \$2.8 million if it implemented TAAS. He added it is to the City's benefit to take advantage of the \$2.8 million in grant funding to see how the system operates, evaluate it, and learn from the contractor. He commented after three years the City can make a decision on how it wants to proceed.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield asked about the transfer spot for other routes in the area. Mr. Harrison explained the transfer site is downtown across from the Amtrak Station for all bus routes.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield pointed out microtransit service will eliminate non-productive routes.

Councilmember Smith questioned why the consultant recommend the City implement SAAS instead of TAAS and what the City can learn from the implementation of TAAS. Mr. Harrison explained AECOM researched nine transit systems throughout the country and for those who had the equipment, personnel, and a transit system already in place, it recommended the SAAS model. He added staff recommended implementing TAAS to take advantage of the \$2.8 million in grant funding.

Interim Assistant City Manager Brian Hiatt stated staff is recommending that the City maintain its vehicles in case Council decides to convert from TAAS to SAAS in the future. He pointed out when the consultant made the recommendation the amount of grant funding was unknown. He indicated since the funding amounts have been determined it is to the City's advantage to implement TAAS.

Mayor Alexander asked about the current Transit budget. Mr. Harrison stated it is \$1.6 million including capital. Mayor Alexander indicated transitioning to TAAS will cost approximately \$925,000 per year for one route. Councilmember Post stated at the current budgeted amount the City pays approximately \$550,000 per route. Mr. Greene stated entities that have converted to microtransit have seen an increase in ridership which leads to an increase in cost. He added the approved budget includes a \$600,000 allocation from the General Fund to the Transit Fund. He noted some of the entities that have made the transition to microtransit are looking at a larger subsidy from their General Fund because of the popularity of the service. He added staff will continue to evaluate cost as it looks for opportunities to expand the service.

Mayor Alexander asked if the City will be able to adjust rates for microtransit service to help offset the potential cost increase. Mr. Hiatt stated the City of Wilson increased its fare, and its customer base was willing to pay a higher rate for the increased level of service.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to approve a microtransit pilot project utilizing the Transportation-As-A-Service model and using funding awarded through the North Carolina Department of Transportation Integrated Mobility Division Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to authorize staff to move forward with issuing a request for proposal to support a microtransit pilot project utilizing the Transportation-As-A-Service model. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Community Appearance Commission

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield with Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voting AYE, the following appointment was made to the Community Appearance Commission:

Mr. Jason Young

Term Expires 3/31/2026

Hurley Park Advisory Committee

Upon a motion by Mayor Alexander with Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voting AYE, the following appointment was made to the Hurley Park Advisory Board to fill an unexpired term:

Mr. Jerry Lawson

Term Expires 3/31/2024

CITY ATTORNEY'S COMMENTS

(a) Firefighter Social Security

City Attorney Graham Corriher asked Council to consider adopting a Resolution that establishes the effective date for Social Security for firefighters as January 1, 2024, if the firefighters vote to approve participation in Social Security. He stated in April Council adopted a Resolution stating if firefighters vote to participate in Social Security Council will take the required action to take to fund the City's portion of the costs.

Mr. Corriher stated a 90-day notice of the referendum vote was sent out and the vote is scheduled for August 31, 2023. He added if the vote is approved a packet of material will be sent to the Social Security office to amend the City's agreement. He indicated an effective date of January 1, 2024 would establish a clean start at the beginning of the year.

City Manager Jim Greene noted approximately \$300,000 is set aside in the coming budget if firefighters approve Social Security that would cover the City's portion. He thanked Council for its support of the opportunity for the Fire Department and he recognized Mr. Corriher for his diligent work on this project.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to adopt a Resolution setting the effective coverage date as January 1, 2024 for Social Security pending approval of the Firefighter referendum vote. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

RESOLUTION SETTING THE EFFECTIVE COVERAGE DATE AS JANUARY 1, 2024 FOR SOCIAL SECURITY PENDING APPROVAL OF THE FIREFIGHTER REFERENDUM VOTE.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 17 at Page No. 27, and is known as Resolution 2023-20.)

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

City Manager Jim Greene thanked Council for all it does for the City, and he recognized staff for all it does to get the Agenda ready for Council.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember McLaughlin noted no one from the community attended the Budget Town Hall meeting, and when Council term limits were considered only six people were present. He stated there is a lack of community input and bringing Council terms to a vote of the people will allow for more input from the community. He thanked the Fire Department for its service to the community.

Councilmember Post noted the budget process was very organized which made it easier for Council. He commended Finance Director Wade Furches on his work with staff and the Management Team to make the budget process a success. He also commended City Manager Jim Greene on the Manager's Report which is very beneficial to Council. He referenced the changes that are planned for the Amtrak schedule, and he thanked everyone who has worked to make sure the City's voice is heard.

Councilmember Smith stated he is looking forward to the Salisbury Pride Festival that will take place this weekend. He added he is grateful the City is committed to inclusion and celebrating and looking out for each other.

MAYOR PRO TEM'S COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield stated she attended the J.E.S. Center's First Annual Father's Day Banquet, and she thanked Ms. April Butler and Mr. Terrence Jones for their work on the banquet. She commended the Salisbury-Rowan NAACP and the Juneteenth Planning Committee for its work on the week long Juneteenth events.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield noted approximately 16 people attended the Council meeting in support of the Salisbury Police Department and its support of LGBTQ+ community members. She indicated there has never been a question from that community regarding the Police Department's support. She added there is a heightened sensitivity in the country and young people need to know the City is safe. She stated she has worked with multiple city managers and police chiefs in different capacities and the support has never wavered. She emphasized they have always made sure the community is safe and everyone is treated the same. She added she is hopeful the Police Department and the LGBTQ+ community heard the message from multiple people during public comment.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

Mayor Alexander thanked Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield for attending the J.E.S. Center's Father's Day Banquet, and she pointed out Homeless Advocate Dennis Rivers was one of the honorees. She thanked Council for attending Juneteenth and helping present the proclamation for that very important celebration in the community. She also thanked staff who participated in the Juneteenth events.

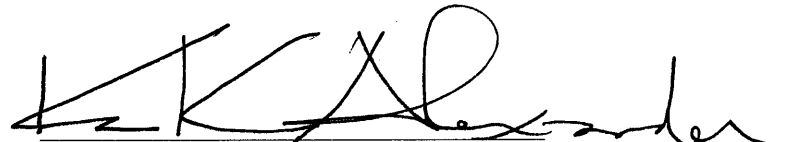
(a) Salisbury Pride Festival

Mayor Alexander announced the 11th annual Salisbury Pride Festival will take place at Bell Tower Green on Saturday, June 24, 2023 from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The 2023 theme is United with Pride. A Rainbow Walk around Bell Tower Green will take place at 10:45 a.m. and will march to the main stage to kick off the festival. The event is free and open to the public. For more information please contact Salisbury Pride.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.



Karen Alexander, Mayor



Connie B. Snyder, City Clerk