

Salisbury, North Carolina
February 21, 2017

REGULAR MEETING

PRESENT: Mayor Karen Kirks Alexander, Presiding; Mayor Pro Tem Maggie A. Blackwell; Council Members Kenneth Hardin, William Brian Miller, and David Post; City Manager W. Lane Bailey; Deputy City Clerk Kelly Baker, and City Attorney F. Rivers Lawther, Jr.

ABSENT: City Clerk Myra B. Heard.

Salisbury City Council met in Council Chambers in City Hall located at 217 South Main Street. The invocation was given by Councilmember Miller. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Alexander at 5:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mayor Alexander welcomed all visitors present.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Mayor Alexander noted the following change to the Agenda:

Add — Mayor to proclaim Girl Scouts Hornet's Nest Council Cookie Weekend.

Add — Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell to present Tuesday Tie Days at Isenberg Elementary School.

Add — Changes to public comments.

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Alexander proclaimed the following observance:

GIRL SCOUTS HORNET'S NEST COUNCIL COOKIE
WEEKEND

February 24-26, 2017

TUESDAY TIE DAYS AT ISENBERG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell addressed Council regarding Tuesday Tie Days at Isenberg Elementary School. She stated the students asked their teacher Anthony Johnson why he wears a tie, and Mr. Johnson explained it was part of being a grown up and it helps him get respect. She noted the students asked if they could wear ties too. She stated Mr. Johnson asked the community for ties, and he received so many donations the program was expanded to include Hurley, Overton, and North Rowan Elementary Schools.

Ms. Blackwell stated student behavior improves on Tuesday when the boys are wearing their ties, because if one of them have a significant behavior issue, they must remove their tie. She pointed out Fire Chief Bob Parnell, Lieutenant Joe Miller, and Detective Richard Rooplal recently went to Isenberg Elementary School to teach the young men how to tie their ties. She thanked them for helping the students and for all they do for the City.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Alexander indicated she had received feedback from Councilmembers, and she reviewed proposed changes to public comments. She noted public comments would be held at the end of the meeting, and anyone who would like to speak must sign up prior to the 5:00 p.m. meeting. She stated speakers must provide their name, address, contact information and topic of discussion. She commented people who are unable to arrive before 5:00 p.m. can sign up to speak by calling the City Clerk's office at (704) 638-5224 before 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. She indicated citizens will have three minutes per person to speak and citizens will no longer be allowed to yield their three minutes to another speaker. She added public comment sessions will be limited to one hour and will be held at regularly scheduled Council meetings.

Mayor Alexander explained the proposed changes to public comment would allow the City to focus on the business portion of the meeting and then allow feedback to residents who address Councilmembers. She added if Council approved the changes they would be incorporated into a Resolution for consideration at its next meeting.

Councilmember Hardin indicated he does not agree with the proposed changes. He stated citizen concerns are City business, and Council seems to be getting further away from hearing its citizens.

Councilmember Post noted he agrees with portions of the proposed changes. He pointed out it is not reasonable to expect the public to sit through the uncertain length of Council meetings for an opportunity to address Council for three minutes. He indicated the Rowan County Board of Commissioners holds public comment at the beginning of its meetings. He added Council should continue with a set time rather than moving public comments to the end of the meeting. He indicated he agrees with a signup sheet and one-hour time limit for public comments. He suggested citizens be able to yield their time once, but only if the person who yields their time is listed on the signup sheet. He noted he prefers a set time at the beginning of the meeting or at 6:00 p.m. for public comments. He pointed out many times Council addresses citizen's concerns at the end of the meeting when many of the citizens have left.

Mayor Alexander explained State law requires 30 minutes of public comment, and she pointed out citizens who attend the Council meeting for City business are required to wait until public comment is over. She commented Council is working to restore balance to the meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell indicated holding public comment at the end of the meeting would give Council more freedom to ask questions and make remarks. She pointed out during the meeting Council has the increased pressure of the business at hand, and if public comments are held at the end of the meeting the business portion is complete. She stated in the last year Council has increased opportunities for dialogue with the community by initiatives such as Meet with the Manager and Coffee with a Cop.

Mayor Alexander clarified State law requires one 30-minute public comment period per month, and the City currently allows two unlimited public comment periods. She noted the signup sheet will make it easier for staff to follow up with citizens. She explained the goal is to handle the business of the City and engage the public in a productive way.

Councilmember Miller stated the format of public comment is part of the frustration and added he prefers public comment be held at the end of the meeting after City business. He indicated he would like a format that allows Council to have dialogue with citizens. He pointed out if City business can be completed quickly it gives Council more time to focus on public comments. He indicated it would be helpful to determine accountability for an issue that is raised during public comments.

Mayor Alexander pointed out an answer is not always available when an issue is raised. She commented Council can work with City Manager Lane Bailey to assign an issue to staff at the meeting.

Mr. Hardin pointed out citizen input is just as important as City business. He commented he appreciates other avenues for citizens to address the City, but he noted a variety of times should be considered so more people can participate. He agreed public comment needs control, but he added he does not want to stifle citizen's right to speak.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell pointed out if citizens plan ahead they can make their comments into a three minute format or have another citizen give them their three minutes and meet the time frame regardless of the topic.

Mayor Alexander noted staff will draft a document for Council to consider at its next meeting.

Mr. Post clarified whatever Council votes on regarding public comment will not take effect until the following Council meeting. Mayor Alexander agreed.

CONSENT AGENDA

(a) Approval of Minutes

Adopt Minutes of the Regular meeting of February 7, 2017.

(b) Temporary Road Closure – South Main Street

Adopt an Ordinance declaring a temporary road closure for South Main Street between Innes and Bank Streets Saturday, March 25, 2017 for the Salisbury Car Show.

ORDINANCE DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR A SALISBURY CAR SHOW EVENT.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 26 at Page No. 13, and is known as Ordinance 2017-10.)

(c) Temporary Road Closure – Jake Alexander Boulevard

Adopt an Ordinance declaring a temporary road closure on Jake Alexander Boulevard beginning at Lincolnton Road and ending on Statesville Boulevard at Brenner Avenue Sunday, May 7, 2017 for the Buck Hurley Triathlon.

ORDINANCE DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE BUCK HURLEY TRIATHLON.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 26 at Page No. 14, and is known as Ordinance 2017-11.)

(d) Temporary Road Closure – Old Concord Road

Adopt an Ordinance declaring a temporary road closure on Old Concord Road beginning at Monroe Street and turning onto Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Saturday May 20, 2017 for the Fur Fun 5K Run/Walk for the PAWS.

ORDINANCE DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE FUR FUN 5K RUN/WALK FOR THE PAWS.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 26 at Page No. 15, and is known as Ordinance 2017-12.)

(e) Temporary Road Closure – North Main Street

Adopt an Ordinance declaring a temporary road closure on North Main Street between Innes and Kerr Streets Friday, May 19 and Saturday, May 20, 2017 for the Cheerwine Centennial Celebration.

ORDINANCE DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR A CHEERWINE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION EVENT.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 26 at Page No. 16, and is known as Ordinance 2017-13.)

(f) Budget Ordinance Amendment – Insurance Proceeds

Adopt a Budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2016-2017 budget in the amount of \$36,868 to appropriate insurance proceeds received for the General Fund Capital Replacement Fund.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2016-2017 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE INSURANCE PROCEEDS.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 26 at Page No. 17, and is known as Ordinance 2017-14.)

(g) Budget Ordinance Amendment – Fire Department

Adopt a Budget **ORDINANCE** amendment to the FY2016-2017 budget in the amount of \$4,205 to appropriate insurance proceeds received for the replacement of a bay door at Fire Station 1.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2016-2017 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE INSURANCE PROCEEDS.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 26 at Page No. 18, and is known as Ordinance 2017-15.)

Councilmember Miller requested a change to the February 7, 2017 Minutes. He clarified a fence has not been installed between The Abbey and the Carlton's residence, but a payment has been made.

Thereupon, Mr. Miller made a **motion** to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Ms. Blackwell seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller, and Post, and Meses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT AND HOME PROGRAM FUNDS

Planning and Development Services Director Janet Gapen and Planner Kyle Harris addressed Council regarding the use of 2017-2018 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Program funds. Ms. Gapen explained the City receives the funds through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). She reviewed the estimated funding for the coming fiscal year:

CDBG	\$272,910
HOME Program	\$95,489
<u>Program Income</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>
Total	\$393,399

Ms. Gapen pointed out the estimate is based on funding received during the current fiscal year, and she noted the exact funding will be determined once the Federal budget is approved. She indicated more than 70% of the funds must be used to benefit low to moderate income households and families. She stated the funds are available to anyone within the City’s jurisdiction that meets the income requirements.

Ms. Gapen noted there are four designated neighborhoods for public infrastructure funding which includes sidewalks, parks and other facilities which are Jersey City, West End, East End, and Park Avenue.

Ms. Gapen reviewed the eligible activities and priorities established by the 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan:

- Owner-occupied housing rehabilitation
- Emergency rehabilitation
- Acquisition rehabilitation for homeownership – vacant, abandoned, foreclosed housing
- Sidewalks, public infrastructure, and park improvements
- Public service agencies (15% cap)

Mr. Harris stated a public information session was held to gather community input regarding how the funds for public service improvements should be spent. He noted sidewalk construction and improvements to increase pedestrian safety were suggested along Old Wilkesboro Road from Brenner Avenue to Oakwood Cemetery, Monroe Street from Partee Street to Brenner Avenue, and Old Plank Road at Livingstone College. He commented staff will coordinate with Engineering and Public Services regarding the feasibility of constructing sidewalks in the proposed locations.

(b) Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing, after due notice thereof, to receive comments regarding the use of 2017-2018 CDBG and HOME Program funds.

Ms. Mae Carroll, 1103 Old Plank Road requested sidewalks be installed along Old Plank Road and Old Wilkesboro Road which are often used by Livingstone College students.

Ms. Krista Woolly, Executive Director Community Care Clinic, 315 Mocksville Avenue thanked Council for its continued support of the clinic. She presented highlights of the Community Care Clinic, and she pointed out every \$1 donated to the Clinic will provide \$8 of care. She thanked Council for its continued partnership with the Community Care Clinic, and she requested \$10,000 to provide increased dental care to the community.

Ms. Carolyn Rice requested facilities for youth who live on the west side of the City. She stated in March citizens will begin working in their community block-by-block. She asked Council to consider a facility that could be used by the multiple cultures that are present in the West End community.

Ms. Renee Bradshaw, Executive Director Family Crisis Council, requested \$11,000 to pay 50% of the third shift advocate for women and children who are victims of violence and sexual assault. She presented the highlights and services offered by the Family Crisis Council, and she thanked Council for its continued support.

Ms. Cathy White, Gateway Freedom Center, stated the center offers housing and programs for women who are homeless, coming off drugs, or have been released from prison. She explained the center opened in 2014, but was unable to obtain State certification due to staffing issues and had to close. She noted it takes approximately \$15,000 per month to staff the Freedom Gateway Center which sleeps 14 people.

Councilmember Hardin asked Ms. White if she had spoken with the Goodwill Connection Center regarding their re-entry program. Ms. White stated she had.

Ms. Sherry Smith, Rowan Helping Ministries, thanked Council for its continued support of Rowan Helping Ministries which helps provide case managers for shelter guests. She stated Rowan Helping Ministries served approximately 500 guests in 2016, and the shelter averages 75 guests per night. She requested \$25,000 to help Rowan Helping Ministries provide case managers for shelter guests.

Ms. Emily Rivers, 932 Sunset Drive, explained in the past she needed help with her home but did not fit the criteria for CDBG and HOME Program funding because of her address. She commented she was placed on the bottom of the list which boosted those in certain neighborhoods toward the top of the list. She requested additional information regarding CDBG and HOME Program funding, and she asked Council to consider people who may not qualify for the funding but still need help with their home.

Mayor Alexander asked Ms. Gapen to address Ms. Rivers' issue. Ms. Gapen explained the funds are available to anyone who resides within the City limits. She noted people who need

assistance beyond the City's jurisdiction are referred to the Salisbury Community Development Corporation (CDC) who determines eligibility. Mayor Alexander clarified the requirements to receive CDBG and HOME Program funds are set up by HUD.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell stated she has inquired about adding the Green Hills neighborhood to the list of neighborhoods designated for public infrastructure funding for eight years. She challenged Council to work toward including the Green Hills neighborhood in the public infrastructure funding designation.

Councilmember Miller asked about the process for designating an additional neighborhood for public infrastructure funding. Ms. Gapen noted an additional designation would require an update to the 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan. She explained the plan can be amended at any time. Mayor Alexander suggested Ms. Blackwell bring the issue up when Council considers the CDBG and HOME Program Fund budget.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Alexander opened the floor to receive public comments.

Minister Latasha Wilkes stated she is concerned about recent gunshots in the City. She noted four people were walking around her father's neighborhood wearing masks and firing guns, and she spoke to police officers about picking up the shell cases, but the shooters picked them up before the police officers arrived. She added she is concerned about shootings in the West End, and she asked if cameras could be installed in the area. Ms. Sharon Row yielded time to Ms. Wilkes. Ms. Wilkes noted a community march will be held Saturday, February 25, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. to address violence in the community. She invited Council to attend. She indicated the march will start at the graffiti wall on East Horah Street.

Ms. Carolyn Logan thanked Chief Stokes and Captain Melonie Thompson for meeting with her. She added she is concerned about the City and does not feel safe in the community. She noted there are drugs and gangs in the City. Ms. Jessica Shaffer yielded her time to Ms. Logan. Ms. Logan added citizens do not feel safe, but they pay for public safety. She commented the City needs someone who is experienced in gang prevention.

Mr. Todd Paris referred to the recent shootings and violence in the City. He pointed out the Police Department is short-staffed, and the payment schedule for police officers must be revamped. Ms. M.T. Sidoly yielded her time to Mr. Paris. Mr. Paris noted the City will need to be the best paid Police Department in order to keep police officers. He pointed out the Police Chief needs to be able to discipline and control his employees within the command structure. He indicated the City must build trust for police officers, and Council must find the funds to rebuild the Police Department.

Ms. Ollie M. Carroll noted the City is in a state of emergency, and she pointed out citizens want to come together to solve the problems that plague the City. She suggested Council establish a feedback system for public comments to let citizens know their voices are heard.

Ms. Carolyn Rice explained her grandson has a drug problem and mental disorder, and he needed help. She commended the police officers who were involved in an incident with her grandson for their professionalism. She thanked the police officers for the respect shown to her family during a trying situation.

Ms. Dora Mbuwayesango indicated she is concerned about the proposed changes to public comments. She explained citizens could see the change as Council being unwilling to work toward reconciliation. She commented no-knock warrants intimidate people.

Ms. Regina Dancy referred to changes in the public comment policy, and she noted it appears the changes are taking place due to the no-knock warrant issue. She stated citizens will continue to address Council and request suspension of no-knock warrants in the City. She requested Council consider a Stop the Violence Summit to show the community it is tired of the violence and ready to take action.

Ms. Nan Lund stated people across the City are afraid. She commented citizens are asking Council to let them know their voices are heard.

Ms. Susan Lee indicated the City should come together and develop a vision to work through its problems. She stated the issues are intertwined and the community must unite to move forward.

Ms. Emily Rivers commented citizens are afraid and fear can cause people to do things that are outside of their character. She referenced a positive experience she had with police officers in the City. She indicated she has concerns, but she also has solutions. She stated the community must turn back to God.

Mr. Michael Kirksey referenced the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Program funds the City receives. He suggested the money be used to invest in the youth. He stated the safety of young African-American men has not been addressed locally or by the State or Federal government. He suggested Council concentrate on a central base for the community such as Duncan School.

Ms. Amelia Durring stated she sent her son to live with his father in Mooresville because she feared for his safety. She stated her interactions with the Police Department have been positive. She noted her daughter worked at Sonic but quit her job after the recent shooting. She asked Council to do what it can to address violence in the City.

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

Thereupon, Mr. Miller made a **motion** to take a brief recess. Ms. Blackwell seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller and Post, and Mses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

Mayor Alexander reconvened the meeting.

UPDATE - CODE SERVICES

Code Services Coordinator Mandy Edwards addressed Council regarding the minimum housing process and 10 properties that have been identified as candidates for demolition. She explained City Code establishes the minimum housing standard and Code Enforcement conducts inspections to determine when homes are in violation. She reviewed the Code Enforcement process and the steps taken before demolition is considered. She presented the cases suitable for demolition:

- 711 East Liberty Street
- 717 West Fisher Street
- 622 South Caldwell Street
- 920 Locke Street
- 1003 Grady Street
- 200 East 11th Street
- 418 South Craige Street
- 624 West Kerr Street
- 1033 Short Street
- 916 Pine Street

Councilmember Miller stated the property owner maintains the title once demolition is complete. Ms. Edwards agreed, and she pointed out the City would place a lien on the property. She explained the City can foreclose on its liens or the property owner can sell the property and use the proceeds to repay the City.

Mr. Miller asked if there is ever an offer to purchase a property in an advanced state of disrepair. City Manager Lane Bailey pointed out the cleared land would be worth more than the dilapidated property. Mr. Miller asked if any city going through the demolition process would attempt to take ownership of a property rather than leaving it vacant. Mayor Alexander noted the Community Development Corporation (CDC) tries to purchase the properties whenever possible, but she added funds are limited.

Mayor Alexander asked if the City has funds in the budget to complete the demolition process and if each property would be brought back to Council before demolition. Ms. Edwards explained staff will bring each property back before Council for adoption of an Ordinance to permit demolition.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell pointed out the City may get better pricing for multiple demolitions. Ms. Edwards noted it would cost approximately \$77,800 for demolition and removal

of the 11 houses. She added the estimate does not include asbestos abatement if it should be needed.

Planning and Development Services Manager Preston Mitchell explained staff's goal is to rehabilitate properties whenever possible. He cautioned that a blighted property is more dangerous to a community than an overgrown lot.

Councilmember Hardin asked if houses in danger of collapse are given priority for demolition. Ms. Edwards agreed, and she noted staff will work with a property owner if there is any evidence they are attempting repairs.

Mr. Hardin pointed out many of the properties have out-of-state owners. He asked if staff had statistical information regarding out-of-state and in-state ownership of dilapidated housing in the City. Ms. Edwards noted staff does not have the information, but would like to use GIS to map out the problem housing and determine if there is a correlation between out-of-state property owners and dilapidated housing.

Mr. Hardin asked about the process when a property owner is deceased. Ms. Edwards explained if a property owner passes away without a will the family does not have to assume ownership of the property. She pointed out it can be difficult to find relatives, and she indicated City Code allows staff to notify by publication when other attempts fail.

Mr. Hardin commented Code Enforcement has a difficult job, and he thanked the Code Enforcement Officers for all they do for the City.

Mayor Alexander asked if a priority matrix exists regarding dilapidated housing. Ms. Edwards indicated staff may consider prioritization once the initial demolitions are complete. Mr. Miller pointed out if staff focuses on one area at a time it could make a greater impact on the whole community. Mr. Mitchell commented he does not believe there is any area in the City that has multiple properties in the condition of the properties before Council. He noted the properties before Council are the ones staff felt were most critical.

Councilmember Post asked if it would make sense for the City to take ownership of dilapidated houses through purchase or tax foreclosure. Mr. Miller suggested staff develop options for property owners.

Mr. Bailey stated the City does not have funds in the budget designated for demolition, but staff will find the money because of the condition of the properties. He added he has spoken to Rowan County Manager Aaron Church, and he is not sure the City can foreclose on property tax debt because it must go through the Rowan County Tax Collector. He noted the City can pursue abatement liens, and he commented staff has discussed creative ways to acquire dilapidated properties.

PURCHASE – MORPHOTRAK LIVESCAN STATION

Police Chief Jerry Stokes explained the Police Department's fingerprinting machine is outdated and needs to be replaced to meet Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) submission standards. He asked Council to consider the purchase of a MorphoTrak LiveScan Station.

Thereupon, Ms. Blackwell made a **motion** to approve a sole-source purchase of a MorphoTrak LiveScan Station in the amount of \$20,875, of which \$17,023 is covered by funds received from a Justice Assistance Grant. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller, and Post, and Meses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

City Manager Lane Bailey asked Council if it had any questions for Chief Stokes.

Mayor Alexander asked Chief Stokes if Council has appropriated the funds needed to hire additional police officers. Chief Stokes noted the funding is in place, and he added staff is working to fill the vacant positions. He explained Council voted to increase police officer's salary to make them comparable with other departments. He pointed out three police officers have been hired and several others are in the background check process. He commented most of the new hires are for entry level positions. He added he feels supported by Council and Mr. Bailey.

Mr. Bailey addressed comments regarding Fibrant funding and its effect on the Police Department. He explained several years ago the City reorganized its Fibrant operations and completed a workforce reduction. He stated the Police Department is so short-staffed it cannot send police officers to training. He noted the goal is to get the Police Department fully-staffed, and the budget back to the level it was prior to the recession and Fibrant reorganization. He noted staff has had conversations with community members regarding additional training and educational opportunities for police officers, and he is excited about the prospects.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell asked if any external resources are available to combat the increase in crime. She stated the violence has reached an unprecedented level in the City. Chief Stokes indicated the Federal government has an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force it is planning to bring to the City. He noted the FBI took data to analyze in order to identify investigation targets. He stated Federal assistance is coming, but it will take time to build the cases. He stated he requested two additional SBI agents for Rowan County. He explained Federal and State agencies want to provide assistance, but administrative changes have created some influx regarding assistance. He indicated he and Sherriff Auten are traveling to Greensboro to speak with the United States Attorney regarding assistance for the City. He added he requested assistance from the Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS) regarding collaborative reform, but applications were put on hold before the election. He commented the applications should be reassessed in April 2017, and if the Salisbury Police Department is selected it could receive Federal grant funding.

Chief Stokes noted staff is working to bring in retirees to conduct background checks and work non-violent cases so detectives can focus on violent crimes.

Mr. Bailey pointed out the City should fully staff its Police Department before it applies for a COPS grant for additional officers.

Mayor Alexander noted approximately 500 law enforcement recruits graduated in 2016 and North Carolina has 532 municipalities. Chief Stokes noted the candidate pool is diminished. He pointed out in the past approximately 2,000 recruits graduated from Basic Law Enforcement Training statewide. Mayor Alexander asked if the City can recruit nationally. Chief Stokes noted in some cases the training will transfer, but candidates must train in North Carolina law. He noted ads have been published, and Human Resources is working on a campaign to attract recruits from other states to the City.

Councilmember Miller asked if the City is working to recruit veterans that were military police officers. Chief Stokes noted it would depend on the level of training received in the military, and he indicated the City is aggressively seeking law enforcement candidates. He explained experienced police officer can receive up to a \$5,000 signing bonus, depending on the level of experience and educational incentives.

Mr. Miller asked if any milestones are in place to retain existing police officers. Chief Stokes noted the City has a program that allows police officer advancement. He thanked Mr. Bailey and Council for their support of the Police Department.

Mr. Miller pointed out law enforcement has been maligned in the last several years and police officer morale is at an all-time low. He asked if there is anything specific Council can do to help with police officer morale and to demonstrate its support for police officers. Chief Stokes noted police officer morale is a national problem. He stated recognizing the efforts of the police officers is critical to their success, and he commented he receives calls and letters from the community thanking police officers for all they do.

Councilmember Post pointed out the shortage of graduates is affecting police departments across the State. He thanked Chief Stokes for all he has done for the community and the Police Department.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Community Appearance Commission

Upon a motion by Ms. Blackwell, seconded by Mr. Post, and with Messrs. Hardin and Miller, and Ms. Alexander voting AYE, the following appointment was made to the Community Appearance Commission for a term to begin April 1, 2017:

Mr. Chris McNeely

Term Expires 3/31/20

Tree Board

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell requested Council waive the term limit for Mr. Johnny Safrit and Ms. Linda Jones to allow them to serve another term on the Tree Board.

Upon a motion by Ms. Blackwell, seconded by Mr. Post, and with Messrs. Hardin and Miller, and Ms. Alexander voting AYE, the following appointment was made to the Tree Board for a term to begin April 1, 2017:

Mr. Johnny Safrit
Ms. Linda Jones

Term Expires 3/31/20
Term Expires 3/31/20

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

(a) Second Quarter Financial Update

City Manager Lane Bailey asked Financial Services Director Teresa Harris to present the second quarter financial update.

Ms. Harris referenced property tax values for the second quarter, and she noted \$2.817 million is budgeted, \$2.730 million had been billed, and \$2.842 million is projected to be billed. She pointed out sales tax revenue continues to increase and is projected to create \$500,000 to \$600,000 in additional sales tax revenue. She noted State franchise tax is also over the budgeted amount for mid-year.

Ms. Harris reviewed the budget verses actual and variance for each department. She pointed out special projects, and she noted the East Innes Streetscape is 24% expended, Planning and Community Development are 32.1% expended due to budgeted incentive grants not being paid, Engineering special projects are 12% expended, and roof replacement for the Head Start Building has not been completed. She added street paving will be completed in the spring.

Ms. Harris reviewed the Water and Sewer Fund revenue for the second quarter and the monthly usage trend. She explained Water and Sewer Fund revenue is slightly over budget for the second quarter due to industrial water usage that is difficult to trend. She indicated the majority of Water and Sewer Fund debt will be paid in the second half of the fiscal year.

Ms. Harris reviewed Fibrant customers billed mid-year, and she noted the usage trend. She also reviewed Fibrant income and expenses for mid-year. She pointed out a net operating income of \$455,787 for six months, and she added Fibrant has a net deficit of \$126,042.

Councilmember Miller asked if a contribution from the General Fund will be used to cover the debt service payment. Ms. Harris explained the contribution from the General Fund is approximately \$2.2 million, and the debt service payment is \$2.1 million. She noted the debt service payment, which consists of principal and interest, is due next week. She reviewed the Broadband Fund expenditures.

Ms. Harris explained Transit fare revenues are ahead of mid-year projections and expenditures are on target for the second quarter. She noted Stormwater revenues are level for the second quarter, and she added Stormwater has a 95% collection rate.

Councilmember Miller asked if the information will be posted on the City website for public review. Ms. Harris stated staff will post the information on the City website.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell asked if the additional sale tax revenue is a projection for the year. Ms. Harris agreed, and she explained the projection is based on trends. Ms. Blackwell referenced the 95% collection rate for Stormwater, and she asked if 95% is the City's standard collection rate. Ms. Harris explained the 95% collection rate is for Stormwater, which can be difficult to collect if it is a customer's only service.

Mayor Alexander asked if the franchise tax includes the new tax collected on services. Ms. Harris stated the City receives service tax revenue through sales tax. Mayor Alexander asked if the increase in service tax is part of the projected sales tax revenue increase. Ms. Harris agreed, and she pointed out the economy is improving.

City Manager Lane Bailey noted revenues are positive, but the City has had some unexpected expenditures. He added the Fund Balance is healthy, and if the year should show a loss it will not be significant.

(b) Transit Update

City Manager Lane Bailey asked Transit Director Rodney Harrison to update Council regarding a partnership between North Carolina Rail and the City transit system.

Mr. Harrison noted during the last three years the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Rail Division has focused on enhancing customer's experience on passenger trains by increasing services, updating the current infrastructure, and offering cost-effective ways to help customers reach their final destination. He indicated the effort is known as the Last Mile Program. He added North Carolina by Train has partnered with local transit systems from Raleigh to Charlotte to offer passengers a free bus pass to reach their final destination. He stated 11 transit systems are involved in the program, and the North Carolina Secretary of Transportation needs an agreement from the City for its participation.

Mayor Alexander asked City Engineer Wendy Brindle about updates for Depot Street. Ms. Brindle noted there were questions regarding how to treat Depot Street, and staff is collecting data for the Historic Salisbury Foundation (HSF) to review. She explained Traffic Engineering Coordinator Vickie Eddleman is collecting the data and should finalize the process by the end of March.

Mayor Alexander asked when the program would begin should Council approve the request. Mr. Harrison noted the program should begin in March if NCDOT receives the needed agreements. He pointed out the City will be reimbursed by the State for transit charges.

Thereupon, Mr. Miller made a **motion** to approve the authorization of the Mayor to execute an agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation regarding the Last Mile Transfer Program. Mr. Post seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller, and Post, and Mses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

MAYOR 'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Special Event Permit Committee

Councilmember Miller announced the Special Event Permit Committee will meet Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. at City Hall.

(b) Mural Funding

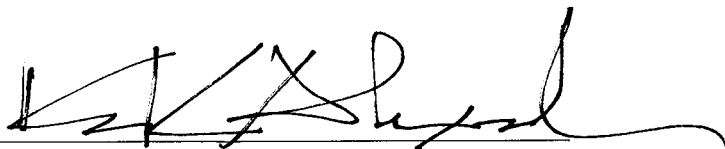
Councilmember Post noted citizens have offered funding for the Mural, but they do not know where the money should be given. Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell suggested Council ask the Community Appearance Commission, which includes the Public Art Committee, for their determination regarding the Mural.

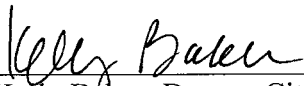
RECESS

Mayor Alexander asked for a motion to recess the meeting.

Thereupon Mr. Miller made a **motion** to recess the meeting until, Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers located at 217 South Main Street. Mr. Post seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller, and Post, and Mses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

The meeting was recessed until Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers located at 217 South Main Street.


Karen Kirks Alexander, Mayor


Kelly Baker, Deputy City Clerk