

Salisbury, North Carolina  
February 21, 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 6:00 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)

## **PROCLAMATIONS**

Mayor to proclaim the following observances:

HUMAN RELATIONS MONTH  
DEE DEE WRIGHT RECOGNITION

February 2023  
February 21, 2023

Mayor Alexander and Council recognized Ms. Dee Dee Wright for her contributions and dedication to the community as a leader and activist whose work has touched the lives of countless people. Mayor Alexander stated Ms. Wright has displayed concern and commitment for the Salisbury community, and worked tirelessly to bring civil rights issues to light.

Ms. Wright thanked Council and City Manager Jim Greene, and she stated it has been an honor to serve the community.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

(a) Minutes

Approve Minutes of the regular meeting of February 7, 2023.

(b) City Representative – Shelter Ministries of Rowan County

Appoint Ruth Kennerly as the City representative to the Board of Directors for Shelter Ministries of Rowan County.

(c) Resolution – City Manager Contracting Authority

Adopt a revised Resolution regarding City Manager contracting authority.

### RESOLUTION REGARDING CITY MANAGER CONTRACTING AUTHORITY (REVISED FEBRUARY 21, 2023)

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 17 at Page No. 4-5, and is known as Resolution 2023-03)

(d) Update – Employee Pay Grade and Classification Schedule

Approve an update to the adopted employee pay grade and classification schedule to allow for reorganization and classification changes.

Thereupon, Councilmember McLaughlin 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.

Ms. Anne Browlee asked Council to implement an alert system for nearby residents of Catawba College when emergencies take place on or near the campus.

Ms. Karen South Jones stated more public restroom facilities are needed at City parks and greenways. She asked Council to consider installing call boxes and security cameras in strategic locations to monitor greenway entrances and exits.

Ms. Mary Walker, Representative of Women for Community Justice, emphasized the importance of hiring a new police chief. She added expectations for the new police chief include representing all citizens regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identification, or social and economic status.

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

### **FORWARD 2040: SALISBURY'S FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH**

Planning Director Hannah Jacobson asked Council to consider adopting Forward 2040: Salisbury's Framework for Growth as the City's comprehensive plan. Ms. Jacobson thanked and recognized the Steering Committee and staff for their work and dedication to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Jacobson stated since the draft was released in November, staff has worked to collect public comment and feedback. She added that 21 presentations had been made to various boards and commissions, neighborhood associations, civic groups, businesses and non-profit organizations. She noted three community meetings had been held, and staff was available at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Resource Fair. She indicated staff held virtual and in-person office hours for one-on-one conversations, and she commented the draft is available on the City website.

Ms. Jacobson provided a summary of draft changes which include fixing grammatical and spelling errors, improving image quality, adding labels in maps to street names, updated Appendix D and added Appendix C. She commented staff removed redundant policies and converted policies to actions. She stated actions were added related to Kesler Mill, a campaign against littering, and the housing strategy.

Ms. Jacobson noted the plan is 334 pages and composed of six different appendices built upon 10 vision themes with 63 goals, 316 policies and 56 actions for short-term action within one to five years. She added the plan includes a Future Land Use Map which serves as geographic policy framework that describes a desired pattern for future growth. She explained that the Future Land Use Map does not alter current zoning maps or regulations but serves as a tool for evaluating rezoning cases.

Ms. Jacobson explained the new process using the Future Land Use Map. She added when reviewing zoning cases to determine if it is consistent with the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan or inconsistent, there is now an option to amend the Future Land Use Map by stating the zoning case is inconsistent, but the proposal has public benefit.

Ms. Jacobson noted the plan also includes an evaluation and assessment tool that serves as an annual report to review development patterns from the previous year and anticipate trends within the following year. She added the evaluation and assessment tool allows staff to revise, add, or remove policies and offers an opportunity to amend the Future Land Use Map if necessary.

Ms. Jacobson stated the Steering Committee voted unanimously to advance the plan on February 6, 2023, and the Planning Board held a public hearing on February 14, 2023, and voted unanimously to recommend Council adopt Forward 2040: Salisbury's Framework for Growth as the City's comprehensive plan.

City Manager Jim Greene thanked staff and the Steering Committee for their work and dedication to the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan. He added this plan will shape Salisbury's growth and future over the next 20 years.

Mayor Alexander congratulated Ms. Jacobson, staff, and the Steering Committee for completing the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing after due notice regarding Forward 2040: Salisbury's Framework for Growth.

Ms. Dee Dee Wright, Mr. John Schaffer and Mr. Gene Goetz, members of the Salisbury Steering Committee asked Council to consider adopting the Forward 2040: Salisbury's Framework for Growth as the City's comprehensive plan.

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

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to adopt Forward 2040: Salisbury's Framework for Growth as the City's comprehensive plan. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

### **LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT**

Senior Planner Victoria Bailiff asked Council to consider adopting an Ordinance amending Chapters 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 15 of the Land Development Ordinance of the City of Salisbury, North Carolina.

Ms. Bailiff commented revisions to Chapters 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11 include removing references to the Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan and replacing them with references to the Forward 2040 Plan. She explained that revisions to Chapter 15 include adding processes for amending the Comprehensive Plan text and the Future Land Use Map.

Ms. Bailiff stated the text amendments were reviewed by the Technical Review Committee (TRC) on December 15, 2022 who recommended approval with no requested changes. She added the amendments were sent to the Planning Board on February 14, 2023 and it voted unanimously to recommend approval.

Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing after due notice regarding the proposed text amendment.

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

Councilmember Smith stated the City Council hereby finds and determines that adoption of an Ordinance to amend the Land Development Ordinance of the City of Salisbury as underlined or stricken herein is reasonable, in the public interest and consistent with the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Thereupon, Mr. Smith made a **motion** to adopt an Ordinance amending Chapter 1 Purpose and Applicability, Chapter 4 Subdivisions and Infrastructure, Chapter 5 Building Types and Standards, Chapter 7 Recreational Open Space, Chapter 8 Landscaping, Chapter 10 Parking, Chapter 11 Lighting on Private Property, and Chapter 15 Development Process of the Land Development Ordinance of the City of Salisbury, North Carolina. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 1 PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY, CHAPTER 4 SUBDIVISIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, CHAPTER 5 BUILDING TYPES AND STANDARDS, CHAPTER 7 RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE, CHAPTER 8 LANDSCAPING, CHAPTER 10 PARKING, CHAPTER 11 LIGHTING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY, AND CHAPTER 15 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 31 at Page Nos. 69-89, and is known as Ordinance 2023-15.)

### **PROPERTY TAX REVALUATION PROCESS**

Finance Director Wade Furches and Rowan County Tax Assessor Chip Main addressed Council regarding the property tax revaluation process. Mr. Main indicated property tax revaluations are conducted every four years, and he noted County staff has worked on the revaluation process for the last two years. He explained property tax revaluations are required throughout the state every eight years, and Rowan County conducts revaluations every four years. He noted the revaluation will update real property values to reflect fair market value as of January 1, 2023. He stated the Rowan County tax base is derived from 80,632 parcels of which 13,311 are located in the City. He pointed out personal property is also taxed.

Mr. Main explained the objective is to revalue the real estate data base to appraise property at 100% market value. He noted the revised property values will stay in place for the next four years unless changes are made to a property. He reviewed the three approaches to property value:

- Market which abstracts value from the sale of property
- Cost of land
- Material and labor and income approach which is used to value commercial property

Mr. Main indicated there have been 16,706 residential sales since 2019 of which 11,941 were qualified sales and 4,765 were unqualified sales. He explained unqualified sales include foreclosures, bankruptcies, auctions, sales among relatives, and condemnations. He displayed a sales map, and he pointed out the higher volume of sales occurred within the City limits near I-85.

Mr. Main noted the current sales assessment ratio in Rowan County is 73.38%, and he explained a home that sells for \$300,000 currently has an assessed value of \$220,000. He reviewed the preliminary estimate of the City tax base which is \$4 billion with an additional \$94 million for downtown. He explained once the 78,000 notices are mailed, the appeals process will begin. He pointed out Rowan County offers property tax reductions for certain groups with income restrictions including elderly and disabled veterans.

Mr. Furches stated the City's current rate is \$.7196 per \$100 value, and he indicated as part of the budget process staff must compute and disclose a revenue neutral tax rate. He explained the revenue neutral tax rate will provide the same amount of property tax revenue the City had this year with a factor for growth included in the calculation. He indicated the tax rate will probably decrease, and he pointed out the projected values will keep changing until the notices are mailed. He added the City's current tax base is \$3.26 billion and the projection is for approximately \$4.1 billion.

Councilmember Post asked about the valuation for Rowan County. Mr. Main indicated last year the County's tax base was \$13.2 billion and the estimated tax base is \$18.5 billion.

Mayor Alexander thanked Mr. Main for his presentation.

### **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – SALES TAX REVENUE**

Finance Director Wade Furches asked Council to adopt an Ordinance amending the FY2022-2023 budget in the amount of \$500,000 to appropriate additional sales tax revenue. He explained when the FY2022-2023 budget was adopted, staff recommended \$1 million be set aside and if sales tax revenue continued to be strong, then staff would come before Council to request an appropriation of the funds. He added a \$500,000 request came before Council in October and staff is requesting the remaining \$500,000 be allocated for City projects.

Mayor Alexander asked if the City had already received the sales tax revenue funds. Mr. Furches commented the City has received funds from October 2022 through February 2023.

Thereupon, Councilmember McLaughlin made a **motion** to adopt an Ordinance amending the FY2022-2023 budget Ordinance of the City of Salisbury, North Carolina to appropriate additional sales tax revenue. 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 ADDITIONAL SALES TAX REVENUE.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 31 at Page No. 90, and is known as Ordinance 2023-16.)

## HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL

Councilmember Smith noted the Human Relations Council (HRC), under the leadership of Human Relations Manager Anne Little and HRC Chair Debra Ellison, have worked to amend the HRC Ordinance. He added the HRC has worked to ensure human rights are honored and celebrated in this community.

Ms. Little thanked Councilmember Smith for serving as Council liaison to the HRC. She recognized HRC members in the audience, and she thanked them for their service to the community. She introduced Human Relations Specialist Cheryl Leverett-Lide who joined the City on January 9, 2023, and will focus on the HRC, fair housing, and the Non-discrimination Ordinance.

Ms. Ellison reviewed the proposed changes which include a name change to the Human Relations Commission. She reviewed the proposed changes to Appendix D, Part 8 Section 1.01 which states the purpose. She noted the goal is to establish consistency with the City's Non-discrimination Policy and Ordinance.

Ms. Ellison noted the proposed changes include a name change, a membership restructure, and changes to the function, powers, and duties of the HRC. She reviewed the priorities of the HRC:

- Strategic recruitment campaign
- Reorganization
- Retreat and training
- Enhanced alignment with City Council and its priorities
- Broadened multicultural community outreach programs and events

Councilmember Post asked if the County has been contacted regarding the proposed changes. Mayor Alexander stated she has spoken to Commission Chair Greg Edds who stated the County is committed to the work of the HRC.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield indicated it takes a lot of work to update policies, and she thanked the HRC for putting in the work which sets the template for future growth.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to adopt an Ordinance amending Appendix D Boards, Committees, Commissions etc. of the code of the City of Salisbury, North Carolina relating to the Human Relations Commission. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

ORDINANCE AMENDING APPENDIX D BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS ETC.  
OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA RELATING TO THE  
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 31 at Page No. 91-98, and is known as Ordinance 2023-17.)

**CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

City Attorney Graham Corriher stated at its last meeting Council approved a contract for engineering work on a relocated pump station for Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU). He noted the agreement is with Cube Yadkin Generation, LLC to pay up to \$2 million toward the engineering work for the relocated pump station.

Mr. Corriher indicated the City is a finalist for a \$22.5 million Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant. He stated the City is eager to proceed with the project, and he noted the current water intake is at risk of flooding and has flooded in the past.

Mr. Corriher stated Cube Yadkin Generation, LLC is the owner of the High Rock Dam, and it has a federal license to operate the dam. He added as a condition of its license Cube is required to make flood protection improvements to the City's pump station. He noted it is the City's opinion that it needs to relocate the pump station to remove it from the floodplain. He indicated Cube is in agreement and the funds in the contract will be used for the project. He stated the total cost of the relocated pump station is approximately \$31.5 million. He pointed out the City has not been officially awarded that grant, but all indications are positive and staff wants to proceed with the preliminary engineering work with Cube's support.

Mr. Corriher noted the agreement is for \$2 million, and he pointed out Cube has committed a total \$9 million match required by FEMA.

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to approve an agreement with Cube Yadkin Generation LLC to fund up to \$2 million for preliminary engineering, design, and permitting for the Water Supply Resiliency Project for Salisbury-Rowan Utilities Raw Water Pump Station Project. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

City Manager Jim Greene had nothing to report to Council.



## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilmember Smith thanked the Communications Department for recognizing Black History Month on social media, and he thanked the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Department for working to compose the information.

Councilmember Smith thanked everyone who attended and shared concerns during the West End Neighborhood Town Hall that took place last week.

## **MAYOR PRO TEM'S COMMENTS**

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked Ms. Dee Dee Wright for her continued service to the community. She then thanked Women for Community Justice for attending the meeting and voicing its concerns.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked the 2040 Steering Committee for its hard work on the Comprehensive Plan. She recognized members of the Human Relations Commission for their work in the community.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield suggested a discussion take place with Council regarding four-year staggered terms instead of the current two-year terms. She explained she wanted to suggest the conversation take place now so it does not conflict with the November election.

Councilmember Post suggested the discussion include the public just like the previous discussion regarding the separate mayoral election. He also suggested beginning the discussion in January 2024 after the election so there is no perception of personal interest in the outcome.

Mayor Alexander suggested City Attorney Graham Corriher go through the process with Council to determine if there is public interest in four-year staggered terms for Council. Councilmember Post agreed he would like to receive public input.

Mayor Alexander asked Council if it would like to form a committee to engage with the public regarding the Council terms. Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield agreed. She added changes may not apply to the 2023 election, but she wanted to initiate the discussion since the process will take time to complete.

Councilmember Smith pointed out Council serves two-year terms while the Rowan-Salisbury School Board and the Rowan County Commissioners serve four-year terms.

Mayor Alexander asked if Council wants to create a Council Committee or if it wants to take a different approach. City Attorney Graham Corriher explained the process will be lengthy. He noted Council has the authority to change certain items in the Charter such as the length of terms, number of council members, mayoral election, but it cannot change everything. He added Council could make the changes or vote to put it on the ballot like the mayoral election. He pointed out there are timelines to meet if Council has intent to make the change for the 2023 election. He

commented if the intention is to place it on the ballot, there would be more time since the change would not take effect until the 2025 election.

Councilmember Post asked if this item could be placed on the Agenda for the next Council meeting for further discussion. Mr. Greene recommended staff bring information back to Council at its next meeting and Council could provide direction to staff. By consensus, Council agreed to put the item on the next Agenda for discussion.

**MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS**

Mayor Alexander thanked staff for its work on the Council meeting Agenda, and she congratulated Ms. Dee Dee Wright on her recognition.


**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.



Karen Alexander, Mayor

  
Connie B. Snyder, City Clerk