

Salisbury, North Carolina  
June 4, 2024

## **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 B. 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 6:14 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, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to adopt the Agenda as presented. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

## **RECOGNITION – SALISBURY-ROWAN UTILITIES STAFF**

City Manager Jim Greene noted staff received an email from Ms. Brunetta Franklin regarding the excellent customer service provided by Salisbury-Rowan Utilities staff Chad Jennings, Johnny Hawkins, Jon Handy, and Damon Davis during a sewer lateral transfer that took place at her home. Mayor Alexander read the email from Ms. Franklin regarding her experience

and the professionalism of the staff and the pride they took in their work. Council thanked Mr. Jennings, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Handy and Mr. Davis for their exceptional customer service and for all they do for the City.

### **RECOGNITION – NEW ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER KELLY BAKER**

City Manager Jim Greene stated Administrative Services Director Kelly Baker will assume her new role as Assistant City Manager effective June 10, 2024 where she will provide administrative leadership for all departments, coordinate communication with Council, lead customer service initiatives and the City's State and Federal agendas, assist with special projects and coordinate implementation of Council's Strategic Plan. He added Ms. Baker will supervise several departments including Human Resources, Downtown Development, Internal and External Communications, Information Technology and the City Clerk's office. He pointed out Ms. Baker is the first woman to serve as Assistant City Manager.

Council congratulated Ms. Baker on her promotion and thanked her for all she does for the City. Ms. Baker thanked Mr. Greene for the opportunity to serve as Assistant City Manager. She added she is excited to be a part of the vision Council is setting for the community.

### **PROCLAMATION**

Mayor to proclaim the following observances

SALISBURY PRIDE DAY

June 22, 2024

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

(a) Minutes

Approve Minutes of the regular meeting of May 7, 2024, and the two special meetings of May 14, 2024.

(b) Assignment Agreement for Retention and Expansion Assistance

Authorize the City Manager to execute an Assignment Agreement for Retention and Expansion Assistance for DHL to assume the economic incentive agreement for real property initially provided to Crow Holdings. The incentive provides for a grant equivalent to 90% of the property taxes paid on real property for a period of three years.

(c) Budget Ordinance Amendment – Parks and Recreation

Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2023-2024 budget in the amount of \$2,083 to appropriate a donation to Parks and Recreation for the Summer Reels and Riffs Concert Series at Bell Tower Green Park.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2023-2024 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE A PARKS AND RECREATION DONATION.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 32 at Page No. 55, and is known as Ordinance 2024-33.)

(d) Budget Ordinance Amendment – Fire Department

Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2023-2024 budget in the amount of \$4,275 to appropriate a reimbursement received by the Fire Department from Rowan Cabarrus Community College for 50% of the cost for leadership training.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2023-2024 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE FIRE TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 32 at Page No. 56, and is known as Ordinance 2024-34.)

(e) Interlocal Agreement – Rowan County

Authorize the City Manager to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with Rowan County for the administration of HOME-ARP funds for the construction of permanent supportive housing through Shelter Ministries, Inc.

(f) Brenner Avenue Improvements

Approve additional compensation in the amount of \$21,958.85 for required easements for the sidewalk and intersection improvements on Brenner Avenue.

(g) Purchase Order – Land Application Services

Authorize the City Manager to approve a new purchase order in the amount of \$148,000 for EMA Resources for land application services for Salisbury-Rowan Utilities. This will replace a previously approved purchase order to cover the final invoice for land application services. Funds are available in Salisbury-Rowan Utilities FY24 budget.

(h) Purchase Order – Dodge Chargers

Authorize the City Manager to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$115,480.17 for the purchase of new 2023 Dodge Chargers from Performance Automotive Group. This will replace the previously approved purchase order to Parks Ford who is experiencing severe production delays. Vehicles from Performance Automotive are ready for delivery.

(i) Sale of Sidearm and Badge

Authorize the sale of sidearm and badge to Police Lieutenant Joseph Miller in the amount of \$1.00 in recognition of his retirement from the Police Department on June 1, 2024.

(j) Budget Ordinance Amendment – Police Department

Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2023-2024 budget in the amount of \$2,000 to appropriate Controlled Substance tax funds for the Police Department for the use as a donation to Crime Stoppers.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2023-2024 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE POLICE DEPARTMENT CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE TAXES.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 32 at Page No. 57, and is known as Ordinance 2024-35.)

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Alexander opened the floor to receive public comment.

Mr. Ethan Chirico addressed Council regarding occupational cancer concerns for fire fighters.

Ms. Heather Depalma-Spivey thanked Council for the Salisbury Pride Day Proclamation. She invited Council to lead the Rainbow Walk that will take place at the Pride Festival, and she thanked Council for its continued support of the Pride Festival.

Salisbury Pride President Michael Brooks also thanked Council for the Salisbury Pride Day Proclamation, and he noted the events that will take place during the Pride Festival on June 22, 2024.

Mr. Michael Kirksey addressed Council regarding concerns in the West End community.

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

## **PROPOSED FY2024-2024 CITY BUDGET**

City Manager Jim Greene, Assistant Finance Director Mark Drye and Budget Manager Tracey Keyes provided an overview of the proposed FY2024-2025 City budget. Mr. Greene noted the proposed budget emphasizes the City's commitment to financial stewardship and prioritizes strategic investment.

Ms. Keyes noted the priorities for the City budget were based on the Strategic Plan, and include investment in employees, realistic revenue estimates, plan and manage for growth, infrastructure and capital improvements, using Fund Balance wisely for Council priorities and one-time needs, and a high quality of life.

Ms. Keyes stated the total recommended budget for FY2024-2025 is \$119,746,878, an 11% increase from the FY2023-2024 adopted budget. She noted the increase is due to \$7,000,000 in grants, infrastructure, compensation, new positions, and increased benefit costs.

Mr. Drye noted the proposed budget includes the following pay adjustments:

- 1.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in August 2024
- 4.5% salary range adjustment in September 2024
- 3.0% average merit in January 2025
- Annual 1% lump sum bonus December 2024

Mr. Drye reviewed the proposed budget tax and fee adjustments which include:

<u>Tax/Fee</u>	<u>Current Rate</u>	<u>Proposed Rate</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Recommended Property Tax Rate	\$ .616	\$ .665	\$ .049
Stormwater Fee	\$4.81	\$5.29	\$ .48
Water and Sewer Rate	\$63.08	\$65.20	\$2.12
Solid Waste Fee	\$9.28	\$11.57	\$2.29
Recycling Fee	\$5.80	\$6.28	\$ .48

Mr. Drye stated the proposed budget recommends a monthly property tax increase of \$9.50 per month for an average home valued at \$231,685. He reviewed the General Fund Balance for FY2025 and noted the budget recommends appropriating \$2,446,794 in Fund Balance to fund one-time projects. He explained the budget adoption process steps which includes:

- Budget Presentation to Council – May 14, 2024
- Budget Public Hearing – June 4, 2024
- Additional Budget workshop - June 11, 2024
- Budget Adoption – June 18, 2024 (per Council approval)

Mr. Greene thanked Ms. Keyes, Mr. Drye, and the Finance Team for their work on the budget. He noted the budget focuses on public safety and recommends adding three police officer positions and six firefighter positions.

Councilmember Post asked what the General Fund balance as a percent of expenditures will be if the recommended budget is approved. Mr. Drye stated the estimate is 48% or \$11,718,634.

Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing after due notice to receive comments regarding the proposed FY2024-2025 City Budget.

Mr. Clyde noted concerns with the \$.049 cent tax increase and the increase in solid waste, stormwater, and recycling fees.

Ms. Dee Dee Wright inquired about the Downtown Dumpster Pilot project and the rental income generated by the Plaza. She requested additional information regarding the \$1,500 budgeted for Dixonville Cemetery and the \$50,000 budgeted for the Fred M. Evans Pool.

Mr. Ethan Chirico asked Council to consider increasing the proposed 1.5% COLA to a 3% increase.

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

Councilmember Post noted he spoke with Ms. Dione Adkins, Executive Director of the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, who expressed concern about filling teaching positions for Head Start programs. He asked Council to consider approving a stipend for Salisbury Head Start teachers to help recruit and fill open positions.

Councilmember Smith and Councilmember McLaughlin noted support for the recommended pay adjustments for City employees.

Councilmember Post urged citizens to participate in the budget work sessions and public hearings to ask questions and provide funding suggestions.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked citizens for providing feedback on the proposed budget. She also thanked staff and the Finance Department for their work on the budget. She noted the City is committed to public safety and providing exceptional City services.

Mayor Alexander stated it is essential for the City to have a healthy General Fund. She thanked employees for working to acquire grants to help pay for long-term projects that benefit the City.

## **CONDITIONAL DISTRICT OVERLAY – SACRED HEART CHURCH**

Senior Planner Victoria Bailiff addressed Council regarding amending an existing Conditional District (CD) Overlay for Sacred Heart Church, located at 37 Lumen Christie Lane, to permit a new rectory and 36 additional parking spaces in the existing parking lot. She noted the site includes seven parcels that total approximately 107 acres.

Ms. Bailiff stated the CD Overlay has multiple base zoning districts, and she pointed out the requested changes will take place in the northernmost parcel. She noted surrounding uses include residential, agricultural, institutional and undeveloped properties. She indicated the property is partially wooded with many grade changes and it includes a blue line stream and floodplain that will not be disturbed by the proposed development.

Ms. Bailiff noted the master plan proposes a 5,083 square foot rectory and 36 new parking spaces with additional landscaping. She indicated the Future Land Use Map has the property categorized as Public Office and Institutional, which is consistent with the Community Institution (CI) zoning district. She stated staff finds the proposed rezoning is consistent with the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan Policy 6.3.3. She added the master plan was reviewed by the Technical Review Committee on April 18, 2024 who recommended approval of the master plans subject to minor revisions, which were satisfied upon resubmittal.

Ms. Bailiff indicated Planning Board held a courtesy hearing on May 14, 2024. She noted the applicant's representative was available to answer questions, and one citizen expressed concerns regarding increased runoff due to additional impervious surface. She noted the Planning Board considered the citizen's concerns and ultimately found the proposal to be consistent with the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan and recommended approval. She added the Planning Board noted the flooding issues are concerning, but it did not appear that the additional impervious surface would create enough runoff to exacerbate the flooding issues in the Hidden Creek community.

Councilmember Post asked if water from the property flows toward the Hidden Creek development. Public Works Director Chris Tester stated the water naturally flows in the direction of Hidden Creek and approximately 340 acres drain to the drainage basin in the creek. He added the proposal includes four of those acres and the additional impervious surface will equate to one-half acre. He pointed out approximately 20 acres of the 107 acre site are inside the City limits and there will be a minimal impact to the drainage basin. He stated during the construction examination process a review will be conducted to make sure the criteria for impervious surface area for the City and the state is met.

Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing after due notice to receive comments regarding the proposed CD Overlay.

Ms. Gwen Mangler stated she lives in Hidden Creek development and expressed concern regarding the impact of water erosion from the proposed rectory and the 16 additional parking spaces. She pointed out the rectory appears to have no additional landscaping proposed, but it is on the cliff that downgrades toward Hidden Creek.

Mr. Gray Stout, architect for the project stated he supports the proposal. He noted approximately 15 years ago, the master plan for the Sacred Heart campus was brought before Council and it includes best management practices that were required for engineering and state and City regulations. He explained the regulations include multiple wet retention ponds and detailed civil engineering plans to study where the water from the campus would go. He indicated the changes will not add water to the creek due to the site's distance from the creek. He pointed out the church has continued to maintain the existing ponds and retention ponds as required by state standards.

Mayor Alexander noted the proposal meets City and state requirements for water retention. Mr. Stout agreed.

Mayor Alexander invited Ms. Mangler back to the podium. Ms. Mangler stated she walks the trail from Hidden Creek to Sacred Heat, and she indicated there is erosion on the hill near the top of the trail.

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

Ms. Bailiff indicated an erosion control plan is not required because the disturbance is under one acre, but Chapter 9 of the Land Development Ordinance (LDO) requires appropriate erosion control measures even if the disturbance is under one acre so that mud and sedimentation do not run off the site.

Councilmember Post stated the City Council hereby finds and determines that adoption of an Ordinance to amend the Conditional District Overlay is consistent with the goals objectives and policies of the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan. City Council finds that the map amendment is reasonable due to the limitations set forth in the petition and the compatibility of the proposed use and existing surrounding uses. Thereupon, Mr. Post made a **motion** to adopt an Ordinance amending the Land Development District Map of the City of Salisbury, North Carolina, amending the existing Conditional District Overlay for 375 Lumen Christi Lane, approximately 107.56 acres to permit a new rectory and parking lot expansion. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT MAP OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA, AMENDING THE EXISTING CONDITIONAL DISTRICT OVERLAY FOR 375 LUMEN CHRISTI LANE, APPROXIMATELY 107.56 ACRES LOCATED AT TAX MAP 326 PARCEL 239 AND TAX MAP 327 PARCELS 001, 129, 130, 131, 132 AND 133 TO PERMIT A NEW RECTORY AND PARKING LOT EXPANSION.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 32 at Page No. 58-59, and is known as Ordinance 2024-36.)

Council took a short recess.



## UPDATE – 10-YEAR HOUSING STRATEGY PLAN

Planning and Neighborhoods Director Hannah Jacobson and Thomas P. Miller and Associates Housing Director Aaron Finley addressed Council regarding the 10-year Housing Strategy Plan. Mr. Finley reviewed the timeline for the project, and he indicated the final report should be completed in July. He noted the proposed Housing Strategy Plan is consistent with the Strategic Plan and will meet four proposed goals:

- Increase opportunities for new affordable for-sale and for-rent developments
- Ensure residential development meets the community's needs
- Maintain and improve the existing supply of for-sale and for-rent housing
- Foster efficient and collaborative housing approaches

Mr. Finley noted since 2019 there has been a 66% increase in the median sale price of a home in the City, and he indicated 19% of homeowners are cost burdened. He stated there has been a 26% increase in median gross rent from 2017 until 2022, and he pointed out 48% of renter households are cost burdened.

Mr. Finley reviewed the housing demand model, and he noted the demand for new units for sale and rent by 2033 is projected to be between 5,200 and 5,500 units. He added 26% of the new units will be for households earning less than 60% of the area median income. He then reviewed the strategies to address Goal 1 to increase opportunities for new affordable for-sale and for-rent developments:

- Strategy 1.1 Establish a dedicated affordable housing trust fund
- Strategy 1.2 Explore an option to partner on a community land trust for long-term affordable housing
- Strategy 1.3 Develop a strategic approach to City-endorsed Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) applications
- Strategy 1.4 Offer regulatory incentive packages to developers that include affordable units in new developments
- Strategy 1.5 Maximize funding opportunities and programs for affordable housing development

There was discussion among Council regarding housing choice vouchers which are not available in the City or County at this time due to long waiting lists. There was discussion regarding owner households that are cost burdened, and Mayor Alexander requested clarification regarding the affordable housing data. Mr. Finley explained the data includes estimates from the American Community Survey calculated for Salisbury by the United States Census Bureau.

Mr. Finley stated a public survey took place between October 2023 and January 2024 with over 550 surveys completed. He noted policies with over 70% support include increased code enforcement, owner-occupied rehabilitation funding, energy efficiency programs, affordable home ownership, tenant's rights, minimum housing enforcement and replacing vacant commercial spaces with residential units. He reviewed Goal 2 to ensure residential development meets the community's needs:

- Strategy 2.1 Formalize a land bank with the Community Development Corporation
- Strategy 2.2 Encourage missing middle development through zoning changes
- Strategy 2.3 Improved construction standards to improve quality of new builds
- Strategy 2.4 Ensure that needs for executive housing are met

Mr. Finley referenced Goal 3 to maintain and improve the existing supply of for-sale and for-rent housing, and he indicated over 55% of the City's housing stock was built before 1980. He reviewed the strategies for Goal 3:

- Strategy 3.1 Expand programming to assist/fund home rehabilitation
- Strategy 3.2 Develop an affordable housing preservation inventory and campaign
- Strategy 3.3 Develop a strategy to encourage infill redevelopment and commercial- to residential conversions

Councilmember McLaughlin asked about the location of infill redevelopment opportunities. Ms. Jacobson stated the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan includes a Future Land Use map that identifies areas with potential for mixed use and infill redevelopment.

Mr. Finley then referenced Goal 4 to foster an efficient and collaborative housing approach, and he noted there are many collaborative partnerships in the City. He reviewed the strategies for Goal 4:

- Strategy 4.1 Review the existing staffing capacity to administer current and new programs
- Strategy 4.2 Convene a housing solution task force
- Strategy 4.3 Take an active role in improving tenant-landlord relations
- Strategy 4.4 Conduct a public education campaign around affordable housing
- Strategy 4.5 Advocate for changes to the state-level housing policy

Mr. Finley noted the next steps are to focus on a final recommendation based on feedback from Council, develop implementation steps, identify best practices and performance metrics and to prepare the final report.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield indicated the strategies for each goal included big ideas such as converting unused commercial properties to residential properties. Mr. Finley noted the report will include recommendations that will require future conversations. Councilmember Post pointed out the projection for new housing will require a lot of land, and he questioned if there will be available land to meet the need.

Council thanked Mr. Finley and Ms. Jacobson for their presentation.

## **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 appointments were made to the Community Appearance Commission to fill unexpired terms:

Mr. Carlton A. Jackson, Jr.

Term Expires 3/31/2025

Mr. Keith Cohick

Term Expires 3/31/2026

### **Greenway, Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee**

Upon a motion by Councilmember McLaughlin with Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voting AYE, the following appointment was made to the Greenway, Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee to fill an unexpired term:

Ms. Karen South Jones

Term Expires 3/31/2025

## **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

### **(a) Express Educate and Connect for a Safer Salisbury**

City Manager Jim Green stated the Human Relations Commission (HRC) is hosting Express Educate and Connect for a Safer Salisbury Thursday, June 6, 2024 from 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. He asked Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director and HRC staff liaison Anne Little to provide additional information. Ms. Little stated the event is a community round table regarding public safety and raising the quality of life for all. She stated former Salisbury Deputy Police Chief and current Police Chief of Madison, Wisconsin Shon Barnes will be the guest speaker. She added small group discussions will address issues related to crime in the City. She noted Mr. Willie Ratchford and Dr. Anthony Wade with WPR Consulting will facilitate the small group conversations along with members of the HRC and the Police Chief's Advisory Board. She indicated members of the Salisbury Youth Council will participate in the event, and she invited the community to attend.

## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilmember Smith recognized members of the Human Relations Commission (HRC) for their work on the Elizabeth Duncan Koontz Awards, and he congratulated award winners Emily Perry, Jason Walser, David Whisenant, and Edward and Susan Norvell and thanked them for their contributions to the City.

## MAYOR PRO TEM COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield wished all dads a Happy Father's Day, and she congratulated Assistant City Manager Kelly Baker on her promotion. She noted there are decisions to be made regarding the proposed budget. She indicated she is committed to making the City an employer of choice, making fair decisions for citizens and staying aligned with the City's Strategic Plan. She added she is thankful for the Councilmembers that serve with her.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked Mayor Alexander and Council for its continued support of Salisbury Pride by setting an example, being visible and creating a safe space for all citizens.

## MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

Mayor Alexander noted the NAACP will sponsor a Juneteenth Commemoration Celebration that will include:

- A Stronger Together Prayer Vigil on Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup>
- Southern Soul Music and Fish on Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup>
- Juneteenth Celebration will take place on Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup> at Bell Tower Green
- Soulful Sunday Celebration on Sunday, June 16<sup>th</sup>
- Youth Culture Day on Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup>
- Juneteenth: A Day of Service on Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>
- Juneteenth Heritage Breakfast on Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>

Mayor Alexander thanked staff for all it does for the City, and the quality of professionalism that is extended to citizens.

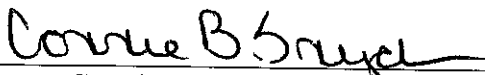
## ADJOURNMENT

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 9:36 p.m.



Karen K. Alexander, Mayor



Connie B. Snyder, City Clerk