

Salisbury, North Carolina  
September 21, 2021

## **REGULAR MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Karen K. Alexander, Presiding; Mayor Pro Tem Al Heggins, Council Members William Brian Miller, David Post and Tamara Sheffield; City Manager W. Lane Bailey, City Clerk Kelly Baker; and City Attorney J. Graham Corriher.

**ABSENT:** None.

In response to the State of Emergency declaration related to the spread of COVID-19 and to limit physical interactions and the potential spread of COVID-19 the Salisbury City Council met electronically. 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.

## **RECOGNITION OF VIEWERS**

Mayor Alexander welcomed all viewers.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to adopt the Agenda. Upon a roll call vote Mayor Alexander voted AYE, Mayor Pro Tem Heggins voted AYE, Councilmember Miller voted AYE, Councilmember Post voted AYE, and Councilmember Sheffield voted AYE. (5-0)

## **PROCLAMATIONS**

Mayor Alexander proclaimed the following observances:

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK	October 3 – 9, 2021
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH	October 2021
NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION MONTH	October 2021

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

(a) Minutes

Adopt Minutes of the Regular meeting of September 7, 2021.

(b) RoMed Medical Center Phase 3

Approve a two-year extension to previously approved Ordinance 2019-52 for CD-03-2018 RoMed Medical Center Phase 3. There are no proposed changes to the previous approval.

(c) Water Meters – Badger Meter

Approve the purchase of cellular data service in the amount of \$218,321 for water meters from Badger Meter, Inc. The expense is budgeted and is required to operate and maintain the advanced metering infrastructure system.

(d) Sale of Parcel – 1700 Block of North Long Street

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the sale of parcel 007-164, located in the 1700 block of North Long Street, to Rowan Funeral Services in the amount of \$800 and authorize the advertisement for upset bids.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING UPSET BID PROCESS FOR THE SELL OF PARCEL #007 164 LOCATED IN THE 1700 BLOCK OF NORTH LONG STREET.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 16 at Page No. 25-26, and is known as Resolution 2021-22.)

(e) Voluntary Annexation – Grants Landing

Receive the Certificate of Sufficiency and adopt a Resolution setting the date of the public hearing for October 19, 2021 regarding the voluntary annexation of Grants Landing, parcels 460-152 and 462-006.

RESOLUTION SETTING DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON QUESTION OF THE ANNEXATION OF GRANTS LANDING, PURSUANT TO GENERAL STATUTE 160A-31.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 16 at Page No. 27-28, and is known as Resolution 2021-23.)

(f) Public Right-Of-Way – Military Avenue

Dedicate tracts 3 and 4 as shown on Map Book 9995 Page 3149 and referenced as parcels 015-398 and 015-399, as public right-of-way for Military Avenue.

RESOLUTION PERTAINING TO THE DEDICATION FOR PUBLIC USE OF A RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR MILITARY AVENUE.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 16 at Page No. 29, and is known as Resolution 2021-24.)

(g) Encroachment – 117 East Innes Street

Approve an encroachment for an American with Disabilities Act accessible ramp at 117 East Innes Street in accordance with Section 22-17 of the City Code, and subject to approval by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote Mayor Alexander voted AYE, Mayor Pro Tem Heggins voted AYE, Councilmember Miller voted AYE, Councilmember Post voted AYE, and Councilmember Sheffield voted AYE. (5-0)

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Alexander opened the floor to receive public comments.

Ms. Debra Chirico expressed concerns regarding wages for City firefighters.

Ms. Emily Rivers expressed concerns regarding increased gun violence, the hiring of the next City Manager, and the way police officers handle individuals during traffic stops.

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

**REZONING – 475 FAITH ROAD**

Zoning Administrator Teresa Barringer addressed Council regarding a request to rezone one parcel located at 475 Faith Road for the construction of an 11,500 square foot Goodwill retail store. She explained the request was brought before Council at its February 21, 2021, meeting as a general rezoning to combine the parcels.

Ms. Barringer stated the request is to maintain the base zoning of Corridor Mixed-Use (CMX) and establish a Conditional District (CD) Overlay for an alternate site design to exceed the maximum 75 foot front setback as specified in the Land Development Ordinance (LDO). She noted during review of the site plan staff discovered the setback requirement was exceeded. She explained the request is to allow a 100 foot setback allowance from Faith Road and a 110 foot setback allowance from Dunham Avenue. She explained the set back is needed for vehicle clearance of the drive through and for traffic safety.

Ms. Barringer displayed an architectural rendering of the project. She reviewed the Use Matrix, and she pointed out the uses under CMX zoning will remain the same. She explained CMX zoning requires a 75 foot maximum commercial setback from both street sides which is the reason for the request.

Ms. Barringer indicated the proposal is consistent with Vision 2020 Comprehensive Policies C-8, C-16, and C-17. She noted the case was brought to the Planning Board at its August 24, 2021 meeting and the Planning Board unanimously recommended approval.

b) Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing, after due notice thereof, to receive comments regarding CD-05-2021.

There being no one to address Council, Mayor Alexander closed the public hearing and indicated comments will be accepted for 24 hours from the close of the public hearing.

Mayor Alexander thanked Ms. Barringer for her presentation.

### **FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY GRANT**

Mayor Alexander noted the next item is for Council to consider accepting an Assistance to Firefighters Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the amount of \$110,909.09 for the purchase of 20 thermal imaging cameras. She stated a 10% match of \$11,090.91 is included in the FY2021-2022 adopted budget.

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to accept an Assistance to Firefighters Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the amount of \$110,909.09 for the purchase of 20 thermal imaging cameras. Upon a roll call vote Mayor Alexander voted AYE, Mayor Pro Tem Heggins voted AYE, Councilmember Miller voted AYE, Councilmember Post voted AYE, and Councilmember Sheffield voted AYE. (5-0)

## **APPOINTMENTS – ROWAN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD**

Upon a motion by Councilmember Sheffield. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Heggins, and Councilmembers Miller, Post, and Sheffield voting AYE, the following reappointments were made to the Tourism Development Authority Board:

Ms. Krista Osterweil  
Ms. Cyndi Greenwood

Term Expires 9/30/2023  
Term Expires 9/30/2023

## **CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT**

City Attorney Graham Corriher had no report for Council

## **CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

### (a) Fire Department Salary Update

City Manager Lane Bailey noted the City contracted with the Management and Personnel Services (MAPS) Group to conduct the City’s pay study. He stated due to retention challenges in the Fire Department, the MAPS Group agreed to do a preliminary partial study of the Fire Department and should have enough data within a month to make some salary adjustments. He clarified it would not be the complete study, and the full study will include every position and will look at how the positions should rank on the City’s pay scale.

Mr. Bailey noted he received questions regarding the amount of overtime firefighters are working, and he explained ways to address the overtime are being considered. He added the MAPS Group is studying part-time pay in order to make a recommendation to reduce overtime hours. He indicated he has had conversations with Fire Chief Bob Parnell regarding adjustments that can be made outside of the study.

Mr. Bailey explained 26 firefighters are assigned to each shift and 22 individuals are needed to cover that shift, which creates an overage of 4 people. He added when firefighters take annual or sick leave or when there is a vacancy other firefighters may be called back for overtime. He pointed out 85% of the overtime is voluntary, and often the firefighters know six weeks in advance of their assigned day when they would be subject to a mandatory call-back. He stated Chief Parnell worked with departmental personnel to adopt and implement the system. He commented he is working with Chief Parnell regarding options to increase the available pool of part-time employees to prevent mandatory call backs. He added a modification of the nepotism policy for part-time salaries may be considered.

Mr. Bailey noted the issue of firefighters not receiving Social Security benefits has also been raised. He explained firefighters do not receive Social Security benefits because they do not pay into the plan. He added he asked City Attorney Graham Corriher to determine the process to allow the Fire Department to vote to participate in Social Security. He explained in the 1950s the

Fire Department voted to not participate in the Social Security system. He added staff has spoken with Social Security representatives regarding what needs to be done and the language needed for Council to adopt a Resolution for the Fire Department vote.

Mr. Bailey stated staff believed the vote would require a super majority to pass, but it may only require a simple majority. He added after Council adopts the Resolution there may be a 90-day period before the vote can take place. He clarified only Fire Department personnel would be allowed to vote. He stated the Fire Department is part of the North Carolina Local Government Retirement System and firefighters also receive the same 401K benefits as other City employees.

Mr. Bailey provided an updated on vacancies within the City. He reviewed a listing by department, and he pointed out there are four vacancies in the Fire Department. He noted staff is working to fill those positions. He added the largest number of vacancies are the Police Department, Public Works, and Finance Departments.

Councilmember Sheffield clarified the Fire Department has not participated in Social Security, and she asked if they will have to catch up in the Social Security system if they agree to participate. Mr. Bailey explained the biggest challenge is participants have to contribute to the Social Security system for 10 years, or 40 quarters, to receive the benefit. He stated a firefighter who does not plan to work for another 10 years would have money taken out of their check but never receive the return on investment.

Mayor Pro Tem Heggins asked for clarification regarding the partial pay study. Mr. Bailey explained the MAPS Group will consider all of the pay ranges in comparison to like communities and then make a recommendation. He added it will be useful information but the complete pay study will provide the best data.

Councilmember Post asked if a civil service pension is in place for Fire Department personnel in lieu of social security. Mr. Bailey stated there is not, and he explained benefits were traded in the past for an extra day off. He commented he believes the Fire Department should vote on participation in Social Security before any other action is taken regarding retirement benefits. He stated depending on the vote a 457 Plan could be considered. He explained the younger firefighters may like the 457 because it would have a bigger return on investment than Social Security. He added if a firefighter contributes to a 457 plan and then leaves the Fire Department they must still pay into the Social Security system for 10 years to receive benefits.

Councilmember Post then asked if firefighters receive Medicare benefits. Mr. Bailey stated the firefighters receive Medicare benefits.

Mr. Bailey noted he and Chief Parnell met last week with Fire Department personnel and will continue to do so.

(b) Hotwire Communications Update

City Manager Lane Bailey noted Councilmember Sheffield requested an update on Hotwire Communications. He stated the ACC Network is now available on all Hotwire/Fision video

packages. He added Hotwire is a participant in the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program which provides temporary discounted monthly broadband for qualifying low-income households. He pointed out local governments who operated broadband systems in North Carolina are not eligible to participate in the program. He explained because of the public/private partnership Hotwire Communications is able to offer this to Salisbury citizens.

Mr. Bailey noted Hotwire has distributed over 600 laptops, backpacks, and school supplies to children in Rowan County through its Empowering Communities Foundation. He added Hotwire has installed Wi-Fi hotspots to assist in areas where children may not have broadband in their home. He stated Hotwire discounted rates during the COVID shut down which enabled kids to participate in online classes. He encouraged citizens to support Hotwire Communications.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilmember Sheffield noted BlockWork will take place on October 19, 2021 and October 23, 2021. She encouraged citizens to sign up and volunteer.

Councilmember Sheffield noted the Hispanic and Latino Heritage Month takes place September 15, 2021 through October 15, 2021.

Councilmember Sheffield stated the City lost a talented musician in Ms. Emily Sowers, and she expressed her condolences to the Sowers family and the local music community.

Councilmember Post commented the North Carolina Pickle Ball Championships will take place at the Catawba College tennis courts. He noted over 375 people from 12 states will participate in this event that will bring revenue to the City.

### **MAYOR PRO TEM COMMENTS**

Mayor Pro Tem Heggins stated the City is moving in the right direction regarding pay for the Fire Department.

### **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS**

#### (a) 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Busker's Bash

Mayor Alexander announced the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Busker's Bash will take place Friday, October 1, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. in downtown Salisbury. Voting pick packs and map can be picked up from City Hall, Rowan Museum or the Rowan County Visitors Center. For more information contact 704-637-7814.

Mayor Alexander thanked Fire Chief Bob Parnell and Fire Department personnel for the ceremony to honor 9/11. She also thanked staff for all it does for the City.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilmember Post. Upon a roll call vote Mayor Alexander voted AYE, Mayor Pro Tem Heggins voted AYE, Councilmember Miller voted AYE, Councilmember Post voted AYE, and Councilmember Sheffield voted AYE. (5-0)  
The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.



Karen Alexander, Mayor



---

Kelly Baker, City Clerk