

Salisbury, North Carolina
December 5, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

PRESENT: Mayor Karen K. Alexander, Presiding; Mayor Pro Tem Tamara Sheffield; and 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 6:00 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.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield. All Council members in attendance agreed unanimously to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

NEW COUNCIL CONVENES

Ms. Karen Kirks Alexander was elected Mayor and Mr. Harry McLaughlin, Mr. David Post, Ms. Tamara Sheffield, and Mr. Anthony R. Smith were elected as City Council members in the November 7, 2023 regular municipal election for a two-year term, assembled in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 217 South Main Street, at 6:05 p.m. on December 5, 2023 for the purpose of being inducted into office.

City Clerk Connie Snyder administered the oath of office of Mayor to Karen Kirks Alexander. She then administered the oath of office to each of the recently elected Councilmembers.

The new Council convened.

ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEM

Mayor Alexander opened the floor to receive nominations for the office of Mayor Pro Tem for the City of Salisbury. Councilmember Smith nominated Tamara Sheffield to serve as Mayor Pro Tem. There were no other nominations. By unanimous vote of the Council, Tamara Sheffield was elected Mayor Pro Tem for a two-year term beginning December 5, 2023.

The oath of office for Mayor Pro Tem was administered to Tamara Sheffield by City Clerk Connie Snyder.

REMARKS FROM NEW COUNCIL

Mayor Alexander opened the floor to receive comments from newly elected Councilmembers.

Councilmember McLaughlin thanked the citizens who voted, and he noted he is looking forward to working with Council.

Councilmember Post thanked citizens for voting. He recognized the City's Management Team, including City Manager Jim Greene and City Attorney Graham Corriher, and thanked City staff for their hard work.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked everyone who assisted with her campaign. She also thanked everyone who voted and the Board of Elections who worked to create fair opportunities for people to vote. She thanked staff and commemorated its hard work.

Councilmember Smith recognized the City's branding of 'Be the Difference,' and he explained the difference means to be set apart. He stated he is honored to serve the community and looks forward to tackling projects with Council. He thanked staff for its service to the community. He recognized and thanked his family for their love and support.

Mayor Alexander stated she is honored to serve with Council to work toward a community for everyone. She thanked her family for their continuous support and the community for taking the time to vote.

Mayor Alexander stated Senator Tom Tillis announced over \$1 billion in infrastructure is coming to North Carolina, and the Asheville to Salisbury train connection was approved to receive part of that funding.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

CONSENT AGENDA

(a) Minutes

Approve Minutes of the special meetings of November 21, 2023 and November 27, 2023, and the regular meeting of November 21, 2023.

(b) 2024 Schedule of Regular Council Meeting Dates

Adopt the 2024 schedule of regular Council meeting dates. Mayor Alexander noted on February 6th the City Council meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m.

(c) Right-of-Way Encroachment – AT&T

Approve a right-of-way encroachment for the installation of underground fiber optic cable by AT&T within the right-of-way of Jake Alexander Boulevard near 505 West Jake Alexander Boulevard per Section 11-24(27) of the City Code and subject to North Carolina Department of Transportation approval.

(d) Contract – Charles R. Underwood, Inc.

Authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Charles R. Underwood, Inc. in the amount of \$248,434 for the Crowell Lift Station upgrades.

(e) Contract – Summit Design and Engineering Services, PLLC

Authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Summit Design and Engineering Services, PLLC, in an amount not to exceed \$53,000 for engineering services associated with the Fisher Street Bridge Feasibility Report.

(f) Remind – HOME ARP Grant Agreement

Authorize the City Manager to execute a request to amend the current HOME-ARP Grant Agreement type of activity from “Create and Develop Non-Congregate Housing” to the “Development and Support of Affordable Housing” in the amount of \$487,247, and have it submitted to the administering agency.

(g) Public Hearing – Annexation Agreement

Set a public hearing for January 2, 2024 to receive comments regarding a proposed Annexation Agreement with the Town of Spencer.

(h) Voluntary Annexation Request

Receive a request for voluntary annexation of approximately 10.88 acres located on Peach Orchard Lane, Tax Map 407B Parcel 043, and a adopt a Resolution instructing the City Clerk to investigate the sufficiency of the request.

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK TO INVESTIGATE A PETITION RECEIVED UNDER G.S. 160A-58.1, FOR VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION OF TAX MAP 407B PARCEL 043, 10.88 ACRES LOCATED ON PEACH ORCHARD LANE.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 16 at Page No. 333, and is known as Resolution 2023-78.)

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield 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.

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

SALE OF BONDS FOR THE FORD CITY MOTOR LOFTS PROJECT

City Attorney Graham Corriher and Attorney Kristen Kirby addressed Council regarding the issuance and sale of Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds for the Ford City Motor Lofts project located at 419 South Main Street.

Mr. Corriher introduced Ms. Kirby who is representing the City, and he explained the issuance of bonds requires a bond counsel who represents the interests of the bondholder and completes the paperwork for issuing the bond. Mr. Corriher reminded Council the Ford City Motor Lofts Project will provide low-income housing for senior citizens.

Mr. Corriher noted the project was introduced in December of 2021 when the developers asked the City to serve as the issuer of the bonds. He stated the City is not obligated to repay the bond, and he explained bond repayment would come from the developer. He clarified that no debt will be held against the City if the project does not come to fruition. He stated the City will issue

up to \$9.5 million in bonds that are tax-exempt for construction financing. He noted staff has worked with the developer to obtain project approval from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

Planning and Neighborhoods Director Hannah Jacobson provided a project overview, and she indicated the developer is planning to build 64 low-income units for senior citizens. She stated the units are restricted to residents earning 50% to 60% of the area median income.

Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing after due notice to receive comments regarding the issuance and sale of Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds for the Ford City Motor Lofts project.

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

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to adopt a Resolution authorizing the issuance and sale of Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds for the Ford City Motor Lofts project. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF MULTIFAMILY HOUSING REVENUE BONDS (FORD CITY MOTOR LOFTS), SERIES 2023.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 16 at Page No. 333, and is known as Resolution 2023-78.)

FORD CITY MOTOR LOFTS PROJECT COMMITMENT LETTER

Planning and Neighborhoods Director Hannah Jacobson asked Council to consider endorsing a letter committing \$200,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support the Ford City Motor Lofts project located at 419 South Main Street.

Ms. Jacobson explained if the project does not proceed, the \$200,000 will be reimbursed to the City and can be reallocated to other community development projects. Councilmember Post noted the Ford City Motor Lofts is a great project to utilize CDBG funding.

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to endorse a letter committing \$200,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds in support of the Ford City Motor Lofts project. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT MAP AMENDMENT – EAST COUNCIL STREET

Senior Planner Victoria Bailiff addressed Council regarding a request to amend the Land Development District Map of the City of Salisbury to rezone one parcel, approximately .668 acres,

located along the intersection of East Council and North Shaver Streets, from Corridor Mixed-Use (CMX) and Residential Mixed-Use (RMX) with a Conditional District (CD) Overlay to RMX with a CD Overlay to request an exception to the Land Development Ordinance requirements for an alternate design.

Ms. Bailiff noted Shelter Ministries of Rowan County is the petitioner for the project. She displayed images of the site and reviewed the master plan, which proposes a campus-style residential development comprised of five duplexes with 10 total units.

Ms. Bailiff explained the developer is requesting three alternative designs. She stated the first alternative design is a request to reduce the front setback from 10 feet to 5 feet, reduce the side setback from 20% to 9% lot width and the rear setback from 25 feet to 5 feet. She added the second alternative design request is for a parking reduction from 12 spaces to four ADA parking spaces. She added the final alternative request is that no parking lot connection to the adjacent lots be required.

Ms. Bailiff stated the Future Land Use Map designates the property as a traditional neighborhood and with the CD Overlay in place staff finds that the plan matches up with the characteristics of a traditional neighborhood and is consistent with Forward 2040 policies.

Ms. Bailiff stated the master plan was reviewed by the Technical Review Committee (TRC) on October 19, 2023 who recommended approval subject to minor revisions which were satisfied upon resubmittal. She stated Planning Board held a courtesy hearing on November 14, 2023 and it voted unanimously to recommend approval as submitted.

Councilmember McLaughlin asked if neighboring residents had concerns regarding the proposed project. Ms. Bailiff noted she has not received any concerns from neighboring residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield asked if the CD Overlay is needed with the zoning request due to the three alternative design requests. Ms. Bailiff agreed, and she commented the proposed campus-style development requires a CD Overlay. Mayor Alexander requested clarification regarding the proposed campus style housing. Ms. Bailiff noted campus-style development consists of multiple buildings without a main structure.

Councilmember Post asked if the parking spaces off Shaver Street behind the proposed development are related to the project. Ms. Bailiff noted that the parking spaces are for another Rowan Helping Ministries property. She explained that the parking spaces were not shown on the master plan to clarify that the spaces are not part of the rezoning request.

Councilmember McLaughlin asked if the proposed development would serve as permanent or temporary housing. Ms. Kyna Grubb, Executive Director of Rowan Helping Ministries, clarified the development is for permanent housing.

Councilmember Posted asked if a resident with a vehicle will be allowed to park in the parking spaces behind the development. Ms. Grubb stated residents would be able to park in the

parking spaces behind the building or the on-street parking. She pointed out the sidewalks along Shaver and Council Streets will connect residents from the development to parking.

Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing after due notice to receive comments regarding the proposed Land Development District Map amendment.

Ms. Kyna Grubb, Executive Director of Rowan Helping Ministries, spoke in favor of the project. She stated the project was identified in 2018 as part of Rowan Helping Ministries Strategic Plan. She noted that at that time, 18 individuals qualified for permanent supportive housing, but only two were placed due to availability. She indicated the proposed campus-style development would offer qualified Rowan County residents a permanent place to live.

Mayor Alexander asked if the residential units would be available to families. Ms. Grubb stated two of the units are suitable for families.

Councilmember McLaughlin asked about a time frame for the project. Ms. Grubb noted upon Council approval the project would go to bid at the end of the year and construction is anticipated to begin in spring.

There being no one else 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 rezone the properties described herein, is reasonable and in the public interest. The proposal is fundamentally consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Thereupon, Mr. Smith made a **motion** to adopt an Ordinance amending the Land Development District Map of the City of Salisbury, North Carolina, rezoning 0 East Council Street, approximately 0.668 acres, Tax Map 010 Parcel 411, from Corridor Mixed-Use and Residential Mixed-Use with a Conditional District Overlay to Residential Mixed-Use with a Conditional District Overlay. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT MAP OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA, BY REZONING 0 EAST COUNCIL STREET, APPROXIMATELY 0.668 ACRES, TAX MAP 010 PARCEL 411, FROM CORRIDOR MIXED-USE AND RESIDENTIAL MIXED-USE WITH A CONDITIONAL DISTRICT OVERLAY TO RESIDENTIAL MIXED-USE WITH A CONDITIONAL DISTRICT OVERLAY.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 31 at Page No. 333, and is known as Ordinance 2023-78.)

STREET CLOSING – UNIMPROVED PORTION OF SECOND STREET

Transportation Director Wendy Brindle addressed Council regarding a request to close an unimproved portion of Second Street located off the 100 block of Carolina Boulevard. Mrs. Brindle stated Council previously adopted a Resolution of Intent to close an unimproved portion of Second Street.

Mrs. Brindle displayed images of the area, and she added staff followed North Carolina General Statute 160A-299 and posted signage and notified all citizens affected by the closing. She explained that closing an alley must not be contrary to the public interest and no one should be deprived of reasonable means of ingress and egress to their property. She noted staff has found that to be the case and those affected will still have access to their property.

Ms. Brindle stated a public sewer line runs through the right-of-way. She added if the Order is adopted it would be subject to a 30-foot permanent easement for the sanitary sewer line.

Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing after due notice to receive comments regarding the proposed closing of an unimproved portion of Second Street.

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

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to adopt a Resolution pertaining to the closing of an unimproved portion of Second Street located off the 100 block of Carolina Boulevard. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 16 at Page No. 333, and is known as Resolution 2023-78.)

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to adopt an Order closing an unimproved portion of Second Street subject to a 30-foot sewer easement. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

(The above Order is recorded in full at the Register of Deeds and maintained in the City Clerk's Alley Closing file dated December 5, 2023)

2023 ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT

Finance Director Wade Furches and Auditor Elsa Swenson presented the June 30, 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report from Martin Starnes and Associates, CPA. Ms. Swenson indicated the firm has issued the City an unmodified opinion which is a clean audit opinion.

Ms. Swenson reviewed General Fund revenue and expenditures noting \$49.9 million in revenue which is an increase of 6%, and expenditures were at \$43.4 million, an increase of 12%.

Ms. Swenson added Fund Balance for the General Fund was \$35.7 million which includes non-spendable items of \$855,015 and items restricted by State Statute of \$6.2 million resulting in an available Fund Balance of \$28.5 million. She added there is an increase in the available Fund Balance of \$8.1 million due to the \$5.6 million transfer of ARP funds to the General Fund which supplanted salaries for the Fire and Police Departments.

Ms. Swenson described the available Fund Balance as a percent of expenditures and transfers to other funds. She stated the available Fund Balance in the General Fund is 61.05%, and she indicated property taxes were at \$24.2 million an increase of 4%. She noted unrestricted intergovernmental value were at \$15.7 million which was a 7% increase from FY2022-2023. She pointed out public safety was one of the most significant expense areas at \$19.9 million which is an increase of 12%.

Ms. Swenson reviewed major enterprise funds for 2023 and noted Water and Sewer unrestricted net position was \$48.9 million and Broadband Services was negative \$2.4 million. She added Stormwater was \$3.1 million, Transit \$407,000. She stated change in net position for the Water and Sewer Fund was \$7.1 million, Broadband just over \$2million, Stormwater \$605,000 and Transit \$62,000. She indicated even though Broadband unrestricted net position is negative the overall net position is positive for the first time at \$1.4 million.

Ms. Swenson stated the quick ratio for the Water and Sewer Fund was 7.31%, and the Local Government Commission (LGC) would be concerned if it was less than 1%. She reviewed operating income performance for the Water and Sewer Fund which is calculated by taking the operating income of \$5.9 million and adding back the depreciation of \$5 million and removing the principal debt service of \$3.3 million which gives an operating income performance of \$7.7 million.

Ms. Swenson noted one performance indicator of concern was identified regarding the Water and Sewer Fund condition of assets. She added the remaining useful life of assets is .5 which is due to the need for continued investment in assets and infrastructure. She added Mr. Furches discussed this with Council at its 2023 Retreat. She stated the City is required to provide a letter to the LGC within 60 days of the audit presentation.

Councilmember Post asked why the operating income of the Water and Sewer Fund decreased from \$8.2 million to \$5.9 million. Mr. Furches noted in the Water and Sewer Fund expenses in maintenance and construction increased by \$2 million due to systems being repaired and infrastructure investments. Mr. Post asked if that \$2 million increase is considered non-recurring maintenance. Mr. Furches agreed.

Councilmember Post noted the undepreciated portion of Water and Sewer assets was .5, but the LGC prefers the undepreciated portion to be over .5. He commented it is important for the City to invest funding back into capital infrastructure. Mr. Furches pointed out the City completed \$36 million of investment in water and sewer using 2020 revenue bonds. He noted in the FY2024 budget Council approved an additional \$6.4 million from the Water and Sewer Fund Balance to go towards projects. Mr. Post asked for the City's total investment in capital infrastructure in the Water and Sewer Fund budget. Mr. Furches stated the City's total investment is around \$90 million in the Water and Sewer Fund.

Councilmember Post asked about Broadband services showing \$3.1 million in FY2022 and \$2.4 million in FY2023. He then asked if the Broadband Fund includes debt to be paid. Mr. Furches stated approximately \$4 million in Broadband includes capital assets beyond outstanding debt. Mr. Furches added the total net position is almost \$1.5 million and this is the first time the

City has had a positive total net position in Broadband services. Mr. Post asked if the City is paying the mortgage payment out of the General Fund. Mr. Furches confirmed the General Fund contributes \$2.7 million to the Broadband Fund.

City Manager Jim Greene reminded Council last fiscal year, Salisbury- Rowan Utilities (SRU) Director Jim Behmer presented the Capital Improvement Plan for SRU. He noted it is an aggressive plan, and the City is continuing to invest in water and sewer infrastructure which is a critical asset for the City and the community.

Mayor Alexander asked if increasing capital infrastructure will cause utility rate increases. Mr. Greene noted staff reviews utility rates each fiscal year, and he added it is not sustainable to not have water and sewer utility rate increases given the infrastructure needs.

Mr. Greene thanked staff for its work on the audit which is critical to City operations and shows a strong financial measurement program.

Council thanked Ms. Swenson and Mr. Furches for their work on the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

RIGHT-OF-WAY USE PERMIT – 119 AND 121 NORTH MAIN STREET

Transportation Director Wendy Brindle requested Council consider approving a right-of-way use permit for the use of four marked parking spaces on Main Street until March 22, 2024 and the intermittent use of Hogan's Alley until January 5, 2024 for construction taking place at 119 and 121 North Main Street per Section 22-50 of the City Code. She explained City Code allows downtown property and business owners to request the use of right-of-way during construction and renovation projects due to the limited parking spaces for construction vehicles. She explained City Code allows staff to issue right-of-way use permits for up to two weeks and anything over two weeks or that blocks sidewalks or roadways requires Council's approval.

Ms. Brindle stated Section 22-50 of the City Code requires the applicant to use parking spaces directly in front of their building and if additional parking spaces are required the applicant must obtain written approval from the businesses that are directly impacted. She pointed out the requested parking spaces are in front of 119 and 121 North Main Street and staff is monitoring the use of the parking spaces. She explained only vehicles actively used for construction would be allowed to use the parking spaces over the two-hour time limit.

Ms. Brindle indicated the second request is for the use of Hogan's Alley. She displayed a photograph of the alley, and she pointed out windows and possibly a door will be added to the wall. She stated the building will have residential units upstairs and commercial use downstairs. She noted work has begun on the inside of the building which will minimize impact to the alley. She added the request is to work in the alley from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. beginning December 6, 2023 which would reduce the impact to local business that open at 10:00 a.m. She indicated a spotter will be available in case a pedestrian needs access to the alley. She noted it will be the

property owner's responsibility to relocate the planters and the amenities during construction. She commented the work is anticipated to be completed before January 5, 2024.

Ms. Brindle noted the third request is in the rear of the building. She displayed a photograph of the building, and she pointed out an area where the property owner is proposing to park a dump trailer. She stated the dump trailer will be parked on private property with minimal intrusion into the alley. She explained the dump trailer will arrive in the morning and will be removed at the end of the work day. She indicated the dump trailer may not be at the site each day. She stated adjacent businesses have been notified of the request and staff has not received any complaints.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield indicated staff is monitoring the developer's activity and the parking spaces are not being abused. She commented she does not see the use of Hogan's Alley being an issue, and she pointed out the windows will bring the building closer to its original design.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to approve a right-of-way use permit for the use of four marked parking spaces on North Main Street until March 22, 2024, the intermittent use of Hogan's Alley until January 5, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m., and the location of a small dump trailer to be removed at the end of each work day with minimal intrusion into the alley for construction taking place at 119 and 121 North Main Street per Section 22-50 of the City Code. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

BYRNE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Byrne Criminal Justice Initiative (BCJI) Coordinator Chanel Nestor presented an update on the West End Salisbury Transformed Empowered Neighborhood Development (WEST END) Project. She explained the City was awarded an \$800,000 grant from the BCJI program, which is a community-led initiative to help revitalize the West End neighborhood and address its crime concerns. She stated this is a grant collaboration between the Police Department, Parks and Recreation Department, and the Planning and Neighborhoods Department. She introduced Ms. Gwen Jackson from Urbane Environments who will serve as a Community Consultant, and Project Supervisor Lieutenant Corey Brooks.

Ms. Nestor reviewed the history of the project. She added the grant was developed in coordination with Idea Analytics who served as grant writer and is responsible for certain project management aspects of the grant. She thanked staff for its support, and she noted the project received community support from Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (RCCC) and NAACP President Gemale Black. She stated community outreach is ongoing. She indicated the action plan was submitted to the Bureau of Justice Assistance in September for its review and once the action plan is approved the City will receive the funding.

Ms. Nestor explained \$200,000 of the grant will be used to provide seed grants of up to \$20,000 for new and existing programs that focus on youth and families. She pointed out grant activities must take place between May 2024 and September 2024 in the West End community.

She commented any 501c3 in Rowan County can apply for a grant, and she noted applications will be reviewed by a 13-member resident-led council. She stated two information sessions will be held, and she pointed out grant applications will be accepted from January 15, 2023 until February 16, 2023. She noted a Memo of Understanding is being created between the United Way and the City to allow the United Way to implement the grant. She added the United Way will receive a 10% administrative fee, or approximately \$20,000. She stated priority areas include youth and family development, youth and family education, neighborhood safety, youth and community recreation and civic engagement.

Ms. Nestor reviewed remaining grant actions:

- Supporting the development of a unified West End Neighborhood Association
 - Contribute \$100,000 toward development of a neighborhood association
 - Identify a neighborhood coordinator
- Neighborhood beautification and community visioning projects
 - Contribute \$50,000
 - Hold neighborhood meetings in February and March to define a plan
- Support small business development by providing 20 seed grants in the amount of \$2,500 for West End residents
 - Contribute \$60,000
 - Seeking a partnership with RCCC Small Business Center
- Crime Intervention Neighborhood Training
 - Contribute \$15,000
 - Working to identify a training program
- Security Technology
 - Contribute \$15,000
 - Working to identify camera locations and to implement a lighting pilot project

Councilmember Smith asked if the funding for the seed grants will be received upfront. Ms. Nestor agreed. Ms. Jackson added the grants are non-reimbursable provided an applicant can expend the funds in the allotted time frame.

Councilmember Smith stated he is concerned about neighborhood integrity, history, and maintaining culture and community in relation to development and redevelopment. He added it is important to have a neighborhood association review the type of development that comes into the community.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield referenced the youth development programs, and she asked if applicants can be both new and existing entities. Ms. Nestor agreed, and she stated the goal is to support the overall development of youth and families in the West End community. Mayor Alexander asked if the organizations have to be located within the West End neighborhood. Ms. Nestor stated any organization that operates within the County can apply provided the grant activities take place in the West End neighborhood.

Mayor Alexander asked if the United Way is managing the qualification process. Ms. Nestor explained the United Way will manage the online platform and the resident-led council will

use a scoring system to determine which organizations receive the grant funding. Mayor Alexander asked if the resident-led council is already in place. Ms. Nestor noted the goal is to begin planning for the council in January.

Councilmember Smith asked if grant writing assistance will be provided to applicants. Ms. Nestor stated staff will determine if the need exists, and she added staff is working to make sure applicants understand the qualifications.

Councilmember Post stated the grant is for \$800,000, and he questioned the overall budget of the grant. Ms. Nestor noted the overall budget is not included in the presentation. She added the funds to be received by research partner Ideal Analytics is a major concern. Mr. Post asked how much Ideal Analytics is receiving. Ms. Nestor noted the company is receiving approximately \$160,000 over three years. Mr. Post requested the administrative cost of the project be emailed to Council. Mr. Post noted the committee is made up of community volunteers, and he asked who is providing the framework for the committee. Ms. Nestor indicated she provided the framework for the committee and individuals that attended the monthly neighborhood meetings could sign up to serve on the committee. She added there is no formal structure regarding the obligations of the group.

Council thanked Ms. Nestor for her presentation.

DOWNTOWN SALISBURY, INC. ANNUAL REPORT

Downtown Development Director Sada Troutman stated Council previously approved a five-year agreement with Downtown Salisbury, Inc. (DSI) to manage the Mainstreet Program and the City's Municipal Service District (MSD) tax dollars. She provided an update of what has been completed and what has been reported to the Statewide Main Street Organization in order for DSI to remain an accredited organization.

Ms. Troutman commented the MSD map recently expanded to include another block for a total of 26 downtown blocks. She noted DSI is managed by Downtown Development and a Board of 24 stakeholders who represent business owners, property owners, non-profit leaders, and downtown residents. She added the non-profit board manages DSI and helps execute non-profit operations through a four-point operating approach that includes organization, economic vitality, promotion, and design.

Ms. Troutman reviewed City statistics:

- 56 completed building and property improvement projects
- Nearly \$15 million in public and private investment dollars for physical improvements
- Vacancy rate below 10%, with increasing average rental rates
- 40 full-time jobs created
- 28 part-time jobs created
- 21 businesses opened and 4 expanded businesses

Ms. Troutman reviewed highlights from the past year that include the Main Street Awards where the City received three state-wide awards:

- Main Street Champion – Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department
- Best Infill Building Project – Bankett Station
- Best Outdoor Space Improvement – Bell Tower Green

Ms. Troutman then reviewed pending projects:

- Evaluation of the Downtown Parking Pilot Program
- Continuation of the Downtown Salisbury Social District
- Coordination of the Main Street Project and development of a communication plan for stakeholders
- Assistance on the Rail Walk Alley improvements led by the Tourism Development Authority
- Execution and continued development of the 10 events hosted by DSI and Downtown Development, in addition to continued assistance on the events coordinated by Parks and Recreation in the downtown

Ms. Troutman presented the 2023-2024 goals:

- Develop a downtown residential neighborhood by instigating a culture of community through
 - Continuing to assist in the development of downtown residential and to support services and businesses
 - Assessing results of the Downtown Parking Pilot Program
- Decrease commercial vacancy rates from 9% to 8.5% or lower by
 - Continuing to work with the development group for the Empire Hotel
 - Completing a property inventory regarding available property and property types
- Communicate design opportunities that perpetuate Downtown Salisbury's historic character, while encouraging new opportunity by
 - Continuing to work with multiple City departments on the Main Street Project
 - Design to be complete by fall 2024
- Working on various infrastructure projects to improve downtown

Councilmember Post asked about the 9% vacancy rate. Ms. Troutman explained the vacancy rate was reported in July and it includes vacant storefronts and does not include upper story residential units.

Councilmember Post asked about the Empire Hotel. Ms. Troutman noted the developers continue to work on financing and developing plans. She commented work on Phase 1 of the Efirid Section in the Plaza should begin shortly. She indicated the developers have communications with staff throughout the process.

Councilmember Post congratulated DSI on what has been accomplished, and he thanked Ms. Troutman for her hard work. Ms. Troutman pointed out it is the collaborative work of various departments.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield noted she serves as Council liaison to the DSI Board and the partnership between the City and the non-profit Board is unique. She indicated she is honored to be a part of the DSI Board and to see various departments working collaboratively.

Mayor Alexander stated she is excited for the preparation of the streetscapes taking place throughout downtown. Ms. Troutman pointed out a lot of departments are involved in the process.

City Manager Jim Greene agreed it takes a team, but he pointed out Ms. Troutman is a leader that works great with businesses and staff. He thanked Ms. Troutman and her team for the great work they do for the City.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

(a) Uniform Construction Standards Draft Manual

City Manager Jim Greene stated Transportation Director Wendy Brindle previously presented the Uniform Construction Standards manual draft to Council. He noted staff will be available Wednesday, December 6, 2023 from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. at the Park Avenue Community Center to answer questions and receive public input on the draft. He stated any questions or comments can be sent to Ms. Brindle at wbrin@salisburync.gov, and he noted a copy of the draft is available on the City's website.

City Manager Jim Greene pointed out Council will only have one meeting in December. He wished Council a wonderful and safe holiday season and presented Salisbury logo items to Councilmembers. He wished everyone a Happy Holiday.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Post noted \$267 million has been invested in the City's water and sewer system and there is a need for additional investment to maintain the system. He thanked staff for all the work they do for the City.

Councilmember McLaughlin thanked staff for all it does for the City, and he thanked Public Works for the hat that had given him. He stated he looks forward to continuing the work of Council, and he indicated he would like to focus on crime and safety issues to include reducing the speed limit to 25 mph inside the City limits.

Councilmember Smith thanked staff, citizens who attend the Council meetings, and those that provide words of encouragement. He noted he appreciates community engagement, and he wished everyone a great holiday.

MAYOR PRO TEM'S COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield pointed out the Community Appearance Commission will open voting on December 12, 2023 for its downtown store holiday decorating contest. She noted votes can be cast online at salisbruync.gov/holidaydecor.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked those who helped make the employee holiday luncheon a success, and she indicated it was nice to be there to serve and have an opportunity to thank employees for the great work they do for the City. She added the Boards and Commissions Reception took place last week to honor the volunteers who work so hard for the City. She thanked Public Works Director Chris Tester and his team for their work to collect leaves throughout the City, and she wished everyone a safe and happy holiday.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

Mayor Alexander thanked staff for the professionalism and passion it extends to the community. She added it was great to see such a wonderful turnout at the City's employee luncheon, and she wished everyone a wonderful and safe holiday.

(a) Photos with Santa and the Grinch at Bell Tower Green

Mayor Alexander announced Downtown Salisbury, Inc. will host photos with Santa and the Grinch at Bell Tower Green Park Saturday, December 9, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Free rides on the antique fire trucks with Santa and the Grinch will take place from 1:30 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.

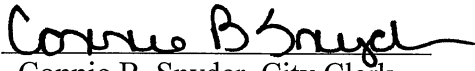
(b) New Year's Eve Celebration at Bell Tower Green

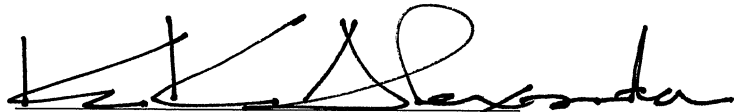
Mayor Alexander announced the City of Salisbury will host the New Year's Eve at the Bell Tower celebration Sunday, December 31, 2023 at Bell Tower Green. Festivities begin at 9:00 p.m. and include food trucks, live entertainment, a live video feed from Time's Square, and ringing in the New Year at midnight.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.


Connie B. Snyder, City Clerk


Karen Alexander, Mayor