

Salisbury, North Carolina
August 16, 2016

REGULAR MEETING

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

ABSENT: City Manager W. Lane Bailey and City Clerk Myra B. Heard.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mayor Alexander welcomed all visitors present.

RECOGNITION – LYNN RAKER

Mayor Alexander recognized retired Urban Design Planner Lynn Raker for her 20 years of service to the City.

Thereupon, Mr. Miller made a **motion** to adopt a Resolution honoring Lynn Raker. Ms. Blackwell seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller and Post, and Mses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

Mayor Alexander noted Ms. Raker served the City as an Urban Planner from June 3, 1996 until June 1, 2016. She read the Resolution and then presented a framed copy to Ms. Raker.

RESOLUTION HONORING LYNN RAKER.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 15 at Page No. 16, and is known as Resolution 2016-15.)

CONSENT AGENDA

(a) Approval of Minutes

Approve Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 2, 2016 and the Special Meetings of August 2, 2016.

(b) Sidewalks – Old Concord Road

Authorize an agreement in the amount of \$177,242.55 with Carolina Siteworks for the installation of sidewalks on one side of Old Concord Road between Harrell Street and Ryan Street.

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

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell thanked Mr. Jake Alexander for helping the City secure a grant to fund the sidewalks on Old Concord Road.

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Human Resources Analyst Souwan Kiengkham addressed Council regarding the Summer Youth Employment Program. He explained every summer the City hires students, who are City residents, to participate in the eight-week program. He noted the students gain working experience and exposure to local government by working in multiple departments. He recognized the students who participated in the Summer Youth Employment Program:

Mr. Ikey Harrison
Mr. Jaydon Brown
Ms. Sarah Tran
Mr. Myron Riley
Ms. Irma Cruz

Mr. Riley thanked Council for supporting the program which gave him an opportunity to work at Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU), Engineering, and Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Tran thanked staff for the warm welcome she received, and she pointed out the Summer Youth Employment Program is a great opportunity for local students.

Mr. Brown thanked Council for allowing him to work in the Summer Youth Employment Program. He noted he worked in the Planning, Finance, and Transit Departments.

Mr. Harrison indicated he worked in Communications, Transit, and Public Services, and he thanked Council for allowing him to work in the program.

Mayor Alexander congratulated the students, and she thanked everyone who worked to make the program a success.

Mr. Kiengkham explained the City also works with high school and college students, and graduate program candidates on various projects throughout the year. He thanked the summer youth employees for their hard work and dedication to the City.

DEBT REFINANCING

Finance Director Teresa Harris noted staff presented Council with information regarding the refinancing of Fibrant debt at its last meeting. She explained the interest rate will be reduced to 2.06%, the maturity date will not be extended, the debt service reserve will be eliminated, and the City will save approximately \$379,000 annually.

Ms. Harris stated the Local Government Commission (LGC) will consider the loan approval at its September meeting. She noted the first step required to seek the LGC's approval is to adopt a Resolution making certain findings and appointments and requesting approval. She explained the findings are:

- Such proposed contract is necessary or expedient to the City
- Such proposed contract, under current circumstances, is preferable to a general obligation bond issue of the City for the same purpose
- The sums estimated to fall due under such proposed contract are adequate and not excessive for their proposed purpose
- The City's debt management procedures and policies are good and its debt will continue to be managed in strict compliance with the law
- No increase in taxes will be necessary due to the proposed contract and
- The City is not in default regarding any of its debt service obligations

She indicated the second part of the Resolution requests the LGC approve the contract and appoint Public Financial Management, Inc. as financial advisor and Robinson, Bradshaw, and Hinson P.A. as special counsel for the transaction

Councilmember Post noted the firm of Robinson, Bradshaw, and Hinson P.A. is representing him in a personal matter although a different attorney from the firm is handling it. City Attorney Rivers Lawther clarified there is no conflict of interest.

Thereupon, Mr. Miller made a **motion** to adopt a Resolution making certain finding and appointments and requesting approval of the Local Government Commission. Mr. Post seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller and Post, and Mses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDING AND APPOINTMENTS AND REQUESTING APPROVAL OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 15 at Page No. 17, and is known as Resolution 2016-16.)

(c) Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing, after due notice thereof, to receive comments regarding the refinancing of the Series 2008 Certificates of Participation and Series 2013 Refunding Certificates of Participation:

Mr. Darrell Hancock, Salisbury resident and former Councilmember, stated he supports the refinancing. He noted there are many benefits to having broadband in the City. He pointed out Fibrant has not been received as it should, and former Councils have been criticized for unpopular decisions. He commended Council for its leadership, and he noted a local utility benefits the entire community.

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

Ms. Harris explained the final step is to approve a Resolution approving an installment financing contract with STI Institutional and Government, Inc. and authorizing the execution and delivery of documents in connection therewith. She noted this includes:

- Installment Financing Contract (the "Contract ") between the City and STI Institutional and Government, Inc. (the "Bank ")
- Deed of Trust and Security Agreement (the "Deed of Trust ") from the City to a trustee for the benefit of the Bank
- Escrow Deposit Agreement (the "Escrow Agreement ") between the City and U.S. Bank National Association which are referenced in the Resolution

Ms. Harris explained the Resolution seeks approval of the drafts and authorizes the Mayor, City Manager, Finance Director, and City Clerk to execute and deliver each of the documents and take any and all action to effect the installment refinancing pursuant to the contract. She stated the Resolution states all actions of the City effectuating the proposed refinancing are approved, ratified and authorized pursuant to and in accordance with the transactions contemplated by the referred documents.

Thereupon, Mr. Post made a **motion** to adopt a Resolution approving an installment financing contract with STI Institutional and Government, Inc. and authorizing the execution and delivery of documents in connection therewith. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller and Post, and Meses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

RESOLUTION APPROVING AN INSTALLMENT FINANCING CONTRACT WITH STI INSTITUTIONAL AND GOVERNMENT, INC. AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF DOCUMENTS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 15 at Page No. 18, and is known as Resolution 2016-17.)

BUILDING REHABILITATION INCENTIVE REQUEST

Downtown Salisbury, Inc. (DSI) Executive Director Paula Bohland requested a public hearing for a Downtown Revitalization Grant. She explained the Municipal Service District was recently expanded to include the 400 block of North Lee Street. She pointed out a former warehouse is being renovated into a brewery and restaurant. She stated the Morgan Ridge Brewery and Railwalk Eatery located at 421 North Lee Street is a \$1.6 million project of private downtown investment. She explained approximately 9,000 square feet of a vacant industrial building will be revitalized and repurposed. She pointed out the completed project will bring 23 full-time jobs and 18 part-time jobs to the City.

Ms. Bohland stated the project will expand the brewery industry in the City, which has increased tourism and provided an economic impact. She requested Council consider setting a public hearing for September 6, 2016 for a proposed grant not to exceed \$75,000 in Downtown Revitalization Grant funds.

Mayor Alexander requested data to explain how the proposed grant was calculated. Ms. Bohland stated Council approved the Downtown Revitalization Grant Program last year, and she noted the applicant is requesting a Building Revitalization Grant and a Fire Suppression Grant.

Councilmember Hardin requested clarification regarding the tourism dollars that will be generated if the grants are approved. Ms. Bohland noted she will present the information to Council at its next meeting. Mr. Hardin pointed out the proposed craft brewery will be the second in the City, and he is concerned downtown could become a party hub. He asked if there will be a residual impact. Ms. Bohland noted the business is located in a known food hub, and the eatery will be available to the public.

Mr. Hardin requested that return on investment information and correlation studies be presented to Council at its next meeting. Ms. Bohland agreed.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell stated breweries are high volume water users, and she pointed out the City lost a large water customer when the mills closed.

Thereupon, Ms. Blackwell made a **motion** to set a public hearing for September 6, 2016 regarding a building rehabilitation incentive request for Morgan Ridge Brewery. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. Messrs. Miller and Post, and Meses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. Mr. Hardin voted NAY. (4-1)

UPPER FLOOR REHABILITATION INCENTIVE REQUEST

Downtown Salisbury, Inc. (DSI) Executive Director Paula Bohland, explained the Washington Building is over 20,000 square feet and one of the larger downtown buildings. She noted the Washing Building has been empty for many years except for housing a restaurant for a short time. She stated the building is vacant, and it needs a new roof, as well as heating and air.

Ms. Bohland stated KMD Construction purchased the property in 2015 and will invest \$2 million to renovate and repurpose the building. She noted the building will house a restaurant and other retail space on the bottom level, office space on second floor, five market rate apartments on the third floor, and one in the mezzanine area. She noted at least four full-time and nine part-time jobs will be created in addition to employment in the office spaces. She requested a public hearing be set for September 6, 2016 for a Building Rehabilitation Grant, Residential Production Grant, and a Fire Suppression Grant not to exceed \$175,000.

Councilmember Hardin asked about the private investment. Ms. Bohland indicated the project will have at least \$2 million in private investment.

Councilmember Miller requested Planning and Development Services Manager Janet Gapen provide Council detailed information regarding the impact the grants have had since their implementation. Ms. Bohland stated she will present an impact study and an explanation of the grant programs during the public hearings. She pointed out there are direct and indirect benefits to the City when people live downtown.

Councilmember Post asked about the incentives provided for the redevelopment of the Bernhardt Building. Ms. Bohland noted the incentives were approximately \$147,000 for residential production, building rehabilitation, and fire suppression. Mr. Miller requested staff address the importance of fire suppression at Council's next meeting.

Mr. Hardin asked if DSI has a way to determine if the dollars generated from the incentive grants stay in the City. Ms. Bohland noted staff uses trends to generate this information.

Mr. Miller explained the programs were created to increase the tax base and property investment in the downtown, and he pointed out job creation was an added benefit. Ms. Bohland commented the grants were intended to increase the use of underused buildings, and she noted the grant guidelines do not refer to job creation.

Mr. Hardin stated he supports maintaining downtown buildings, and he added he is concerned some citizens may not be able to afford to patronize the businesses being created. Ms. Bohland explained many of the people who are remodeling buildings are not starting the businesses, but they are investing their money in a building that may be in disrepair. She added every dollar that is spent locally will be reused at least 11 times, and she pointed out the 23 above minimum wage jobs will also support the local economy.

Mr. Miller referenced a study that indicated if 3% of a city's population lives in the urban core, it creates a more vibrant downtown. He commented the incentive grants help potential developers make the decision to proceed with a project, which creates additional development.

Mr. Hardin noted he wants to make sure everyone can enjoy the businesses once the buildings are developed.

Councilmember Post referenced the Bernhardt Building, and he pointed out it was extremely dilapidated. He commented the Washington Building had been renovated to a degree by its previous owner and is not in the same state of disrepair as the Bernhardt Building.

Thereupon, Mr. Post made a **motion** to set a public hearing for September 6, 2016 regarding an upper floor rehabilitation incentive request for the Washington Building on North Main Street. Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Mr. Post pointed out there are vacancies in the 100 block of North Main Street and Council must do all it can to bring the block back to life. Mayor Alexander encouraged property owners to apply for the grants.

Messrs. Miller and Post, and Meses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. Mr. Hardin voted NAY. (4-1)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Alexander opened the floor to receive public comment.

Mr. Joe Morris, 600 West Henderson Street, noted in the past the City sent out surveys regarding customer service. He explained Public Services and the Fire Department received the highest ratings and the Planning Department received the lowest rating. He stated people liked neighborhoods, downtown redevelopment, historic preservation, and community appearance. He indicated when Code Enforcement was created the Fund Balance was used to subsidize the operation for the first year. He added Code Enforcement has never received the attention that it deserves from the City. He commented he is here to support the efforts to promote code enforcement in the City.

Ms. Dee Dee Wright, 418 South Caldwell Street, thanked Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell and Mr. Jake Alexander for their work to get sidewalks installed along Old Concord Road.

Ms. Barbara Perry, 131 West Bank Street, stated there has been upheaval and turmoil in the City's Code Enforcement Department for the last 16 months. She noted she serves as a member of Housing Advocacy Commission (HAC), and she pointed out HAC members hear from citizens who do not feel enough is being done to address Code violations. She added the City Code was updated in 2015, but the changes have not been enforced due to understaffing. She commented each time the City hires a Code Enforcement Officer they must be trained and situations are not addressed. She added many citizens are unhappy with Code Enforcement in the City.

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

PURCHASE ORDER – CAROLINA METER AND SUPPLY

Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU) Director Jim Behmer, Engineering Manager Jason Wilson, and Senior Engineer Jeff Jones addressed Council regarding the purchase of small water meters. Mr. Wilson noted in January Council approved a Capital Project Budget Ordinance for \$7.2 million to appropriate funds for the Advanced Metering Implementation (AMI) Project. He explained SRU first solicited proposals from water meter suppliers for a pilot project in China Grove. He noted Carolina Meter and Supply, who was chosen for the pilot project, will continue to honor the pricing it submitted in 2013. He asked Council to consider a sole source purchase with Carolina Meter and Supply for small water meters.

Councilmember Post pointed out Council authorized \$7.2 million for the project and staff is requesting approximately \$5 million. He asked if the remaining \$2 million will be needed to complete the project. Mr. Wilson explained the first two items on today's agenda are to purchase the meters and transmitters. He noted the third item will be for project management integration. He added there will be future contracts for meter change outs to complete the AMI Project.

Mr. Behmer added the project is within projected costs. He pointed out the new meters will enhance the City's customer service by allowing staff and customer to view daily water usage. He added customers will be quickly notified of potential water leaks. He pointed out the water meters have a 20-year life cycle.

Councilmember Miller clarified Council previously approved the Advanced Metering Implementation Project. Mr. Wilson agreed, and he noted the new water meters will standardize the City's small water meters. Mr. Miller asked about the project completion date. Mr. Wilson noted the project should be completed in one year.

Thereupon, Mr. Miller made a **motion** to Resolution authorizing the City Manager to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$4,684,609.80 to Carolina Meter and Supply for the purchase of small water meters for the Advanced Metering Infrastructure Implementation Project. Mr. Hardin seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller and Post, and Meses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO APPROVE A PURCHASE ORDER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,684,609.80 TO CAROLINA METER AND SUPPLY FOR THE PURCHASE OF SMALL WATER METERS FOR THE ADVANCED METERING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 15 at Page No. 19, and is known as Resolution 2016-18.)

PURCHASE ORDER – CONSOLIDATED PIPE AND SUPPLY COMPANY

Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU) Director Jim Behmer, Engineering Manager Jason Wilson, and Senior Engineer Jeff Jones addressed Council regarding the purchase of large water meters for the Advanced Metering Implementation Project. Mr. Wilson explained the large water meters are two inches and larger in size and are compatible with the small water meters. He noted the large meters are manufactured by Master Meter while the small meters are produced by Badger. He stated the meters have been tested for several years, and he indicated staff is pleased with the results.

Thereupon, Ms. Blackwell made a **motion** to Resolution authorizing the City Manager to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$535,943.40 to Consolidated Pipe and Supply Company for the purchase of large water meters for the Advanced Metering Infrastructure Implementation Project. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller and Post, and Mses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO APPROVE A PURCHASE ORDER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$535,943.40 TO CONSOLIDATED PIPE AND SUPPLY COMPANY FOR THE PURCHASE OF LARGE WATER METERS FOR THE ADVANCED METERING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 15 at Page No. 20, and is known as Resolution 2016-19.)

CONTRACT – UTILITY METERING SOLUTIONS

Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU) Director Jim Behmer, Engineering Manager Jason Wilson, and Senior Engineer Jeff Jones addressed Council regarding a data integration and program management contract for the Advanced Metering Infrastructure Project. Mr. Jones explained in order to transfer data from the new meters to the City billing database, staff realized another partner was needed. He stated requests for qualifications were sent to 11 national firms, and staff received six responses and interviewed four companies. He indicated Utility Metering Solutions has experience with the meters being installed and integration with the billing system. He added Utility Metering Solutions will perform a Return on Investment Analysis at the end of the project.

Councilmember Post asked about the contingency services built into the contract. Mr. Jones noted the integration is a lump sum that includes a 12-month allowance for project management which should be completed in less than 12 months.

Mr. Post explained he is concerned about contingency for software consultants. He asked if there is a cap for software development. Mr. Jones stated the integration services is a fixed price, and he pointed out the installation of water meters is time dependent. He commented staff can build liquidated damages into the contract if Utility Metering Solutions extends its project management. He pointed out the software development is a fixed cost. Mr. Post stated the contract must clearly define what “out of scope services” means.

Councilmember Miller clarified services that are out of scope must be agreed upon by both parties. Mr. Jones agreed, and he noted the company cannot perform services without prior approval. Mr. Miller clarified the contract cannot exceed the budgeted amount without coming back to Council. Mr. Jones agreed.

Thereupon, Mr. Post made a **motion** to award a contract in the amount of \$250,000 to Utility Metering Solutions for data integration and program management for the Advanced Metering Infrastructure. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller and Post, and Mses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – YADKIN PEE DEE WATER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU) Senior Engineer Jeff Jones explained the Yadkin Pee Dee Water Management Group is a collaboration of parties who use water from the Yadkin River. He noted the long range planning group considers water supply issues, quantity, and quality of water. He pointed out there has not been long-term planning for the Yadkin River. He noted it is underdeveloped when compared to the other river basins, and the group wants to conduct 50 to 100 year planning for the water supply.

Councilmember Miller asked for examples of water problems faced by other communities. Mr. Jones noted Greensboro is at the head of its river basin yet it gets its water from the Yadkin River. He explained Greensboro’s water supply comes from a reservoir making it susceptible to drought conditions. He added planning for the Catawba River forecasts a water shortfall for Charlotte and surrounding communities in the next 38 to 40 years. He pointed out the Yadkin River is located between Greensboro and Charlotte, and now is a good time to plan for its future.

Thereupon, Mr. Post made a **motion** to authorize the City Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Yadkin Pee-Dee Water Management Group. Ms. Blackwell seconded the motion. Messrs. Hardin, Miller and Post, and Mses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

UPDATE – CODE SERVICES

Development and Code Services Manager Preston Mitchell provided an update regarding Code Enforcement. He indicated when he took over as Code Services Manager four months ago, he found significant deficiencies in procedures and processes.

Mr. Mitchell explained Code Enforcement Officers are sworn to uphold and enforce the City's Nuisance, Zoning, and Housing Ordinances. He noted the Code Enforcement Department is made up of two Code Enforcement Officers, a Senior Administrative Specialist, a Code Services Coordinator, and the Code Services Manager.

Mr. Mitchell stated the City is divided into two zones and each Code Enforcement Officer patrols approximately 18 square miles divided along Innes Street. He pointed out the Code Enforcement Officers also patrol the ETJ area.

Mr. Mitchell reviewed the 2016 caseload, and he pointed out Code Enforcement has processed 1,287 cases. He indicated \$23,088.76 is being billed or liens are being placed on property for abatements that have taken place primarily during the summer months. He added the City has two contractors that staff meets with weekly to handle mowing and housing violations. He indicated when the abatement contract is assigned, the notice of violation has been issued and the compliance date has passed. He noted the contractor is required to present a signed photograph as documentation once the abatement is complete. He explained the City bills the property owner, who then has 10 days to pay the invoice before a lien is placed on the property.

Mr. Mitchell pointed out the compliance period was recently reduced from 15 days to 5 to 10 days, depending on the violation. He explained a notice of violation sets a hearing date for a housing complaint. He pointed out a housing complaint can be generated by five citizens who submit a petition to force a housing case or a Housing Inspector or Code Enforcement Office can witness a violation. He noted at the hearing, the property owner is issued findings of fact and given 90 days to bring the property into compliance for minor violations. He added if a violation poses an imminent danger, the property owner is given 48 hours to bring the property into compliance. Mr. Mitchell stated if the time frame is not met the property owner is subject to abatement or civil fines.

Mr. Mitchell noted code enforcement can be difficult in historic districts. He added boarding up a property is not always the best answer because the value of neighboring properties could be affected.

Mr. Mitchell displayed software that allows Code Enforcement Officers to update complaints while they are in the field. He pointed out Code Enforcement has found a large number of properties where the owners are deceased and the title has not transferred. He added there are a number of foreclosures in the area, and bad data makes identifying the responsible property owner difficult.

Mr. Mitchell reviewed the City's housing data:

- 14,500 total housing units
- 12,500 are occupied
- 460 are on the market
- 130 in some form of foreclosure
- Over 2,600 units in flux making it difficult to determine who controls the property

Mr. Mitchell indicated staff would like to bring a text amendment to Council for its consideration to allow staff to abate properties immediately when control or ownership cannot be determined. He added a lien will be held by Rowan County to be paid when the property title is transferred.

Mr. Mitchell noted the position of Code Services Coordinator is currently being filled, and it is anticipated the person will be in the field 60 % of the time. He added the remainder of time will be spent in the office handling case management, billing, and liens with Senior Administrative Specialist Arlette Oglesby.

Mr. Mitchell indicated community enforcement and education will be considered in the future, and he noted Code Enforcement Officers will conduct foot patrols and knock on doors to speak with citizens.

Councilmember Miller asked if the Code Services Coordinator would replace the former Code Enforcement Manager. Mr. Mitchell noted Code Services merged with Development Services shifting positions. Mr. Miller clarified the City will not hire a Code Services Coordinator and another manager because Mr. Mitchell now serves as the Code Enforcement Manager. Mr. Mitchell agreed.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell noted there are several steps associated with mowing compliance. She asked if the case must go through the entire process again once it has been abated and the grass is allowed to regrow. Mr. Mitchell noted staff must go through the steps a minimum of three times, and on the fourth violation it becomes a chronic violation. He stated from that point forward the property will be mowed and a lien filed. Ms. Blackwell asked if the property owner is considered a chronic violator for the growing season or forever. Mr. Mitchell noted the property owner is considered a chronic violator for the growing season only. Ms. Blackwell pointed out it would take most of the summer for a property owner to be considered a chronic violator. Mr. Mitchell agreed.

Ms. Blackwell then asked about the total number of boarded-up houses in the City. She pointed out last year Council approved an Ordinance that states once a home is boarded-up the property owner must register the property and submit a repair plan to staff. She asked how many plans are on file. Mr. Mitchell stated he is unaware. Ms. Blackwell noted, as liaison to the Housing Advocacy Commission (HAC), boarded-up houses is one of the top complaints she receives. She noted boarded-up houses affect neighboring property values and stigmatize the City.

Ms. Blackwell asked who is attending the North Carolina Association for Housing Code Officers. Mr. Mitchell noted Code Enforcement Officers Barksdale and Cotilla will both attend, and he added Officer Cotilla will specialize in zoning and obtain his Certified Zoning Official accreditation. He added Officer Barksdale will specialize in housing since he has 13 years of experience in the field. Ms. Blackwell pointed out the North Carolina Association for Housing Code Officers will be a great asset to the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Blackwell pointed out the reorganization of Code Services will include three Code Enforcement Officers. She indicated Council previously approved a fourth position for Code Enforcement. She asked Council to consider the City's housing stock as an economic development issue, and she stated additional staff is needed in Code Enforcement. She noted the Code Enforcement Officers have a very difficult job.

Councilmember Hardin thanked Mr. Mitchell and staff for helping the community understand the housing issues the City faces. He asked what it would take for the Code Services Department to be completely staffed. Mr. Mitchell indicated he is addressing the staffing issue with Planning and Development Services Manager Janet Gapen. He pointed out summer is the peak season for zoning, housing, and nuisance violations. He noted he would like to research similar sized communities to determine best practices. He pointed out some communities use contract services to assist Code Enforcement Officers during the summer months.

Mr. Hardin asked Assistant City Manager Zack Kyle if a vacant position in another department could be moved to Code Enforcement. Mr. Kyle noted it has been done in the past. He pointed out Ms. Oglesby moved to Code Services to assist the Code Enforcement Officers with paperwork so they can spend more time in the field. He indicated staff needs time to evaluate the changes and determine if an additional officer should be considered in the coming year's budget.

Mr. Hardin pointed out animal control is maintained by Rowan County. Mr. Mitchell noted the animal itself is handled by Rowan County, but the environment that creates the problem is handled by the City.

Mr. Hardin commented boarded-up properties negatively impact the community, and there are properties in the West End that have been boarded-up for many years. Mr. Mitchell stated many of the properties are under no control, and staff is working to determine who controls the property to mitigate the situation.

Mr. Hardin stated Code Enforcement Officers have been receptive and responsive to his concerns. He added the community must hold people accountable for their actions, and it is disappointing when property owners do not take responsibility for their property.

Mr. Miller asked if contract support could help with the Code Enforcement backlog. He requested staff bring a recommendation to Council in 30 to 60 days so it can provide the tools that Code Enforcement Officers need. He requested staff bring a plan to Council before spring to eliminate the backlog. He stated Code Enforcement has been under-staffed for too long. He commented Council must give Code Enforcement the resources and tools it needs to take care of situations as they arise.

Mr. Hardin asked if something can be done today to address Code Enforcement issues. Ms. Blackwell stated Council previously approved four positions for Code Enforcement. Mr. Kyle explained Ms. Oglesby, who works to help keep the officers in the field, is considered a Code Enforcement position. He noted staff will review the process to see if an additional Code Enforcement position should be included in the coming year's budget.

Mayor Alexander agreed Council should approve the resources Code Enforcement Officers need to serve the community.

Councilmember Post asked if the process and procedures are new. Mr. Mitchell explained the processes are not all new. He commented staff is working to ensure a proper legal trail for every case.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Housing Advocacy Commission

Upon a motion by Ms. Blackwell, seconded by Mr. Miller, and with Messrs. Hardin and Post, and Ms. Alexander voting AYE, the following appointment was made to the Housing Advocacy Commission to fill an unexpired term for a landlord:

Ms. Jayne Helms

Term Expires 03/31/18

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

There were no comments.

MAYOR 'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) **"School Tools" Campaign**

Mayor Alexander announced the City of Salisbury is partnering with Communities in Schools to collect items for its annual "School Tools" Campaign. Last year Communities in School packed more than 500 bookbags for students, and with the community's help, we hope to reach even more students this year. The types of supplies needed include bookbags/backpacks, notebook paper, pencils, crayons, colored pencils, three-ring binders and rulers. The "School Tools" Campaign kicks off August 1 and lasts through August 20. Supplies will be collected at the following locations:

- City Hall – 217 South Main Street
- Customer Service Center – 1415 South Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue
- City Office Building – 132 North Main Street
- Fire Station 1 – 514 East Innes Street

- Police Department – 130 East Liberty Street
- Public Services – 519 North Fulton Street
- Salisbury-Rowan Utilities - 1 Water Street
- City Park – 316 Lake Drive

(b) Play Ball Initiative

Mayor Alexander announced the free Play Ball Initiative will be held Saturday, August 27, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon at Catawba College's Newman park. If there is enough interest transportation from Hall Gym and the Civic Center will be offered. The event is for boys and girls aged 7 to 17 and is designed to create a renewed sense of enthusiasm for baseball and softball through a free skills clinic. This is a great opportunity to strengthen family and community bonds.

(c) Vision 2020 Plan Update

Mayor Alexander announced the City of Salisbury is accepting applications from those wishing to serve on the Steering Committee for the update to the Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan. The City is looking for volunteers who represent a diverse cross-section of the community and have different geographic, economic, generational, and social perspectives. Applications can be submitted online through the Boards and Commissions page on the City's website at www.salisburync.gov or by calling Catherine Garner in the Planning Department at 704-638-5324.

(d) Google Fiber

Councilmember Post noted the Wall Street Journal announced Google Fiber reduced the number of cities where it plans to install broadband due to the cost. He pointed out the cost of broadband affects Fibrant and other companies.

(e) Baseball/Softball Championships


Councilmember Post announced the City has two local teams playing in national championships on ESPN. He noted the Rowan Little League Girls Softball 12 and under team playing in the Little League World Series. He added the Rowan County American Legion team is playing in the National Championship.

(f) Retirement – Police Officer Lynn Foster

Councilmember Hardin announced Police Officer Lynn Foster is retiring and today is his final Council meeting. He thanked Officer Foster for his service to the City.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Blackwell seconded by Mr. Miller. All council members in attendance agreed unanimously to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.



Karen Kirks Alexander, Mayor



Myra B. Heard, City Clerk