

Salisbury, North Carolina
February 20, 2024

REGULAR MEETING

PRESENT: Mayor Karen K. Alexander, Presiding; Mayor Pro Tem Tamara Sheffield, Council Members Harry McLaughlin, David Post, and Anthony Smith; City Manager Jim Greene, Jr., City Clerk Connie B. Snyder; and City Attorney J. Graham Corriher.

ABSENT: None.

Salisbury City Council met in Council Chambers in City Hall located at 217 South Main Street. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Alexander at 6:00 p.m. A moment of silence was taken.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

RECOGNITION – FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Finance Director Wade Furches stated the Budget Team has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association for the 32nd consecutive year. He recognized Finance Manager Mark Drye, Budget Manager Tracey Keyes, Budget Analyst Kaley Sink, and Budget Analyst Shueyeng Vue for the receipt of this award for their work on the FY2024 budget.

Mr. Furches then recognized Senior Accountant Crissy McBride on her designation as a Certified Local Government Finance Officer. He explained certification is achieved through a combination of professional experience, continuing education requirements, and successful completion of four examinations in the public finance field. He noted Ms. McBride is the third Finance employee to receive this designation.

Council congratulated the Finance Department on its recognitions and thanked them for all they do to manage the City's finances. City Manager Jim Greene thanked the Finance staff for the great work they do for the City, and he pointed out the City's accomplishments start with sound financial and budgetary practices.

CONSENT AGENDA

(a) **Minutes**

Approve Minutes of the regular meetings of February 6, 2024.

(b) **Budget Ordinance Amendment – Parks and Recreation Donation**

Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2023-2024 budget in the amount of \$4,000 to appropriate a donation related to the Hall Gym Recreation Program.

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

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 32 at Page No. 21, and is known as Ordinance 2024-10)

(c) **Budget Ordinance Amendment – Insurance Proceeds**

Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2023-2024 budget in the amount of \$8,500 to appropriate insurance proceeds from an accident claim at Fire Station 4.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2023-2024 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE INSURANCE CLAIM PROCEEDS FOR FIRE STATION 4.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 32 at Page No. 22, and is known as Ordinance 2024-11.)

(d) **Budget Ordinance Amendment – Police Department**

Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2023-2024 budget in the amount of \$10,050 to appropriate \$10,000 in grant funds from the Blanche and Julian Robertson Foundation for the 2023 BlockWork event and a \$50 donation for the Dixonville Cemetery Memorial.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2023-2024 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE DONATIONS.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 32 at Page No. 23, and is known as Ordinance 2024-12.)

(e) Budget Ordinance Amendment – Public Arts Commission

Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2023-2024 budget in the amount of \$18,480 to appropriate revenue for the Public Arts Commission.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2023-2024 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE REVENUE FOR THE PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 32 at Page No. 24, and is known as Ordinance 2024-13.)

(f) Budget Ordinance Amendment – Property Tax Revenue

Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2023-2024 budget in the amount of \$700,000 to appropriate additional property tax revenue.

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2023-2024 BUDGET ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO APPROPRIATE PROPERTY TAX REVENUE.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 32 at Page No. 25-26, and is known as Ordinance 2024-14.)

(g) 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 rights-of-way of Statesville Boulevard and Holly Avenue per Section 11-24(27) of the City Code and subject to NCDOT approval.

(h) Right-of-Way Encroachment – Conterra

Approve a right-of-way encroachment for the installation of underground facilities by Conterra within the rights-of-way of West Innes Street, Mahaley Avenue, North Park Drive, Statesville Boulevard, Yost Street, and Summit Avenue per Section 11-24(27) of the City Code and subject to NCDOT approval.

(i) Contract – Martin Starnes and Associates, CPA

Award a contract to Martin Starnes and Associates, CPA's in the amount of \$45,100 for auditing services for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

(j) Agreement – Dependable Development, Inc.

Authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with Dependable Development, Inc. for the Shay Crossing Phase 4 sewer infrastructure project. The developer will pay the cost of the improvements estimated to total \$77,000.

(k) Contract Extension – Trammell Crow Company

Approve a one-year contract extension on an economic development incentive grant with Trammell Crow Company. The anticipated investment will remain the same and the new completion date will be January 1, 2026.

(l) Voluntary Annexation – Woodleaf Road

Receive the Certificate of Sufficiency for the voluntary annexation of 58.07 acres located on Woodleaf Road, Tax Map 328 Parcels 050, 066 and 110 and adopt a Resolution setting the date of the public hearing for March 19, 2024.

RESOLUTION SETTING DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON QUESTION OF THE ANNEXATION OF WOODLEAF ROAD, PARCELS 328 050, 328 066, AND 328 110 PURSUANT TO G.S. 160A-58.1.

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 17 at Page No. 12-14, and is known as Resolution 2024-09.)

(m) Sale of Garbage Truck

Adopt a Resolution declaring specific equipment as surplus and authorize the sale of a 2015 Freightliner M2 106 garbage truck on Govdeals.com

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SALE OF SURPLUS PROPERTY WITH POTENTIAL VALUE OF \$30,000 OR MORE

(The above Resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book No. 17 at Page No. 15, and is known as Resolution 2024-10.)

Councilmember McLaughlin referenced item 6j - Authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with Dependable Development, Inc. for the Shay Crossing Phase 4 sewer infrastructure project. He asked who will be responsible if the cost of the improvements is over \$77,000. Salisbury-Rowan Utilities Director Jim Behmer explained the request is for the Crane Creek sewer lift station and equal funding from multiple developers will be combined to improve capacity at the lift station.

Councilmember Post referenced Item 6f - Adopt a budget Ordinance amendment to the FY2023-2024 budget in the amount of \$700,000 to appropriate additional property tax revenue, and he asked if the extra funding is from the property tax revaluation or additional growth. Finance Director Wade Furches explained some of the additional property tax revenue will come from

growth, but the majority can be attributed to the property tax revaluation.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Alexander opened the floor to receive public comments.

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

LAND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT MAP AMENDMENT – LINCOLNTON ROAD

Senior Planner Victoria Bailiff addressed Council regarding a Land Development District map amendment to rezone one parcel, approximately 0.113 acres, located at the intersection of Ludwick Heights Lane and Lincolnton Road from General Residential (GR-6) and Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMX) to NMX. She stated the petitioner is Sekeithia Moye, and she noted the parcel is split-zoned between GR6 and NMX. She reviewed the surrounding zoning, and she pointed out adjacent residential properties to the northeast and west of the parcel.

Ms. Bailiff explained the request before Council is a general request that does not include conditions or a site plan. She reviewed the permitted uses, and she pointed out both GR and NMX permit residential uses, but NMX also allows non-residential uses. She referenced the Future Land Use Map which designates the area as multifamily community.

Ms. Bailiff noted the parcel has water and sewer utility lines running through it and would require 15-foot easements on both sides of each utility line. She pointed out the easements take up the majority of the parcel and would prohibit the property owner from building on the site. She explained the parcel is not suited for outdoor recreational facilities due to the rights-of-way which leaves a parking lot as the only primary use. She indicated the parcel could be paved with a hold harmless agreement, but staff does not believe that a parking lot would fit within the multifamily community place type. She added staff finds that the requested rezoning is not consistent with Forward 2040 based on Policies 5.5.3 and Policy 4.6.11.

Ms. Bailiff stated Planning Board considered the request at its January 23, 2024 meeting and there was discussion regarding impacts to adjacent properties, concerns over permitted uses within the NMX district, and the compatibility with the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan. She stated Planning Board recommended denial of the request stating it was not consistent with the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan and was not reasonable or in the public interest due to the incompatibility of the proposed uses in the existing neighborhood.

Councilmember McLaughlin asked if anything can be built on the parcel with GR-6 zoning. Ms. Bailiff explained the property owner must adhere to the utility line requirements which would leave a narrow strip of approximately six or seven feet in the middle of the parcel. She added, regardless of the zoning, a structure cannot be built on the parcel, and she pointed out NMX zoning would allow the parcel to be used as a parking lot. She noted if the rezoning request was approved once the landscaping buffers and parking requirements were met very few parking spaces would be allowed.

Ms. Bailiff noted Livingstone College owns the adjacent parcel and representatives attended the Planning Board meeting to voice the opposition to the request. Mayor Alexander added Planning Board was unanimous in their denial.

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

Mr. Dan Poteat stated he does not support the proposed rezoning as it would be an intrusion into the neighborhood. He asked Council to deny the request.

Ms. Sekeithia Moye stated she reached out to Livingstone College to see if the College would be interested in the property, and she noted their property, which is adjacent to her parcel, is abandoned. She indicated she has property that cannot be developed, and she questioned what can be done on the site.

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

Councilmember Post stated the City Council hereby finds and determines that the Ordinance amending the Land Development District Map of the City of Salisbury, North Carolina as proposed is not reasonable because it does not fit within the nature of the surrounding and adjacent properties, is incompatible with the zoning of adjacent properties, is not consistent with the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan policies 5.5.3 and 4.6.11, is not in the public interest, and is not consistent with the overall goals and policies of the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, Mr. Post made a **motion** to deny the request. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION – 285 PEACH ORCHARD LANE

Planning and Neighborhoods Director Hannah Jacobson asked Council to consider adopting an Ordinance to extend the corporate limits of the City of Salisbury, North Carolina to include 11.0855 acres on Tax Map 407B Parcel 043 located at 285 Peach Orchard Lane.

Ms. Jacobson stated the parcel is a satellite annexation. She explained the parcel is not within the City's current Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) but is within its growth area. She noted a rezoning case does not accompany the annexation, but an application has been submitted to the Land and Development Services Department to rezone the property to Light Industrial zoning. She explained the application is a general-use rezoning, so there are no site-specific plans

to accompany the request, but the applicants propose using the land as a contractor's yard for storage.

Ms. Jacobson noted the zoning request will be brought to Planning Board at its February 27, 2024 meeting for its consideration. She added the expected tax revenue for the site is \$3,385, she pointed out the City would incur additional costs for police and fire services however, there are no objections to this annexation from City departments.

Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing after due notice to receive comments regarding the proposed voluntary annexation of 285 Peach Orchard Lane.

Mr. Jason Dolan, applicant and representative of Timmons Group spoke in favor of the annexation.

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

Thereupon, Councilmember Post made a **motion** to adopt an Ordinance to extend the corporate limits of the City of Salisbury, North Carolina to include 11.0855 acres on Tax Map 407B Parcel 043 located at 285 Peach Orchard Lane effective February 20, 2024. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

ORDINANCE TO EXTEND THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA TO INCLUDE 11.0855 ACRES ON TAX MAP 407B PARCEL 043 LOCATED AT 285 PEACH ORCHARD LANE EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 20, 2024.

(The above Ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book No. 32 at Page No. 27-28, and is known as Ordinance 2024-15.)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM FUNDS

Planning and Neighborhoods Director Hannah Jacobson and Planner Malikia Cherubala addressed Council regarding Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program funds received from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Ms. Cherubala stated for 2024-2025, staff anticipates receiving \$560,000 in CDBG funds. She noted the 2020-2024 Action Plan goals include increasing the supply of affordable housing, improving public facilities and infrastructure, providing homeownership opportunities, assisting public service agencies, promoting business growth and a robust workforce, affirmatively furthering fair housing and effectively planning and administering programs.

Ms. Cherubala stated public service support for the 2024-2025 program year will include funding non-profit agencies by providing support to low-to-moderate income individuals and families. She explained the City reserves 15% of the total allocation which provides an opportunity to award \$5,000 to \$10,000 grants depending on the number of applicants. She noted previously

due to supplemental CARES Act Funds, the City could support more agencies than the upcoming budget will allow.

Ms. Cherubala noted staff will evaluate the application process and conduct a public survey to determine program focus areas. She stated staff will postpone the application process until the focus areas are determined. She provided an action plan timeline:

- February 20, 2024 – Public Hearing
- March 19, 2024 – Presentation of the draft Annual Action Plan
- March 19, 2024 through April 19, 2024 – 30-day public comment period
- April 1, 2024 – Public Input Meeting
- May 7, 2024 – City Council to consider approval of the Annual Action Plan
 - Tentative open applications for public service agencies

Ms. Cherubala asked Council to hold a public hearing to amend the 2022-2023 Action Plan. She stated staff is proposing to reallocate \$45,000 in program funds that resulted from the cancellation of projects to extend the Memorial Park Greenway to Best Street. She noted amending the 2022-2023 Action Plan will allow the project to be paid in full using CDBG funds. She added staff is also recommending amending the 2020-2021 Action Plan to reallocate \$60,000 of CDBG funds from small business assistance to homelessness prevention coordination.

Councilmember Smith asked how staff will receive public input regarding CDBG priorities for 2024-2025. Ms. Jacobson noted staff plans to engage the public through community surveys, neighborhood meetings, and social media.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield asked if delaying the application process will impact CDBG grant deadlines. Ms. Jacobson stated delaying the application process will not impact CDBG deadlines.

Mayor Alexander convened a public hearing after due notice to receive comments regarding the use of CDBG program funds.

Rowan Helping Ministries (RHM) Grant Writer Leslie Cabagnet stated CDBG funding supports case managers and the Street Outreach Program. She added there are 203 sheltered and unsheltered individuals living in Rowan County and in the past fiscal year RHM provided shelter services to 727 men, women, and children with 287 of the sheltered guests obtaining permanent housing.

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

CONTRACT – SHELTER MINISTRIES OF ROWAN COUNTY

Planning and Neighborhoods Director Hannah Jacobson asked Council to consider authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with Shelter Ministries of Rowan County in the amount of \$487,247 to construct 10 units of permanent supportive housing with funds available through the HOME Investment Partnership American Rescue Plan Program (HOME-ARP).

Ms. Jacobson explained the funding has been made available through the American Rescue Plan and as a member of the Cabarrus/Iredell/Rowan HOME Consortium, Salisbury is eligible for \$525,940 in HOME-ARP funding. She stated \$487,247 is available for project funds and the remaining funds are available for administration. She added staff has worked closely with its partners at the HOME Consortium, including Rowan County, to explore funding opportunities.

Ms. Jacobson stated staff's recommendation is to award the funds to Shelter Ministries of Rowan County to help build their First Horizon's Community, which would include 10 units of permanent supportive housing. She displayed a map of the area, and she indicated the community will be located on East Council and North Shaver Streets. She added the project budget is \$2.933 million, and she stated Rowan Helping Ministries was awarded \$1.63 million from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency and is requesting \$738,812 from Rowan County and \$487,247 from the City.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract with Shelter Ministries of Rowan County in the amount of \$487,247 to construct 10 units of permanent supportive housing with funds available through the HOME-ARP Program. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

Councilmember Post asked how long people can reside in the proposed housing development. Rowan Helping Ministries Director Ms. Kyna Grubb stated the community would provide permanent supportive housing and community members could live there permanently.

PANHANDLING

City Attorney Graham Corriher asked Council to consider approving the first reading of Ordinance revisions related to panhandling. He explained the Ordinance would require two readings since it has criminal penalties and would be effective after Council approves the second reading.

Mr. Corriher referenced the 100-foot rule proposed in the Ordinance revision, and he explained the rule prohibits engaging with a vehicle and standing on a median within 100 feet of high-traffic, high-collision roads identified by the Police Department. He stated the rule does not prohibit anyone from standing on the side of high-traffic, high-collision roads.

Mayor Alexander asked if educational signs will be posted near the high-traffic and high-collision roads. Mr. Corriher stated the educational signs will be placed in areas staff believes

would be the most effective and where the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will allow.

Mayor Alexander asked if the educational signs would be available to private property owners. Mr. Corriher noted Council's approval is needed to amend the fee schedule to allow private property owners to purchase signs.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked Mr. Corriher for his work on the Ordinance revisions, and she added the City is not criminalizing poverty and homelessness but trying to promote public safety. Councilmember Smith added the Ordinance is needed for public safety in high-traffic, high-collision roads.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to Ordinance Amending Chapter 22, Article I, of the Code of the City of Salisbury, relating to streets and sidewalks. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

** It will be necessary to have a second reading on the above Ordinance.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to an addition to the City's fee schedule to include \$60 for the purchase of an educational sign and \$45 for the purchase of the sign post. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

Councilmember McLaughlin left the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

DOWNTOWN PARKING PILOT PROGRAM

Downtown Development Director Sada Troutman provided an update on the Downtown Parking Pilot Program. She asked Council to consider approving an additional year of the program and adding additional parking in the Wells Fargo parking lot.

Ms. Troutman noted two of the three parking lots in the pilot program had 100% of the parking spaces leased in less than six minutes. She added the parking spaces have been used consistently with one incident where parking spaces were used without a parking permit. She added the parking program brought in \$6,300 of revenue to the City with 15 parking spaces leased at a cost of \$35 a month per parking space.

Ms. Troutman stated adding an additional year to the program would include Downtown Development staff continuing to handle permits and applications. She added the program would be implemented on a first come, first serve basis and proof of downtown residency, property ownership, or employment would be required to lease a parking space.

Ms. Troutman noted staff is proposing to lease 25 parking spaces across two parking lots. She added staff recommends eliminating the City Office Building parking lot since none of the parking spaces were leased. She commented staff is proposing to keep five parking spaces in the

Central City lot and to increase the number of parking spaces in the Wells Fargo parking lot to 15. She added the remaining parking spaces in the Wells Fargo parking lot are unrestricted and open to the public. She indicated the remaining parking spaces in the Central City lot are open to the public but are limited to two-hour parking. She noted that the proposed 25 parking spaces comprise less than 5% of the 535 City-owned off-street parking spaces.

Ms. Troutman stated a Downtown Liaison will be hired and trained in parking enforcement and will have software to track parking violations and repeat offenders. She added Finance and Police Department staff have looked at the process to collect past due fines and will bring that proposal to Council for its consideration.

Mayor Alexander congratulated staff on the success of the program.

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to approve an additional year of the Downtown Salisbury Parking Pilot Program and approve additional parking spaces to lease. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, and Councilmembers Post and Smith voted AYE. (4-0)

PINK GRANTE STRUCTURE AT 219 EAST INNES STREET

Planning and Neighborhoods Director Hannah Jacobson provided an update regarding the pink granite located at 219 East Innes Street. She pointed Downtown Properties, LLC owns Bankett Station located at 201 East Innes Street which is the former location of a pink granite filling station. She added Downtown properties LLC also owns 211 East Innes Street which is a warehouse being rehabilitated for residential upfit and the parking lot at 219 East Inness where the pink granite is currently stored. She displayed photographs of each property, and she reviewed an event timeline:

- September 2016 the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approved the demolition with a 365-day delay
- During the 365-day negotiation period Downtown Properties, LLC acquired the warehouse and the parking lot
- November 2017 – Council adopts an Ordinance for demolition with no discussion of the intent to reuse the pink granite and no formal or enforceable agreement
- January 2018 – Demolition permit was issued
- March 2018 – HPC approved the construction at 201 East Innes Street which was completed fall 2021
- May 2022 –HPC approves new construction using the pink granite at 219 East Innes Street
- May 2022 – Pre-application meeting with Land and Development Services to initiate site plan review; received feedback but no formal application has been submitted

Downtown Development Director Sada Troutman pointed out staff met with the property owners who have worked with three different groups regarding proposals for the site over the past five years. She added the property owner is working with local parties regarding a plan that

incorporates the site as well as adjacent sites with a focus on connectivity and engagement with the Lee Street and Innes Street corridors. She noted the proposal is in the early stages, and the property owner does not wish to share additional details at this time.

Ms. Troutman noted the property owners plan to wrap the fence at 219 East Innes Street with renderings of the plan for the site and will continue to keep the site clear and mowed. She added Code Services Manager Michael Cotilla reached out to the property owner to explain the code enforcement process.

Ms. Jacobson clarified the City does not have a formal agreement it can enforce regarding the pink granite and its reuse in the redevelopment of the site. She added the property owners have continued pursuing opportunities for the property and are committed to improving the appearance of the site.

Councilmember Post pointed out it may be hard to find a tenant before a building is in place. Mayor Alexander suggested the pink granite could be incorporated into a new building that would not be a replica of the gas station. Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield stated the City can enforce safety and appearance, and she pointed out the location has looked bad for too long.

City Manager Jim and Council thanked Ms. Jacobson and Ms. Troutman for their work to research the information regarding the pink granite.

ROCO ALERT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Communications Director Linda McElroy explained RoCo Alerts is a mass notification system used to keep residents up to date in real-time regarding emergency and non-emergency situations. She added the service is free and provides residents options to receive their messages via text or email. She reviewed the history of RoCo Alerts, and she indicated staff first explored a mass notification system in 2016. She explained the City and County partnered in 2020 on a notification system, and she explained the City pays a portion of the County's Everbridge contract.

Ms. McElroy commented in the initial training the administrators were City Communications, Rowan County Emergency Management, Salisbury Fire Department and Public Works, and further training now includes the Salisbury-Rowan Utilities and Police Department. She pointed out appropriate alerts include:

- Severe, inclement weather alerts
- Heavily-traveled road closures
- Water main breaks or other losses of water
- Hazardous materials leak
- Missing persons
- Power outages
- Criminal activity – or active shooter
- Large-scale solid waste collection delay

Ms. McElroy noted inappropriate alerts include:

- One-lane closures on less-traveled side streets
- Temporary lane closures for one hour or less such as pothole repair
- Advertisements of private events unassociated with the City or County
- Minor traffic signal repair not related to a power outage or traffic incident

Ms. McElroy pointed out citizens are encouraged to download the Everbridge app, and she added alerts are delivered via text message, but also include telephone calls to landlines and mobile devices, email, and teletype machines. She noted other uses include internal alerts for City and County employees, and she added the police tipping feature that was used with Nixle is still active through the Everbridge app. She explained Cheerwine Festival attendees can opt-in for festival information.

Mayor Alexander asked if Nixle participants are automatically enrolled in RoCo Alerts. Ms. McElroy agreed, and she added participants should not receive duplicate messages. She explained how to sign up for the RoCo alerts, and she pointed out if someone drives into an area that has an alert they will receive the message.

City Manager Jim Greene noted information about RoCo Alerts and how to sign up for the service will be included in the next *Lamplighter*. Ms. McElroy noted there is work to be done to get the information out to the public and have citizens sign up for the service. She noted even though the numbers are low staff has found the messages spread through word of mouth communication.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked staff for providing clarity regarding the alerts.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

(a) Microtransit Update

City Manager Jim Greene noted Council asked about the City of Gastonia approving its microtransit program. He asked Deputy City Manager Richard White and Transit Director Rodney Harrison to provide an update on the City's transition to a microtransit program.

Deputy City Manager Richard White pointed out the Microtransit Pilot Program grant was approved by the state and is awaiting federal approval, which may take two to three months. He indicated once the approvals are complete the City should receive its funding and be able to proceed with its Microtransit Pilot Program in June or July. He added it could take up to nine months to implement the program.

Mr. White reviewed the launch process and the shared responsibility between the City and the vendor once it is selected. He noted staff has developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) and once the grant funds are received staff will release the RFP and begin the launch process.

Mr. Greene pointed out Gastonia did not use grant funding to proceed with its microtransit program. Mr. White explained Gastonia is implementing its service city-wide using its state and federal funding. He noted in their first year Gastonia anticipates spending \$1.6 million of their own funds plus an additional \$1 million to purchase 14 vehicles. He added their implementation took approximately six months. He added the City anticipates its service will begin on July 1, 2024 with a contracting company called Via which is responsible for the dispatch, call center and fiber management. He added the City will maintain its fleet for at least a year and will retain ADA paratransit during this time.

Councilmember Post noted Gastonia has chosen to implement its program city-wide for one year, but plans to keep its buses in case they need them. Mr. White agreed. Mr. Post commented he likes that approach.

(b) Budget

City Manager Jim Greene suggested Council meet on March 14, 2024 for a budget presentation and then again on March 21, 2024 prior to the Council meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield indicated she liked receiving information in sections last year instead of all at one time. Mr. Greene noted he plans to do the same this year.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Post thanked staff for the great work it does for the City. He then thanked Code Enforcement Manager Michael Cotilla for all he does including a recent clean up at an unsheltered area. City Manager Jim Greene noted staff addressing issues with the unsheltered population also includes Homeless Advocate Dennis Rivers and Public Works Director Chris Tester who do an outstanding job providing assistance to individuals and cleaning up the areas.

MAYOR PRO TEM'S COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield thanked the Finance Department for their great work to receive the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for 32 consecutive years. She then thanked Ms. Allison Summit from Rowan County Emergency Services for being a part of the RoCo Alerts conversation, and she noted she appreciates the partnership between the County and the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield commended staff on the partnership with First Horizon community, and she thanked staff for all it does for the City.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

(a) Neighborhood Beatification Grant

Mayor Alexander announced the Community Appearance Commission invites Salisbury neighborhoods to apply for a Neighborhood Beautification Grant. Selected neighborhood will receive funding to support implementing a neighborhood improvement project. The maximum award is \$2,500. There is no fee to apply and grant applications will be accepted through Friday, March 1, 2024. For additional information please call (704) 638-5235.

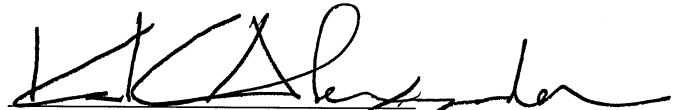
(b) Cultivating Community Conversations

Mayor Alexander announced the Salisbury Youth Council will partner with the Police Department to host a Cultivating Community Conversation for local youth on Tuesday, February 27th at 5:00 p.m. at City Park Recreation Center. Local businesses are invited to attend a second Cultivating Community Conversation Thursday, February 28th at 8:30 a.m. at the Salisbury Police Department. For additional information please call (704) 638-5218.

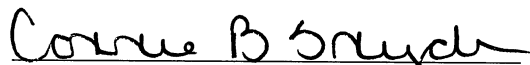
ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield and Councilmembers Post and Smith voted AYE. (4-0)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.



Karen Alexander, Mayor



Connie B. Snyder, City Clerk