

July 22, 2024

The City Council of the City of Rocky Mount met this day in a regular session scheduled for 4:00 p.m. in the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building with Mayor C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr. presiding.

Councilmembers present: André D. Knight, Reuben C. Blackwell, IV, Richard Joyner, T.J. Walker, Lige Daughtridge, Tom Harris and Jabaris Walker.

Staff present: Keith Rogers Jr., City Manager; Kim Batts, City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Nyki Hill, Assistant City Manager; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget Evaluation and Development; Emilie Pinkston, Director of the Department of Development Services; Darvin Moore, Fire Chief; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Grant Roberson, Communications Manager; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Kream Mosley, Deputy City Clerk; Monica Brantley, Deputy City Clerk and Colin McGrath, Interim City Attorney.

Security Officers: Sergeant Chris Williams, and Senior Police Officer Shawn Battle.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and asked that all in attendance keep Trace Christman's family in their thoughts and prayers following his untimely death this past Sunday afternoon. He stated that Trace was known for his love of family, his dedication to hard work, and his thriving desire to learn every day. He continued stating Trace made an everlasting impact on those who knew him and this great City, may his memory live on. He requested all in attendance to stand for a moment of silence.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Jabaris Walker, and unanimously carried that the minutes of the following City Council meetings be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting:

- A. Regular scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held April 8, 2024
- B. Regular scheduled City Council meeting held April 8, 2024

The minutes of the Regular Rescheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held April 8, 2024 are as follows:

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2024, AT 5:00 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING WITH MAYOR PRO TEM T.J. DAUGHTRIDGE PRESIDING:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lige Daughtridge, Mayor Pro Tem
 André D. Knight
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
 Richard Joyner
 T.J. Walker

STAFF PRESENT:

Keith Rogers, Jr.
 Kim Batts
 Robert Hassell
 Stephanie Taylor
 Mabel Taylor

Tom Harris
Jabaris Walker

Others Present:
Donna King M&L Associates

Ken Hunter
Elton Daniels
Nyki Hill
Monica Brantley
Richard J. Rose

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtridge called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

By consensus Councilmember T.J. Walker will continue to serve as the NCLM delegate. City Manager Rogers called Stephanie Taylor, Community Development Administrator, to introduce the consultant who would be making a presentation.

CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT AND DOWN EAST HOME CONSORTIUM - Stephanie Taylor/Donna King

Stephanie Taylor introduced Donna King Senior Project Manager at M & L Associates. She stated that M&L works with The City to create plans for the Department of Housing and Development. She said that Ms. King would be presenting the 2024 to 2026 3-year Consolidated Plan and 2024 Annual Action Plan.

Ms. King stated that she would present the consultations that they went through as well as the different components of the Consolidated and Annual Action Plan.

What is a Three-Year Consolidated Plan?

- Required to receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME investment Partnership (HOME) entitlement funds on an annual basis.
- Covers the period: July 1, 2024, thru June 30, 2027
- Components:
 - Stakeholder Consultation (Public Agencies, Nonprofit Service Organizations, Residents, Homeless Assistance Organizations, Public Housing Authority, etc.)
 - Housing and Homeless Needs Assessment
 - Housing Market Analysis
 - Strategic Plan - Local Priorities
 - Annual Action Plan - Proposed Activities for Program Year 2024 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)

Community Outreach

Community Comments:

- **Affordable Housing** is considered the highest priority need in the community.
 - Housing rehabilitation to help low-income families maintain their home
 - Down payment assistance to help make homeownership more affordable
- **Public Services** are needed to provide shelter/supportive services for person experiencing homelessness, and services that may help them to secure housing affordable at their income level.
- **Reduce blighted conditions** resulting from vacant/deteriorated structures in neighborhoods.

Councilmember Joyner stated he hoped that the communities' priorities would be reflected in the budget.

Summary of Goals

Consolidated Plan Goals:

- To provide decent housing by improving the quality and supply of affordable housing.
- To provide a suitable living environment.

- To increase access to public services.
- Reduce blighted conditions resulting from vacant/deteriorated structures in neighborhoods.
- Create economic opportunities that promote financial self-sufficiency.

Priority Needs

Priority Housing and Community Development Needs:

- Increase access and improve quality of Affordable Housing
- Eliminate Slum/Blighting Influences
- Improve Public Facilities and Infrastructure
- Expand Public Services
- Economic Development
- Planning and Administration

HOME and CDBG Estimated Resources for 2024

- Each year, the City of Rocky Mount receives Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and the Down East HOME Consortium (DEHC) receives HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- The grants are non-competitive entitlement funds allocated by HUD based upon a formula which considers community size, demographics, and housing characteristics.

Program	Anticipated Annual Allocation*
Rocky Mount CDBG	\$536,901
DEHC HOME	\$464,399

*Funding amounts are estimated based on FY 2023 allocations.

CDBG Expenditures

City of Rocky Mount Proposed Activities for FY 2024:

- Single family housing rehabilitation
- Homebuyer Assistance
- Section 108 loan repayment
- Public services
- Planning and Administration

CDBG Proposed Budgets

Project	2024 CDBG Allocation
Administration (20%)	\$107,380
Section 108 Loan	\$90,128
Public Service (15%)	\$80,535
Homebuyer Assistance	\$125,00
Homeowner Rehabilitation	\$133,858
Total	\$536,901

Councilmember Blackwell asked Ms. King to explain the Public Service category.

Ms. King replied that Public Service funds could be used for several things and gave the following examples:

- Job training
- Direct assistance for people who are experiencing homelessness
- Supporting shelter operation costs
- Educational programs

Councilmember Blackwell asked if Homebuyer Assistance was for downpayments.

Ms. King responded that it could be used for down payments as well as closing costs. She stated that the CDBG limits the amount to 50% of what the lender requires as a downpayment.

Councilmember Blackwell inquired if The City currently partners with another organizations.

Stephanie Taylor replied that The City collaborates with The Rocky Mount Housing Authority.

Councilmember Blackwell asked how many people have been helped in the last year.

Ms. Taylor stated that they have not closed on any loans since July 2023.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if funds are carried over.

Ms. Taylor responded yes if the funds were not used.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if there would be \$250,000 available July 1st of this year.

Ms. Taylor stated that there was \$100,000 last year and the budget was increased by \$25,000, so it should be \$225,000.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if The City was retooling the collaboration with The Housing Authority.

Ms. Taylor replied that they will be working to revamp the program.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if the program is open to everyone or if Housing Authority renters are moving to ownership.

Ms. Taylor stated that she believed the individuals go through the Housing counseling course and then can access the funding. She wasn't sure if they were current residents or those resident from the City of Rocky Mount.

Ms. King responded that it's not exclusive to their public housing residents and open to the community. She said that the Housing Authority has their own program as well and can provide vouchers for their residents.

Councilmember Harris asked if any of the community engagements were conducted with local builders and realtors to get their perspective.

Ms. King said that the announcements were made publicly, and she doesn't believe that the targeted emails included public partnerships. She stated that there were some construction representatives and private contractors.

2024 Proposed HOME Budget

- Rocky Mount serves as the Lead Entity for the Down East HOME Consortium, a partnership of 9 jurisdictions in Nash and Edgecombe Counties.
- The DEHC will allocate HOME funding to the following activities (Note: funding amounts and percentages are estimated based on the 2023 HOME allocation)

	Project Name	Funding Amount
1	HOME Program Administration (10%)	\$46,439
2	HOME Rocky Mount HOME - Scattered Site Housing Rehabilitation	\$218,267
3	HOME Community Housing Development Organization Set Aside (15% minimum)	\$69,660
4	HOME Edgecombe County, Conetoe, Pinetops, and Princeville Scattered Site Housing Rehabilitation	\$92,880
5	HOME DEHC Participating Jurisdictions: Spring	\$18,577

	Hope, Middlesex, and Whitakers Scattered Site Housing Rehabilitation	
6	HOME DEHC participating Jurisdiction: Sharpsburg	\$18,576

Schedule for Public Process

Next Steps in the Citizen Participation Process:

- March 27, 2024 - April 27, 2024: Public Display and Comment period
- April 1, 2024: Edgecombe County Board of Commissioners Presentation
- April 8, 2024: Presentation to Rocky Mount City Council Committee of the Whole
- April 22, 2024: Public Hearing at Rocky Mount City Council
- May 13, 2024: Rocky Mount City Council Meeting to Approve Plan
- May 15, 2024: Submission of Plans to HUD (or other date as designated by HUD)
- July 1, 2024: Program Year Begins

Councilmember Joyner asked if they start taking applications on July 1.

Mabel Taylor-Jones responded that a date hasn't been set, they will decide on a program and start sometime in July 2024.

Councilmember Knight asked how much of the 1.5 million American Rescue Plan Act funds had been spent towards affordable housing.

Ms. King asked if he was referring to the Home American Rescue Plan. She said that those activities haven't started yet and the deadline to spend those funds is 2030.

Councilmember Knight asked which program they thought would launch in July, the Urgent Repair Program, Housing Repair or Workforce Housing Repair.

Ms. Taylor replied that state funds are being received for the Urgent Repair Program and the application period must open in July. She said that there is no set date for the Housing Repair Program. Ms. Taylor stated that applications from 2022/2023 are currently being processed and the priority is to get those completed. She said that they don't want to create a backlog of applicants applying for the program.

Councilmember Knight asked if the housing rehab matching rebate will still be offered. He said that last year there was a waiting list and people were being turned away.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that the backlog is being worked on.

Ms. Taylor replied that they are working on the Urgent Repair, Housing Repair program, Housing Matching Rebate, and Workforce housing applicants in addition to applicants who applied for the Home Program. She said that they are assisting homeowners who applied for all those programs.

Councilmember Blackwell asked Ms. King if what was designated for homelessness wasn't ARP funds.

Ms. King said that the Home ARP is a special allotment of funds.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if she was referring to a Home ARP through HUD and not the full assistance received from ARP.

Ms. King responded that she did not know if other funds that were in the rescue plan were specific to housing. She said that for the Home ARP program grantees that received home funds were provided additional ARP funds to address homelessness as a result of Covid.

Councilmember Knight asked how much of the funds were still available.

Ms. Taylor stated that none of the Home ARP funds have been spent.

Ms. King said that because it's a new program HUD will require policies and procedures to be in place before moving forward.

Councilmember Harris asked what had been accomplished from last year's goals that were approved in the plan.

Ms. King said that information would be available in the Consolidated Annual Reporting document for the activities that go through to June. She stated that she could provide the accomplishments for the first two years of the plan.

Councilmember Harris asked if money was not expended this year would roll over and if it was a continuous roll over.

Ms. King said yes.

Councilmember Harris asked when HUD would say no more money.

Ms. King replied that currently for the Community Development Block Grant Program HUD requires that you can have no more than one and a half times your annual allocation on your books. She said that HUD will run a report at the beginning of May to see how much money The City of Rocky Mount still has in their line of credit. She said for Home Funds expenditure deadlines are supposed to be 4 years. She stated that for CDBG grants you can theoretically spend funds from 15 years because it's not an annual threshold. She said that Public Services and Administrative cap funds will be extended for a minimum of 2 years from the time that they're awarded. Ms. King said that there are actual limits, so if the funds are being spent in the subsequent year make sure that you aren't going over the amount that was previously approved.

Councilmember Blackwell said that it would be wonderful to see how the existing programs are performing, along with any balances that exist in each line item. In addition to the number of people on the waiting list per program.

Councilmember Blackwell asked for clarity on Home ARP. He inquired if it was the allocation that the Council was notified about for several million dollars.

Ms. King replied that those are separate funds.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if there was additional money from Home ARP.

Ms. King said that the Home ARP planning process included extensive outreach. She stated that those allocation plans have been sent to HUD and it's her understanding that they have been approved. She will provide a copy of the ARP plan and that may help with the details of the process that was followed with the stakeholder consultation.

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtridge asked for clarification on the ARP funding along with statistics for the programs.

Councilmember Knight shared that on July 11, 2022, Council appointed \$1.5 of the \$3 million ARP funds to be spent over 3 consecutive fiscal years. With \$500,000 each fiscal year for the following and the remaining \$1.5 being spent on acquisition.

- \$225,000 Community wealth building,
- \$100,000 Down Payment Assistance Program

- \$50,000 Urgent Repair
- \$50,000 Housing Repair
- \$50,000 Workforce Housing
- \$25,000 Housing Rehab Matching Rebate

He asked how much of what The Council adopted had been spent on those approved initiatives.

Councilmember Knight clarified that Ms. King was discussing Home ARP funds and he was referencing The American Rescue Fund. He asked for an update on both.

Ms. King said that a copy of the most recent CAPER (Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report) for the HUD funds could be provided.

Councilmember Knight asked City Manager Rogers where does monies that aren't spent for programs the Council approves go.

Keith Rogers stated that he would like as part of an upcoming work session to provide an update of what funds have been spent. He said at that time they can then delineate the portion that is general funds versus the federal funds. He stated that in many instances unspent funds that were allocated would be carried forward. He feels it would be better to see what has been done, what remains, and which pots they came out of.

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtridge asked that The Manager provide a written copy in advance so that Council would have the opportunity to review and have some productive questions.

Councilmember Joyner asked if people on the waiting list would be contacted.

Ms. Taylor replied that there is no waiting list. She said that when the application period opens it will be posted and it's first come first served.

Councilmember Joyner inquired about the people who weren't served in the last process.

Ms. Taylor answered that they would have to reapply. She said that they are currently assisting those applicants who applied and qualified.

Councilmember Harris asked if any of those applicants were approved last year.

Ms. Taylor said that they were applicants approved for each program last year. She stated that they are working through the process, contracts have been signed and work has started on the homes.

Councilmember Joyner stated that he had people from his ward who were approved but money wasn't available and asked if they would have to reapply.

Ms. Taylor said that they would have to apply again if they did not get assistance.

Councilmember Joyner stated that people thought there was a waiting list and asked how they would know it's necessary to reapply.

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtridge asked if it's possible to reach out to the people who were approved before funding ran out to let them know to reapply.

Ms. Taylor replied that there is a long list of individuals that

applied for each program.

Councilmember Blackwell stated those who were approved.

Ms. Taylor said that she could recertify each applicant to make sure they still qualify for the program.

Mayor Pro Tem asked if those individuals could be contacted to inform them to reapply to reduce confusion.

Mr. Rogers said that it could be done.

Councilmember Knight reported that the Housing Repair and Workforce Housing programs were not offered.

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtridge asked that The City Manager address Council concerns in his report so that Members would be able to provide feedback. He also asked for what was extended and what is available to be rolled over.

Mr. Rogers replied yes, he could have the information in about 30 days.

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtridge asked that it be available when they meet with him individually to discuss the budget.

Mr. Rogers said yes.

Councilmember Walker asked if once the information is received if the decision will be made on how staff will prioritize those who may need to reapply.

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtridge said that it would have to be formulated and then they could provide guidance to The City Manager.

Councilmember Joyner agreed and added that some people had work plans that were approved when they were told that the money ran out.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Information only; no formal action

1st QUARTER CRIME STATISTICS - Robert Hassell

Chief Robert Hassell presented a summary of city-wide crime numbers to the City Council for the 1st Quarter of 2024. It was noted that the presentation covers crime incidents throughout the City, currently and in comparison with the prior year during the same time period. The Council was advised that crime numbers are tracked by the FBI and shared with the Bureau of Justice Statistics for tracking purposes and the presentation includes investigation outcomes for violent crimes and related arrests. The presentation also included maps depicting areas of shots fired, incidences of aggravated assault and murder and highlighted efforts and successes of the Police Department to combat violent crime.

An overview of PowerPoint presentation provided to the Mayor and Council includes:

- National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Part 1 crime comparisons by type were provided. Total crime numbers for the 1st Quarter of 2024 were reported as:
 - 83 Violent Crimes
 - 406 Property Crimes
- 2023 Q4 vs 2024 Q1
 - Violent Crime ↑25%
 - Shooting into vehicle/building victims ↑53%
 - Aggravated assault victims ↑14%
 - Individual Robbery Cases ↑23%

- Property Crimes ↑9%

Councilmember Joyner asked how shooting into occupied or unoccupied dwellings are reported.

Chief Hassell said that a shooting into any dwelling or vehicle is captured but if people are inside then it's an occupied dwelling.

Councilmember Harris asked about a shooting into 4 vehicles and asked if that's counted as one incident.

Chief Hassell replied that aggravated assault victims are counted by person and not incident. He said that if the vehicles were not occupied it would be recorded as damage to property.

Councilmember Jabaris Walker asked if the 406 property crimes were different cases from January 1st through April 1st.

Chief Hassell responded yes.

- Virtual Call Center:
 - Virtual CFS/Reports = 299
 - Hours Saved from Patrol = 374
- Crime Report:
 - Aggravated assault and shooting into OCC building/vehicle: *total victims = 46
 - *Victims with injuries = 23
 - *Victims without injuries = 23
- ShotSpotter and Citizen calls City-wide:
 - Shots fired/Heard = 227
 - Incidents with shell casings found = 71
 - Number shell casings found = 877
 - Number of Firearms Seized = 97
 - Weapon violation arrests = 18
- Code Enforcement:
 - Inspections = 13
 - Vehicles Removed = 6
 - Vehicles Received Warning = 13
- Other Police Stats:
 - Calls for Service = 20,768
 - On-View Arrests & Warrant Service = 577
 - Traffic Accidents = 448
 - Accident Property Damage = \$1,949,216
 - Traffic Stops = 2,295
 - Citations Issued = 995
 - Warnings Issued = 1,660

Councilmember Blackwell asked if the Police Department has their own Code Enforcement Team.

Chief Hassell stated that they have 2 part-time Enforcement Officers.

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtride asked if there were still issues with trucks being parked on public streets.

Chief Hassell said they still receive those complaints.

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtride noted that public streets in residential areas aren't engineered for the weight of these trucks.

Chief Hassell added that it's a traffic hazard, as it may be hard to see around a large truck parked on the street. He stated that they have been notifying the owners of trailers that their vehicle has been seen in violation of a city ordinance. He hopes the company will contact their driver and it won't occur again.

- Violent Crime, Gang & Arrest Team:
 - Warrants Served = 54
 - Citations Issued = 36
 - Calls for Service = 590
 - CFS - Primary = 303
 - Search Warrants = 11
 - Gang Validations = 53
 - Intelligence & Retaliation Reports = 13
 - Contraband Seized:
 - Weapons = 19
 - Marijuana = 218.9 grams
 - Cocaine/Heroin = 101.6 grams

Councilmember Harris asked if there was no Fentanyl in the City.

Chief Hassell stated that it could be laced with Fentanyl. He said that street tests don't show that, and they wouldn't have that information until it comes back from the state lab.

- Community Involvement:
 - Attended = 9
 - # of Officers/Staff Involved = 32
 - # of Citizen Interactions = 345
 - # Initiated = 12
 - # of Officers/Staff Involved = 77
 - # of Citizen Interactions = 202

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| . Coffee with a Cop | . South Rocky Mount Civic Meeting |
| . PAL Basketball (10x) | . A Dog's Valentine Day |
| . CARE Academy | . Read Across America (2x) |
| . South East Rocky Mount Community Group | |
| . Visit at TCI (Law Enforcement Appreciation) | |
| . Hillsdale Community Meeting | |
| . Little Raleigh Community Meeting | |
| . International Festival of Cultures | |

Councilmember Joyner asked Chief Hassell to look at where most of the crimes were occurring to see if dilapidated or abandoned property were a contributing factor.

Councilmember Knight thanked the Sheriff's Department for helping RMPD on Branch and Beal Streets. He asked Chief Hassell for his thoughts and plan on Rocky Mount being named the 3rd worst dangerous town in the state in an article. He feels Rocky Mount is a safe and great place to live and no one is talking about that. He asked The City Manager about the PR strategy, since there is a person who is contracted from WRAL, and a marketing manager had been hired. He asked if the data should be disputed. He feels the Chief should publicly address and dispel some of the things being said about Rocky Mount.

Chief Hassell replied that as a citizen he feels safe in Rocky Mount. He said that violent and property crime is not tolerated in the City and they do their best to investigate and charge with the appropriate crime. He stated that the violent crime gang team, patrol division and investigators have done enormous work. He said that violent crime numbers have dropped every year. Chief Hassell said that he couldn't speak to the article and didn't know who wrote it. He stated that the SBI and FBI typically don't compare cities,

but it doesn't stop individuals from going to sites and pulling numbers as they see fit.

Councilmember Knight asked how many officers live within the City.

Chief Hassell said he believed 25 officers and he would come back with an accurate number.

Councilmember T.J. Walker shared that over the past few years a city league basketball team has won in each age group bracket, the softball team went undefeated last year, and the youth football team has defeated both counties. He stated that Rocky Mount has one of the best debate teams in the state. He said that people will highlight the negative before the positive.

Chief Hassell stated that community activities are important because to tackle issues with the community they must engage the community. He said it's an opportunity to speak with parents, seniors and kids to build trust and know what's going on in their neighborhoods. He said to continue to recruit the best and brightest that we can't be shortsighted. He feels positive interaction with officers and staff can build trust and aspirations in the youth. He said it's important to be tough on crime and engage the community.

Councilmember Joyner reported that he still has streets in his community that are unsafe and asked that they be looked at. He said that there are stores that have contributed to negative behaviors in the community and people don't feel safe. He stated that with going into the summer people may be placing calls because of the noise and asked that it be announced that contributing to the behavior is unacceptable.

City Manager Rogers stated that in the Ward meeting he heard the concerns. He said that he and Chief Hassell will come up with a plan to get ahead of it and be impactful in their strategy.

Councilmember Harris acknowledged that there was more information in the report and thanked Chief Hassell and Mr. Rogers.

Councilmember Jabaris Walker asked who should be called if there is an issue with dogs in the early morning.

Chief Hassell replied in an emergency 911 should be called. He said if there is no immediate threat from the animal that dispatch can be called.

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtridge asked at what point a dog would become a nuisance and something done with the animal.

Chief Hassell said that they respond to every animal complaint. He said if it's repeated complaints eventually charges will be made, and the dog may be seized.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that departments are issuing statements, and you see a picture of a Rocky Mount police with articles. He feels that the number of press releases that come out about crime is high and that lends to a feeling of a malaise of unsafety. He asked if there was a public relations communication strategy for the whole city. Councilmember Blackwell shared that he has seen where cities contracted with people who write strategic articles around quality of life in their city and they're placing them in magazines of influence statewide and nationally. He said that every city has crime, but they aren't branded unsafe.

Keith Rogers stated that the points were well taken and that communities across the country deal with similar challenges. He said Public Safety Communications data is available immediately. Mr. Rogers stated it's a choice of whether to put it out via press

release or have it at another data point. He shared that they are working towards being able to put data across departments on a website that is more easily attainable for citizens. He said that certain information doesn't have to be done in a press release, the information will be available and that addresses transparency. He feels it's a great point to be strategic about The City's brand.

Mayor Pro Tem Daughtridge voiced that it needs to be highlighted that the Fire Department responds to every EMS call within the City and assists both counties. He said that he takes pride in that and talks about it often.

Councilmember T.J. Walker noted in Chief Hassell's report that of the 1,340 incidents, 1% was a gang validated offender or suspect. He stated that Rocky Mount doesn't have a gang issue.

Chief Hassell said that there are 195 validated gang members in a city of almost 55,000 people. He stated that if any of those individuals are involved in a crime it's tracked and goes through the validation and revalidation process annually. He reported that if the individual does not commit one of the 10 factors they come off after 5 years.

Councilmember Knight expressed that he isn't saying not to have community engagement or basketball. He read that the US violent crime rate is up across America. He said that it's according to who is writing the article and the data that they are using. Councilmember Knight said that he would like more officers living in the City. He asked if that could be a requirement moving forward so Officers will live among and know the people they protect.

Councilmember Harris suggested when looking at housing plans in the future to look for ways to provide housing for police, fire and teachers.

Councilmember Jabar Walker asked if gangs in the city consist of Bloods, Crips and local organizations.

Chief Hassell stated that some are local gangs. He said that there are 11 gangs in the City, that the 195 are a part of.

Councilmember Jabar Walker thanked Chief Hassell for the quick response to the shooting in Meadowbrook.

Chief Hassell said that the goal is to respond within 5 minutes.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Information only; no formal action

ADJOURNMENT

Without objection, the Mayor Pro Tem adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

A printed copy of the PowerPoint presentations are on file in the office of the City Clerk.

APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

- Consideration of demolition of 109 Owens Circle
- Housing Programs
- Closed session - Personnel

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the agenda be amended as requested.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

City Manager Keith Rogers Jr. provided the following community update. The City Manager reported that:

- Stated that the Rocky Mount Police Department is holding its back to school Pack a Patrol Car event everyday this week from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and we are asking for donations so we can send kids back to school this year with a fully stocked book bag with supplies
- Stated the Downtown Live program continues this summer and this Thursday Chairman of the Board will be featured starting at 6:00 p.m. on the Imperial Centre lawn

Councilmember Knight stated it is his understanding that they have two programs that have been launched, urgent repair and housing repair, if the City Manager could mention those for the citizens because they are very important and one of the priorities of this Council in reference to housing.

City Manager Rogers stated that is correct, they are accepting applications for those programs.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Mayor opened the meeting for petitions from the public and outlined guidelines for public petitions. He called on the following individuals for public comment and a brief summary of comments is outlined below:

Curmilus Dancy

- Stated he attended the LGC meeting a little over a week ago and he was pleased with the presentation, and the Mayor and the other 2 gentlemen in attendance did a great job
- Stated what came to his attention is Dale Folwell, State Treasurer made it clear that he had been following Rocky Mount since 2016 and it was obvious that he has an issue with Rocky Mount
- Stated again, he was pleased but now he is waiting to see when the hotel and parking deck will be back on the agenda

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge, and unanimously carried that the Consent Agenda Items 8(A) through 8(G), be approved as follows and more specifically:

A. WATER ASSESSMENT CONTRACT

The City Council received a water assessment contract with Ethner Roberson, Jr. for water service to 3312 Arlington Street. Council was advised that the connection fees for this property are \$4,265, that the customer has prepaid \$1,000, and the contract requires the remaining fees of \$3,265 to be assessed against the property.

By consent, the assessment contract with Ethner Roberson, Jr. for water service to 3312 Arlington Street **(C-2024-2)** was approved and the Mayor and City Clerk authorized to execute the same on behalf of the City.

B. RESOLUTION/NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (NCDEQ) GRANT APPLICATION

The City Council received a request from Energy Resources to approve a resolution for a North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) Grant application for electric infrastructure improvements to include grid modernization, equitable access to resilient and reliable energy and equitable workforce development. It was noted that Energy Resources intends to submit an application for the following projects:

- Installing new Intellirupter/Tripsaver technology for Circuit 22 at an estimated cost of \$397,749.00
- Reconductoring circuit 32 and reconductoring from Substation 10 to Substation 6 (Circuits 63 and 1003) at an estimated cost of \$569,648.00
- Installing an overhead transmission loop to substation 14 at an estimated cost of \$7,114,804.00

The City Council was advised that successful recipients of the grant are required to "cost match" with one-third (1/3) an amount of the awarded funding for each project and the awarded funding amount will not be known unless Rocky Mount is awarded a grant. It was noted that the entire grant funding set aside for small utilities, which is the pool of funding Rocky Mount qualifies for, is \$5.7 million dollars.

Resolution No. R-2024-25 entitled **RESOLUTION ENDORSING SUBMISSION OF NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (NCDEQ) GRANT APPLICATION FOR NEW INTELLIRUPTER/TRIPSAVER TECHNOLOGY, RECONDUCTORING CIRCUIT 32 BETWEEN SUBSTATION 10 AND 6, AND INSTALLING AN OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION LOOP TO SUBSTATION 14** was approved and staff was authorized to submit application on behalf of the City, and the City Manager/Mayor and City Clerk were authorized to execute any required documentation and/or certifications, as well as, subsequent grant agreement on behalf of the City.

C. 2025-2029 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE/ROCKY MOUNT JUDICIAL CENTER

The City Council was advised that the FY 2025 annual Fiscal Plan included the presentation of the 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and an addition to the CIP is recommended for a project involving the Rocky Mount Judicial Center. It was noted that funding for this project currently consists of \$4,500,000 provided by an appropriation by the North Carolina General Assembly in their current biennial budget.

The addition to the CIP for a project involving the Rocky Mount Judicial Center was approved and **Ordinance No O-2024-44** entitled **CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$4,500,000 TO THE GENERAL CAPITAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FUND** was adopted.

D. FY 2024-2025 PROJECT ORDINANCES/TAR RIVER TRANSIT

The following FY 2024-2025 project ordinances were approved:

- **Ordinance No O-2024-45** entitled **GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE FY 2025 RURAL TRANSIT OPERATING PROJECT** - Rural Operating (ROP25) - \$3,196,576
- **Ordinance No O-2024-46** entitled **GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE FY 2025 RURAL TRANSIT CAPITAL PROJECT** - Rural Capital (RCA25) - \$1,648,900
- **Ordinance No. O-2024-47** entitled **GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE FY 2025 RURAL TRANSIT SYSTEM FEEDER PROJECT** - Rural Feeder (FEE25) - \$50,000

E. PROJECT ORDINANCE/REPLACEMENT OF FIRE STATION #2

The City Council was provided with a capital project ordinance appropriating funds for Fire Station #2. It was noted that the financing for the construction and associated costs of this project in the amount of \$11,400,000 was approved by the City Council on June 24, 2024 and the installment financing was approved by the NC Local Government Commission on July 9, 2024.

Ordinance No O-2024-48 entitled **CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE FIRE STATION #2** appropriating \$11,400,000 for construction and related project costs was adopted.

F. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) GRANT ACCEPTANCE/STORM SEWER DAYLIGHTING PROJECT

The City Council was advised that the City had received an ARPA grant in the amount of \$3,663,363 for the design and construction of a storm sewer daylighting project. City Council was also informed that the project will consist of daylighting a failing 100-year-old culvert running between the 500 block of Tarboro Street and the 500 block of Eastern Avenue that is causing area flooding and damage to houses in the vicinity of the culvert. It was noted that no match is required.

Resolution No R-2024-26 entitled **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) GRANT AWARD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,663,363 FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF A STORM SEWER DAYLIGHTING PROJECT** was adopted.

G. PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT/PARKER'S CANAL DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS

The City Council was provided with a project ordinance amendment appropriating \$2,213,123 (\$662,603 grant funds; \$1,550,520 Stormwater fund) to the Stormwater Capital Project Development Fund to reflect the final project cost, including land acquisition. It was noted in the materials provided for the ARPA grant acceptance for the Storm Sewer Daylighting Project and the Parker's Canal Drainage Improvement project ordinance amendment that land acquisition would be necessary for 528, 532 Tarboro Street and 525, 531 Sycamore Street.

Ordinance No O-2024-49 entitled **CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT PARKER'S CANAL DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS** appropriating funds in the amount of \$2,213,123 to the Stormwater Capital Project

Development Fund to reflect the final project cost, including land acquisition was adopted.

LEASE AGREEMENT/YABA GROUP, INC

The City Council was provided with a resolution of intent to enter in a lease agreement with Assef Thaher, doing business as, Yaba Group Inc., for City owned property at 207 E. Thomas Street (5-year lease with automatic renewal for one (1) successive term of five (5) years; annual rent = \$42,000 - renewed lease will increase rent 5% to \$44,100 annually; initial term August 26, 2024 - August 26, 2029 - renewal term will be August 26, 2029 - August 26, 2034.

Resolution authorizes the City Clerk to advertise the proposed agreement pursuant to NCGS 160A-272.

It was noted this item was postponed from the July 8, 2024 City Council meeting.

Council Discussion

Councilmember Blackwell stated he is very excited that they have people who are interested in helping Rocky Mount to expand and grow a footprint downtown and throughout the City. He explained he is also interested in ensuring that staff continues the same spirit in which this restaurateur is being recruited to downtown Rocky Mount. He continued explaining that he would like to see that same effort, energy and resources allocated to other individuals and efforts in downtown Rocky Mount and find ways to incentivize, not just owners but renters, with working capital and improvements. He stated he would like to see a robust program related to recruitment and retention of who they have downtown and how much money they have allocated to that.

Councilmember Harris stated in reviewing this information that is in the agenda today, he feels there are pages missing from the lease.

Councilmember Joyner stated that he had an opportunity to visit the restaurant and see some of the operations and it is very community grounded and inclusive. He expressed that he hopes they will look forward to those same relationships that this owner has presented in other areas here in Rocky Mount.

Councilmember Knight stated he is in support of helping anyone who would like to move in the downtown area, but he also would like to see that same energy when it comes to the existing local residents or business owners. He explained that there is a particular restaurant and comedy club that is about to open in the downtown area, that was trying to get help from the City and they were told the City did not have any funding available to assist. He explained that it may be because the prior owner had already used the grants that the City offers and he is not sure if there is a waiting period, but this entrepreneur wants to move into a building

and bring an eatery and comedy club downtown. He stated that he would like this Council to direct the City Manager and staff to come up with a grant for entrepreneurs, so they can benefit from funding from the City as well. He stated that he does support this, but he also supports the existing entrepreneurs.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated that he echoes what Councilmember Harris just spoke about as they do own a lot of properties and provide a lot of leases and he thinks fundamentally, the City of Rocky Mount should not be in the leasing business, but they are. He explained that there is a history of leases being broken or not working out for whatever reason and the City has historically ended up eating a lot of the expense that is involved. He stated that he is going to vote in support of this but asks the City Manager and staff to go through the leases and make sure these facilities are inspected, whether it is on a monthly, quarterly, biannual/annual basis and certainly when the lease comes to an end.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that the Douglas Block is probably the most renovated building and now the oldest renovation that the City has done. He explained that all of those buildings are probably entering another level of need for being refreshed, as Councilmember Daughtridge pointed out, to ensure the tenants are not having to deal with unsafe environmental issues, especially since many of those properties are food based. He stated that the point that Councilmember Knight brought up about the seafood restaurant downtown is a great example of what he was saying. He stated the gentleman has invested \$60,000 out of his own pocket to continue the renovations that were needed in addition to what was needed to make the building suitable for his own purposes, but it is still not enough. He stated he feels the City really needs an aggressive working capital strategy for downtown. He explained that he is not recommending that the City pay for everything, but the City is responsible for leading the recruitment and designing the approach, packages, and the relationships that are required to see a beautiful downtown like Rocky Mount really elevate. He requested that Mayor Pro Tem Daughtridge look at placing the discussion on an upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting in order to give clearer direction to the City Manager about what the City Council would like to see. He explained that he thinks it is wise to at least set some parameters up front and give the team something to focus on, then have them bring it back for Council's review and Council can make changes if needed and move forward.

Councilmember Joyner asked who was responsible for ensuring that these buildings are left in the condition that they started out in, once the City gets them up to par for a lease.

City Manager Rogers responded that these buildings are City-owned properties, within the lease it covers the maintenance and the condition the building should be left in once the lease is up, but it is the City's responsibility to maintain that appropriate term throughout the lease.

Councilmember Harris asked for assurance that the appendices would be in the lease when it was brought back to City Council for approval.

City Manager Rogers stated that those appendices were included on the last agenda when this item was deferred so he thinks maybe it just got lost in translation, but the items Councilmember Harris asked about would be included in the lease. He reminded Council that tonight they just approving the advertising of the lease terms so it would be back before Council for approval. He stated they would double check to make sure the Clerk's office was provided the correct document.

Councilmember Daughtridge called for the question.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that **Resolution No R-2024-27** entitled **RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO ENTER INTO LEASE AGREEMENT WITH ASSEF THAHER, DOING BUSINESS AS YABA GROUP, INC., FOR CITY OWNED PROPERTY AT 207 E. THOMAS STREET** was adopted.
FY 2023-2024 TAX SETTLEMENT/APPOINTMENT OF COLLECTOR OF REVENUE

The City Council received a resolution from the Tax Collector of taxes collected for the Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Due to the retirement of the Collector of Revenue, the resolution additionally request the appointment of Latasha Hall, Director of Business and Collections Services, as Collector of Revenue, thereby granting her permission to collect 2024-2025 taxes.

Motion to adopt the resolution was made by Councilmember Joyner and seconded by Councilmember T.J. Walker. Discussion was requested.

Councilmember Knight stated this is giving Mrs. Hall the authority to collect taxes but in order to collect taxes, if there is a lien on the property it is hard to collect so he recommends including the language that she has authority to release liens as well.

Mayor Roberson asked Interim City Attorney to verify what the General Statute authorizes and includes.

Interim City Attorney McGrath responded that generally speaking the authority to collect taxes is mandated by North Carolina General Statute and includes the authority to enforce the taxes and attach liens to deal with those kinds of issues.

City Manager Rogers stated that is correct, this was intended to be a perfunctory item due to the retirement of staff, but they are currently actively collecting taxes, liens, and any other monies

owed to the City through the Business and Collections Services Agency.

Councilmember Knight requested to amend the motion to include the language.

Motion was amended by Councilmember Joyner and seconded by Councilmember T.J. Walker and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2024-28** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING SETTLEMENT OF FY 2023-24 TAXES DUE AND COLLECTED AND AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS AND COLLECTIONS SERVICES TO COLLECT FY 2024-2025 TAXES** be adopted, with the additional language to allow attachment/release of tax liens pursuant to NCGS 105-373 added.

DEMOLITION/109 OWENS CIRCLE (added to agenda in open meeting)

Councilmember Blackwell stated he was presented with a petition from neighbors on Owen Circle relative to a property that was damaged by fire two years ago and has been through several iterations of code enforcement. He explained that the owner has collected the insurance and moved to another town outside the City limits and there are no plans to demolish the property. He continued explaining that this property is an environmental hazard, unsightly, and the reason he is having to bring it is because staff is informing people that the City has no plans to demolish properties within the city limits of Rocky Mount. He stated if that is the case, then he will have to continue to bring these properties to the meeting because right now the neighborhood is paying the price for unsightly, dangerous, deficient, and embarrassing properties.

Councilmember Blackwell made a motion to adopt a demolition ordinance for the property located at 109 Owens Circle, seconded by Councilmember Joyner. Discussion was requested.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he is fully in favor of going through the demolition process of properties such as this and he knows in Councilmember Harris' Ward, there was one there for 3-5 years like this. He continued stating he knows there is a legal process that has to be followed, and he would like to know where this property is in the process. He explained that this issue is all over Rocky Mount and it comes down to money and he would like to know the expense of the demolition. He inquired if there is any legal action the City can take against the property owner to recoup the money because this house needs to go ahead and come down.

Interim City Attorney McGrath responded that Councilmember Daughtridge is correct, that the City's authority to go in and tear down someone's property is limited significantly by statute. He explained that the City does have some authority to summarily abate public health nuisances, and he knows that authority in Rocky Mount has been exercised to demolish property. He stated that his

suggestion would be to direct staff to make sure, before this is ordered, that it can be justified. He continued stating short of that, there are other processes that can be used under the statutes to demolish, each has its own notice and hearing opportunity, so they essentially have to develop a basis and then move forward based on the governing procedure. He explained as to the cost of demolition, it is taxable to the property owner and if not paid, it becomes a lien on the property and at some point that lien can be foreclosed upon. He stated his suggestion when they are talking about specific properties is that they have an opportunity to at least confirm which authority they are going to use and go from there.

Blackwell stated when staff completes these processes and it is clear that the properties need to be demolished, the staff should be bringing that to City Council, not City Council having to take methodology like this and almost impose it upon the staff. He stated that has been the process in Rocky Mount up until now and the questions that the City Attorney has wisely framed should have already taken place. He explained that there are plenty of properties that should be demolished that have gone through the process, but the last step is not taken of coming to Council for approval for those properties to be demolished. He asked what the point is of going through the process if the process is not completed. He explained they have budgeted prior to this budget, thousands of dollars to take properties down. He recommended that they bring back to the table the land trust opportunities which they started talking about, but deferred until they got more information. He explained this would be a wonderful opportunity if the City needs to start collecting properties like this, if the owners have no interest and no willingness to do something about it. He stated that the neighbors should not be forced to live next to dilapidated houses because somebody technically has a right because they own the property. He stated if the property owner is creating problems for everyone else then the City needs to step in.

Councilmember Knight stated he is still surprised that they are having this conversation since it was discussed in depth months ago. He explained that if the staff is doing the work, but the City Manager is not signing off to bring it to Council, this needs to be directed to Mr. Keith Rogers, Jr. He explained that he brought several houses forward and City Manager Rogers was adamant about not demolishing the houses even though there is an ordinance that gives the Council the authority to demolish the houses when they go through the process.

Councilmember Blackwell stated he would like to revise the motion for the demolition of 109 Owens Circle to request that staff

ensure that the legal process has been adhered to and completed, that appropriate funding be allocated for demolition of the property and a lien placed on the property so the city will be able to recover expenses related to the demolition.

Councilmember Harris stated he had requested Council receive a listing of all properties that have suffered damage due to fire several months ago when Councilmember Knight brought this issue up. He asked the City Manager to provide Council with a detailed list of all burned properties and what, if any, legal process has been started for each of the properties at the next Committee of the Whole or as soon as available so Council can have a better indication of what needs to be done. He also requested that the City Manager let Council know how much money was expensed in previous years, how much rollover there is and exactly what the dollar amounts are that Council has approved for demolition.

Mayor Roberson stated he will give the floor to City Manager Rogers if he wants to answer some of those questions.

City Manager Rogers stated that he wanted to add a little context to the discussion, not to debate the merits, but City staff is in the communities working to make sure that code enforcement is being done. He reminded Council that the three properties that were previously discussed that Council directed to be demolished have been demolished, so they have been adhering to Council's desire. He informed the City Attorney that staff has been working to make sure all the legal specifications have been met in order to do so. He added that he knows staff has done a ride along with the Mayor and several of the Councilmembers throughout the Wards to identify any additional concerns that the Council may have so they can compile a list and try to be strategic as well as proactive to the concerns that are brought up not only by Council, but directly from citizens. He stated he is happy to entertain any additional properties, this is the first time the property before them tonight has been brought to his attention, so he will be glad to look into it. He continued stating that they would certainly be willing to bring back a comprehensive list and an action plan to the Council at a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

Councilmember Blackwell asked City Manager Rogers if a property can go through the entire process without him ever seeing anything related to it or sign off on the final order. to confirm that if he is saying that if this property has gone all the way through the entire process and he has not seen anything related to it, if the process does not call for him to sign off on the final order.

Councilmember Blackwell asked Mr. Rogers if this is the first time he has seen anything on this property, why would staff be

telling the community that it has gone through almost the entire process, but there is no present priority for demolition.

City Manager Rogers responded he is not sure how to answer the question, but he confirmed this is the first time the item before them tonight has been brought to his attention and he is happy to look into it to see where it is in the process. He explained again that he is making these comments tonight to provide clarity that staff are working to enforce code and demolish properties where appropriate. He stated not to get into a debate about the merits, but he mentioned prior that there are certain requirements that must be met in order for demolition so there is not a holding list that they are holding from moving forward with demolition.

Councilmember Blackwell stated he is not debating merits, he is asking when the City Manager approves or denies in the process.

City Manager Rogers stated depending on what code is used, the process does not require additional approval from the Council or the Manager depending on the type of demolition. He explained that what he was trying to express is that it is hard to answer a question about a property that is brought forward in a Council meeting without looking to see what the issues are because it is going to be on a case-by-case basis. He stated that he wanted to confirm with Council that staff is working on code enforcement and there is no pause or difference of direction in terms of enforcing code which includes the demolition of properties. He explained that in the recently adopted budget, there is a line item that remains for demolitions and while the cost per house may vary, the City has budgeted resources to do demolitions. He reminded Council again that they just recently completed the three that Council previously asked to be looked into.

Mayor Roberson stated that he thinks Council's points are well made and that they want a list of current dilapidated and fire damaged properties and where they are in the process to be able to have an active discussion about the issue.

Councilmember Knight stated there was a very extensive conversation in reference to this before and there is a City ordinance that entails everything that was just stated.

The Mayor restated the amended motion: Motion made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that staff is requested to ensure that the legal process has been adhered to and completed, that appropriate funding be allocated for demolition of the property and a lien placed on the property so the city will be able to recover expenses related to the demolition of 109 Owens Circle.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Councilmember Knight stated that last month he asked a question related to a community development position titled Community Engagement Manager because he did not recall seeing that position in the Compensation and Pay Plan that Council approved. He explained asked for clarification from the City Manager that Councilmember T.J. Walker stated he believed it was in the plan that was approved. Councilmember Knight stated the City Clerk had been asked by the Council to research the information and she was unable to find the position in the minutes or the plan approved by the City Council. He stated Council would need to ratify the position of Community Engagement Manager and that action is not taken, then that position should not be in operation. He stated secondly, if you go back and read the minutes from the April 8, 2024 City Council meeting, it details a lengthy conversation about the housing grants currently approved by Council. He explained in a release he saw today, it was stated that the City is only offering two programs. He stated the Council has four approved housing programs for the citizens, and he has copies of the policies that were adopted by Council. He stated the City Manager and his staff decided to eliminate two of the programs without the authority of this City Council, in addition to changing one of the programs from a grant to a loan and there is not a policy to dictate that change. He also explained that the amount was changed from \$15,000 to \$50,000 and there is again no administrative policy in place, but they have residents coming down to City Hall to register for these programs. He stated at the last City Council meeting, City Manager Rogers and staff were asked to provide information where Council approved these changes. The City Clerk was asked to search the minutes for approval of changes/programs, but she stated she was unable to locate an approval. He explained when the consultant came about the HOME funds, there was a presentation by the coordinator and not the Director or Deputy Director, and he has never seen a staff person that was not a department head make a presentation to this Council. He also stated that the information was unclear, and Councilmember Harris and others asked for clarification from staff. The City Council also requested a breakdown of those programs and who applied from the City Manager. He stated that they had waiting lists and people received approval letters then received another letter stating the City did not have the funds. He stated that during the budget session he was told by City Manager Rogers that the citizens were not applying for the money, but citizens have informed him they are being are being told that the City is not offering those programs. He stated there are two programs that have not been approved by this Council and two programs that are not being offered

according to citizens which are the matching rebate program and the workforce housing. He requested that those programs be brought back since City Council did not discontinue them.

Councilmember Blackwell requested that they continue this discussion in a Committee of the Whole meeting and be able to outline what that discussion may look like in advance, so they know how to plan and how to prepare. He stated he would like to dedicate the entire Committee of the Whole to housing so no one feels pressed to make a 15-minute presentation or have a 15-minute conversation.

Mayor Roberson expressed that he is in favor of it although he does not get a vote.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated he has already spoken with the City Manager and City Attorney so they could have a heads up, but he is not sure if it will be at the next Committee of the Whole or the following, but it has already been put in place.

Councilmember T.J. Walker stated he would like to thank the Event Center staff, Assistant City Manager, Elton Daniels, and Director of Parks and Recreation, Joel Dunn as they put together the first quarterly Downtown Date Night at the Event Center. He stated that it is probably one of the most extraordinary events you will see in Rocky Mount where you can pay \$40 for a general ticket, \$85 for a gourmet dinner with 3 hours of entertainment including mainstream comedians and artists from all across the nation. He explained that he is also looking forward to the housing conversations.

CLOSED SESSION (added in open meeting)

A closed session was requested relative to matters concerning personnel.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Harris and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 5:04 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-646** at the end of **Minute Book 38** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, by consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.



Kim Batts
City Clerk