

**City Council Regular Session
September 28, 2015**

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City met in regular session on Monday, September 28, 2015 in Council Chambers, located on the 2nd floor of the Municipal Administration Building, 306 E. Colonial Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Joe Peel
Councilwoman Jean Baker
Councilman Ray Donnelly
Mayor Pro Tem Anita Hummer
Councilman Tony Stimatz
Councilman Michael Brooks
Councilman Kem Spence
Councilman Darius Horton
Councilman Johnnie Walton

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Chief Eddie Buffaloe, Acting City Manager
City Attorney Bill Morgan
Finance Director Sarah Blanchard
Planning Director June Brooks
Electric Superintendent Karl Clow
Assistant to the Manager Angela Cole
Human Resources Director Katherine Felton
Public Utilities Director Paul Fredette
Fire Chief Larry Mackey
ECDI Director Wade Nichols
IT Director Matthew Simpson
Parks and Recreation Superintendent "Hipp" Barclift
City Clerk Vivian White

The City Council regular session was called to order by Mayor Joe Peel at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Peel welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized Councilman Darius Horton to give the invocation, after which Mayor Peel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Peel announced that Chief Eddie Buffaloe was serving as acting city manager during the meeting in the absence of City Manager Rich Olson, who was away at a manager's conference.

1. Agenda Adjustments and Approval:

Mayor Peel requested the Council's pleasure regarding approval of the prepared agenda.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Anita Hummer, seconded by Councilman Darius Horton, to approve the agenda with any necessary adjustments. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Baker, Donnelly, Hummer, Stimatz, Brooks, Spence, Horton, and Walton. Against: None. The motion carried.

(Clerk Notation: No adjustments to the agenda were requested.)

2. Statement of Disclosure:

The City Clerk read the Statement of Disclosure. No conflict of interest disclosures regarding items listed on the agenda were made.

3. Presentations:

- a. Proclamation for Alpha Delta Kappa Month – October 2015

Mayor Peel read and presented a Proclamation declaring October 2015 as Alpha Delta Kappa Month in Elizabeth City. He encouraged all citizens to recognize and support the professional efforts of our outstanding women educators. The Proclamation was accepted by Lisa Croley, representing the Gamma Iota Chapter of ADK. Ms. Croley thanked Mayor Peel and the City Councilors for recognizing the sorority.

b. Proclamation for Pharmacy Week – October 18-25, 2015

Mayor Peel read and presented a Proclamation declaring October 18-24, 2015 as Pharmacy Week in Elizabeth City. He urged all citizens to acknowledge the valuable services of the pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who work in inpatient, outpatient, home-care and long-term care settings. The Proclamation was accepted by Ms. Jennifer Burgess. She thanked Mayor Peel and the City Councilors for honoring her profession with this designation. She encouraged everyone to keep a record of their medications on a wallet card and to get a flu shot, if appropriate.

4. Comments from the Public:

There were no comments from the public.

5. Approval of Minutes:

Mayor Peel requested the Council's pleasure regarding approval of the prepared minutes.

a. City Council Regular Session of September 14, 2015:

Motion was made by Councilman Darius Horton, seconded by Councilman Ray Donnelly, to approve the Regular Session minutes of September 14, 2015. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Baker, Donnelly, Hummer, Stimatz, Brooks, Spence, Horton, and Walton. Against: None. The motion carried.

b. City Council Special Meeting of September 21, 2015:

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Anita Hummer, seconded by Councilman Darius Horton, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of September 21, 2015. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Baker, Donnelly, Hummer, Stimatz, Brooks, Spence, Horton, and Walton. Against: None. The motion carried.

6. Consent Agenda:

Mayor Peel recognized Acting City Manager Eddie Buffaloe to read the Consent Agenda items into the record. Chief Buffaloe recommended approval of all items as follows:

(Clerk notation: Both Items were recommended for approval by the Finance Committee during their meeting of September 24, 2015.)

Beginning of Consent Agenda:

- a. Consideration – Authorization to Accept 2015 COPS Hiring Program Grant in the estimated amount of \$120,074, with a \$37,524 cash match by the City, which is for three years and equates to \$12,508 annually;
- b. Consideration – Authorization for City staff to submit an application to the Tourism Development Authority in the amount of \$500 to support the Great Dismal Swamp 9-Ball Classic being held on October 24, 2015.

End of Consent Agenda:

Motion was made by Councilman Ray Donnelly, seconded by Councilman Darius Horton, to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Baker, Donnelly, Hummer, Stimatz, Brooks, Spence, Horton, and Walton. Against: None. The motion carried.

7. Regular Agenda:

- a. Consideration – Award of Community Support Grants for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 *(Recommendations made by the Finance Committee during their meeting of September 24, 2015).*

Mayor Peel recognized Assistant to the City Manager Angela Cole to provide the background for this request.

Ms. Cole stated that on September 16, 2015, members of the Finance Committee, along with most members of the City Council, heard presentations by those organizations that requested funding through the Community Support Grant Program. She said that applications were received from 12 organizations representing 15 different projects.

Ms. Cole reported that there had been questions regarding the City’s statutory authority to make direct funding allocations for educational purposes. She stated that City staff had received an interpretation on that question; however, an additional concern had been raised regarding the City’s authority to indirectly appropriate funding through a foundation or other organization. Ms. Cole stated that an interpretation had been received on that matter, as well, which revealed that the City has no statutory authority in either case. She stated that, with this opinion from the School of Government, City staff had removed the Finance Committee’s \$2,500 award recommendation for the Education Foundation. She stated that the City Manager had communicated that information to the Education Foundation.

Ms. Cole referred the City Council to the funding matrix that provided both the organization’s funding request and the recommendations made by the Finance Committee during their September 24, 2015 meeting. She pointed out that the Finance Committee also suggested that all budgeted funds for Community Support Grants be awarded at the present time.

Motion was made by Councilman Tony Stimatz, seconded by Councilman Darius Horton, to accept the recommendations of the Finance Committee as it pertains to Community Support Grants.

Mayor Peel invited discussion by members of the City Council. Hearing none, he requested a vote on the motion, which is recorded as follows:

Those voting in favor of the motion were: Baker, Donnelly, Hummer, Stimatz, Brooks, Spence, Horton, and Walton. Against: None. The motion carried.

(Clerk Notation: The following matrix provides the funding requests received as well as the recommendations made by the Finance Committee and the subsequent action of award by the City Council.)

Applicant Organization (Program Reference)	Funding Request	Grant Awards FY 2015-16
Arts of the Albemarle (ECPPS Workshop)	2,060.00	500.00
Arts of the Albemarle (Jazz Music Series)	7,000.00	.00
Education Foundation (AVID Student Development)	2,500.00	.00

Food Bank of the Albemarle (Food Distribution)	20,000.00	12,000.00
Home Team Foundation (Football Camp)	2,300.00	.00
Home Team Foundation (Spring Break Camp)	2,400.00	.00
Kids First, Inc. (Abuse Treatment)	10,000.00	8,000.00
NC Blazers (Basketball Tournament)	3,000.00	2,800.00
Pasquotank Library (Online Tutoring Service)	2,000.00	800.00
Port Discover (Multiple Outreach Science Programs)	7,500.00	7,500.00
River City CDC (Juneteenth)	5,000.00	2,500.00
River City CDC (WorkCamp)	10,000.00	5,000.00
City of Elizabeth City (SOULS Feeding Program)	3,000.00	3,000.00
Visions of Hope (Women’s Shelter)	3,000.00	3,000.00
YMCA (Swim Safety)	5,000.00	2,000.00
12 Organizations/ 15 Program Requests	\$84,760.00	\$47,100.00

8. Comments and Inquiries on Non-Agenda Items:

Councilman Donnelly requested an update on NCDOT’s Knobbs Creek Bridge Project. He reported that the downtown restroom facilities at Mariners’ Wharf Park have not been open on weekends. He asked that the schedule be adjusted to accommodate citizens’ requests to him on that matter. He announced that ECDI is currently selling Italian dinner tickets for Ghost Walk, being held on October 9 – 10. He announced that he had tickets for sale.

Councilman Spence announced that Pasquotank Correctional Institute would hold a job fair on Saturday, October 3 and would be accepting applications on site. He commended Parks and Recreation Superintendent Hipp Barclift for the job he is doing for the department.

Councilwoman Baker reminded everyone of the upcoming Ghost Walk event on October 9 – 10. She stated the theme for this year is “Prohibition, Bootlegging and the Jazz Age” and reported that the event will feature eight sites with great actors providing local historic information.

Councilman Walton reminded everyone of an upcoming “Teachers Night Out.” He challenged local teachers to become more aware of what’s happening within the community. He suggested that teachers need “to know what’s headed in their direction” in the Legislature. He stated “if you don’t, it’s your fault – there’s a lot of things that’s happening – and if you don’t update yourself with the challenges in front of you or the challenges that certain people are trying to put out there, you gonna’ be more surprised than you think you are.” He stated “if you don’t get out and vote, your career will be

your career – and there's not a lot of things that's gonna' be happening good for your career. So, get out and vote if you will."

Mayor Pro Tem Hummer reminded the City Councilors that the Veterans Day Ceremony will be held at Waterfront Park this year rather than West Lawn Cemetery. She announced that the event would be held on November 11 at noon.

Councilman Horton thanked all residents for attending the City Council meeting. He reminded everyone that Elizabeth City State University's Homecoming will be held October 11 – 18, with the Homecoming Parade on Saturday, October 17. He stated that the deadline to register to participate in the parade is October 9.

Councilman Stimatz stated that he had previously asked for the amount of unscheduled maintenance in the City's Enterprise Funds over the last five years. He said that what he wanted to know was, in Electric, Water and Sewer and Sanitation in particular, the unscheduled maintenance costs in each of those funds. He stated that during the Work Session, the Council had been presented the Water and Wastewater Systems Asset Management Plan. He reported that the plan points out that the City has significant problems in its ancient and over-burdened system. He said the plan documents a minimum of \$2.5 million annually just to replace aging water mains, lift pumps and sewer mains. He stated that amount does not include critical capital projects that effect providing water and sewer service. He said that without water and sewer "life becomes really desperate." He implored the citizens to understand that the City has a very old system; and he encouraged everyone to consider how the City could pay for the needed improvements. He asked the public to get involved by contacting their Congressional Representatives and Senators to request that "we stop paying for everybody else's sewer pipes all over the world and pay for the sewer pipes and water pipes in America;" and increase CDBG funding specifically for water and sewer projects "in towns like ours." Councilman Stimatz stated that the City also has a huge problem with inflow and infiltration into the City's sewer pipes, which creates an added cost for treatment by the citizens. He explained the issue of yard waste being placed in the streets and gutters as a contributing factor and encouraged everyone to help with this critical problem by placing yard waste on their lawn for pickup.

Councilman Brooks asked the City Attorney whose responsibility it is to maintain streets in low-income housing areas. Mr. Morgan responded that if the streets are City streets, the City would be responsible.

Councilman Brooks stated that the residents in low income housing are "catching it over there" as far as how management is treating them. He said as he was going door to door, residents were talking to him and the complaints were consistent. He asked what the City could do "to relieve some of the pressure." He stated that some of the regulations were "so strict, it's almost like living on a plantation." He said that these people are the "working poor" and even with part-time jobs, they cannot make ends meet. He said that he could not address the situation alone and suggested that the Council needed to get involved as "a collective effort."

Mayor Peel invited Councilman Brooks to have a chat with him regarding this issue. He pointed out that in this instance "the mayor has a little authority" and suggested he might be able to do some things to help. He requested that Councilman Brooks provide the specific issues in order to "figure out where to go." Mayor Peel cautioned that there may not be a lot that can be done by the City, since the housing projects are run by the federal government. He agreed that they do impose a lot of restrictions.

Councilman Brooks suggested that the Council send a letter to HUD to inform representatives of local management practices.

Mayor Peel pointed out that there is a lot going on in Elizabeth City. He said "it's a great place to live, with lots of good things going on!" He thanked everyone for attending the meeting and thanked the Councilors for their service.

9. Adjournment:

There being no further business to be discussed, Mayor Peel adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Joseph W. Peel
Mayor

Vivian D. White, CMC/NCCMC
City Clerk