

**City Council Work Session  
January 27, 2020**

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City met in work session on Monday, January 27, 2020 in Council Chambers, located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Municipal Administration Building, 306 E. Colonial Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Bettie Parker  
Councilman Kem Spence  
Mayor Pro Tem Johnnie Walton  
Councilman Billy Caudle  
Councilman Michael Brooks  
Councilman Darius Horton (*arrived at 6:13 p.m.*)  
Councilwoman Jeannie Young (*arrived at 5:32 p.m.*)  
Councilman Chris Ruffieux

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilman Gabriel Adkins

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Rich Olson  
City Attorney Bill Morgan  
Finance Director Suzanne Tungate  
Chief of Police Eddie Buffaloe Jr.  
Deputy Chief of Police James Avens  
Interim Electric Superintendent Bob Vannoy  
Assistant City Manager Angela Cole  
Human Resources Director Montique McClary  
Public Utilities Assistant Director Amanda Boone  
Parks and Recreation Director Dexter Harris  
Senior Center Coordinator Stacy Williams  
Deputy Fire Chief Chris Carver  
ECDI Director Debbie Malenfant  
IT Director Matthew Simpson  
Grants Management Administrator Jon Hawley  
City Clerk April Onley

The City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Bettie Parker at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Parker welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized Mayor Pro Tem Walton to give the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. Agenda Adjustments and Approval:**

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

**Motion was made by Councilwoman Young, seconded by Councilman Caudle to approve the agenda. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Walton, Caudle, Brooks, Ruffieux, Young, and Spence. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**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. Presentation – CAFR – Presented by Auditors of S. Preston Douglas & Associates, LLP:**

City Manager Olson introduced Auditor Lee Grissom and Finance Director Suzanne Tungate to present the item. Mr. Grissom advised that he was from S. Preston, Douglas & Associates, LLP, the City's current auditing firm. He noted that his firm usually offered

presentation in November, but had been moved to January this year. Mr. Grissom said that he was pleased to announce that the City’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) had received an unmodified/clean opinion, which mean the auditors found nothing that indicated that the financial statements were inaccurate. In addition, the auditors did not have any finding concerning the City’s compliance with NC General Statutes.

He briefly addressed the following items:

On June 30, 2019, the governmental funds the City of Elizabeth City reported declared a combined fund balance of \$8,542,689, a 6.5% increase over last year; and a 35.6% increase in unassigned fund balance to \$4,749,560. These balances are fund balances and do not include the Pension and OPEB adjustments that the Governmental Statements include. The City’s unassigned fund balance in the General Fund has increased slightly from 22.34% in 2018 to 22.7% in 2019. This ratio is fund balance as a percentage of total expenditures. At the end of the year, the unrestricted net position of the Electric Fund amounted to \$7,199,205, a decrease of \$572,067; the Water & Sewer Fund was \$1,438,907, an increase of \$1,487,706; the Stormwater Fund amounted to \$1,279,224, a decrease of \$146,372; and the Solid Waste Fund was \$(297,604), an increase of \$109,221.

Councilman Walton expressed concern that the audit only addressed a sampling of records and not a full investigation. Mr. Grissom explained that was what was deemed necessary by NC General Statute and that a further look would have been necessitated if a finding had occurred or a discrepancy.

Mayor Parker requested information on the difference in the Enterprise Funds in 2018-2019. Mr. Grissom stated that he believed much of that was involved in the agreements the City entered with customers due to the Edmunds conversion problems. Councilman Walton asked that staff provide the total amount of money remaining in agreements, including any written off amounts and the number of individuals still on them. City Manager Olson responded that he would compile that information and distribute it the following day.

**4. Presentation – Brenda Daniels ElectriCities – Pool Street Park:**

City Manager Olson recognized ECDI Director Debbie Malenfant and Brenda Daniels of ElectriCities to discuss the item. Ms. Malenfant explained that staff was in the beginning stages of revitalizing Pool Street Park, which was built in 1978 with a \$50,000 grant from the Land and Conservation Fund. She provided a digital mock-up of the proposed new layout of the park, which included the following details:

The City, in conjunction with Elizabeth City Downtown Inc. (ECDI), proposes to remove all the trees, brick, pavers, and streetlights using an outside contractor. The site would be resurfaced and minor utility work would occur. Sidewalks would be installed along the periphery of the corridor and recycle some of the brick pavers to create a central brick path. Instead of planting trees, we would install a series of shade structures similar to the one at Mariners’ Wharf Park. String lighting would be installed throughout the park, as would benches. The new alley layout would make the park a new gathering spot and draw to the downtown area similar to Pailin’s Alley. The new layout would allow the park to host or support events such as farmers’ markets, First Friday Artwalk and outdoor weddings. The new lighting and open layout would make the park safer overnight. It would also allow for outdoor dining. The upgrades were estimated at \$100,000, broken down as follows:

Pavers	\$35,000
Lights	\$10,000
Tree Removal	\$ 5,000
Sidewalk	\$15,000
Shade Structure	\$20,000
Miscellaneous	\$15,000
Total	\$100,000

Ms. Malenfant said that staff had applied for a NCEMPA Downtown Revitalization grant for this project, and in early January, the City received notice that we were awarded \$10,000. Brenda Daniels of ElectriCities presented the check for the project and explained the importance of revitalization of parks.

**5. Presentation – Christina Malloy – Homeless Program;**

City Manager Olson introduced Christina Malloy of River City CDC. Mrs. Malloy stated that River City had recently received a grant to address homelessness in our area. She provided a Council with an overview of the River City Program, which recognized the fact that our community's poor and homeless have needs that can only be addressed through concerted collaboration and substantial funding. She said that River City CDC works with the Elizabeth City Police Department each year to perform a count of the homeless, which begins shortly after midnight and goes through the morning hours. She said that River City CDC has been assisting the Police Department with making sure Cold Weather Vouchers go to the people who need them.

Councilman Horton asked if River City CDC currently needed anything from the Council, including funding for their own homeless projects. Mrs. Malloy explained that they did not need anything at this time, and the purpose of the presentation was simply to advise the Council of their efforts in the community.

**6. Committee Reports:**

- a) **EC-PC Economic Development Commission: Councilman Adkins, Councilman Caudle, Mayor Parker** – Councilman Caudle reported the Commission met the previous Wednesday and received presentations on pending economic development opportunities.
- b) **Central Communications Advisory Board: Councilman Brooks** – Councilman Brooks reported that the Board had not met yet.
- c) **Fireman's Relief Fund Board: Councilman Adkins, Councilman Spence** – Councilman Spence stated they had not met.
- d) **NC Eastern Municipal Power Agency: City Manager Olson and Mayor Parker**- City Manager Olson reported that NCEMPA had met on the 24<sup>th</sup> and he provided an update in the previous week's FYI.
- e) **Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc.: Councilwoman Young** – Councilwoman Young stated that seven new businesses had held ribbon cuttings in the last two months. She advised that Weatherly Lofts was beginning to accept applications to interested parties. She praised the City's BIG program for the numerous new jobs it had created. She thanked ECDI and Director Malenfant for their tireless work in the downtown area.
- f) **Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce Board: Mayor Parker** – Mayor Parker said the Board met on January 21<sup>st</sup> to discuss several events, including the Chamber's upcoming annual dinner on the 30<sup>th</sup>.
- g) **Finance Committee: Mayor Parker, Mayor Pro Tem Walton, Councilman Caudle, Councilwoman Young, Councilman Brooks, Councilman Adkins, Councilman Ruffieux, Councilman Horton, Councilman Spence** – Mayor Pro Tem Walton stated the Committee met on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and had forwarded all topics to the Consent Agenda.
- h) **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Mayor Pro Tem Walton** – Mayor Pro Tem Walton stated the Board would meet in February.
- i) **Storm Water Advisory Board: Councilman Spence, Councilman Ruffieux and Councilman Horton** – Councilman Ruffieux advised the Board had not met.

- j) **Tourism Development Authority: Mayor Pro Tem Walton** – Mayor Pro Tem Walton said the TDA met on the 23<sup>rd</sup>; he attended, but had not been able to participate due to not receiving the County’s confirmation yet.
- k) **Community Relations Commission: Councilman Brooks** – Councilman Brooks stated the CRC had not met.
- l) **Airport Authority: Councilman Caudle** – Councilman Caudle said the Authority presented their annual audit the previous week, which included project updates.
- m) **Joint Committee On Homelessness: Councilman Horton, Councilwoman Young** – Councilman Horton and Councilman Young stated there was no report.
- n) **Albemarle RPO Transportation Advisory Committee – Councilman Ruffieux** – Councilman Ruffieux had nothing to report.

**6. Adjournment:**

There being no further business to be discussed, Mayor Parker adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

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Bettie J. Parker  
Mayor

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April D. Onley  
City Clerk