



CITY OF  
**ELIZABETH CITY**  
HARBOR OF HOSPITALITY *North Carolina*

**TO:** Mayor and Members of the City Council  
**FROM:** Rich Olson, City Manager  
**REF:** City Manager's Weekly FYI ~ February 21, 2020  
**COPY:** Email Distribution

1. On Wednesday, approximately 25 top law enforcement officials from agencies throughout eastern North Carolina gathered in Elizabeth City to discuss the proposal of a North Carolina State regional crime lab coming to Elizabeth City. The Honorable Howard J. Hunter, III of the North Carolina House of Representatives was the distinguished guest. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss House Bill 813 - an act to Direct North Carolina Department of Justice to Plan Eastern Region Laboratory to be Located on the Campus of Elizabeth City State University. House Bill 813 has obtained approval from the North Carolina House of Representatives and is currently awaiting consideration from the North Carolina Senate. Elizabeth City was strategically selected due to its geographical location, which is considered the largest city east of Greenville. Elizabeth City would be the ideal location to best serve the law enforcement and criminal justice agencies in District 1 of the State. With the number of cases being submitted to the lab on a daily basis, having a crime lab locally would be an asset to the all 16 local agencies, as well as State and Federal agencies. The selection of Elizabeth City, specifically the campus of Elizabeth City State University was made, due to the existing structure located on the campus as well as a Criminal Justice Curriculum in place at the University. In addition, the need for a crime lab in this area is clearly shown by the number of back-logged cases currently awaiting laboratory analysis for law enforcement investigations (the number was 350 cases from District 1 when last tallied a year ago). Chief Buffaloe and I would like to thank Elizabeth City Councilwoman Jeannie Young for orchestrating and hosting this informative meeting. It is great to see all the many agencies pulling together for this effort and we hope to have more discussions on this important matter in coming months.
2. This week, I attended the RMS Board meeting in Raleigh. Our February meeting tends to be our most important meeting due to the Board's

evaluation of the actuarial information provided by staff and establishing rates for the three pools we oversee. Our members will see a significant decrease in their overall worker's compensation rates. The rate decrease will be 7.6%. Additionally, the City of Elizabeth City had a low claims experience this year and should see a reduction in our modifiers, this should relate to a rate decrease for the 2020-21 renewal period. Also, the Board approved an increase in our package discount to 5%. Since the City is a member of the NCIRMA and IRFFNC pools, we will receive this discount. The City can expect a 5% rate increase to our property and liability insurance. The IRFFN pool is experiencing a large increase of approximately 20% in our reinsurance. This was the primary reason for the rate increase. This can be directly contributed to the hurricanes that have hit our region over the last three years. Finally, our health insurance pools will all see an increase. The pool the City is a member of will receive an increase of 19.2%. This amount is the average the insurance group will experience. The City of Elizabeth City's health insurance experience was extremely good and although we do not have our official renewal rate as of yet, I do not expect a rate increase for us.

3. On February 19<sup>th</sup>, the Albemarle Rural Planning Organization (ARPO) held a board meeting in the Town of Hertford to discuss Division One DOT updates and proceed with committee meetings. The director of the Highway 17/64 Association, Marc Finlayson made a presentation between board meetings to update the group on the latest budget limitations with NC DOT. Through Senate Bill 356, NC DOT will have access to a total of \$290 million and the creation of a rainy day fund. The Department, in return, will have to meet strict financial reporting requirements set forth by the General Assembly. With the current budget limitations, over 900 projects in the engineering/design phase have been put on hold across the state. Locally, this has affected two major projects in Elizabeth City. Preliminary plans for the Hughes, US 17 South, and Oak Stump corridors have been on hold since August. We have not received word on when these projects will be released to continue.
4. On February 19<sup>th</sup>, the Elizabeth City Waste Water Treatment Plant lab inspection was performed on July 23, 2019 and received final approval. Our prior inspection was performed on December 8, 2009; normally, these occur are every two years, but the State has had significant staffing shortages. After the inspection was completed, our bench sheets, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), and parameter procedures underwent drastic changes as evidenced by the 38 discrepancies discovered. We now have updated bench sheets and all new SOP's for all parameters, quality control for all parameters, detailed data tracking through Excel, and reagent tracking for traceability. The lab was brought up to speed on the correct methods for calibrating and troubleshooting lab equipment. Modern statistical methods are now used to validate data.

More sophisticated mathematical evaluations of the data allow greater confidence in reporting. This was a multifaceted effort of the Lab Supervisor, Chief Operator, Superintendent and Operators to review and implement a comprehensive update in methods and certifications allowing us to continue to serve the community with solid science and environmental stewardship.

5. On Wednesday, Public Utilities staff used their new sewer camera on Brooks Avenue and Ray Street. With the camera, staff can now better evaluate the sewer line conditions. This information will help the City write compelling grant applications to fund needed repairs. Later this year, the City will apply to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's Community Development Block Grant-Infrastructure program. If awarded, this grant will provide the City up to \$929,563.45 to repair water and sewer lines.



6. In 2019, the Parks and Recreation department was one of 18 state-wide departments to obtain an Explore Archery Grant. This grant was received from USA Archery, in partnership with the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association (NCRPA). As a requirement of the grant, the Parks and Recreation Department had to implement a beginner to



intermediate archery program. On Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the department hosted its first Try Archery program at the Knobbs Creek Recreation Center for ages seven and up. With high attendance numbers from a diverse group of citizens, the program was a huge success!

7. For the month of February, our Code Enforcement Division has had a total of 48 new cases so far. From 02/01/2020 to 02/20/2020, 56 cases have been closed, with 82 cases still active.

**UPCOMING EVENT**

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City will meet in Work and Regular Session on Monday, February 24, 2020, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, located on the second floor of the municipal building at 306 East Colonial Avenue.