



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 ~ January 24, 2020
COPY: Email Distribution

1. The City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) received an unmodified (or clean) opinion, meaning that the auditors did not find anything indicating that the financial statements are not accurate. In addition, the auditors did not have any findings concerning the City's compliance with NC General Statutes. [Please click here to see the report.](#) 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 due to purchasing a trencher and a digger derrick truck. The Water & Sewer Fund was \$1,438,907, an increase of \$1,487,706, due to a \$1 million debt payment being paid off. The Stormwater Fund amounted to \$1,279,224, a decrease of \$146,372 due to normal operations. The Solid Waste Fund was \$(297,604), an increase of \$109,221 due to an increase in garbage collection fees. I'd like to thank Director Suzanne Tungate and Evelyn Benton for all their hard work in preparing the audit.
2. On Wednesday, I attended the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA) meeting in Wilson. During the meeting, CEO Ray Jones informed us that we received a \$3.1 million favorable billing adjustment that was a result of ongoing cost challenges with Duke Energy Progress. In addition, we received a report on NCEMPA's liability for coal ash removal. The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) issued an order effective December 1, 2019, requiring excavation of coal ash basins at six additional plants including Roxboro

and Mayo, which NCEMPA had part ownership. Initially, Duke appealed the order; however, a settlement was reached with NCDEQ on December 31, 2019. Due to the settlement agreement, our approved rate plan will not need to be modified. The NCEMPA Board of Commissioners confirmed the action taken by the Rate Committee at their January 9, 2020 meeting to lower our wholesale rates by 1% beginning April 1, 2020. Staff will be evaluating if we should adjust our retail rates. Any adjustments will be proposed in the 2020-2021 Budget.

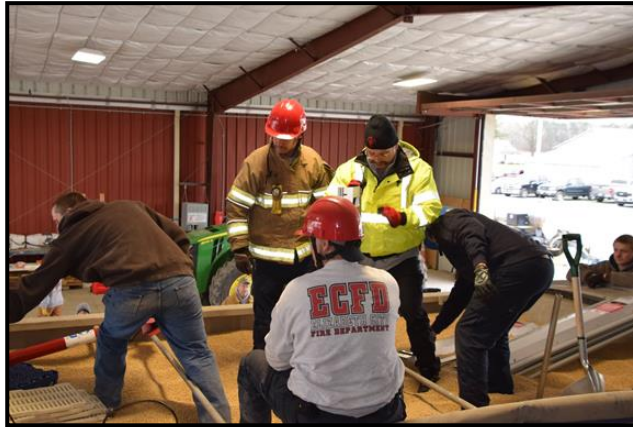
3. The City of Elizabeth City Public Utilities Department applied for two grants from North Carolina Risk Management Services (NCLM RMS). The first grant was applied for on August 23, 2019 and was for the purchase of a sewer inspection camera utilizing funds from the property and liability pool. A sewer inspection camera is a critical tool in the inspection of sewer mains. By being able to visually inspect the sewer mains, the department is better able to abate potential sewer backups into residences. The second grant was applied for on October 10, 2019, and was for an access control system utilizing funds from the worker's compensation pool. The access control system is necessary at the department's location on Pritchard Street to provide improved worker safety. Within the last week, the City has been notified that we were awarded funding for both grants. The maximum funding allowed per grant is \$5,000. The City received the maximum for both grants for a total of \$10,000.
4. Last week, Lead for North Carolina (LFNC) Fellow Shom Tiwari, Public Utilities Director Amanda Boone, and Assistant City Manager Angela Cole attended LFNC's Winter Training at the University of North Carolina School of Government. Our three representatives engaged with fellows and supervisors from 15 other jurisdictions participating in the LFNC program. The training featured comprehensive workshops, including Women in Local Government Leadership and Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Sector. Shom also presented on grants he has helped to assess, upgrades antiquated sanitary sewer infrastructure, and making Elizabeth City more resilient against hurricanes.
5. In his time with the City thus far, Shom has worked on various other projects, including an ADA Transition Plan to ensure all City facilities are accessible to people with disabilities; a risk and resiliency plan for the City's water system to prepare for potential emergency threats; and a presentation to the Local Emergency Planning Committee about safety procedures surrounding the chemicals used at the water and wastewater treatment plants. As Shom continues his two-year fellowship with the City, he will also work on a stormwater management plan and stormwater pollution prevention plan to fulfill EPA permitting requirements and ensure the City's preparedness for addressing potential contaminants in our stormwater system. In February, Shom will attend the North Carolina City

and County Management Association's Winter Conference to present on his experiences as an LFNC Fellow in Elizabeth City. In addition, he will be speaking at the League of Cities Board Meeting at the end of February in Duck.

6. The UNC School of Government has been providing workshops over the past several weeks for local officials and staff to address the new North Carolina General Statute 160-D that involves local development regulations. The School of Government has been providing resources and training for implementation of Chapter 160-D to all municipalities and counties in North Carolina. The new Chapter 160-D of the North Carolina General Statutes consolidates current statutes for local development regulations (now in Chapters 153-A and 160-A) into a single, unified chapter, and places these statutes into a more logical, coherent organization. While the new law does not make major policy changes or shifts in the scope of authority granted to local governments, it does provide many clarifying amendments and consensus reforms that will need to be incorporated into local development regulations before January 2021. From our staff, City planners Kellen Long and Cheryl Eggar attended the workshop hosted by the UNC School of Government team this past week. One major change in Chapter 160-D is that in order to enforce zoning regulations, all counties and municipalities must have a comprehensive plan in place that has been adopted by their governing board. The City has a joint CAMA land use plan with Pasquotank County that serves as our comprehensive plan. This plan was adopted by the City in 2012, and will allow us to maintain all existing zoning and development regulations.

7. The first bow hunting season overseen by the City of Elizabeth City Police Department ended on January 1, 2020. As you may recall, last February, the City Council approved an amendment to our City Ordinance to permit bow hunting of deer on the City-owned property located on Wellfield / Thunder Road. The Police Department began issuing permits on August 7, 2019; and the official hunting season ran from September 7, 2019 through January 1, 2020, in accordance with the North Carolina Wildlife Commission's hunting season guidelines. The Police Department issued a total of 13 permits. A hunting calendar was created and maintained by staff; each hunter had to call to reserve which day they wanted to hunt, and only two hunters, per the ordinance, were permitted to hunt per day. At the end of the season, City staff made contact with all those who were issued permits, not only to receive a count on how many deer were taken but also to receive feedback on the overall experience. Out of the 13 who had applied to hunt the land, four individuals did not follow through with hunting. The remaining nine individuals who hunted on the property advised that they are excited to return in September. Overall, it was reported that seven doe and two bucks were taken on the property.

8. This past weekend, members of the Elizabeth City Fire Department Technical Rescue team had the opportunity to do hands-on training in Perquimans County. The team was invited to Eure Farms, which has active grain bins to practice grain bin rescue techniques in a controlled environment.



These types of rescues require extensive knowledge to conduct them safe and effectively. The fire departments in Perquimans County along with Perquimans EMS also participated in the training. LaMar Grafft of the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute was on hand to provide guidance for all of those who participated, as well as an overall critique of the training. A large-scale exercise is planned for February 29th to test what has been learned during these trainings. In the last couple of years, our fire department has been involved in several of these types of rescues and I am proud of the amount of time and energy they put into keeping our community safe.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City will meet in Work and Regular Session on Monday, January 27, 2020, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, located on the second floor of the municipal building at 306 East Colonial Avenue.