

Holly Gray, Mayor Pro-Tem
Bryan Moyers, Council Member
David Brundage, Council Member



Carl E. Gierisch, Jr., Mayor

Brian Darby, Council Member
Hogan Page, Council Member
David Thompson, Council Member

**MINUTES
ROANOKE CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP
AUGUST 22, 2024
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
500 S. OAK STREET
7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Carl E. "Scooter" Gierisch, Jr.; Mayor Pro Tem Holly Gray; Council Members: David Thompson, David Brundage, and Hogan Page; City Manager Cody Petree, and City Secretary April S. Hill.

DEPT. STAFF: Assistant City Manager/Chief of Police Jeriahme Miller, Fire Chief Chris Addington, Assistant Chief of Police Jeff Williams, Finance Director Kyle Lester, IT Manager Blake Gore, Economic Development Manager Siale Langi, and Communication and Public Administrator/Marketing Carissa Katekaru.

ABSENT: Council members Brian Darby and Bryan Moyers.

A. CALL CITY COUNCIL TO ORDER

City Council called to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. PUBLIC INPUT

No one wished to speak.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of board and commission member appointments.

Mayor Pro Tem Holly Gray stated during the appointment of board members, there have been several occurrences of an overabundance of members from the same Ward being appointed to the same board. Mayor Pro Tem Gray explained there had been discussions on how to better represent all of the Wards.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray suggested the Mayor and City Council members appoint a board member from each Ward, meaning the Mayor would appoint a member at large, and each City Council member would appoint a member from their Ward. This would allow good representation from each Ward and would not cause the loss of members who have served for a long time, maintaining the historical knowledge.



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City Manager Cody Petree stated the Roanoke Economic and Industrial Development Corporation Type A is a 5-person board, so that could be a challenge.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray asked if the number of members could be extended.

Mr. Petree stated the board is currently well represented, as it has one (1) member from each Ward, with there being two (2) members from Ward 1.

Councilmember Thompson stated none of the boards are just three (3) members, so there will be at least one (1) member from each Ward.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray stated appointments can be from each Ward and include "at large" members. Mayor Pro Tem Gray further stated she is not sure on how it should be implemented. Mayor Pro Tem Gray suggested moving forward the board appointments be handled in this manner, as opposed to reappointing all of the board members at once.

Councilmember Thompson stated as of right now most of the boards are well represented, with the exception of two (2) boards.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray suggested setting a limit of how many boards a member can serve on. Board members should be limited to serving on a maximum of two (2) boards at a time.

Councilmember Thompson was in agreement.

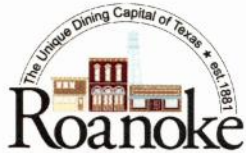
Mayor Gierisch read a statement from Councilmember Bryan Moyers who was unable to attend the workshop.

Mayor and fellow Council Members,
I apologize for having to miss this workshop discussion about a couple of the topics I am passionate about. Thank you for focusing on board nominations and appointments equally from each Ward across Roanoke, whenever possible. I am also very in favor of creating a legislative board, so that we can keep better tabs on what's going on the state level and how it will affect Roanoke citizens.

City Council Member Bryan Moyers

Mayor Gierisch stated in the past, it was difficult to get volunteers to serve on the boards. However, we are now getting a lot more volunteers, which is a great blessing to our city.

Mayor Gierisch and City Council discussed the current representation of all of the boards.



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Mayor Pro Tem Gray stated the Parks and Recreation board and the Keep Roanoke Beautiful board could be handled differently, as they are advisory boards.

Direction for staff:

1. The three (3) Wards (City Council members) would choose one (1) member, the Mayor would choose one (1) member, and the remaining members will be at large.
 - On boards with six (6) members, there will be two (2) at large seats.
 - On boards with seven (7) members, there will be three (3) at large seats.
2. Limit the number of boards a member can serve on at one time. (2 board maximum)

Councilmember Hogan Page asked what would be the protocol if we didn't receive applications from every Ward.

Mr. Petree suggested the seats would then become at large.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray was in agreement.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray further explained that the city receives applications that are not completely filled out, and from applicants who have never attended a meeting.

3. If applications are not filled out in its entirety, the application will be disqualified and will not be considered.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray asked Mr. Petree if it would be better to implement this as board seats become available.

Mr. Petree stated it would be better to implement as we move forward. Mr. Petree explained that trying to implement it with all of the boards at once, can be very challenging.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray suggested a Saturday workshop/meeting with all board members to better inform them on what each board does.

Councilmember Thompson stated training on open records and the "do's" and "don'ts" of meetings would be good.

Mr. Petree explained invitations are sent out to board members for training, but there isn't always an interest in attendance.

Mayor Gierisch asked board members, who were in attendance of the workshop, if they would like to give some input.



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Helen Ward, Roanoke resident, stated she proudly serves on two (2) boards. Mrs. Ward stated it should be a requirement of attendance at a few City Council meetings, prior to applying to a board. This would allow applicants to know more about what is going on in the city. Mrs. Ward stated attendance of board members should be adhered to and enforced. Mrs. Ward further explained, members should be removed if they do not comply with the attendance requirements. Mrs. Ward stated that board members who have served on the board "since day one," should be removed, because they no longer have "fresh ideas." Mrs. Ward suggested City Council members attend board meetings to see how the appointed members are conducting themselves, and since the City Council appoints these members, they can remove these members.

Angie Grimm, Roanoke resident, stated she has been on the Parks and Recreation board for 15 years, and has a lot of knowledge of the city's history, which has been very helpful. Mrs. Grimm explained that it is important to have long tenured members, in addition to new members. Mrs. Grimm stated it is also important that City Council members attend board meetings, to get a glimpse of how the board members work together, and hear their ideas. This would also allow City Council members an opportunity to get to know the people in their Ward.

Kristie Womack, Roanoke resident, former Planning and Zoning Commission member, addressed the commitment issue that City Council is looking for. Mrs. Womack suggested City Council take into consideration the work/life/family balance along with commitment to the boards. Mrs. Womack explained that due to situations her family's health, her attendance was higher than it should have been. Mrs. Womack further explained that she also has work commitments, that at times has caused additional absences. Commitment isn't just showing up at every meeting, commitment is years dedicated to serving. Mrs. Womack suggested that applicants with experience applicable to a specific board, should also be taken into consideration, instead of limiting it to "if they attend meetings prior to applying".

Mayor Pro Tem Gray stated it is very rare that an applicant has the applicable experience.

Mrs. Womack stated there are some applicants that may have some experience that would bring in that practical application and knowledge to the board.

Mayor Gierisch stated those who have served for a long time, sometimes get complacent and can at times take it for granted.

Councilmember Hogan Page asked if someone is serving on the maximum of two (2) boards, but are interested in serving on a different board. Would they have to resign from one of their boards prior to applying, or how will that work?



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Councilmember Thompson stated we would tell them to go ahead and apply, but if appointed, you will have to drop one of the other boards.

Councilmember Page asked if they would immediately have to drop out, or would they finish out their term.

Councilmember Thompson stated it would be immediately.

2. Discussion of creating a Legislative Committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Holly Gray stated this is something she has wanted to do for a long time, as she is very involved with Texas Municipal League (TML) and the legislative policy, testifying on behalf of the city multiple times in Austin. Mayor Pro Tem Gray explained what she would like to do is create a Legislative Policy Committee, consisting of a maximum of three (3) City Council members and 5 or 6 citizens to serve on the committee. The purpose of the committee would be to have City Council set the legislative policy, or have the committee recommend what the policy will be, in relation to the next legislative session. An example is "oppose anything that erodes city policy". The committee would go through the package, to know what is being filed, and they would set that policy. The committee would attend the "Denton County Days" in Austin, in addition to another time and meet with legislatures. The most important thing the committee will do is to make calls and send emails to our representatives when bills come out that the city opposes. This committee will allow the representatives to hear from their Roanoke constituency, on bills that are opposed, which has a greater impact. Mayor Pro Tem Gray explained the committee will be active as soon as it is created and members appointed and go through June 2025, and a new committee will be appointed every 2 years, when the legislature meets.

Mr. Petree stated we have a draft resolution for review. It will be placed on the agenda once it has been reviewed.

Councilmember Page stated this is a great idea.

Mr. Petree stated staff has already prepared some information to give to the committee, once the appoints have been made.

Councilmember Thompson asked if there was no action this evening, and it will go on the next agenda.

Mr. Petree stated it would be several weeks before we place it on an agenda.

Councilmember Thompson asked what is the deadline in getting the committee appointed and ready to go.



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Mayor Pro Tem Gray stated November 2024, and it is important to make sure committee members know how much of a commitment this will be.

3. Discussion of the FY2024-2025 preliminary budget.

Mr. Petree stated staff was asked to place this item on here and a memo was given to City Council. Mr. Petree further stated staff is available to answer any questions.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray asked if there was a way to hold the tax rate. Mayor Pro Tem Gray also asked if some items can be placed on pause for now, to avoid an increase.

Councilmember David Brundage stated it was discussed how to raise revenue, but there was no discussion about reducing expenses.

Mayor Gierisch stated that some of the discussion during the budget workshop involved money that was not drawing interest, however, now it is. Mayor Gierisch stated he would rather use the interest, instead of raising taxes.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray stated there are a lot of cities raising taxes.

Mayor Gierisch stated some cities are offsetting the increase with exemptions; however, we are at the maximum of our exemptions.

Mr. Petree explained that staff is looking at the long-term budget and want to make sure we are keeping the same level of service(s) to residents and employees.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray stated it does not make sense to raise taxes this year, because the school district has recently raised their taxes, and the city will be going out for a bond next May.

Councilmember Thompson stated he agrees the increase should be postponed until next year.

Councilmember Brundage asked if budget projections take into account that assessed values will go up.

Finance Director Kyle Lester gave an overview and explanation of how the assessed values affect revenues.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray explained the City of Roanoke still has one of the lowest tax rates.

Kristie Womack addressed the City Council stating she would rather a tax increase happen now, as opposed it being a larger increase later.



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Mayor Pro Tem Gray asked attendees what they thought about an increase.

Mrs. Ward stated she leans towards doing the increase now.

Mrs. Grimm stated you can never make everyone happy, but maybe staff can look at where costs can be cut.

Mrs. Womack the decision should not be based upon financial/political climate, because she would hate to see the city suffer to avoid making the decision and being the "bad guy".

Mr. Petree stated our services will not decline if the rate is not increased. Police and Fire will not suffer, nor will city amenities.

Mr. Lester explained the sustainability.

After much discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Gray asked for staff to put together a much smaller memo that will show possible cuts that can be made.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Holly Gray second by David Thompson to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

April S. Hill, City Secretary

Carl E. "Scooter" Gierisch, Jr., Mayor

