1. I have received the proposed budget for the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA). NCEMPA runs on a calendar year, unlike the City’s fiscal year, which is from July 1\textsuperscript{st} through June 30\textsuperscript{th}. The budget will be presented to the Board of Commissioners on November 14, 2019. The total 2019 budget for the agency is $545.1 million dollars. Eighty-seven percent of the budget will be spent on the purchase of power from Duke Energy Progress. Under the FRPPA agreement, Debt Service associated with the defeasance of bonds will be $51.1 million. At the end of 2019, the amount of outstanding debt will be $268.2 million. The debt is scheduled to be completely paid off in 2025. The budget calls for a 1.3% increase in the City of Elizabeth City wholesale rate in April of 2019. The rate committee will meet in January to discuss the purposed rate increase. In addition, a 3% rate increase is scheduled in April 2020 under our long-term rate plan. Even with the rate increase in 2019, the City of Elizabeth City will still have some of the lowest retail rates in the southeast and the state, as a whole. To balance our budget in 2019, NCEMPA will be decreasing our net position by $20 million. CEO Roy Jones and his staff have provided the Board a very responsible budget document.

2. This week, the construction supervisor for James Flanigan of J.D. Lewis Construction Company submitted official building plans to the City for the Weatherly Lofts Project. Plan submission brings the project one step closer to fruition. City staff from Inspections and the Fire Department will review the plans and work with the developer on any required changes. The Weatherly Lofts project will transition the former Weatherly Candy Company/Mattress Outlet property at 225 North Water Street and the adjacent buildings into more than 40 market-rate studio apartments. The City is excited about this transformational project for our downtown.
3. In February, I informed you of a customer satisfaction survey opportunity being offered to the City, free of charge, from ElectriCities. GreatBlue was hired by ElectriCities to conduct a comprehensive survey of Elizabeth City electric utility residential and commercial customers. The primary aim of the survey was to gain a deeper understanding into customer perceptions of and satisfaction with the services we provide. Using quantitative metrics, GreatBlue was able to measure our customer interest in key programs and services. Elizabeth City received an average positive rating of 53.8% among residential customers and 57.4% among commercial customers. This was driven by the highest positive ratings being recorded for “providing reliable electric service.”

4. Customer service personnel performed well, as 74% of residential customers and 58.6% of commercial customers were satisfied with the Elizabeth City representative who handled their call or visit. The top reasons for contact between both customer bases were related to billing questions, payments, and high bills. The largest frequency of Elizabeth City residential customers prefer to pay their bill through “hand delivering” it (45.9%), whereas two-fifths of commercial customers report “mailing” their monthly bill payment (39.0%). 69.7% of residential customers surveyed believe that Elizabeth City electric utility rates are higher than surrounding utilities; 80.5% of commercial customers believe this as well. Only 27.9% of residential customers and 34.1% of commercial customers responded positively that Elizabeth City is “providing good value for the cost of electricity.” I do believe only when we are able to fully implement the Tyler Utility Billing Software will we be able to address several issues brought up in the survey. A number of our citizens want to receive notification of their bill amount and reminders via text messages. This is one of the options offered by Tyler. I have asked ElectriCities to provide us survey results from other cities as a way to benchmark us against them. Once I receive this information, I should be able to develop a strategy on how we can improve our service.

5. Today, the CIS Utility Billing Executive Committee held its bi-weekly conference call with Tyler Technologies and ElectriCities to discuss our progress with the software conversion. This morning’s conference worked through an action plan in order to complete a “pull” of the existing Logics software data. The conversion of our data has been especially problematic because there are a number of junk characters embedded within the data. These extra commas, alpha and numeric characters create an obstacle, not allowing the remainder of the data and codes to convert. The City previously reported that a third-party vendor specializing in converting Logics Classic data (the type the City Electric Utility currently has) to readable data tables has been hired. Newcombe Computers has developed a work-around conversion that was successfully used with
Logics conversions in other cities. The team remains hopeful that our vendor will be successful and plan to re-visit this project element on Monday. The goal is to convert 10 years of historical account data, while maintaining the balance of our 30-year account history on a virtual server within the Customer Service City Hall offices. All other data files necessary for the conversion – balance, write-off, and deposit reports – have been generated and transmitted to Tyler representatives. If the work-around is not successful, the City will have to engage the Logics Solutions firm to develop a software application that will complete the full data extraction. The quoted price to complete the task using Logics is $15,210.00. I will exercise this opportunity only as the City’s last option. The team also discussed the details of our upcoming on-site visit with Tyler representatives. Tuesday through Thursday of next week, Customer Service representatives and Data Processing personnel will be reviewing our business processes, receiving software demonstrations, and finalizing our billing survey.

6. On September 27th, several employees tested for wastewater certifications. I am pleased to report the following certifications were obtained: Darren Rummel and Joe Murray – Grade II Wastewater; Amanda Boone – Collections I. Similarly, October 25th, was water exam day. I am pleased to report the following certifications were obtained: Travis Tucker – A-Well; Julius Williams and Richard Perkins – Cross-Connection; Raymond Staten, Bob Rice and Derrick Wisdom – C-Distribution; Amanda Boone – B-Distribution. The City operates an A-Well Water Treatment Plant, Grade IV Wastewater Plant, A-Distribution system and Grade III Collections system. We encourage all operators to continue their education and certifications to advance and have a successful career in the water and sewer industry. Congratulations and great job!

7. City staff met with representatives of the contractor and engineering services firm for the Parkview Interceptor Project on Thursday, November 1st. The boring portion of the project has been completed and the contractor is now working on making the appropriate tie-ins at either end and coating the manholes. Once the work on the upstream end at Parkview has been completed, the contractor will proceed with repairing and paving the roadway. Staff is anticipating the road will be back open by Thanksgiving. The project will not be complete, but will be focused at the pump station on Grace Drive.

8. Yesterday was the informational and open house meeting for the Tiber Creek Watershed. The meeting began with introductions of the project team and City representatives by AECOM, the engineering firm working on the project. Introductions were followed by a general overview and history of the watershed. AECOM then detailed the process for the project moving forward and the objectives of the open house. To date, about 18
responses have been received from residents in the watershed. Four of those personally attended the open house and provided information on issues within the watershed to the consultants.

9. On Tuesday, the City’s Wellness Team sponsored their first Breast Cancer Awareness Bra-ha-ha event. The Bra-ha-ha is a unique experience that celebrates artistry and survivorship of breast cancer. City staff members decorated bras in some of the most creative, hilarious and eye-catching ways imaginable. Using bras as their canvas, these employees were challenged to construct unique and over-the-top designs using breast cancer awareness as inspiration. These humorous and heartwarming masterpieces were unveiled during the event while male city employees modeled the bras, during the catwalk display. There were about 75 employees who participated in this event. This year’s winners are: Electric Foreman Jason Value; Human Resources Receptionist Joyce Pendleton; Customer Service Representative Tiffany Jernigan; and Human Resources Director Montique McClary. The Bra-ha-ha encompasses a weeklong bra exhibition that concluded today. I would like to thank my co-judges City Clerk April Onley and Deputy Finance Director Evelyn Benton for voting on the winners. A big thank you to the Elizabeth City Wellness Team for another fun-filled engaging event.

10. In February, the City Council approved a Business Investment Program grant for the Albemarle Theaters, LLC. The BIP grant was also approved by the County around the same time. The agreement has been on hold, waiting for the theater to complete the subdivision process for the property on where it’s going to be located. The subdivision process has been completed and recorded with the County. Since this process is now complete, the City, County and Albemarle Theaters, LLC can complete the BIP Agreement. The agreement calls for Albemarle Theaters, LLC to invest $8 million to develop the site and building. For this level of investment, the City and County will provide a grant back to the business in the amount of property taxes paid yearly, which will decline by 10% a year over a ten-year period. Albemarle Theater hopes to have the new eight-plex theater opened by October 2019.

11. This week, the Elizabeth City Police Department received a donation of a ballistic canine vest from SpikesK9Fund.Org, a non-profit organization that
gives donations to law enforcement agencies with active K-9 Units. The vest, valued at $2,500.00, is custom fit, lightweight, and guaranteed for life. It is built to exceed Threat Level II standards and stop a variety of handgun rounds and bladed weapon attacks. It has built-in load bearing harness system rated to 2,500 lbs., which enables it to be worn on all deployments. The vest allows the police canine in the field to maintain full mobility and agility. The donation of the ballistic canine vest to the Elizabeth City Police Department was approved by the City Council in July. Now that the vest is in, it has been issued to ECPD K-9 “Colt” who will begin to use it in the field immediately.

12. This morning, Assistant City Manager Cole and I led a debriefing meeting with Elizabeth City State University representatives and City personnel. Our discussion centered on the 2018 ECSU Homecoming events occurring last week. As a best practice measure for our major community-wide special events – ECSU Homecoming, Potato Festival, Independence Day, etc. – staff conducts an examination and review of event planning, execution, and suggestions for the future. City representatives included police and fire officials, risk and safety analyst, parks specialist, electric utility and public streets superintendents, and the event coordinator – all of these individuals, including Emergency Management, make up the Special Event Permit Team. We also had a brief discussion on changing the route for next year’s parade. I thank ECSU Police Chief John Manley, Director of Community and Economic Engagement Russ Haddad, and University Advancement Executive Assistant Aileen Whidbee for participating in today’s meeting and providing feedback to us on staff performance and City engagement. ACM Cole and I will be communicating a list of recommendations to Vice Chancellor of University Advancement Dr. John Lee. Although our mighty Vikings did not fare well during gameplay, I congratulate them and all ECSU alumni on another safe and successful homecoming event. Viking Pride. Viking Pride. Viking Pride!

13. **First Friday ArtWalk – Tonight – 5:00-7:00 pm, Downtown Elizabeth City**

Every First Friday of the month many art studios and businesses in downtown Elizabeth City are open from 5:00 pm until 7ish for our First Friday ArtWalk! Guest artists along with food and music abound as the downtown streets come to life. Come down to see all of our local creativity and stay and eat dinner at one of our several great restaurants downtown. November’s First Friday ArtWalk promises to be an extra-spectacular event with twenty-three (23) participating venues! Grand openings, student artists, visiting artists, and live music are all part of the plan this month. Not to mention a 10-foot
giant walk-through colon, which will absolutely be a unique experience. Friday night will be the near-culmination of Arts of the Albemarle’s Art SPLASH event with visiting artists from throughout the region, state and nation who gathered in Elizabeth City for the weeklong creative event. The main SPLASH artists will be set up in Studio 10 with various pop-up venues throughout downtown. ArtWalk will also be partnering this month with the local community college, College of the Albemarle, who will have student artists, displays, demos and activities at eleven locations in downtown. It’s exciting that there will be four new downtown businesses hosting artists as well as their grand openings as part of the First Friday events. Come early for the pre-ArtWalk activities coordinated by COA -- games, popcorn -- at Mariners' Wharf Park starting at 3:30 (weather permitting).

**Upcoming Events:**

- City offices will be closed on Monday, November 12th, in observance of Veteran’s Day.

- The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City will meet at Tuesday, November 13, 2018 in Council Chambers and at 7:00 p.m. for a Regular Session on the 2nd floor of the Gardner Municipal Building.