

The regularly schedule meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, January 6, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor William Mays presiding.

Present: Mark Caruso, Joseph Fawbush, Delores Belcher, and William Mays

Absent: Only Four Council Membes at this Time Due to Vacancy of Former Councilmember Terry Roop's Seat. Appointment Pending.

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

The invocation was given by Father Tim Drake and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Police Chief James C. Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the December 16, 2014 meeting as presented.

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There was no response to the Mayor's call for visitors.

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The City Manager advised Council that an update will be given to them on the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation by Ms. Becky Nave, Public Relations and Marketing Director, and Mr. Jack Morgan, Policy Analyst.

Ms. Nave advised that a Southwest Virginia Marketing Committee of 19 counties had been formed and their first annual restructuring meeting was held in Damascus. There will be four annual meetings and the next is scheduled the end of the month in Blacksburg.

She advised of the various venues which can be used to advertise local events, such as My Southwest Virginia.org website, Virginia Tourism, and also advised of upcoming events during this year.

Following her presentation, Ms. Nave answered questions from Council.

Mr. Morgan gave a brief presentation advising of tourism's economic impact on the region, which is up 45%, which is above state level. There has been a 32% increase in local tax revenue from travels with the City of Norton listed as #2 in increase with a percentage rate of 61.1%. A total of \$765,667 was estimated to be the local tax revenue from travelers in 2013 in the City. Regionally, Meals and Lodging Taxes more than doubled.

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Council was advised that they will soon be planning the next Outdoor Expo which had 1,000 people from 9 states in attendance last year. He further discussed the impact this had on quality of life and human capital, business growth, and outdoor recreation.

Both Ms. Nave and Mr. Morgan advised they would help the City in any way they could.

Mayor Mays and Council thanked both of them for their presentations.

Ms. Tamara Greear, of Thrower, Blanton, & Associates presented Council members with a copy of the 2013-2014 fiscal audit for the City for the period ending June 30, 2014.

Ms. Greear stated she would like to thank City staff for working with them on this audit and allowing the state deadline to be met. She also extended thanks to Dr. Perrigan, Superintendent of the Norton City Schools, and his employees for meeting this same deadline.

In her presentation, she advised that the City had an unmodified or clean opinion. There was one issue with an untimely reimbursement with the Social Services Department; however that has been corrected. She discussed with Council the various funds and stated there were negative balances in some, especially the Water and Sewer Funds. She stated that this could have a negative impact on obtaining future funding for various projects. School Board funding has increased from 1.5 million dollars in 2005 to 2.4 million dollars in 2014.

In discussing the City's position compared with other localities, Councilman Fawbush stated everyone knows what localities are going through. Councilman Caruso stated the City has excellent administrative guidance and that the City Manager and Finance Director have expertise and are very knowledgeable.

Ms. Greear also advised that the City should use caution on spending in the upcoming year.

Following a lengthy discussion, Ms. Greear advised they would be willing to help in any way and should Council members have any questions regarding the audit, she asked that they call her.

In their packets, Council had a list of fiscal year 2014 encumbrances for which a public hearing needs to be held. The City Administration is asking for authorization to advertise this public hearing at the January 20th meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council authorized the City Manager to advertise a public hearing to be held on January 20, 2015 on the encumbrances.

Council had been presented in their packets a copy of a transfer and a check for approval. The transfer was to Norton City Schools in the amount of \$135,000 to cover payroll and the check was to Thomas Construction Company in the amount of \$154,906.11 for Pay Application #10.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve the above check and transfer as specified.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to go into closed meeting to discuss personnel as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, as amended and Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7) of the Code of Virginia as amended regarding consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal counsel.

Mayor Mays declared Council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to go back in open meeting.

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Mayor Mays declared Council back in open meeting.

The Clerk polled each member of Council as to the Certification of Closed Meeting with each answering yes. The Clerk then read A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by the following unanimous vote: YES – Caruso, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

25374

The Mayor opened the floor for nominations to the City of Norton Community Policy and Management Board as a Council representative.

Councilman Caruso nominated Councilwoman Belcher.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease.

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Mayor Mays declared Councilwoman Delores Belcher appointed to the City of Norton Community Policy and Management Board as a Council representative. This term will expire November 15, 2018.

Mayor Mays opened the floor for an appointment to the Southwest Virginia Emergency Medical Services Council for a one year term to expire January 31, 2016.

Councilman Fawbush nominated Todd Lagow to be reappointed to this Council.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease.

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Mayor Mays declared Todd Lagow reappointed to the Southwest Virginia Emergency Medical Services Council for a one year term which will expire on January 31, 2016.

At this time, a motion was made by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, for the City Attorney to notify the Wise County Circuit Court and the City of Norton Election Board of a vacancy on Council and that Council wishes to schedule an election at the next General Election held within the City.

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In comments from the City Manager, Mr. Ramey advised that:

He had placed, at each Council member's desk, a 2015 Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful calendar. The picture for the month of July is one of Norton.

Presented council members a copy of the 2015 State Holiday Schedule which contains the holidays the City will observe.

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City employees will be recognized and receive their tenure pins at the next meeting.

There will be upcoming events in the City sponsored by the Parks & Recreation Department and the Wise County Extension Office.

The City offices will be closed on January 16th for Lee-Jackson Day and Monday, January 19th for the Martin Luther King holiday.

There were no comments from the City Attorney.

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In comments from Council, members advised that:

Councilwoman Belcher stated she is learning as she goes along.

Councilman Fawbush welcomed Councilwoman Belcher.

Councilman Caruso also welcomed Councilwoman Belcher and stated he would like to thank, in advance, the City's emergency service workers as winter is just beginning. Thanks also were extended to Fred, Jeff, and all those on getting the information on the audit process completed on time.

Thanks was extended to the City Attorney for the work done on collecting back taxes.

Thanks were extended to Mary Brown for her work on City Council.

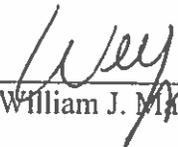
He is looking forward to the New Year.

Mayor Mays advised also extended a welcome to Councilman Belcher.

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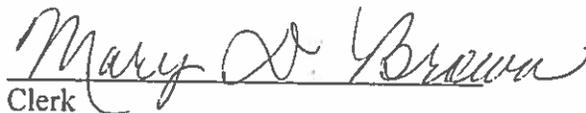
There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William J. Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk