

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, September 15, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

Present: Mark Caruso, Robert Fultz, Jr., William Mays, Joseph Fawbush and Dee Belcher

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

The invocation was given by Reverend Ken Taylor and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Police Chief James Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following vote: YES – Fultz, Caruso, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, ABSTAIN – Fawbush (absent at previous meeting), Council moved to adopt the minutes of the September 1, 2015 meeting as presented.

During the Mayor's call for visitors, Mrs. Jane Sandt, Co-founder of Helping Hands of the City of Norton informed Council that this organization held their first Heart and Soul 5K on Saturday, September 12, 2015. Mrs. Sandt advised Council that Helping Hands had a lot of support from Mr. Ramey and the City to ensure the run was successful. Helping Hands raised over \$7,000.00 to buy shoes for children in the Norton City School system.

Linda Leonard, 1005 Virginia Avenue, N.W., came forward to express her thanks to Council for their support of Arts in the Park. There were more artists this year and the City was well represented by musicians. She also expressed her thanks to Mr. Ramey for his support and to the City workers for going above and beyond to help the artists. Ms. Leonard stated even though the weather did not cooperate she considers the event a success.

At this time, Mayor Mays advised he would like to amend the agenda to include 6-C-1 Consideration of Resolution Proclaiming Friday, October 2, 2015 International Walk to School Day in the City of Norton.

It was the consensus of Council for the agenda to be amended.

Mr. Sam Adams, one of the coaches of the 9 & 10 Year Old Girls District 13 Champions and other coaches and players, presented Council with a photo of the team and thanked Council for their support of their trip to the State Tournament in Leesburg, Virginia. Mr. Adams advised Council the players also visited Washington, D.C. and showed Council a Power Point presentation of their visit to the monuments in D.C.

Council thanked the coaches and players for their hard work and for representing the City of Norton.

Included in Council's packets was a Proposed Utility Vehicle Ordinance for their consideration.

Mr. Bradshaw gave Council an overview of the proposed ordinance and advised Council they needed to determine which roads utility vehicles would be allowed to operate on and operator requirements.

After a lengthy discussion, Mayor Mays asked if Mr. Carter could operate his utility vehicle under a contractor's license. Mr. Bradshaw advised he would have to research the issue. Mayor Mays asked Mr. Carter to provide the City Manager the information on his utility vehicle so he could supply the data to the City Attorney to research the matter.

Council had been presented in their packets A Resolution Authorizing Application to the Virginia Department of Transportation for a Transportation Alternatives Project.

Mr. Ramey advised Council that City Administration would like to apply for the Map – 21 grant for additional funding of the River Walk project.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following unanimous vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, ABSTAIN – None, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Authorizing Application to the Virginia Department of Transportation Map – 21 Program. (Insert)

Council had been given A Resolution Proclaiming Friday, October 2, 2015 International Walk to School Day in the City of Norton.

After a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Proclaiming October 2, 2015 International Walk to School Day in the City of Norton. (Insert)

In their packets, Council had one check to be confirmed. The check was made payable to Norton Industrial Development Authority in the amount of \$122,004.25.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to confirm the one check as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, 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.

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 into open meeting.

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

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Mountain Empire Older Citizens Advisory Board for a two year term.

Councilman Caruso nominated Michele Knox to be reappointed to the Mountain Empire Older Citizens Advisory Board.

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

Mayor Mays declared Michele Knox reappointed to the Mountain Empire Older Citizens Advisory Board for a two year term which will expire on September 15, 2017.

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

He wanted to thank Mrs. Linda Leonard for her efforts on the Arts in the Park event and stated how hard it is to plan outdoor events. He stated he hoped Mrs. Leonard would organize the event next year.

There were no comments from the City Attorney.

In comments from Council:

Councilman Caruso thanked the City Attorney and Mr. Ramey for their work on the Utility Vehicle Ordinance.

He also praised City Trail Developer Shayne Fields for his work in the Flag Rock Recreation area and advised Mr. Fields represented the City very well at the Outdoor Expo in Abingdon.

He advised Council that the My Southwest Virginia Opportunity Challenge Cup begins today and someone will win \$20,000 to start a business somewhere in Southwest Virginia. He proposes the City do its own entrepreneur challenge for a startup business downtown.

At this time, Mr. Ramey advised Mr. Caruso he had already contacted People Incorporated about this same idea based upon a conversation he had previously with Councilman Fultz.

Councilman Caruso also asked Council to think about restarting the strategic planning process that includes a marketing plan.

He also asked Council to consider creating a tourism/economic development director position as the budget process begins.

Councilman Fultz thanked Mrs. Jane Sandt and Mrs. Linda Leonard for taking ownership of their City and for the work they are doing with their respective events.

He went by Murphy Express today and welcomed them to the City of Norton.

He commended the City Manager for his work on the new wall and for the "Welcome to the City of Norton" signage.

He explained that on September 15, 1983 he suffered a traumatic mining accident. He then shared a photo taken just after a 6 hour surgery that left him in a hospital bed for basically three months. He is thankful for every day and every opportunity. He has no complaints.

Councilwoman Belcher advised she moved to Norton in 1992. A lot of things have changed and good things have been happening. She feels we have been in a crunch but we are pulling out with a lot of hard work. Our future is bright and we cannot make it without our City workers. She always hears positive comments about City employees and she is thankful to live in the City of Norton.

Councilman Fawbush applauded Mrs. Leonard for her work on Arts in the Park and Mrs. Jane Sandt for her efforts with Helping Hands of the City of Norton.

He advised the Woodbooger event is scheduled for October 16th and 17th. The Woodbooger event is currently a recreational activity and he hopes to turn the event into a tourist attraction.

In regard to marketing the City, he believes we need to emphasize our positives and not publicize our deficiencies.

He thanked NIDA for the work they have performed on behalf of the City. They have done many projects in the City of Norton and they are working hard. They have many projects on the table and Mr. Ramey is to be commended as well for his hard work.

He shared Home Hardware's success downtown and that they expect this year to be their most successful yet. He explained Home Hardware is successful because they know their market, product and back it up with service. It is up to individual businesses to market their products and services and find their niche. City Council and City Administration's responsibility is to provide a safe and clean atmosphere downtown and the City has provided this environment.

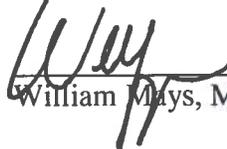
Mr. Ramey has applied for a grant to have a downtown study. This study will enable Council and City Administration to see why spaces are empty downtown. He does not believe downtown is dying. We must focus on the positives and with people working hard the City will survive a setback.

Mayor Mays advised Council if all members are willing to restart the strategic planning that he requests each meeting have an agenda. He wants to hear from Council and will start planning the meetings if everyone is interested.

He advised Jack Mooney told him the City was looking great downtown. Mayor Mays said Jack was very complimentary of Council, City Administration, City staff and everyone involved and he wanted to share this positive comment with Council.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA

  
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William Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Clerk of Council