

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, December 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 the Reverend Freddie Powers and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Sergeant Greg Mays.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the December 1, 2015 meeting as presented. 25726

There was no response to the Mayor’s call for visitors. 25727

Ms. Tamara Greear of Thrower, Blanton, and Associates was present to give Council a synopsis of the City’s audit for the year ending June 30, 2015. A copy of the audit was given to each Council member.

Ms. Greear advised that the City received a clean opinion and had implemented GASB 68 and GASB 71 which is related to pensions. She then proceeded to go over several categories with Council and advised if they had any questions, she would be glad to answer them.

During the synopsis, she advised they didn’t have any significant or material concerns with internal controls. She had a few recommendations this year and the City was already implementing them. 25728

Following a lengthy summation of the audit, Ms. Greear advised Council to monitor the City’s legal debt margin because the reassessment could make a significant difference in the legal debt margin.

Council had no questions for Ms. Greear following her presentation.

Mayor Mays thanked Ms. Greear for tonight’s audit report.

Mr. Ramey advised Council the City had \$372,893 in General Operating Fund encumbrances for the year ending June 30, 2015. Upon Council’s approval, he will advertise a public hearing.

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 for financial encumbrances ending fiscal year 2014-2015. 25729

Mr. Ramey advised that Winfred Collins, the City’s Building Official, was present to give Council an update on the proposed Zoning Ordinance Modifications.

Mr. Collins, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave a brief presentation on the updating of the Zoning Ordinance and advised that the Planning Commission concurred with Council 25730

to include the Lost Creek Property into the Recreation and Conservation Zone. A public hearing was held on November 12, 2015 and the Planning Commission determined the map and zoning ordinance were in compliance and moved to refer the Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment to City Council for the second public hearing.

There were no questions from Council on the Proposed Zoning Ordinance Update.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Fultz and passed by unanimous vote, Council authorized the City Manager to advertise a public hearing on the Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment.

Mr. Ramey, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave the background on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Southwest Virginia Climbing Coalition (SVCC) and The Access Fund. He advised Mr. Brad Mathisen, President of the SVCC, was present to provide Council with an update on the status of the MOU.

Mr. Mathisen, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave Council an update on the SVCC's activities. He advised the SVCC had been working with the Breaks Interstate Park on a Climbing Management Plan and representatives of The Access Fund have made several visits to Flag Rock. Three climbing areas have been identified so far and the SVCC will focus on these areas in Phase II. The SVCC will continue to work with City Administration on a Risk Management Plan, to open identified rock climbing areas, to develop a plan to manage and maintain access trails to rock climbing areas, to develop and distribute rock climbing information, to urge volunteers to assist in maintenance of rock climbing areas. Mr. Mathisen advised he believes rock climbing is growing in Southwest Virginia and asked Council if they had any questions.

25731

Council had no questions for Mr. Mathisen. Councilman Caruso thanked Mr. Mathisen for his work and his effort to increase the City's tourism venues.

In their packets, Council had information about possible modifications to Clear Creek Park to allow horses. Mr. Ramey advised Beth and Neil Walker were present tonight to discuss the information provided to Council.

Mrs. Walker, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave a proposed layout for a horse campground, potential revenue for City and local businesses, and possible concerns. Following a lengthy discussion, it was the consensus of Council for the Walkers to move forward on gathering more detailed information, costs, photos, map, and a master plan for the public and Council's consideration.

25732

In their packets, Council had a request from the Commissioner of the Revenue for a 2015 personal property tax refund that was a duplicate assessment to HVT, Inc., as Trustee for HLT in the amount of \$464.73.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council authorized a refund for the duplicate assessment of 2015 personal property taxes to HVT, Inc., as Trustee for HLT in the amount of \$464.73.

25733

In their packets, Council had one transfer to be confirmed. The transfer was to Norton City Schools in the amount of \$200,000.00 to cover payroll expenditures.

25734

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to confirm the one transfer as stated above.

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. 25735
Mayor Mays declared Council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to go back into open meeting. 25736
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, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays – NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert) 25737

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Appalachian Juvenile Commission for a two (2) year term.

Councilman Caruso nominated Chief James Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease. 25738

Mayor Mays declared Chief James Lane reappointed to the Appalachian Juvenile Commission for a two (2) year term to expire on November 30, 2017.

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

A copy of the amended Fishing Ordinance was placed at Council's desk.

The latest Retail Sales Report was placed at Council's desk.

Downtown stripping is complete. The delay was to allow for a few of the downtown streets to be milled and paved.

Each Council member was provided a DVD regarding the recent walk to school event. These videos are currently playing on NMAC51.

Each year the City receives a calendar from Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful and the City is featured on the month of March 2016. 25739

The City was selected to be in another calendar from Redi-Rock International whose concrete blocks were used in the Safe Routes to School project. The City's project was featured on the month of March and was selected for the 2016 cover.

The Holiday Schedule is also provided at Council's desk.

There were no comments from the City Attorney. 25740

In comments from Council:

Councilman Caruso advised Council needs to review the letter given to individuals that serve on boards as City representatives.

He would like to speak with a VDOT representative to discuss the ATV Ordinance.

He requested an update on the banner project for downtown.

Mr. Ramey advised three checks had been received for the banner project.

Councilman Caruso asked for an update on the playground at Norton Elementary and Middle School (NEMS).

25741

Mr. Ramey advised the electrical is being moved from the pump house. The fence will be removed after completion of the electrical relocation and the City's portion of the project will be complete within the next two weeks.

Councilman Caruso advised Norton Rescue Squad will begin drawing down money on a monthly basis.

He wanted to remind Council of the Strategic Planning Meeting on January 9, 2016.

He advised he and Carol will be attending the 2016 Legislative Reception in Richmond.

Councilman Fultz asked if there was an appeals process with VDOT.

Mr. Ramey advised as long as VDOT is interpreting the information correctly that the General Assembly would be the next course of action.

Councilman Fultz advised he had been chosen for jury duty.

25742

He advised that tonight's meeting was his last meeting as an appointed Council member and he wanted to thank Council for selecting him to serve.

Councilwoman Belcher advised she was impressed with tonight's presentations.

She advised she is still learning and she thinks more citizens should consider doing their civic duty.

25743

Councilman Fawbush thanked Fred and Jeff for their budget work.

He thanked Councilman Fultz for serving during the appointment.

25744

He is looking for bigger and better things in 2016. The City has had good planning and fiscal accountability.

Mayor Mays thanked City employees for their work and going above and beyond.

He thanked Council for their service and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

25745

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rebecca K. Coffey
Clerk of Council