

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, April 19, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

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

Absent: Dee Belcher

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

The invocation was given by the City Manager Fred Ramey and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Police Chief James Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – Belcher, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the April 5, 2016 meeting as presented. 25866

During the Mayor's call for visitors, William "Buzz" Witt, Chairman of Spearhead Trails was present to give Council an update on the activities of the organization. He advised Council on the number of tourism related businesses that had opened and expanded in various localities, along with the number of jobs created, private investments, and meals taxes collected as a result of various trails opening throughout the region. He stated Spearhead Trails has partnered with McCoy Hatfield and Skyward Trails from Kentucky to apply for an ARC grant up to \$3 million. The Board is working on mountain bike trails and they are in the process of collecting information on hiking trails for advertising. 25867

Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Witt for his update.

Chris Jones, Chairman of the Norton Tourism Committee, came forward and advised he wanted to give Council an update on the Committee's ideas. He stated the Committee's first recommendation to Council is to hire a Tourism Director to work with businesses and to act as a liaison between the City, businesses and Tourism. He stated the Committee has three projects they hope to accomplish this year and they are requesting an increase in their budget of \$1,500 over last year's budget for a total of \$5,000 for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. 25868

On behalf of Council, Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Jones for his presentation.

Susan Goins, Regional Director of the Virginia Professional Educators (VPE) came forward in support of the Norton City School System. She advised Dr. Perrigan is proposing to Council tonight to keep Norton City school teachers on an even pay scale and to request a 2% pay raise for school employees. She stated VPE supports these requests and asked for Council's support as well. 25869

Mayor Mays thanked Ms. Goins for her comments.

A Public Hearing was held on A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of a General Obligation Taxable Line of Credit Note in a Principal Amount Not to Exceed \$2 Million. 25870

Mr. Ramey, via a PowerPoint presentation, advised the Line of Credit is needed due to a declining fund balance, timing of large debt payments, and granting agencies requiring the City to pay up front then receive reimbursement which can take up to 60 days. Davenport & Company, Inc., the City's financial advisors, is recommending the City accept the Request for Proposal (RFP) under Carter Bank & Trust's three year proposal. Their proposal had a 2% interest rate, included the \$2,000,000 credit line, the ability to draw down funds as needed with no additional fees, and prepayment flexibility. There is a one-time closing cost with bond counsel.

There were no comments from Council prior to the public hearing.

Mayor Mays opened the public hearing.

There being no public comments, Mayor Mays closed the public hearing.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – Belcher, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of a General Obligation Taxable Line of Credit Note in a Principal Amount Not to Exceed \$2,000,000. (Insert)

Mr. Mike Brown, Chairman of the Norton Electoral Board, was in attendance to present Council with more information on the purchase of new voting equipment as requested by Council at the last meeting.

Mr. Brown advised Council according to the Code of Virginia the Electoral Board is responsible for selecting voting equipment that will function best for their locality. He stated the Electoral Board had attended meetings and reviewed various types of voting equipment. The Board selected the DS-200 and Express Vote equipment for its ease of use, quality, and maintenance service. The Board received two quotes and chose E S & S Company. E S & S will allow the City to trade in the current DRE voting equipment and offers a purchase or lease/purchase option.

25871

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council authorized the City Manager to lease/purchase the voting equipment recommended by the Electoral Board with the option to determine the number of years leased during the budget process.

Mr. Ramey introduced the new U.S. District Forest Ranger Barry Garten and stated Mr. Garten was present to update Council on the Forest Service's plans for the Nettle Patch Project.

Mr. Garten thanked Council for allowing himself and Mr. Shelby Williams, U.S. Forest Service Timber Management Assistant, to present their proposed Nettle Patch Project and to answer any questions regarding the proposal. Mr. Garten advised Council that all forests in the country operate under a Land and Resource Management Plan and the Forest Service follows this management plan to regulate the forests. The Jefferson National Forest is divided into 4 sectors and Mr. Williams has followed the guidelines of the forest policy and has designed a proposed project for the Nettle Patch sector.

25872

Mr. Williams, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave Council an overview of the proposed project and fielded questions from Council.

Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Garten and Mr. Williams for their update on the project and declared a 10 minute recess so that visitors in the audience could meet Mr. Garten and Mr. Williams.

Mayor Mays declared Council back in session and introduced Dr. Sue Cantrell of the LENOWISCO Health District. Dr. Cantrell presented Council with information on health issues and opportunities facing our area. She explained the factors that affect citizen's health and ways to improve the health of the community. She advised that the Health Department received a grant through the CDC Prevention and Public Health Fund Block Grant and is partnering with the City to support physical activity to increase disease prevention. She advised the Norton/Wise County Healthy Coalition is working on becoming a 501(c)3 organization to provide availability to more funding. She stated that there will be a meeting on April 29, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at the Norton Community Center to discuss the goals for health improvement for the City of Norton and Wise County for 2016-2020.

25873

Mayor Mays thanked Dr. Cantrell for her presentation and for the job she does as the LENOWISCO Health Director.

Dr. Keith Perrigan, Superintendent of the Norton City Schools, presented Council with a PowerPoint presentation on their 2016-2017 budget. He advised that this budget is based upon an 815 projected enrollment and includes aligning pay scales, hiring a pre-k teacher and school resource officer, funding a 3% health insurance increase, increasing SOQ funded salary positions 2%, and funding a \$26,500 capital project.

Following his presentation, he advised Council they are asking for a total of \$1,725,569 in local funding, which is an additional \$69,926 above the Required Local Effort (RLE), and requesting \$908,443 for debt service, which is an increase of \$399,040 over last year's budget to cover school renovations and the Energy Efficient Lease. He explained in prior budgets, the Energy Efficient Lease was included in the RLE and paid through operational savings by the school system under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Norton City Schools and the City of Norton. The lease has been reclassified from RLE to debt service and will require an additional funding by the City in the amount of \$90,236, which is included in the total debt service request.

25874

At the conclusion of his presentation, Dr. Perrigan advised he would be willing to answer questions from Council members. He then fielded questions from Councilman Fawbush as to why Council did not receive a line item budget as in previous years. Dr. Perrigan advised Council that the School Board Office would have that information around June 30th and he would provide it to the School Board and to Council.

Regarding the MOU, Councilman Caruso stated he intends for the School Board to honor their agreement with the City and he is not sure the Board of Education had all the information needed to make a decision on the lease agreement. Councilman Caruso stated he expects the school to take the issue as far as needed to receive an exception or waiver to the ruling so that the school system can fulfill its obligation.

There being no further questions of Dr. Perrigan, Mayor Mays thanked him for his presentation.

Council had been presented in their packets with A Resolution Recognizing the Artistic Achievements of Billy Baker of Pound, Virginia.

Mr. Ramey advised Council that The Crooked Road and The Pro Art Association had requested the City recognize Mr. Baker for his contributions to music.

25875

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Recognizing the Artistic Achievements of Billy Baker. (Insert)

In their packets, Council had been presented with A Proclamation Making April 17-23, 2016 as National Public Safety 9-1-1 Telecommunicators Week.

Mr. Ramey advised that the City's Dispatch Center had answered 3,863 – 911 calls and 30,458 non-emergency calls in 2015 and the City would like to recognize their efforts.

25876

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Proclamation for the National Public Safety 9-1-1 Telecommunicators Week in the City of Norton. (Insert)

Mr. Ramey advised Council that over 20 people have attended classes in the 2016 Norton Business Challenge and City Administration is pleased with the participation.

25877

Council had no questions for City Administration and Mayor Mays thanked everyone involved for their work on the Norton Business Challenge.

In their packets, Council had one transfer to be confirmed. The transfer was to Norton City Schools dated March 24, 2016, in the amount of \$170,000 to cover March payroll.

25878

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

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Caruso, 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.

25879

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.

25880

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

25881

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations of a student representative to the Wise County/City of Norton Youth Services Board for a four (4) year term to expire on May 2, 2020.

Councilman Fultz nominated Eric Fletcher to be appointed to the Wise County/City of Norton Youth Services Board.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease. 25882

Mayor Mays declared Eric Fletcher appointed to the Wise County/City of Norton Youth Services Board for a four (4) year term which will expire on May 2, 2020.

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Norton Tourism Committee to fill an unexpired term of William "Bud" Stewart, who has resigned.

Councilman Fawbush nominated Jane Sandt to fill the unexpired term.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease. 25883

Mayor Mays declared Jane Sandt appointed to the Norton Tourism Committee to fill the unexpired term which will expire on September 30, 2017.

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Coeburn/Norton/Wise Regional Wastewater Treatment Authority for a four (4) year term which will expire on May 15, 2020.

Councilman Caruso nominated Joseph Fawbush to be reappointed to the Coeburn/Norton/Wise Regional Wastewater Treatment Authority.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Mayor Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, ABSTAIN - Fawbush, Council moved that the nominations cease. 25884

Mayor Mays declared Joseph Fawbush reappointed to the Coeburn/Norton/Wise Regional Wastewater Treatment Authority for a four (4) year term which will expire on May 15, 2020.

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

Mr. Ramey apologized to Council for not being able to keep tonight's meeting short and asked if Council could reschedule tonight's Budget Work Session to this Saturday, April 23, 2016 at 8:00 a.m.

It was the consensus of Council to reschedule the Budget Work Session to Saturday as suggested by Mr. Ramey.

Council was provided at their desks the latest school Energy Savings Performance Contract Measurement & Verification Report.

Also the latest Retail Sales Tax Report was provided at Council's desks. 25885

City staff is currently patching pot holes throughout the City.

Mr. Ramey handed out to each member of Council a Budget Manual for discretionary agencies.

Mr. Ramey stated a portion of the pool building is ready to be demolished for the new Norton Elementary Middle School (NEMS) playground. City Administration is currently accepting proposals for the removal of a portion of the building and he believes that a

contractor has been located that will remove a portion of the building in exchange for the steel.

Councilman Fawbush stated he had a meeting last week with NEMS Principal Gina Wolford and Physical Education Teacher Elijah Roop and advised the Playground Committee would like to see the entire pool building removed to improve the appearance of the area. Mr. Fawbush recommended that the entire building should be removed if Mr. Ramey can work out storage issues. Council was of consensus to authorize the City Manager to remove as much of the pool building as feasibly possible.

Mr. Ramey advised the Great American Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, April 23, 2016 from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The VML Regional Supper is scheduled for June 15th at Big Stone Gap and the VML Conference is scheduled for October 9th – 11th at Virginia Beach. If Council wishes to attend either of these functions, please advise City Administration so reservations can be made.

Last year a branding session for Southwest Virginia was held in Council Chambers. Last week the results of that session were presented in Wise and the company identified colors, icons, and logos that can be used to re-brand Southwest Virginia. These items are free and are available to download to use in your own creative methods. Mr. Ramey advised he had them to create one for Flag Rock and had a t-shirt designed with the logos. Then he presented each Council member with a t-shirt so that Council could start advertising the brand.

There were no comments from the City Attorney.

25886

In comments from Council:

Councilman Caruso asked for an update on funding for the downtown banner program. Mr. Jeff Shupe, City Finance Director, advised \$1,310 had been received for the program.

Councilman Caruso encouraged Council to support the Tourism Committee in their efforts to attract tourist to the area.

Councilman Caruso stated the school system, like the City, is going to have to honor their obligations and do more with less until the economy improves.

25887

He advised Council needs a vision, a strategic plan, and needs to update the comprehensive plan for the City to guide Council in the future.

Councilman Fultz advised the two classes for the Norton Business Challenge was exciting and he was pleased with the number in attendance and the potential businesses that can develop from this endeavor.

25888

Councilman Fawbush had no comments.

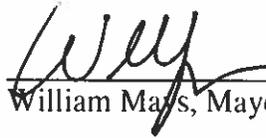
25889

Mayor Mays confirmed the Budget Work Session for Saturday, April 23, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. in Council Chambers.

25890

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rebecca H. Coffey
Clerk of Council