

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

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

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

The invocation was given by Minister Roger Sloce and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Police Chief James Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the March 21, 2017, meeting as presented.

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At this time, Mayor Mays welcomed Interim School Superintendent Gina Wohlford, who then introduced music teacher Gabrielle Caruso Barnette. Ms. Wohlford said Ms. Barnette and her students have worked very hard on their production and that they wanted to share a few musical selections with City Council.

Ms. Barnette said her Music Class will be presenting "Seussical the Musical" at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 19, and Friday, April 21, at John I. Burton High School. She said 75 students are enrolled in the musical program at NEMS and three of her students were present to perform a couple songs from the musical.

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Students Ellie Williams, Owen Hayes, and Collen Hart performed two songs from the school's upcoming musical and received a round of applause for their performances. Council thanked Ms. Barnette and her students for their musical presentation and stated the students were impressive.

There was no response to the Mayor's Call for Visitors.

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Mr. Ramey said he invited the Norton Little League Board of Directors to give an update on activities of the Norton league. He said the league has worked the past three weeks to prepare the fields and the area for the upcoming season and the Board is here tonight to share with Council the work that has been done by volunteers.

Ms. Dorie Stidham, Vice President of the Norton Little League, shared PowerPoint images of work that had been performed on the retaining wall and fields. She said the retaining wall repairs were made possible by a \$7,000 grant received from Honda. She advised the league has received enough donations to build batting cages and they are working on repairing the press box roof. Ms. Stidham also noted that gravel has been placed around the sidewalks and they have worked hard to add to the beauty of the community. She commented that people walk on the new sidewalk adjacent to the ballfields and they are not necessarily involved with Little League, so the league is making community improvements by cleaning up the area and making needed repairs. She added the league will be replacing the existing outfield fencing with a black fence that is similar to the fence around the new sidewalk the City installed with the Safe Routes to School

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Project. She said Norton Little League has 13 teams and 170 kids scheduled to play on Opening Day, Saturday, April 8, 2017. Noting the request for 2017-2018 funding has been submitted to Mr. Ramey, she said the Board appreciates any assistance Council can provide to Norton Little League.

The City Manager advised Mr. Chris Jones, volunteer organizer of the High Knob Music Festival, wanted to give an update on the music festival and work that is being done at High Knob Recreational Lake.

Mr. Jones advised the High Knob Music Festival is now part of the High Knob Enhancement Corporation and, has joined with the Best Friend Festival (BFF) and Mountains of Music to be the final night of entertainment for the BFF on Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>. Alignment with these two entities has allowed for additional marketing of the High Knob Music Festival. Mr. Jones presented several videos that showed work being performed at the Recreational Lake by the Clinch Coalition, Boy Scout Troop 301, and volunteers of the High Knob Music Festival Committee. The groups cleared trees and brush to prepare for this year's musical event. The High Knob Music Festival Committee is planning to rebuild the amphitheater and seating, expand the stage, add lighting and sound, and install several handicap areas near the water fountain. The Committee is required to work within the confines of the National Forest Service so the Committee's plans must be approved by US Forest Service engineers in Roanoke. He noted while planning these enhancements to the Recreational Lake, they have discovered the electrical service needs to be upgraded to a 30 AMP breaker. In addition, the cost estimate to replace the stage has increased by \$8,000 to \$13,000 for total cost of \$30,000 to \$35,000. Several fundraisers are being discussed to assist with the cost of upgrades to the Recreational Lake and include a "Go Fund Me" page, an Applebee's Pancake Breakfast, a High Knob Artic Splash, and a trail race called the "Woodbooger" Run. Mr. Jones said the Committee is requesting \$1,000 from Council for assistance with these projects, but additional funding from Council would be greatly appreciated.

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Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Jones and the volunteers for their hard work.

Councilman Fawbush asked if the permitting for food vendors has been resolved from last year.

Mr. Jones advised the food permit issue has been resolved and that the High Knob Music Festival Committee will be the sole permit holder for any food vendors.

Councilman Fawbush asked if the Committee had discussed charging a small entry fee to assist with raising money for needed repairs.

Mr. Jones advised the Committee is not charging any type of fees because they are trying to encourage locals and visitors to come up the mountain.

Councilman Fawbush asked if the Forest Service was going to waive the parking fee.

Mr. Jones stated the Forest Service will waive the parking fee and Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) will be shuttling attendees to the event. He said the rescue squad will also be on site in case of an emergency.

Councilman Caruso thanked Mr. Jones for doing a great job with the music festival.

Councilwoman Belcher asked Mr. Jones if the Committee had a Facebook page.

Mr. Jones advised they did have a Facebook page named the High Knob Music Festival.

It was the consensus of Council to discuss the High Knob Music Festival's funding request at their budget workshop scheduled for the next Council meeting.

At this time, Mr. Chris Jones, also Chairman of the Norton Tourism Committee, updated Council on a request he had received from residents in Ramsey regarding the installation of a community flower garden at the City's old sewer plant site. He said the request is a true community project and will be maintained by the Ramsey community and Master Gardeners. The proposed garden will be at the end of the Riverwalk Trail once that is developed. This suggested flower garden is not being developed but is an idea for Council to consider.

Mr. Ramey asked Mr. Jones if he was going to schedule a meeting with the Master Gardeners.

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Mr. Jones advised that he was setting up a meeting with the Master Gardeners to discuss the flower garden project. He also said the site would need some prep work and that the City's assistance with that effort would be needed. He said the Master Gardeners will need to provide the City with a Master Plan so that their concept can be approved prior to creating the community flower garden.

Councilwoman Belcher advised Mr. Jones that she wanted to attend the Master Gardener meeting when the community flower garden project is discussed.

Mr. Ramey advised the Norton Police Department has received a Letter of Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The purpose of the Letter of Agreement and MOU are to update all documents concerning support of the VA with all local law enforcement agencies. Police Chief James Lane and the City Attorney have reviewed and approved both documents.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding and the Letter of Agreement between the Norton Police Department and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and authorized the City Manager and the Police Chief to sign both documents between the two entities.

Council had been presented with A Proclamation Declaring the Week of April 9-15, 2017, as National Public Safety 9-1-1 Telecommunicators Week. Mr. Ramey advised the week is dedicated to recognizing the vital work of Telecommunicators in the City. He noted in 2016, the City's 9-1-1 Center answered 3,786 emergency calls and 29,467 non-emergency calls.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the Proclamation Declaring National Public Safety 9-1-1- Telecommunicators Week of April 9-15, 2017. (Insert)

In their packets, Council had been presented with A Proclamation Naming the Week of April 9-15, 2017, as National Library Week.

Mr. Ramey advised Lonesome Pine Regional Library system is asking Council to consider this request which highlights activities going on during the week and encourages citizens to visit the library to take advantage of the resources available at the public library.

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Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the Proclamation proclaiming National Library Week as April 9-15, 2017. (Insert)

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, 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, and discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publically held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (3) of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

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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.

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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.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

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

Mr. Ramey advised that the United States Forest Service has extended the comment period for the Nettle Patch Environmental Assessment and that City Staff is drafting comments for Council's consideration at the next meeting.

Tickets are still available for the Chamber of Commerce's Annual Gala scheduled for this Saturday, April 8.

He placed at each member's desk a copy of the 2016 Annual Report of the Coalfield Economic Development Authority and a brochure regarding National Library Week April 9-15, 2017.

26274

The Norton Parks and Recreation Department has the following events scheduled for the month of April: Norton Easter Egg Hunt in the City Park at 4:00 p.m., Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, Clean Your Files Day at the Magic Mart parking lot from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, and the Great American Cleanup in the Municipal Parking Lot, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> to clean up areas throughout the City.

The School Board will present its budget to Council Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, and Council will have a budget work session following the Council meeting.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Virginia's Outdoor Lovers Expo for Southwest Virginia is scheduled in Radford on Saturday, April 22, 2017, and City Administration will be sending a team to market the City's outdoor recreation opportunities.

There were no comments by the City Attorney.

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In comments from Council:

Councilwoman Belcher noted the City has a great group of volunteers who are working to accomplish many different goals throughout the City. 26276

Councilman Fultz had no comments. 26277

Councilman Caruso had no comments. 26278

Councilman Fawbush said he hiked Hanging Rock Recreation Area to Little Stoney Falls and noted that Hanging Rock Recreation Area is still closed.

Councilman Caruso stated he thought that Hanging Rock Recreation Area will open on Monday, May 15, 2017, after cleanup in that location has completed.

Councilman Fawbush said a large number of people were hiking that day and that he met a hiker from Knoxville, Tennessee. 26279

He said he would not be able to attend the Chamber of Commerce Annual Gala Saturday, April 8, because he has committed to chaperoning the seventh-and eighth-grade dance at Norton Elementary and Middle School.

Mayor Mays said he thoroughly enjoyed the singing performance by the students from Norton Elementary and Middle School, and he added the three performers at tonight's meeting are very talented. 26280

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