

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, August 7, 2018, 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 Delores Belcher

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager

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

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following vote: YES – Caruso, Mays, Fawbush, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, ABSTAIN – Fultz, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the July 17, 2018, meeting as presented.

262795

During the Mayor's Audience for Visitors, Ms. Delores Bolling, 639 Hillcrest Drive, S. E., spoke to Council regarding maintenance on Hillcrest Drive. She stated potholes have not been repaired and maintenance on the city's right-of-way is not being performed. She also commented that two property owners are not maintaining their properties. Ms. Bolling requested that Council address the issues on Hillcrest Drive and correct the problems.

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A public hearing was held on An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia, to consider amending Chapter 8 – Fire Prevention and Protection, Section 8-34 (Qualifications and Number of Members) of the Norton City Code.

Mr. Ramey said the city attorney has prepared an ordinance amending Chapter 8, Section 8-34, of the Norton City Code that will allow a Junior Fire Department and defines all the requirements of the program. He said the junior fire program will be sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America.

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Mayor Mays opened the public hearing.

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

After a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to adopt An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia, updating Chapter 8 – Fire Prevention and Protection, Section 8-34 (Qualifications and Number of Members) of the Norton City Code. (Insert)

Council had been presented with A Resolution to Authorize the City Manager to Submit the US23/Alternate 58 Northbound (NB) Ramp Project through the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Smart Scale Program for the FY2020 Six-Year Improvement Program Cycle.

The city manager said VDOT's Smart Scale Program, created by the Virginia General Assembly, as a new way to prioritize and fund large road projects in the Commonwealth. Mr. Ramey said applications for the Smart Scale Program are taken on a biennial schedule

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and placed into a six-year plan. Mr. Ramey said he was recently contacted by VDOT and was informed that modifications to U.S. Route 23 (US 23) and U.S. Route 58 Alternate (US 58 Alt.) Northbound Ramp may qualify as a project for the Smart Scale Program. Mr. Ramey, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave Council an overview of the proposed changes and noted the projected cost of the project is \$1,276,000 with construction estimated to begin in 2027. He stated LENOWISCO passed a resolution in support of the city applying for VDOT's Smart Scale Program to improve the flow of traffic at this intersection. Mr. Ramey noted VDOT would be managing the project and a resolution by City Council is required showing support for the project.

After a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Submit the US23/Alternate 58 Northbound Ramp Project through the Virginia Department of Transportation's Smart Scale Program for the FY2020 Six-Year Improvement Program Cycle. (Insert)

Council had been presented with the Lease/Purchase Agreement between International Business Machines (IBM) Credit L.L.C., and the City of Norton to purchase a new mainframe and components.

Mr. Ramey advised Council the city has two primary servers the staff uses in daily operations. He said the IBM server is utilized for utility billing and other financial operations while the other server is used for office computers. Mr. Ramey said this upgrade should secure the city's software, daily operations, and data for up to 10 years for General and Water Fund operations. He said the lease/purchase agreement requires Council to authorize the city manager and finance director to enter into the agreement.

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Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council moved to authorize the City Manager and Finance Director to enter into a Lease/Purchase Agreement to purchase new mainframe and components.

Included for consideration in the council packets was an email from the Office of the Governor announcing grants to localities for school resource officer positions.

Mr. Ramey said this grant, if approved, provides a school resource officer for one year at Norton Elementary and Middle School (NEMS) with no additional requirements of the city. He said the Police Department would shift a current officer with three years of experience to NEMS, as required by the grant, and use the grant funds to pay overtime for other officers to fill the position that is being redirected to the school system. Mr. Ramey indicated that his primary concern with this grant opportunity was that it was for only a one-year period. Although, he felt they could make this work for one year, he did not think the Police Department could continue the program if the grant was not continued the next year. Mr. Ramey said the deadline to apply for the grant is August 24th so Council can decide at the August 21st meeting on whether to apply for the grant which would also allow the school board an opportunity to meet and decide on the grant.

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After a lengthy discussion and requests for additional information from Police Chief Lane, it was the consensus of Council to consider the grant opportunity at the August 21st meeting.

The next agenda item was an overview of the Opportunity Southwest Virginia Community Builder Program by Community Builder Daniel Pinard.

Mr. Ramey introduced Mr. Pinard and explained his one-year shared position between the city and the town of Dungannon, Virginia, was created and funded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the University of Virginia's College at Wise.

Mr. Pinard said included in the Opportunity Southwest Virginia Community Builder Program was a project called "Rally Southwest Virginia." He said the "Rally Southwest Virginia" Program included a \$5,000 mini grant that Norton's Rally Team decided to use to purchase a stage that could be used at various types of events. Mr. Pinard stated he was also working to draw communities together that border the mountain for the High Knob Outdoor Festival that is scheduled for Saturday, August 18th. In addition, he is also working on the next Entrepreneurial Business Challenge sponsored by the Norton Industrial Development Authority (NIDA) that is slated to start within the next few weeks.

262801

Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Pinard for the update.

Next, an update on the 2018 High Knob Outdoor Festival was presented by Norton City Special Projects Coordinator Katie Dunn and Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent Emily Wells.

Mr. Ramey said the city's downtown revitalization project is centered on the Norton Industrial Development Authority's (NIDA) building located at 815 Park Avenue, S.W., that is currently being utilized by the Norton Friends and Farmers' Market. He said the goal of this revitalization is to take this building and turn it into a multi-use facility to draw people downtown. He said city administration felt one way to begin this process was to hold an event there, so the first High Knob Outdoor Festival has been scheduled at the facility. Family Crisis Support Services had inquired about holding a concert downtown on August 11th to recognize their 39th Celebration and it was determined the best location for their request was the farmers' market building. Mr. Ramey said the Family Crisis Support's event will have two bands and several food trucks which will allow city administration to evaluate an event in the building to see what can be improved upon before the city's High Knob Outdoor Festival the following weekend.

Ms. Wells explained the past couple of years the extension office has adopted supporting economic development and outdoor recreation as the agency's unit plan of work. She said she is currently working with the city to focus on physical activity for the High Knob Outdoor Festival by encouraging people to try new activities such as mountain bike riding.

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Ms. Dunn informed Council that 30 vendors, three bands, several food trucks, and a beer garden will set up for the High Knob Outdoor Festival. In addition, the festival will have various outdoor trips that morning on High Knob which is the Virginia Cooperative Extension Office's plan to support economic development and outdoor activity.

Daniel Pinard added the High Knob Outdoor Festival is part of the High Knob Master Plan which encompasses several communities that border High Knob. He said the goal is to reach out to these communities that share this asset to promote outdoor recreation because the area is stronger working together on a regional level.

The presenters then shared a video that was created to promote the festival.

At this time, Mayor Mays stated Councilman Fultz, a teacher in Norton City Schools, had to leave for 8th grade orientation at John I. Burton High School. 262803

Following the overviews, the city manager gave an update on the city's proposed Façade Improvement Program as part of the downtown revitalization project.

Mr. Ramey commented a pleasing downtown streetscape is critical in marketing the city center for multi-use. He said one of the programs available with the revitalization is a Façade Improvement Program. Mr. Ramey said businesses and property owners are interested in the program and he suggests the city provide a matching grant up to \$7,500. He said City Administration would like to begin the program in August so this item will be on the August 21st agenda for Council's consideration. 262804

The City Manager gave an update on the city's second Entrepreneurial Business Plan Challenge.

Mr. Ramey said the first business challenge was held in 2016 and was managed by People Incorporated. He said after comparing 2016 with other similar programs in the region, Daniel Pinard is working on expanding and improving the city's challenge for 2018. Mr. Ramey also indicated city administration will be managing this year's entrepreneurial challenge instead of an outside agency. Mr. Ramey said those wishing to be considered for the monetary awards would have to attend all classes, present their business plan and business, and open their business in one of the following fields: Restaurant/Hospitality; Outdoor Recreation; Specialty Retail; Specialty Foods/Grocery; Agriculture/Agritourism; Technology; Arts/Culture; Advanced Manufacturing; and support services for those types of businesses. Mr. Ramey said city administration anticipates open the challenge after the Labor Day holiday. 262805

Council had one transfer to confirm. The transfer was to Norton City Schools, dated June 27, 2018, in the amount of \$100,000 to cover June 2018 payroll expenditures. 262806

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to confirm the transfer to Norton City Schools 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. 262807

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. 262808

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. 262809

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

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Norton Tourism Committee to fill the unexpired term of Jane Sandt whose term expires on September 30, 2021.

Councilman Caruso nominated Becky Lagow to fill the unexpired term on the Norton Tourism Committee to expire on September 30, 2021.

262810

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

Mayor Mays declared Becky Lagow appointed to fill the unexpired term of Jane Sandt whose term expires on September 30, 2021.

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Heart of Appalachia Regional Tourism Authority for a two-year term to expire on July 1, 2020.

Councilwoman Belcher nominated Beth Walker to be appointed to the Heart of Appalachia Regional Tourism Authority for a two-year term to expire on July 1, 2020.

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

Mayor Mays declared Beth Walker appointed to the Heart of Appalachia Regional Tourism Authority for a two-year term to expire on July 1, 2020.

In comments from the City Manager:

In July 2018, Council provided funding for the Norton Little League 11 and 12-year-old Girls Softball Team that qualified for the State Softball Tournament. A financial report has been provided by the team's coaches and a copy has been placed at member's desks.

The city did not make the final top two towns for this year's Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine Top Adventure Town for 2018.

The 2018 Cloudsplitter 100 Ultra Trail Race currently has 77 participants registered for the event. The city will need volunteers for aid stations and there will be a change in this year's route due to flooding.

262812

Mr. Ramey asked Council to advise city administration if they plan to attend the 2018 Virginia Municipal League Conference in Hampton, Virginia.

He provided council with copies of the planned High Knob Outdoor Festival and July traffic counts for Route 619 and the entrance to Flag Rock.

Mr. Ramey confirmed with Council the scheduled work session at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, August 11th and the High Knob Outdoor Festival planned for Saturday, August 18th.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilman Fawbush said the first meeting for the 2018 Woodbooger Festival is scheduled at 4:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 8th, in the Municipal Council Chambers.

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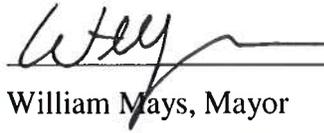
He informed members that LENOWISCO is working on a number of projects and that Southwest Virginia is being recognized.

Mayor Mays commended city administration, staff and Council members for their work and dedication to advancing the city.

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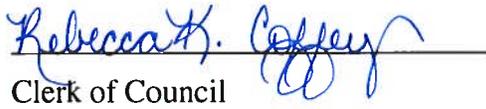
There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk of Council