

The regular meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, September 16, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers with Mayor Robert Raines presiding.

Present: Jack Wallace, Robert Raines, and Joseph Fawbush

Also Present: E. W. Ward, City Manager and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

Absent: Joseph Hunnicutt and William Mays

Mayor Raines advised that Vice Mayor Mays and Councilman Hunnicutt were out of town on business matters.

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The invocation was given by the City Manager and was followed by the pledge of allegiance, which was led by Police Chief Sam Mongle.

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Upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the September 2, 2003 meeting as presented.

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During the audience for visitors, Chris Jones of the Norton Fire Department spoke briefly to Council advising that he was in attendance tonight in order that he may present a check to the Wise County Shriners Club for one half of a fund raiser, "Big Dig 2003." This is the second year the fire department has participated in this event. Mr. Jones presented a check in the amount of \$2,554 to Mr. Ray Watson, President of the Wise County Shriners Club.

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Mr. Watson thanked both Mr. Jones and the members of the Norton Fire Department for their generosity and the City for this donation.

Mayor Raines thanked both men for the work their individual organizations do for the citizens of Norton and Wise County.

Mrs. Muiread Craft, Coordinator of the Guest River Project, introduced herself to Council and also gave a brief update on the Guest River Project. She discussed with Council the accomplishments made from 1998 to the present, as well as funding, and advised Council that she would be happy to answer any questions they may have.

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Following a brief discussion, Mayor Raines thanked Mrs. Craft for the update on the Guest River Project.

The City Manager had passed out to each member of Council a copy of the Annual Comparative Cost Report of Local Governments done annually by the Auditor of Public Accounts. He gave Council a brief update on this report and then showed Council a comparison between the City and towns of like size. These towns were Abingdon, Wise, and Big Stone Gap.

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He advised Council that after their review of this report, he would be glad to discuss any questions or comments they may have.

Mayor Raines thanked Mr. Ward for this very comprehensive review.

Council had been given in their packets a copy of the existing lease agreement with Wise County on the Animal Shelter Facility in Josephine.

Mr. Ward advised that the county is presently building a new shelter in the Blackwood Industrial Park. The existing facility is on City property, which is leased to Wise County. The agreement, which was drawn up by the City and County in June of 1979, states that if the county desires to move or vacate the premises and the City does not want to purchase the County buildings, then the County will remove its buildings from the site.

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The City Manager is seeking guidance from Council as to how they feel this should be handled. The City can purchase the building at a nominal fee or the County will tear it down. The County is at the beginning stages of building the new facility; therefore, the City has some time to make their decision.

It was the consensus of Council that the City Manager is to continue working with the County Administration and bring back to Council his recommendations at the appropriate time for the disposition of this property.

Council had been presented in their packets a proposed agreement between the City and BoCo LTD., owners of the property for the Laurel Trails Subdivision. Mr. Ward advised members of Council that he had presented a revised version of this proposed agreement to them tonight.

Mr. Ward went over the changes, which were made by the City Attorney and K. W. Poore, our consultant on this project.

This agreement must be executed before we can get under contract with the Department of Housing and Community Development. He briefly discussed the City's responsibilities contained in this agreement. The City Manager has discussed this new agreement with the property owner and he is in substantial agreement with the document; however there may be some small things to modify.

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Advising that he had just received the revised document tonight, Mr. Bradshaw, the City Attorney, advised that he hasn't reviewed it; however, he will do so prior to the next meeting.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to authorize the City Manager to sign this contract after the approval of the City Attorney and the property owner.

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to go into closed meeting to discuss personnel as per 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

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Mayor Raines declared Council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to go back into open meeting.

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Mayor Raines declared Council back in open meeting.

The Clerk then 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 Joseph Fawbush, seconded by Jack Wallace, and

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passed by the following unanimous vote, YES – Wallace, Fawbush, Raines, NO – None, ABSENT – Hunnicutt, Mays, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

Mayor Raines opened the floor for nominations to the Mountain Empire Older Citizens Advisory Board for a two year term which will expire on September 15, 2005.

Jack Wallace nominated Michele Knox to be reappointed to this Board.

Upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease.

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Mayor Raines declared Michele Knox reappointed to the Mountain Empire Older Citizens Advisory Board for a two year term which will expire on September 15, 2005.

Mayor Raines opened the floor for nominations to the City of Norton Tourism Board for a four year term which will expire on September 30, 2007.

Joseph Fawbush nominated Michele Knox to be reappointed to this Board.

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease.

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Mayor Raines declared Michele Knox reappointed to the City of Norton Tourism Board for a four year term which will expire on September 30, 2007.

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

The new sewer jet, which the City recently purchased through a lease-purchase agreement, is parked outside for Council to view.

Next year will be the 50 year anniversary of J. I. Burton High School and some activities are being planned to coincide with the Best Friend Festival. Any Council members interested in serving on this committee or having any input should contact Mr. Stan Wilson.

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The City has received passes from the Pro-Art Association for their events. If any member of Council or the City Attorney is interested in attending any of these activities, please contact Mrs. Brown.

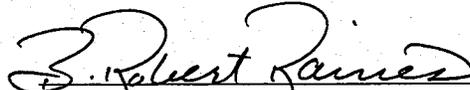
We have received some funding from the U. S. Homeland Security Office and the City has received a document asking for an assessment program and strategy. This document is to be finalized by October 15th. Mr. Stokes, our Emergency Services Coordinator, is working on this report.

In comments from the City Attorney, Mr. Bradshaw advised that he had recently attended a Freedom of Information Act seminar. This was a very informative meeting and he will be sharing the information he received with the City and its employees.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA


B. Robert Raines, Mayor

ATTEST:


Clerk