

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, March 5, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

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

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

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

At this time, Mayor Fawbush asked council members to amend the agenda to include under Item 6-A-1 an update from Pro-Art Association and the Consideration of a 2019-2020 Local Government Challenge Grant Application in the amount of \$4,500 for the Pro-Art Association.

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It was the consensus of council to amend the agenda to include the update from Pro-Art Association and the 2019-2020 Local Government Challenge Grant Application, as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, ABSTAIN – Caruso, council moved to adopt the minutes of the February 19, 2019, meeting as presented.

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

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The city manager, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave a brief history on the Ridge Avenue stacked stone wall which included a description and approximate age of the wall, citizens' calls about potential movement of the wall and the city's responses to each, and city administration's decision to contact The Lane Group in early 2018 to assess potential wall movement to determine public safety. Mr. Ramey said he also contacted the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME) regarding the Ridge Avenue wall and was advised that there was no prior mining near the wall. Mr. Ramey said the city's engineer from The Lane Group is in attendance to provide an update on his evaluation of the wall and to discuss possible options going forward.

Mr. Leslie Sutherland, geotechnical engineer for The Lane Group's Abingdon office, advised council it is evident that the Ridge Avenue stacked stone wall has creeped and moved. He said various gaps appear in the wall and there is a noticeable one foot bulge in one area. Mr. Sutherland said they do not have a baseline on the wall so it could have moved years ago or recently. He said to determine if the wall is currently moving surveyors from The Lane Group used a non-prism surveying method to track the wall over a period of time. Mr. Sutherland said monitoring indicated there was movement in the bulge area of the wall. He said surveyors repeated their measurements and received similar results of one and a half inches of movement in the bulge area of the wall. Mr. Sutherland said at that point, he recommended the city close the road as a safety precaution. Mr. Sutherland went on to explain other tests that were performed on the wall and identified possible causes that could

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contribute to the wall's movement. He said The Lane Group cannot determine the safety factor of the wall based upon the information recorded because there are too many variables. Mr. Sutherland then provided council with several options to mitigate the wall issue and their associated cost.

After a lengthy discussion with members, Mr. Sutherland said his recommendation is to have a structural engineer examine the wall.

Mayor Fawbush asked the city attorney for an opinion on opening the street tonight. Mr. Bradshaw advised council there is a risk but the information presented tonight should be sufficient for council to make an informed decision.

Mr. Sutherland suggested if council opened the road the city should continue surveying the wall to monitor movement.

It was the consensus of council to have a structural engineer examine the Ridge Avenue wall.

The next agenda item was a presentation and request by Pro-Art Association Executive Director Jan Zentmeyer.

Ms. Zentmeyer provided council with a brief update on Pro-Art activities for the 2018-2019 season. She said Barter Theatre will be working with Norton Elementary and Middle School (NEMS) this month to present *The Princess and the Pea*. Ms. Zentmeyer said she is already working on next year's schedule and she said the school programs are the most important work that Pro-Art provides. She asked council to support Pro-Art by applying for the Creative Communities Partnership Grant that will match the city's contribution up to \$4,500. Ms. Zentmeyer said the deadline to apply is April 1, 2019.

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It was the consensus of council to authorize city administration to apply for the Creative Communities Partnership Grant on behalf of Pro-Art Association.

Mayor Fawbush thanked Ms. Zentmeyer for her presentation and the programs Pro-Art Association provides children and the citizens of Norton.

Included in council's packets for consideration was a request to reapply for a grant that will fund a school resource officer (SRO) at John I. Burton High School for an additional year.

Mr. Ramey said according to current grant guidelines this is the last year the city can apply for SRO funding for this specific grant, but he noted staff will continue looking for other grants to fund the SRO position at the high school. Mr. Ramey said city administration is requesting council's authorization to apply for the grant for an additional year.

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After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of council to authorize city administration to reapply for a grant that will fund a school resource officer at John I. Burton High School for an additional year.

Council had been presented in their packets with a request from city administration to reapply for a grant that will fund a school resource officer (SRO) at Norton Elementary and Middle School (NEMS) for an additional year.

At this time, Councilman Mays stated he would abstain from discussion and voting on the NEMS SRO grant application.

Mr. Ramey said this is the same grant the city has applied for previously to fund an SRO at NEMS and it is the same grant that was just authorized for the high school SRO.

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It was the consensus of council, with Councilman Mays abstaining, to authorize city administration to reapply for a grant that will fund a school resource officer at Norton Elementary and Middle School.

In packets for council consideration was a transfer to Norton City Schools, dated December 4, 2018, in the amount of \$131,415, to cover the General Obligation School Bond Series 2012 payment included in the school's December 10, 2018, accounts payable.

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

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey told council former City Treasurer Joseph L. Stallard passed away Monday, March 4, 2019. He said Joe served as city treasurer from January 1, 1990, to December 31, 2001.

He said the city set a new record for rainfall measuring 11.92 inches for the month of February 2019. Mr. Ramey said the record rainfall has had minimal impact. However, 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., behind Prime Sirloin, is experiencing some problems and staff has contacted the Department of Mine, Minerals, and Energy (DMME) since this location was a previous project area.

Mr. Ramey said city administration has interviewed a firm for the 2019 Real Estate Reassessment and contract negotiations are ongoing.

He said the advertisement for a spring Norton Business Challenge did not receive enough interest by the deadline to conduct the challenge, so city administration has applied for a grant that will allow the city to offer a larger funding package for a fall business challenge.

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Mr. Ramey said the city hosted a community mural project meeting and he would like for council to discuss the proposed mural during the CIP/Budget Process.

Mr. Ramey said he provided members with a copy of the latest Retail Sales Tax Report and five 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary stickers. He said staff is currently placing the stickers on outgoing mail.

Mr. Ramey said in honor of John I. Burton's continued basketball success this season and because Burton is playing Eastside tonight for the Cumberland District Basketball Championship, he wanted to share a copy of the 1947 Norhi Mirror and highlight two items. The city manager said the paper noted that Norhi beat Coeburn 69-24, and Norhi beat St. Paul, but "this was one of the roughest games in the school's basketball history and here are the statistics to prove it: L. E. Quillen came through with one black eye, Ligon Lovelace suffered the same thing, Bobby Herndon had the breath knocked out of him, and Jack Parsons of St. Paul lost a tooth."

Mr. Ramey said he suggests scheduling the first CIP/budget meeting at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>.

The following comments were made by council members:

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Councilman Fultz said Barbara Humphreys passed away Saturday, March 2, 2019.

Saying, "Go Raiders" Councilman Fultz cheered on the John I. Burton's boys' basketball team who was playing Eastside High School tonight for the Cumberland District Championship.

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Mayor Fawbush confirmed with council members the CIP/budget meeting at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, March 16, 2019.

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



CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA

Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council