

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, April 2, 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 Roger Sloce and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Police Chief James Lane.

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

263011

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

263012

Mr. Ramey introduced U.S. Forest Service's District Forest Ranger Michelle Davalos. He said Ms. Davalos was in attendance to provide an update on current and planned projects of the Forest Service.

Ms. Davalos provided information on the Clinch Ranger District and shared the mission of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDA) specifically for the Jefferson National Forest is conservation. Ms. Davalos said the Forest Service is bound to conserving the forest land through regulations and the 2004 Land and Resource Management Plan. She informed council the hardest challenge the Forest Service faces is maintaining a sustainable recreation program. Ms. Davalos said the Forest Service would like to design future forest recreation with input from partners, local governments, and the public. She noted that the plan should not duplicate recreation that is already available on public or private land, and as the city learns what recreation is important to citizens, the Forest Service will invest in those projects. Finally, Ms. Davalos said a new project the Forest Service would like to undertake is the restricted view from the new High Knob Observation Tower. She said the Forest Service could potentially expand the pollenate habitat to enhance the view but she would like council's support for the project.

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After Ms. Davalos' presentation and a brief discussion, it was the consensus of council to support the U. S. Forest Service's project to improve the view at High Knob Observation Tower.

The city manager advised he would have a cooperative agreement between the city and the Forest Service that would be on the April 16th agenda for council's consideration.

Included in council's packets for reconsideration from the March 19th meeting was the second draft copy of the City of Norton Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

Mr. Ramey advised that the city is required by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to have an EOP and the document before council is the key information of the plan. He said city administration is asking council to approve the main portion of the EOP

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and that appendices and annexes will be added to the plan for council's review at the April 16th meeting.

After a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt the second draft of the City of Norton Emergency Operations Plan.

Council had been presented in their packets with a Resolution Declaring the Month of April 2019 as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The city manager said the resolution assists in bringing awareness to the issue and encourages our community to work together to prevent child abuse.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt the Resolution Declaring the Month of April 2019 as Child Abuse Prevention Month. (Insert)

263015

A Resolution Declaring the Month of April 2019 as Autism Awareness Month was included in council packets for their consideration.

Mr. Ramey advised today was World Autism Awareness Day and that parent Tiffany Taylor was in attendance supporting the recognition of autism.

Ms. Taylor said that she is very appreciative to live in a community that not only recognizes autism but embraces individuals who have autism. She added that she moved to Norton five years ago after her son was diagnosed with autism because of the good things she heard about our community and school system. Ms. Taylor said she has not been disappointed with her decision to move here.

263016

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt a Resolution Declaring the Month of April 2019 as Autism Awareness Month. (Insert)

Also in packets for council consideration was a transfer to Norton City Schools, dated February 25, 2019, in the amount of \$150,000, to cover February 2019 payroll expenditures.

263017

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, 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 advised Real Estate Tax Tickets will be mailed within the next couple weeks.

He said Cloudsplitter Ultra 100 Trail Race Director Susan Howell advised him she would be eliminating three aid stations from this year's race, and that 27 participants from 15 states and Canada have registered for the event.

Mr. Ramey said the city's Water Plant Superintendent and City Transmission and Distribution (T&D) crews are testing the water system at Flag Rock and they hope to have the park open for the season in a few days.

He provided members with a copy of the latest Heart of Appalachia (HOA) brochure, the latest High Knob traffic counts, a copy of the April 2019 Events Calendar, and the city's latest Financial Statements.

Mr. Ramey confirmed the next tentative Budget Workshop is scheduled for 8:30 a.m., Saturday, April 6th.

263018

In comments from the city attorney:

Mr. Bradshaw advised the city is a plaintiff in one of several opioid lawsuits and one of the lawsuits reached a \$133-million dollar settlement. He said there appears to be signs of success and that he will report more as information becomes available. 263019

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilman Fultz said he is hopeful about the city working with the U. S. Forest Service. He noted that the Cloudsplitter attendees will be pleased to see the improvements at the Farmers Market Building 263020

Councilwomen Belcher asked the city manager if he had an opening date for the cidery. Mr. Ramey said he hopes to turn the building over to the Baileys in July. 263021

Councilman Caruso asked the status of a structural engineer providing a report on the Ridge Avenue stacked stone wall.

The city manager said he contacted Thompson and Litton Engineers (T&L) and they have been on site. He said he asked them to look at the information collected by The Lane Engineering Group and evaluate the data, core drillings, and the wall to give the city a second opinion. The city manager said he was trying to keep the cost down, but a complete analysis of the wall can be requested if council wishes to go that direction after T&L's report. 263022

Mayor Fawbush mentioned that according to the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation and Friends of Southwest Virginia 2018-2019 Regional Impact and Annual Report the city's travel expenditures for 2017 has increased 67 percent compared to 2004. Also, according to the report the city's travel expenditures in 2004 were \$11.9 million and in 2017, travel revenue was \$19.9 million. 263023

Mayor Fawbush commented that several Norton families told him they are excited for St. Paul's Sugar Hill Brewery to open the cidery in Norton.

Also, the town of St. Paul is installing new sidewalks and updating utilities and he applauds their improvement efforts.

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