

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, August 20, 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 Ken Taylor and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Suthers Masonic Lodge #259 members.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Caruso, and Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, council moved to adopt the minutes of the August 6, 2019, meeting as presented. 263139

There was no response to the Mayor's Call for Visitors. 263140

Mr. Ramey said Danny Culbertson, president of Norton Youth Sports Foundation (NYSF), was in attendance to provide an update on NYSF's effort to purchase new football equipment for the Norton Youth Football League.

Mr. Culbertson informed council that NYSF had raised approximately \$16,000, and that the foundation was able to purchase new football equipment and uniforms for 69 youths. He provided council with a handout that showed the new uniforms and equipment, and said next year the foundation hopes to build new bathroom facilities with storage at the Norton Little League field. Mr. Culbertson said NYSF will provide council with an engineer drawing that depicts the proposed bathroom facilities incorporating the city's new sidewalk, and he thanked council for their donation to NYSF. 263141

After brief discussion, council thanked Mr. Culbertson for the work the foundation is doing for Norton youth.

Council had been presented in their packets with a Resolution to Honor and Congratulate the Suthers Masonic Lodge #259, Chartered on December 21, 1894, on its 125th Anniversary.

Mr. Ramey said lodge members provided him with the history of the organization and a resolution was prepared to honor and recognize the 125th Anniversary of Suthers Masonic Lodge #259. He said Junior Warden Monty Marshall and lodge members were present and that Mr. Marshall would provide council with an update on the lodge's activities.

Mr. Marshall asked lodge members to introduce themselves with each member providing their length of service in the lodge and their position. After introductions, Mr. Marshall told council the lodge had been inactive for many years and just recently started fundraising again. He said fundraising has allowed the lodge to sponsor Norton Little League for the past three years, participate in the Brown Bag program for two years, and provide Christmas for 15 families on last year's Christmas Angel Tree. Mr. Marshall said the lodge wants to be good stewards of Norton, and he mentioned the lodge is working to improve the exterior of the lodge building.

Mr. Ramey added that the lodge reached out to the city to be included in the Façade Improvement Program and that lodge members provided the refreshments for the unveiling of the refurbished Coca-Cola sign event August 20th. 263142

Mr. Marshall said members appreciate city council's recognition of their 125th Anniversary and noted it was good to be one of the oldest organizations in Norton. He said the lodge, in recognition of its 125th Anniversary, had 150 numbered coins made and members would like to present council with coin number 66. Mr. Marshall explained members chose coin 66 because 66 years ago Norton built a new high school and named it after Mr. John I. Burton, who was a past Master Mason of the Norton Masonic Lodge. Mr. Marshall said coin 66 was important to the lodge and members hope the coin will be special to the city.

A group photo was taken with council, and Mayor Fawbush thanked lodge members for the coin presentation to the city. He said it is a great honor to receive the coin and to have the Suthers Masonic Lodge #259 in the city, and especially downtown. He said council applauds your service and the work you do.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt the Resolution to Honor and Congratulate the Suthers Masonic Lodge #259, Chartered on December 21, 1894, on its 125th Anniversary. (Insert)

Included in council's packet to reconsider for possible city code modifications were two draft ordinances related to Highland Cemetery and Chapter 20 – Reservoirs.

Mr. Ramey said council reviewed the two ordinances at the July 16th and August 6th meetings and the draft ordinance for Highland Cemetery basically codifies that the city needs to establish rules and regulations that relate to the operation and maintenance of the cemetery and that council can establish fees by resolution.

Council had no further questions or discussion regarding the draft Highland Cemetery ordinance.

Mr. Ramey said the second draft ordinance is amending Chapter 20 – Reservoirs specifically regarding gasoline-powered watercraft on the reservoir. He said at the last meeting, the city attorney advised the reservoir included more area than just the watershed and reservoir at the city property. At this point, council had some concerns about the draft ordinance as written and asked Mr. Bradshaw to amend the draft ordinance and add language that would ensure a person fishing would not be in violation of the regulation if petroleum-based products were in his/her possession, but did not have the products outside of his or her vehicle or watercraft.

Mr. Bradshaw noted that he addressed council's concern and added language that gasoline-powered watercraft are permissible in the parking lot area of the reservoir and on the access roads within the reservoir. Mr. Bradshaw said the modification to the draft ordinance also included language that excluded emergency services operators or other governmental agencies, such as the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF).

It was then the consensus of council to authorize the city manager to advertise public hearings on the two draft ordinances and place the items on the September 3rd council agenda.

The next item before council was a request to authorize a public hearing regarding the use of the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (USDARD) funding for the purchase of emergency vehicles.

Mr. Ramey said city council has utilized USDARD funding for several years to purchase emergency vehicles through a partial loan/grant program. He said city administration recommends council continue using the USDARD funding loan/grant to continue the city's emergency vehicle replacement program.

263143

263144

It was the consensus of council to authorize the city manager to advertise a public hearing regarding the use of the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (USDARD) funding for the purchase of emergency vehicles.

Also in packets for council consideration was a check to BB&T Governmental Finance Payment Processing, dated July 10, 2019, in the amount of \$124,731.52 to cover the payment of the 11th Street Bridge bond.

263145

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES - Mays, Fultz Fawbush Caruso, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, council moved to confirm the check to BB&T Governmental Finance Payment Processing, as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Caruso, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, council moved to go into closed meeting for Personnel as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1), and for the 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.

263146

Mayor Fawbush declared council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to go back into open meeting.

263147

Mayor Fawbush 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.

263148

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

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for two nominations to the Norton Planning Commission for a four-year term each to expire on July 31, 2023.

Councilman Mays nominated Virginia Stokes and Tim Cassell to be reappointed to the Norton Planning Commission for a four-year term to expire on July 31, 2023.

263149

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

Mayor Fawbush declared Virginia Stokes and Tim Cassell reappointed to the Norton Planning Commission for a four-year term each to expire on July 31, 2023

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey first informed council that the late Norton Mayor George E. Hunnicutt, Sr.'s, wife Mary Katherine Breeden Hunnicutt passed away on August 14th, the late councilman Roy Robert's wife Shirley Ann Stallard Roberts passed away on August 19th, and city board member Frank Gravely's wife Australia Gravely passed away on August 17th. Mr. Ramey told members the city sent flowers and condolences on behalf of council and city employees.

263150

Mr. Ramey said the city had a major water leak around 5:30 a.m., this morning and lost approximately 90,000 gallons of water. He said the city's water plant notified city crews of the problem and employees were on site and stopped the leak within 35 minutes.

Mr. Ramey advised council that Craig Street had been reopened at council's request and that residents along Craig Street were either notified by flyer or contacted personally.

Mr. Ramey said he attended a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Scoping Meeting in Bristol regarding planned repairs to the Tipple Hill Bridge. He said the project is scheduled to go to bid in late 2020 and it will require the closure of one lane on each side of the bridge until completion.

He said an invitation soft opening is planned for Sugar Hill Cidery later this week and the grand opening is being planned so that state funding agencies involved in the downtown project can attend.

Mr. Ramey said the High Knob Outdoor Festival and the unveiling of the restored Coca-Cola Clock were successful and he wanted to thank all the volunteers and participants in those two events.

He said Blue Ridge Outdoor Magazine has included the city again in its annual "Top Adventure Town" competition. The competition is being promoted on social media and he encourages everyone to vote for the city. Also, St. Paul is included in the competition, but the town is in a different size category than Norton.

Mr. Ramey placed the latest Retail Sales Tax Report on council members' desks for review.

He said the city will be tabling this coming weekend in Johnson City, Tennessee, at the Meet the Mountains Event.

Mr. Ramey said the Woodbooger Geocache will be held Saturday, September 7th, the High Knob Hellbender and the Woodbooger Festival is scheduled for Saturday, October 5th, and the Cloudsplitter Ultra 100 Trail Race will take place Saturday, October 12th.

In comments from the city attorney:

Mr. Bradshaw said the city was scheduled to hold a delinquent tax sale on two properties, but prior to the sale one of the owners paid all delinquent city taxes, penalties, interest, and fees to the city treasurer before the sale opened. He said the other delinquent tax property sold and all back taxes and fees were collected.

263151

At this time, Mr. Ramey said at the unveiling of the refurbished Coca-Cola sign event, the Kinsey Neon & Sign Company, Inc., had a sticker created that is a replica of the Coca-Cola sign and includes "Norton, Virginia" on the sticker. Mr. Ramey then presented each council member with a sticker.

263152

Mr. Ramey said Ms. Billie Leho presented the city with a one-year swimming ticket for the Norton Municipal Pool for the 1937 Opening Season and it was signed by the secretary of the Norton Kiwanis Club and the mayor. He then passed around the souvenir ticket to council to view and said he would place the ticket with other artifacts that have been given to the city.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilman Fultz said he is grateful for all the local ongoing events and he commends those individuals from the 1930's who had the Coke sign originally installed, the city, the new owner, and Kinsey Sign Company for working together to refurbish the Coca-Cola sign.

263153

Councilman Fultz said the school year is off to a good start, and there is a football jamboree August 23rd at John I. Burton High School, and Meet the Raiders is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., August 26th.

Councilman Caruso praised the city's public works, police and fire departments for excellent work in repairing a major water leak downtown on August 20th. He said they worked efficiently and did a great job in getting the leak repaired quickly.

Councilman Caruso said he was given a suggested rendering of the lot on Park Avenue beside his business Pathfinders that depicted what the property could potentially resemble if renovated. He said after the meeting he would leave the drawing in chambers for council members to review and give their thoughts on the idea put forth by a citizen.

263154

Mayor Fawbush echoed Councilman Caruso's comment on the city's public works and emergency services repair of the major water leak. He also commended city employees for rerouting water so residents would have water while the leak was being repaired.

He observed downtown today at the unveiling of the Coca-Cola sign event that citizens and businesses were proud of Norton and they enjoyed being downtown. He said Kinsey Neon & Sign Company was very proud of their refurbishment of the Coca-Cola sign and noted that the sign is a one-of-a-kind. Mayor Fawbush said the new sign owner Dr. Sturgill was proud to provide a place to hang the Coca-Cola sign and the electricity to light the sign. He thanked Mr. Ramey for all the involvement downtown and thanked Finance Director Jeff Shupe for keeping track of the various funds from various funding agencies.

263155

Councilman Mays added all these projects start with a shared council vision and he wanted to commend council members and city administration for the ongoing work throughout the city.

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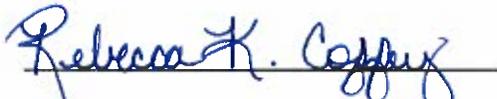
There being no further business to come before council, the meeting adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:


Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council