

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, September 17, 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

The invocation was given by Pastor Freddie Powers and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by the Norton City Trail Coordinator Shayne Fields.

At this time, Mayor Fawbush asked for the consensus of council to amend the agenda to include, under Item 6-F, consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7), as amended.

It was the consensus of council to amend the agenda to include under Item 6-F consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7), as amended.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, 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 September 3, 2019, meeting as presented.

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

Mr. Ramey said that the AmeriCorps/National Civilian Conservation Corps Team Bayou 5 (NCCC Bayou 5) has been working in the city for two weeks and the team was present with the Norton Trail Coordinator Shayne Fields to update council on their activities and to introduce the team.

Mr. Fields said the team has been working on the Campground Trail at Flag Rock Recreation Area. He explained that the completion of the trail will allow anyone camping in the Upper or Lower Campgrounds to access the trails from the campsites. Mr. Fields then asked the team leader for NCCC Bayou 5 to introduce the team and inform council about other activities the team has been involved with since arriving in Norton.

Team Leader Zack Thompson of Olympia, Washington, told council the team spent the last two weeks working at area events. He said the team changed the American flag at Flag Rock, working with Shayne to build a trail in Flag Rock Recreation Area, went tubing on the Clinch River, hiked to the Devil's Bathtub, kayaked during a full moon on the city reservoir, volunteered at a singing event in Big Stone Gap, and will be working the upcoming Naturalist Rally and the Woodbooger Festival. He then asked each member to introduce themselves and note where they are from: Zack Thompson, Olympia, Washington; Dylan Damkoehler, Parker, Colorado; Garrett McKay, Denver, Colorado; Kira Gafkjen, Fishers, Indiana; Sam

Browning, Kansas City, Missouri; Claudia Carmosino, Manchester, New Hampshire; and Rachel Casey, Austin, Texas.

After a brief discussion and on behalf of council, Mayor Fawbush welcomed NCCC Bayou 5 to the city and thanked the team for helping the city build the trail system at Flag Rock Recreation Area.

The next agenda item was a presentation by Preston Mitchell about the Community Remembrance Project.

Mr. Ramey said Mr. Mitchell contacted him about a project he and others have been working on regarding lynchings that occurred in Wise County. Mr. Ramey said Mr. Mitchell and some of the individuals working with him on this project would like to present some of the group's research and their goals and efforts for the project.

Mr. Mitchell told council the University of Virginia's College at Wise received a \$30,000 grant to fund research on the three lynchings in Wise County. He said the college hired five interns to conduct the study and that he has been working for the past three years with racial reconciliation so that communities can become a "Be Beloved" community, which for the past six years has been part of the national church effort to address racial reconciliation throughout the country. Mr. Mitchell explained the purpose of the resolution is for communities to become aware of the lynchings. He said the goals of the project are to teach this part of history in the classroom, to collect soil from the lynching sites, and to erect community remembrance markers or historical markers at these locations. Mr. Mitchell said on February 21, 2019, the Virginia General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution Number 655 which recognizes the need for conversations to occur about the Commonwealth's past error of accepting lynchings and to develop programs to bring awareness of this history so that reconciliation and healing can begin in communities across the state. Mr. Mitchell informed council that the towns of Coeburn and Wise passed the resolution and that he would like for Norton to be a part of the project and pass a resolution showing support for the Community Remembrance Project. Mr. Mitchell noted that during his research he discovered that Bruce Crawford, who graduated from Norhi in 1915 and who owned the Crawford Weekly Newspaper, in Norton was one of two people, who were instrumental in getting Virginia Governor Harry F. Byrd to get the Virginia General Assembly to pass the first anti-lynching law in 1928 which made lynching a state crime.

Next, John I. Burton High School English Teacher Stephanie Cassell told council that Burton is a very diverse school and she does not perceive any racial division among the students and that she is supportive of the Community Remembrance Project because it presents an opportunity for students to research local history and be a part of the conversations about things that might be difficult but need to be discussed. Ms. Cassell noted specifically that people don't seem to know how to respectfully disagree with one another and respect multiple perspectives and it is important that the students learn to discuss issues even though they might be uncomfortable sometimes.

Mr. Ramey told council for their review, he provided copies in their packets of the resolutions that the towns of Coeburn and Wise passed. He said if council would like to consider a resolution at the next meeting, he has prepared a rough draft similar to the general assembly's and of Wise's resolutions that can be modified as council desires and placed back on the agenda for the October 1st meeting.

It was the consensus of council to add the information about Bruce Crawford to the resolution and place it back on the October 1st agenda for council's consideration.

Norton City Schools Innovation Network Team, teachers Stephanie Cassell, Anu Godsey, and Gabrielle Barnette, presented council with an update on project-based learning at John I. Burton High School.

Norton City Schools' Superintendent Dr. Gina Wohlford told council that Norton City Schools was one of 26 schools in Virginia that was chosen to receive the Virginia is for Learners Innovation Network grant and teacher training. She said the training will go through December and that the five teachers selected to receive the project training are returning to the school setting to train colleagues and they are working collaboratively in the classroom to bring project based learning to students at the high school.

Via an Ignite presentation, the three teachers in attendance presented council with information on the project and said the team created the hashtag "Innovative Raiders" to label their projects. They noted that because the school division is small it will be easier to implement project-based learning and that the goal of the program is to keep students engaged in learning and for learning to be relatable. The teachers shared results of various classroom projects and how the collaboration between different classes helped the students use critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and how to have civil public discussions with differing opinions.

After a brief discussion and on behalf of council, Mayor Fawbush thanked Dr. Wohlford, Ms. Cassell, Ms. Godsey, and Ms. Barnette for the update on the Learners Innovation Network and for being role models for students.

Council had been presented in their packets with a Mutual County/City Boundary Designation Agreement.

Mr. Ramey provided council members with a colored map of the current and proposed E911 boundary that the city shares with Wise County and said state code allows for defined boundaries to be established between E911 centers so that emergency services can be dispatched in a more efficient manner. He said there are documented problems where calls came from outside of the jurisdiction of the responding E911 center. Mr. Ramey told council that all the counties that border Wise County have already gone through this process and the agreement in council's packets would formally designate the boundary between Wise County and the City of Norton for the purpose of routing E911 calls to the correct public-safety answering point (PSAP) center. He said city staff and emergency services have reviewed the document and are in agreement with the boundaries. Mr. Ramey said the city attorney has also reviewed the agreement and made some modifications for council's consideration.

After a brief discussion, and upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to approve the Mutual County/City Boundary Designation with noted corrections made by Councilman Caruso and authorized the police chief and mayor to execute the final agreement on behalf of the city.

In packets for council consideration was a transfer to Norton City Schools, dated July 29, 2019, in the amount of \$225,000, to cover July 2019 payroll expenditures.

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

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Mays, 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), for the Discussion or Consideration of the Acquisition of Real Property for a Public Purpose, or of the Disposition of Publicly 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), and consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7) of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

Mayor Fawbush declared council in closed meeting.

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

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.

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

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for nominations to the Norton Tourism Committee for a four-year term to expire on September 30, 2023.

Councilman Fultz nominated Carol Caruso to be reappointed to the Norton Tourism Committee for a four-year term to expire on September 30, 2023.

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

Mayor Fawbush declared Carol Caruso reappointed to the Norton Tourism Committee for a four-year term to expire on September 30, 2023.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey said the Benge Revenge Bike Race was held Saturday, September 7th with 20-30 cyclists participating in the race from Kentucky and Tennessee.

He said the Woodbooger Geocache event was also held Saturday, September 7th with 225 geocachers, representing 13 states, participating in the event. There were 150 participants who completed the Woodbooger Geocache and received the coin.

Mr. Ramey told council that Blue Ridge Outdoor Magazine informed him that the city did not make the three finalists for the Top Adventure Town, and that city administration is pleased to have made the top five finalists.

He said he provided council with the latest Retail Sales Tax Report for review.

Mr. Ramey said upcoming events include the High Knob Hellbender and the Woodbooger Festival scheduled for Saturday, October 5th. He said the Cloudsplitter Ultra 100 Trail Race is slated for October 12th and 13th with 119 runners registered representing three countries, Canada, Mexico, and Ireland.

He said the Virginia Municipal League (VML) Conference is planned for October 6th and 7th in Roanoke.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilwoman Belcher told fellow members she is looking forward to the completion of the WAXM Radio's façade improvement.

Councilwoman Belcher informed members she would be out of town for the October 1st council meeting.

Councilman Fultz informed council that the inflatable run through tunnel for the football team has been ordered and that the helmet will be ordered next year.

Mr. Ramey added the \$1,000 council authorized at the September 3rd meeting to assist with the purchase of the inflatable run through tunnel was presented to the school system today, September 17th.

Councilman Fultz suggested that the Community Remembrance Project resolution include information on Bruce Crawford for his role in ending the horrific lynchings that took place in Virginia.

Councilman Fultz asked if there was a timeline for the completion of the 11th Street Tennis Court Project.

The city manager advised there was not a timeline but the goal was to be finished before bad weather.

Councilman Fultz stated that 36 years ago this past Sunday he was in the Intensive Care Unit at Holston Valley Hospital in Kingsport, Tennessee, and with a bleak prognosis. He said he was not expected to walk and he should not have lived, but he is grateful that he defied the diagnosis.

Mayor Fawbush commented the grand opening of Sugar Hill Cidery went well and was well attended.

He said on September 12th he attended the Invest in Southwest Virginia rollout press announcement at the Higher Ed Center in Abingdon and the group has assembled a team of key figures to bring high-tech jobs to region.

Mayor Fawbush told members he attended the grand opening of Cassell Service Center today, September 17th.

Mayor Fawbush said he would be doing the radio program again this Wednesday, September 18th on WLSR Radio.

He said the Woodbooger Festival is in the final planning stages and this year's festival will be about the history of Norton.

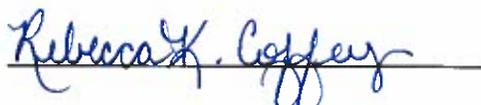
There being no further business to come before council, and upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by consensus of council, the meeting adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council