

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, January 7, 2020, 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 Pastor and Councilman Robert Fultz, Jr., and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led Police Chief James Lane.

At this time, Councilman Caruso asked members to consider amending the agenda to move Item D – Discussion Regarding Militia Support Resolution to Item A, remove Item B – Presentation by MCA Cable of Southwest Virginia Regarding Expansion of Cable Services Into the City of Norton because the company’s presenter could not be present at tonight’s meeting, and move Item A – Presentation of the Planned 2020 Community Calendar of Events/Activities to Item B. It was the consensus of council to amend the agenda as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Caruso, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, council moved to adopt the minutes of the December 17, 2019, meeting as presented.

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

At the December 17th council meeting, Councilman Caruso said he would like to present a militia support resolution to members at the January 7, 2020 council meeting.

Prior to start of the meeting, Councilman Caruso handed out copies of the militia support resolution he had drafted to council members for their consideration, and to the city clerk and city manager. He then read a prepared statement in which he highlighted that the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Code of Laws of the United States of America, and the Virginia State Code all contain language that supports an unorganized militia that is comprised of only law-abiding, well-trained, and well-armed citizens whose purpose is to aid local civil authorities, including law enforcement, in times of crisis, to ensure the safety and security of the citizenry, and to maintain a free state (complete statement attached).

After Councilman Caruso finished reading his prepared statement, applause was given from audience members, and he then read the proposed resolution making a motion to adopt a Resolution Supporting the Order of Militia Within the City of Norton, Virginia, Pursuant to the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article 1, Section 13 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

After lengthy discussion among council members, and comments made from various audience members, Councilman Mays seconded the motion and the resolution was passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Caruso, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None. Council then moved to adopt a Resolution Supporting the Order of Militia Within the City of Norton, Virginia, Pursuant to the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article 1, Section 13 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Council members received applause from audience members and Mayor Fawbush then declared a five-minute recess. (Complete Comments Attached)

The city manager said Norton Parks and Recreation Director Michele Knox and Special Projects Coordinator Katie Dunn were in attendance to present the Norton 2020 Calendar of Events/Activities.

Ms. Dunn told council the 2020 Calendar of Events/Activities is the same as last year's calendar but with a few added events such as a monthly hiking series and a half-marathon which will benefit trail maintenance and development in the Flag Rock Recreation Area. She then shared with council that outdoor yoga, mountain bike rides, and other activities from 2019 will continue in 2020.

Ms. Knox updated council on Parks and Recreation events and activities planned for the upcoming year. She said the department will continue the Easter Egg Hunt and Halloween Bash in the city park, Fantastic Friday Water Slides during the summer at city parks, various summer camps for the kids, flag football and basketball camps, Independence Day Celebration and Parade, Sip-N-Paint classes, Trash to Treasures classes, Christmas Parade, Adopt-a-Spot, the Farmers Market from June through December, environmental classes, paint-a-can contests, the Great American Cleanup in April, the Best Friend Festival in June, paper collection programs at both schools, curbside recycling, and other activities.

On behalf of council, Mayor Fawbush thanked Ms. Dunn and Ms. Knox for their efforts to keep the citizens informed on social media and for their leadership.

Mr. Ramey presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Park Avenue Improvements Study and said the primary purpose of this grant was to study traffic operations and safety along Park Avenue from Tipple Hill to 15th Street, N.W., Norton-Coeburn Road from Tipple Hill to Hawthorne Drive, and 11th Street from Park Avenue to Kentucky Avenue. Mr. Ramey said the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will conduct a meeting on Wednesday, January 15th, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers, and citizens will be able to speak with VDOT representatives about the project. He said based upon the information, recommendations will be made on how to improve traffic and safety for all roadway users including vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Mr. Ramey said some of the improvements VDOT will be sharing with citizens at the meeting will include changes to the Hawthorne Intersection, entrance to the Virginia-Kentucky Shopping Center, various improvements to traffic signals throughout the city, entrance into downtown from Tipple Hill to Route 74, various options for providing a road dike between Route 74 to 11th Street, N.W., evaluating the roadway from 11th Street to Minors Exchange Bank, and specifically looking at 12th Street, N.W., to make it pedestrian friendly. Mr. Ramey said the study will assist the city and VDOT in making decisions to prioritize projects with various funding sources including VDOT's Smartscale program. He said VDOT has provided a flyer and advertised the meeting to receive public input, and city administration is concentrating on notifying downtown business owners and board members. Mr. Ramey said there will not be a formal presentation, but citizens can drop by anytime during the timeframe to see three different recommendations on the plans and talk to VDOT representatives.

Also included packets for council consideration was a check to Inland Construction, Inc., dated December 1, 2019, in the amount of \$153,918.05 to cover downtown improvements.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council moved to confirm the check to Inland Construction, as stated above.

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

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.

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

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for three nominations to the Board of Equalization for a one-year term to expire December 31, 2020.

Councilwoman Belcher nominated Frank Gravely, Sr., David Daniels, and Elijah Roop to be appointed to the Board of Equalization with Stephen McElroy appointed as an alternate for one-year terms to expire December 31, 2020.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved that the nominations cease.

Mayor Fawbush declared Frank Gravely, Sr., David Daniels, and Elijah Roop nominated to the Board of Equalization with Stephen McElroy nominated as an alternate for one-year terms to expire December 31, 2020. These names will be submitted to the Wise County Circuit Court for approval.

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for a nomination to the Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority for a two-year term to expire January 16, 2022.

Councilman Caruso nominated Fred Ramey to be reappointed to the Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority for a two-year term to expire January 16, 2022.

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

Mayor Fawbush declared Fred Ramey reappointed to the Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority for a two-year term to expire January 16, 2022.

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for a nomination to the Ninth District Development Financing, Inc., for a two-year term to expire January 31, 2022.

Councilman Mays nominated Carol Caruso to be reappointed to the Ninth District Development Financing, Inc., for a two-year term to expire January 31, 2022.

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

Mayor Fawbush declared Carol Caruso reappointed to the Ninth District Development Financing, Inc., for a two-year term to expire January 31, 2022.

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for two nominations to the Norton Rescue Squad Board of Directors for a one-year term to expire February 1, 2021.

Councilman Caruso nominated Delores Belcher and William Mays to be reappointed to the Norton Rescue Squad Board of Directors for a one-year term to expire February 1, 2021.

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

Mayor Fawbush declared Delores Belcher and William Mays reappointed to the Norton Rescue Squad Board of Directors for a one-year term to expire February 1, 2021.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey told council he had confirmed that members had completed the required Conflict of Interest Act Training by the deadline of December 31, 2019.

Mr. Ramey advised council it is time to file annual disclosure statements and the submittal deadline is Monday, February 3, 2020.

Mr. Ramey said he provided each member with an overview of city council highlights for 2019.

He reminded council that the next meeting will be Tuesday, February 4th due to the Legislative Reception in Richmond.

Mr. Ramey said the Virginia Municipal League's magazine *Virginia Town and City* highlights Norton on Page 7 regarding Norton being featured on a public radio segment.

Mr. Ramey told council he provided members with copies of the latest traffic counts for High Knob and Flag Rock Recreation Area.

Mr. Ramey said upcoming events in the city include the VDOT Park Avenue Improvement Study meeting on Wednesday, January 15th and the Regional Legislative Reception planned on Wednesday, January 22nd in Richmond.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilman Caruso thanked fellow council members for their support of the militia resolution, and he said it is important that citizens know council supports the constitution both in written form and intent. He also appreciates that council supports the constitution.

Mayor Fawbush said there will be a funding announcement at 10:00 a.m., Friday, January 24th, in the main ballroom of The Wise Inn.

He said members will be traveling to Richmond for the Legislative Reception at The Library of Virginia, scheduled for Wednesday, January 22nd, so there will be no council meeting on Tuesday, January 21st. Mayor Fawbush advised the next meeting will be Tuesday, February 4th.

Councilman Fultz shared that his grandson and John I. Burton High School student Lucas Addison went to Richmond to serve as a Page for Delegate Terry Kilgore in the Virginia Legislature for the next two months. He said it is a wonderful opportunity for Lucas and he is very excited.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council