

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, September 6, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

Present: William Mays, Robert Fultz, Jr., Sarah Davis, Mark Caruso and Joseph Fawbush

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager and Interim City Clerk

The invocation was given by Rev. Gary Hill and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Norton Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator Todd Lagow.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt the minutes of the August 16, 2022, meeting as presented.

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

Included in council packets for consideration was a request for authorization to submit a grant application for the school resource officer (SRO) position at John I. Burton High School.

After providing council with a brief history of school resource officer placement in the Norton City School System, Mr. Ramey informed council that the city may be eligible to apply for a federally funded Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) grant through the Norton Police Department for the high school SRO position, which is currently being funded by the city and the school system. He explained that the DCJS grant program would be funded through the Commonwealth of Virginia and requested authorization to apply for any available funding that could be used for the high school SRO position.

Following a brief discussion, upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council moved to authorize city administration to apply for a DCJS grant to fund the school resource officer position at John I. Burton High School.

Council was asked to review the Proposed 2022-2023 Annual Paving List.

Via PowerPoint, Mr. Ramey provided council with a brief overview of city procurement of milling and paving services for FY2023 projects and a list of recommended streets for council consideration.

He said milling, paving and striping services are procured annually as funding is available and asphalt prices can vary significantly due primarily to oil prices. The city manager presented an overview of FY18-FY23 paving budgets and the milling and paving bids for 2020, 2021, and 2022. He said milling/paving costs have increased and noted that paving and capital expenditures are two of the areas most affected during difficult budget years.

Mr. Ramey said the FY23 paving budget is \$25,000 with additional funding expected from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA).

Anticipated 2022 grant-funded paving includes Park Avenue from 12<sup>th</sup> Street to the western corporation limit and the Southside Comprehensive Housing Project area and Maple Avenue.

Recommended city paving includes Chapman Street, Laurel Avenue, Lost Creek Drive, 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Spout Springs Avenue, 14<sup>th</sup> Street SE, and the 600 to 700 blocks of Virginia Avenue NW.

said the city has 14 more events which can be held under this year's DORA permit and no other DORA events have been mentioned to date. The city will need to reapply for a DORA license next year. He noted that any inquiries about having a DORA event must be brought before city council for formal approval and zone designation.

Included in packets for council consideration was a transfer to Norton City Schools dated July 25, 2022, in the amount of \$350,000 to cover July 2022 payroll expenditures.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, 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 Mays, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council moved to go into closed meeting to discuss Personnel as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, as amended; and for 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 Mays, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to go back into open meeting.

Mayor Fawbush declared council back in open meeting.

Mr. Ramey polled each member of council as to the Certification of Closed Meeting with each answering yes. The city manager then read A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting.

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

Mayor Fawbush asked if council had any recommendations from closed session.

Based on discussions in closed session and numerous community complaints concerning property maintenance, nuisance properties and failure of properties to be maintained causing property value loss, Vice Mayor Caruso made a motion for the City of Norton to set aside up to \$100,000 for community improvement programs such as property maintenance and nuisance property enforcement to be funded by ARPA and/or Unappropriated Reserves funding and amend the 2022-23 Budget for such.

Seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council moved to approve appropriating up to \$100,000 for community improvement programs such as property maintenance and nuisance property enforcement to be funded by ARPA and/or Unappropriated Reserves funding and amend the 2022-23 Budget for such.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey thanked Norton Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator Todd Lagow for logistics coordination for the recent SCCA Flag Rock Hill Climb. He said the city's public

works, police, fire and rescue team personnel are the best and they show it every time the city has an event.

He informed council that tax tickets were expected to be mailed today and should be received in the next week or so.

The city manager reported that on Monday, August 22, 2022, Special Projects Coordinator Katie Dunn represented the City of Norton at the Southwest Virginia Tourism Marketing Awards Luncheon and received, on behalf of the city, the “Best Video Series for a Destination Marketing Budget Less Than \$50,000” Award for the city’s Get Outside in Norton Video Series. The video series was made with a grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Mr. Ramey said the city has been awarded another AmeriCorps Team, Team River 4, which is expected to arrive September 12, stay for four weeks, and leave October 10. He said he hopes the team members will be able to attend the next council meeting.

The city manager provided council with copies of the latest High Knob Traffic Counts. He said the Flag Rock traffic counter was out of order and was replaced September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Upcoming events: September 11, 2022, **UVA Wise ROTC Flag Ceremony** with cadets leaving John I. Burton High School parking lot at 6 a.m., cadets marching from Legion Park at 6:30 a.m., and the ceremony at 9 a.m.; **Halloween Bash**, Saturday, October 29, 2022.

Mr. Ramey asked council members to consider having a council workshop in early November to discuss ARPA funded projects.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilwoman Davis discussed planning details for the picnic for the city’s first responders and their families and said she thought the SCCA Hill Climb went well.

Councilman Mays agreed that the SCCA event went well, adding that the SCCA people were some of the nicest people he has ever met and they were impressed with the efforts of the city.

He officially announced he will run as a write-in candidate for Norton City Council after constituents requested that he do so.

Following a discussion about possible dates for the workshop, the consensus of council was to determine the workshop date at the next council meeting.

Councilman Fultz asked if Halloween will be observed on Monday, October 31.

The city manager confirmed that the city will observe Halloween that date.

Councilman Fultz spoke about how moving the services for the late Stan Wilson were Friday evening at the high school gym.

Noting that Laurel Avenue used to be called Ice Plant Hollow, he asked why the name was changed.

Councilwoman Davis inquired if Councilman Fultz had an update on the status of possible groups to operate the High Knob Tower aid station for the Cloudsplitter.

Councilman Fultz said he talked to Esserville Community Church Youth Director Nick Sturgill and he expressed interest in operating the aid station but would have to consult with the congregation before committing.

Councilwoman Davis said the Cloudsplitter Committee had a productive meeting and Cloudsplitter Director Susan Howell is going to meet with the committee.

Discussion about the aid stations followed.

Councilman Caruso recognized September as National Preparedness Month and said information about disaster preparedness can be found on [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov). He asked for the information to be placed on the city’s website and Channel 51 and for the city to order/print

disaster preparedness materials that could be placed at the community center and city hall for distribution.

He suggested that emergency management personnel could offer some classes about disaster preparedness and how to find these resources. He also suggested having Emergency Management Coordinator Todd Lagow inform council about the city's disaster preparedness plans and having a disaster preparedness class taught at the community center.

Councilman Caruso said it is important that people residing in flood plains have national flood insurance. Information on the National Flood Insurance Program can be found at [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov).

He said city council and city administration have been invited to the Wise Regional Fire School Dinner at 6 p.m., Saturday, September 10, 2022, at the Wise Fire Hall.

Citing ongoing security issues at John I. Burton High School, Councilman Caruso suggested having a security assessment done of the high school and Norton Elementary and Middle School.

Mayor Fawbush said he was impressed with how nice John I. Burton High School is looking.

He said the Blue Ridge SCCA Hill Climb was a success and shared the positive comments he received commending city administration, emergency services and public works. The mayor said SCCA representatives plan to present council with a plaque at a future council meeting.

The mayor noted that tonight's allocation of \$100,000 for property maintenance and nuisance property enforcement sends a message that council is serious about the health and safety of the community and he is hopeful the allocation will continue as an annual budget item.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



Mark Caruso, Vice Mayor

ATTEST:



Fred Ramey, Jr., Interim Clerk of Council