

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, October 4, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

Present: William Mays, Robert Fultz, Jr., and Joseph Fawbush

Absent: Mark Caruso, Sarah Davis and Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager and Interim City Clerk

Also Present: Jeffery Shupe, City Director of Finance, and Stephen McElroy, City Engineer

The invocation was given by Rev. Roger Sloce and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Norton Police Department First Sergeant Greg Mays.

Consideration of the September 20, 2022, Council Minutes was tabled until October 18, 2022.

At this time, Mayor Fawbush asked council to amend the agenda to include after Item 6-B Consideration of the Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the Norton Department of Social Services and King University.

The consensus of council was to consider the MOU after Item 6-B.

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

Mayor Fawbush said he is always pleased to have AmeriCorps in Norton and asked Mr. Shupe to update council on what the team had been doing.

Mr. Shupe welcomed AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) Southern Region Team River 4 to the council meeting and asked City Trail Coordinator Shayne Fields to discuss what the team had done since the September 20th council meeting.

Mr. Fields commended the team members on what they accomplished this past week while he was ill, noting that they assisted at Family Crisis Support Services Hope House Charities and worked independently on trail development. He said he was very proud of what the team had accomplished.

River 4 Team Leader Alexa Rodriguez said tonight's PowerPoint presentation by the entire team was the debrief the team would present to the AmeriCorps board.

Following introductions by Ms. Rodriguez and team members, the presentation discussion focused on purpose of assignment, orientation and skills training provided by Mr. Fields, accomplishments and measurable goals, how the community and team members benefited from the work the team did while in Norton, housing at Camp Bethel, specialty roles, solutions, highlights, reflections and questions.

The team completed 2,352 feet of trail development and ground control, construction of three water bars, and organization of 5,700 pounds of household goods, furniture and supplies at Family Crisis Support Services (FCSS) Hope House Charities. The team worked over 1,000 project hours through October 4th.

Some of the benefits discussed by the team included improved community health and wellness through using the trails to go outside and hike or bike and enhancement of local tourism and the area economy.

Community outreach included a tabling event, check-in and parking assistance at the Naturalist Rally, and distribution of AmeriCorps NCCC flyers, as well as media coverage by

local newspapers, WCYB television station, and other media platforms. Other volunteer opportunities included assisting Norton Fire Department and the American Red Cross with the installation of 19 smoke alarms in community homes as part of the Sound the Alarm 911 Remembrance campaign. The team also distributed water and provided encouragement and support for the runners at one of the High Knob Triple Crown Series Hellbender 10k aid stations.

Team members shared their reflections on being in Norton and the surrounding area, and before-and-after photos of the trails and assignment activities were shown.

Ms. Rodriguez thanked council for the opportunity to update council on the work the team accomplished.

Mayor Fawbush and council expressed appreciation for the team's assistance with Flag Rock Recreation Area trail development and other community service projects. He also thanked Mr. Fields for working with and organizing the AmeriCorps NCCC teams each year.

Outstanding Service Award plaques and Get Outside in Norton t-shirts were given to each team member.

As a token of appreciation for assisting with Sound the Alarm, Norton Fire Chief Todd Lagow presented each team member with a Norton Fire Department challenge coin. He explained that the coin is a token of membership to an organization or squadron, noting that their assistance was truly beneficial to the citizens of Norton and helped the department with its mission of protecting the lives and property of Norton's citizens.

Individual plaque award presentation photos were taken and a group photo of the team with their plaques was taken with council.

Mr. Shupe thanked Team River 4 for their time and effort in Norton, and council expressed their gratitude with a round of applause.

The city finance director said City Engineer Stephen McElroy was in attendance to provide council with a brief overview of Project Intersection Phase II. Mr. Shupe said Norton Industrial Development Authority (NIDA), in conjunction with Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority (LPRIFA), recently awarded a bid for Phase II of the planned regional industrial park to be located at the intersection of US 23 and Alternate Route 58. The planned Phase II scope of work includes the development of the access road, mass grading of site, roadway installation, asphalt pavement with curb and gutter, stormwater management and sediment control structures, utility infrastructure, and site pad grading for Pads 1A, 1B, 2 and 3.

During a PowerPoint overview of the project, City Engineer Stephen McElroy explained the project includes over 4,000 linear feet of roadway, curb and gutter, over 4,000 linear feet of waterline, over 3,000 linear feet of sewer line, approximately 500,000 cubic yards of earthwork and stormwater management. He said bids were received June 2, 2022, with two contractors submitting bids – McFall Excavating and King General Contractors. Notice of Award was issued June 28, 2022, to McFall Excavating for \$7,236,350.25. Notice to Proceed was issued August 29, 2022, with final completion anticipated in May 2023.

Mr. McElroy asked if council had any questions.

He said design build procurement is currently taking place and the project is expected to be under contract by early November 2022 with groundbreaking anticipated in mid to late spring 2023.

Mr. Shupe asked for council consideration of a Memorandum of Understanding Between the Norton Department of Social Services (NDSS) and King University. He said the MOU outlines

the responsibilities of both parties for placing a King University Bachelor of Social Work intern with NDSS.

The finance director advised that City Attorney William Bradshaw had reviewed the MOU and found no issues. Mr. Shupe asked NDSS Director Abe Rutherford to discuss the MOU and address questions from council.

Mr. Rutherford said the MOU identifies the responsibilities of NDSS, King University and this specific intern. He explained that the intern will be working on updating a resource guide for NDSS and the internship will end December 9th.

Mayor Fawbush asked if the MOU would continue each semester.

Mr. Rutherford said this MOU is specific to this student.

Councilman Fultz asked if there has been discussion about having other King University interns in the future.

The social services director said he would not mind having additional interns in the future. He said he had spoken with the field education director at King University and she was very pleased to have the opportunity to work with NDSS.

Mr. Rutherford said the intern's work must be approved by someone with a Bachelor of Social Work degree and NDSS has staff with such. Mr. Rutherford said he will serve as proctor.

The social services director asked if council had any questions.

There were no questions from council.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following roll call vote, YES – Mays, Fultz and Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Davis and Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Norton Department of Social Services and King University and allow Norton DSS Director Abe Rutherford to sign the MOU.

Included in council packets was a request from Norton Commissioner of the Revenue Judy Miller to refund the first half of 2022 real estate taxes totaling \$1,074.15 to Mark Caruso Et Ux. because of a 100 percent Veterans Exemption. The second half of the 2022 real estate taxes were exonerated.

Councilman Fultz asked if this refund was for a dwelling or a business.

Mr. Shupe said he did not know.

Mayor Fawbush said the commissioner of revenue had reviewed the refund and determined the refund was due.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Mays, Fultz and Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Davis and Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council authorized a 2022 real estate tax refund in the amount of \$1,074.15 to Mark Caruso Et Ux due to a 100 percent Veterans Exemption.

Included in packets for council consideration was a check to Little B Enterprises Inc. of Castlewood, Virginia, dated August 19, 2022, in the amount of \$258,664.34 for the waterline replacement portion of the Southside Neighborhood Comprehensive Improvement Project.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following roll call vote, YES – Mays, Fultz and Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Davis and Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council moved to confirm the check to Little B Enterprises Inc., as stated above.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Shupe said a High Knob Destination Center pre-construction meeting was conducted on September 26, 2022, with substantial completion of the project expected on September 26, 2023, and final completion on October 26, 2023. He said these dates could be adjusted for weather and other delays.

He informed council that the Town of Big Stone Gap provided 10 tickets for the Blue Highway Music Festival on October 7 and 8. He asked council members to contact him if they wanted a ticket.

Upcoming events: Anchor Brace and Limb Ribbon-cutting, 12:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 12, 2022; Halloween Bash, 5 to 9 p.m., Saturday, October 29, 2022, at the Expo Center; and Norton Halloween Trick-or-Treating, 5:30 to 8 p.m., Monday, October 31, 2022.

Mr. Shupe reminded council members to be thinking about a date in early November for a council workshop to discuss American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funded projects.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilman Fultz and the mayor said council is working on determining a date for a council work session.

The mayor said the city manager will let council members know once the workshop date is determined.

Mayor Fawbush advised that City Manager Fred Ramey, Jr., Vice Mayor Caruso and his wife were attending the Virginia Municipal League Conference in Richmond, Virginia. The mayor said he asked them to find out what other localities are doing in terms of Airbnb's while they are at the conference.

The mayor said he was informed that one of the roundtable discussions at the conference was on short term rentals, so he is looking forward to hearing this information.

He noted that the need for housing was a topic that was on the agenda at last night's LENOWISCO meeting and this need is being addressed.

Mayor Fawbush said it was a pleasure having NCCC Team River 4 at tonight's meeting and he appreciates everything Mr. Fields does with these teams.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:



Fred Ramey, Jr., Interim Clerk of Council