

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, November 15, 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 Ben Foy of WLS D Radio Station.

Mayor Fawbush said council was pleased to have newly elected council members Stacy Salyers and Chris Jones in the audience tonight. He congratulated Mr. Salyers and Mr. Jones on their election, adding that they will officially take their council seats in January 2023.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Caruso and Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – None, ABSTAIN – Davis, council moved to adopt the minutes of the November 1, 2022, council meeting as presented.

During the Mayor's Call for Visitors, Mr. Ben Foy, on behalf of Rolling Thunder Chapter 4 of Tennessee, presented council with a POW-MIA flag for the Municipal Building flagpole. Mr. Foy and Councilman Caruso unfurled the flag, and a flag presentation picture was taken.

Councilman Caruso thanked Mr. Foy and Rolling Thunder, and he said he would give the flag to the city manager.

After announcing his retirement from WLS D effective Friday, November 18, 2022, Mr. Foy told council he would be moving to Tennessee and would serve as chairman of the Rolling Thunder Chapter 4 Board. He thanked council and the City of Norton for helping complete some area projects, and he said Rolling Thunder Chapter 4 would continue the maintenance of the POW-MIA chair in Veterans Park.

Mayor Fawbush thanked Mr. Foy for his contributions to the City of Norton and the surrounding area. He said Mr. Foy has been a tremendous asset to the city and he enjoyed the times he and Mr. Foy were on the radio together.

Council expressed their appreciation to Mr. Foy and Rolling Thunder with applause.

A public hearing was held to solicit input on City of Norton Charter revisions recommended by city council prior to consideration by the Virginia General Assembly.

Noting that the revisions are a housekeeping item, the city manager provided council with a brief overview of the recommended charter revisions.

He said council was given a list of proposed changes in June 2022 and following review by council and City Attorney Bradshaw a Resolution Recommending Revisions to the City of Norton Charter was completed. After the resolution containing the recommended charter revisions was adopted by council on June 21, 2022, Mr. Ramey sent the resolution to Delegate Terry Kilgore's office and the city resolution with charter changes was then forwarded to the Division of Legislative Services. He said the Commonwealth requested a redlined copy of the charter showing before and after revisions and a public hearing on the charter revisions to be held.

The charter revisions included: **§ 1.2. Boundaries**, boundary line adjustment by order entered in Case No. C04-07 of record as Wise County and City of Norton Land Instrument No. 200400372; **§ 3.4, Elections; terms of council members**, an election for two council members shall be held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November 2024 (rather than in May) and every four years thereafter, and for three council members on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in 2026, and every four years thereafter. Elections shall be held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November (rather than May) every two years thereafter; **§ 3.7. Mayor and Vice-Mayor**, at its first meeting in July 1988, and biennially thereafter following the regular municipal election, the council shall elect on a majority vote one of its members as mayor and another as vice-mayor shall be changed to at its first meeting in January 2025, and biennially thereafter following the regular municipal election, the council shall elect on a majority vote one of its members as mayor and another as vice-mayor; **§ 4.1. Generally**, removal of (4.) Appoint the members of the city school board and fill vacancy thereon; **§ 4.9. When certain officers appointed; provisions particularly applicable to city manager**, at the first meeting in July changed to at the first meeting in January following each councilmanic election, or as soon thereafter as practicable; and **§ 5.2. Election of school board members; terms and compensation**, compensation removed to read **§ 5.2. Election of school board members; terms** and the section should state that two school board members shall be elected at the general election in November 2024 and every four years thereafter, and three school board members shall be elected at the general election in November 2026, and every four years thereafter. The appointed members whose terms expire on June 30, 1996, shall be replaced by the members elected in May 1996, will be removed from the charter. The remaining appointed members shall have their terms extended until June 30, 1998, and will be replaced by the members elected in May 1998 will also be removed from the charter.

The city manager advised that after tonight's public hearing, unless there are modifications by city council, a copy of the redlined charter revisions and certification of public hearing on those charter revisions will be submitted to the Commonwealth.

Mayor Fawbush opened the public hearing.

Receiving no public comments on the charter revision, Mayor Fawbush closed the public hearing.

By unanimous roll call vote, the consensus of council was to move forward with the city charter revisions for submission to and consideration by the Virginia General Assembly, as presented.

Mayor Fawbush said the Flatwoods Job Corps was not present at tonight's meeting so the presentation by the Job Corps was tabled to the December 6, 2022, council meeting.

In packets for council consideration was a transfer to Wise County Board of Supervisors dated August 12, 2022, in the amount \$332,343.24 to cover the city's share for FY2021-2022 court services.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Davis, Caruso and Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – None, ABSTAIN – None, council moved to confirm the transfer to Wise County Board of Supervisors, as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Mays, 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) 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.

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 Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, 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 Virginia Heritage Music Trail (The Crooked Road) Board for a three-year term to expire November 30, 2025.

Councilman Mays nominated Linda Hamilton to be reappointed to the Virginia Heritage Music Trail (The Crooked Road) Board for a three-year term to expire November 30, 2025.

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

The mayor declared Linda Hamilton reappointed to Virginia Heritage Music Trail (The Crooked Road) Board for a three-year term to expire November 30, 2025.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey said the November 3rd tax sale for two city properties resulted in the sale of both properties to city residents and Norton Industrial Development Authority did not have to be involved in that process.

He provided council with a recent Kingsport Times News article regarding the city's trail system.

The city manager reminded council that the Regional Legislative Reception is scheduled for 6 p.m., January 31, 2023, at the Library of Virginia in Richmond, Virginia. He asked council members to let him know as soon as possible if they are planning to attend so reservations can be confirmed.

Mr. Ramey provided copies of the latest monthly financial statement and monthly Retail Sales Tax Report for council review.

Upcoming events discussed by the city manager: Lincoln Road Turkey Day 5K, Nov. 24, 9 a.m., with start/finish location at the Norton Expo Center; Christmas Tree Lighting in the Municipal Parking Lot, 6 p.m., Dec. 3; City Holiday Market, 2-6 p.m., Dec. 4, at the Norton Expo Center; and the Christmas Parade, 6 p.m., Dec 4.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilman Fultz inquired if the city manager had found out any information about the German restaurant that is supposed to locate in Norton.

The city manager said he tried but was not successful at reaching anyone.

Councilman Fultz asked about the replacement timeline for Romano's.

The city manager advised that he met with one of the owners Monday and the city is working with the owners through the city's downtown sign grant program. Mr. Ramey said one of the

owners indicated the goal is to open the new restaurant the first week in December. He said the name of the restaurant will be Alfredo's and the restaurant will serve Italian and Greek cuisine.

Mr. Ramey said the owners have a couple of restaurants in West Virginia and were researching their expansion opportunities in the area. He said after looking at several opportunities, they decided to locate in the former Romano's location.

Councilman Fultz also inquired about the timeline for the opening of the restaurant moving into the former Yamato's location.

The city manager said he did not have any information about when that restaurant will open.

Councilman Fultz noted the good numbers on city sales tax revenue.

Councilman Caruso said the sales tax revenue was up 1.35 percent from last year. He said the last four years the city's sales tax revenue increased year over year which is great news. He thanked the city management and downtown businesses for these positive numbers.

Mayor Fawbush said one of the items discussed at last night's council work session was the employee Christmas bonus and the city manager and the city director of finance were asked to provide council with several options. The mayor shared the two options with council. Option One would require an additional \$42,800 in funding and would restore the full Christmas bonus which would be an average of \$812 for full-time employees and \$431 for part-time employees. He said this bonus would not include the fire department or emergency management services employees. Option Two would require an additional \$100,000 in funding and would provide a \$1,000 bonus to full-time city employees, \$2,000 to police officers, \$500 to part-time employees, \$1,000 to full-time EMS employees, and \$500 to fire department and EMS volunteers.

The city manager explained that these funds would be additional to what was already budgeted.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council moved to approve city employee Christmas bonus Option Two from Unappropriated Reserves, as presented above.

Councilman Fultz asked if the Christmas bonuses would be kept secret until the bonuses are received by the employees.

City Director of Finance Jeffery Shupe said city employees would be informed of the Christmas bonus when they receive paystubs on December 2 and 3.

Mayor Fawbush said Norton Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator Todd Lagow conducted the 2022 Region 4-City of Norton Winter Weather Tabletop Exercise this morning in council chambers with representatives from the state, Old Dominion Power, the National Weather Service, the city, and other agencies attending. He said the panel was impressed with the city's winter weather plan and he received many positive remarks. The mayor commended Mr. Lagow on his success with initiating and planning the exercise which had been in the works since 2009.

The mayor said he noticed that this year's city Christmas tree frame is being built and he is looking forward to seeing the fully constructed tree and the tree lighting on December 3.

The city manager noted that this year's tree is larger, the tree location has changed to the Municipal Parking Lot, and there will be some additional decorations and attractions.

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