

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, October 15, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

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

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager

Absent: Mark Caruso

The invocation was given by city manager and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Fire Chief Todd Lagow.

Due to emergencies in the clerk's family, the adoption of the October 1, 2019 minutes was tabled until the next meeting on November 5, 2019.

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

Mr. Ramey said council tabled a draft resolution in support of the Community Remembrance Project at the October 1st meeting because members felt it was important to highlight the efforts of Bruce Crawford, editor of the Crawford Weekly Newspaper in Norton, to stop lynchings. Mr. Ramey told council he still has not had the opportunity to meet with Preston Mitchell about including his knowledge on Bruce Crawford's efforts due to Mr. Mitchell having had a medical procedure. Mr. Ramey said with council's permission he would like to table the Community Remembrance Project Resolution again to give him and Mr. Mitchell an opportunity to work together on the resolution.

It was the consensus of council to table Item 6-A, A Resolution in Support of the Community Remembrance Project.

The next agenda item was the appointment of working officers of the Norton Fire Department.

The city manager said the Virginia State Code requires council's approval of working officers for the Norton Fire Department. He then recognized Fire Chief Todd Lagow who presented council with a list of working officers of the department for the fiscal year 2019-2020. Chief Lagow advised there had been three changes on this list: first, per his request, move Assistant Fire Chief Marty Hagy to captain; second change, move Buddy Cash from captain to assistant fire chief to take the place of Marty Hagy; and three, add Paul Wheatley as lieutenant to take the lieutenant position of Cody McElroy who has left the department.

After a brief discussion regarding membership, response times, and calls, Councilman Mays made a motion to accept and approve the 2019-2020 List of Working Officers for Norton Fire Department. The motion was seconded by Councilwomen Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, with council approving the list of working officers as presented.

The city manager told council Chapter 8 – Article II of the Norton City Code related to the Fire Department should be reviewed for possible updating. He said with council's permission he would like to review this code section with fire department leadership and City Attorney William Bradshaw and bring recommended changes to council for consideration.

It was the consensus of council to authorize the city manager to review Chapter 8 – Article II of the Norton City Code related to the Fire Department with Norton Fire Department leadership and City Attorney William Bradshaw and bring any recommended changes to council for consideration and approval.

Council had been presented in their packet with a request from the Commissioner of the Revenue to refund an erroneously assessed 2019 Personal Property Tax.

The Commissioner of Revenue determined that Personal Property Tax Relief (PPTRA) was not applied to the original 2019 personal property tax ticket for HVT Inc. A refund in the amount of the \$229.40 is due to HVT Inc.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council authorized a refund to HVT Inc., in the amount of \$229.40 for erroneously assessed 2019 personal property taxes.

Mr. Ramey advised council that as of July 1, 2019, the Virginia General Assembly now requires all local elected officials to complete training on the Virginia Conflict of Interest of Act once every two years. Any local elected official that is already in office as of July 1, 2019, has until December 31, 2019 to complete their first training. Any local elected official that takes office after July 1, 2019, must take their first training within two months of assuming office. The online training is provided by the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council. Mr. Ramey said the clerk must maintain records on each member showing training has been completed including the date of the training sessions for a period of five years. A copy of the 2019-20 VML Edition of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Conflict of Interests Act and the Virginia Public Records Act was shared with City Council in the meeting packet.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Ramey told council he would email a link to each member to complete the required online training.

In packets for council consideration was a transfer to Norton City Schools, dated August 27, 2019, in the amount of \$200,000, to cover August 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 Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, council moved to go into closed meeting for Personnel as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1), 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), and 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), of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

Mayor Fawbush declared council in closed meeting.

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

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey provided a reservoir update noting that the city has a total of 66.5 million gallons of water. He said staff will continue to monitor water reserves and the city continues to purchase water from the Wise County Public Service Authority (PSA)

Mr. Ramey said the High Knob Hellbender was held Saturday, October 5th with 70 runners participating in the race.

Mr. Ramey said the Cloudsplitter Ultra 100 Trail Race held October 12th and 13th had 134 runners registered representing 27 states, the District of Columbia, and the countries of Canada, Mexico, and Ireland. He stated city administration was very proud of all the volunteers and emergency personnel who assisted with the race.

He said he provided council with the October Retail Sales Tax Report for council's review.

Mr. Ramey said the Halloween Bash in the city park is scheduled for Saturday, October 19th with Councilman Fultz slated to be the master of ceremonies.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilman Mays said he would like to thank all the volunteers who have helped with all the events held in the city the past two weeks. He said the volunteerism shows our community working together to ensure safe and successful events. He also thanked those individuals in the county that volunteered to help as well.

Councilman Fultz echoed the thoughts of the city manager and Councilman Mays regarding community volunteers who helped with the Hellbender, the Woodbooger Festival, and the Cloudsplitter Ultra 100 Trail Race, and he also thanked the City's Public Works Department for the many hours they worked to make the events successful. He also thanked the City's police fire and public works departments for assisting with the John I. Burton Homecoming Parade held Wednesday, October 9th, ensuring the safety of participants and spectators by providing traffic control.

Councilman Fultz said he worked the High Knob Tower aid station for the Cloudsplitter Ultra 100 Trail Race and it was much busier than the previous year due to the two aid stations in close proximity to the tower being closed for this year's race. He said the runners brought family and friends with them to the area which created a big economic impact for the city as well as the other events held the past two weeks. He especially thanked Fire Chief Todd Lagow for the improved communication capability for the events.

Mayor Fawbush thanked and expressed appreciation to the city's public works and parks and recreation departments, and emergency services for their efforts to ensure the events for the past two weeks were successful.

Mayor Fawbush said the Woodbooger Festival was successful with 514 attending this year's festival from eastern Kentucky, eastern Tennessee, and southwest Virginia. He thanked Buddy Cash for providing an aid station at the festival and said he received positive comments about the festival and that attendees had a good time at this year's event. Mayor Fawbush said admission to this year's festival was free due to the support of area sponsors, and he thanked them for their financial support of this year's Woodbooger Festival. He thanked Finance Director Jeff Shupe for tracking the festival's finances and Police Chief James Lane for his department's presence ensuring everyone's safety.

Mayor Fawbush said the city is coming upon the Christmas season with the parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony scheduled in December.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

Mark A Caruso, V. Mayor

ATTEST:



Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council