

The regular meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, June 5, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers with Mayor Robert Raines presiding.

Present: Jack Wallace, Robert Raines, William Mays, and Joseph Fawbush

Absent: Joseph Hunnicutt

Also Present: E. W. Ward, City Manager and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

The invocation was given by the City Manager and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Acting Police Chief Randy Mullins.

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2007 meeting as presented.

21644

There was no response to the Mayor's call for visitors.

21645

Council had been presented with An Ordinance Adopting the Budget for the City of Norton, Virginia for the Fiscal Year as of July 1, 2007 Thru June 30, 2008 Appropriating Funds for all Contemplated Expenses of the City for the Fiscal Year and Placing Levies Upon All Real Estate, Personal Property and Bank Stock, Licenses, Fees, User Charges, and All Other Levies as Previously Imposed or Modified Herein.

Mayor Raines advised that the public hearing had been duly advertised and held at the previous meeting. This budget totals \$19,733,883. There is an increase in real estate tax from \$.70 to \$.80 per \$100 of assessed value of real estate and there are no other fee/tax/license increases. The budget also includes a four percent COLA raise for all full time employees. Local school funding is \$1,890,219 which is an increase in local funds of \$126,620.

There were no questions or comments from Council on this ordinance.

At this time, Mayor Raines advised he would like to have Council consider an amendment to this budget to include an additional five percent raise for the City Manager. The Mayor advised that Mr. Ward has done an excellent job for the City and is planning to retire in approximately three years and this increase will supplement his retirement from the Virginia Retirement System.

21646

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Wallace, Mays, Fawbush, Raines, NO - None, ABSENT – Hunnicutt, Council moved to amend the 2007-2008 budget to include an additional five percent raise for the City Manager with said funds to come from Unappropriated Reserves and to adopt An Ordinance Adopting the Budget for the City of Norton, Virginia for the Fiscal Year of July 1, 2007 Thru June 30, 2008 Appropriating Funds for all Contemplated Expenses of the City for the Fiscal Year and Placing Levies Upon All Real Estate, Personal Property and Bank Stock, Licenses, Fees, User Charges, and all Other Levies as Previously Imposed or Modified Herein. (Insert)

Council had in their packets a request from the Norton City Schools to amend their 2006-2007 budget in the amount of \$102,340.

Dr. Lee Brannon, Superintendent of the Norton City Schools, was present to discuss this with Council. He advised Council that \$10,340 of this amount is from Gear-Up Grant Funds and the remaining \$92,000 is State Revenue due to an increase in enrollment. Their budget had projected 715 students and as of March 31st of this year, there was an enrollment of 735 students.

Dr. Brannon further advised if this additional appropriation is approved, these funds will go into a Textbook Fund to purchase textbooks for students.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to amend the 2006-2007 budget of the Norton City Schools in the amount of \$102,340.

Council had been supplied with information regarding an increase of the Virginia Retirement System multiplier for hazardous duty employees (LEOS) from 1.70% to 1.85%.

At this time, Vice Mayor William Mays advised that he would abstain from discussion and action on this item as he has a son who is a police officer.

Mr. Ward advised that the City had received a memo from the VRS advising that there had been a legislative change in the 2007 session for this item. Effective July 1, 2007 political subdivisions that participate in VRS may elect to increase the retirement multiplier from 1.70% to 1.85% for their hazardous duty employees. By doing so, the City's contribution rate will increase. Mr. Ward advised that, if the City elected to do so, this would be an increase of approximately \$10,000. Beginning July 1, 2008 all VRS participating political subdivision employers must provide LEOS benefits for deputy sheriffs. Sheriffs and State Police Officers' retirement multiplier will increase from 1.70% to 1.85% effective July 1, 2007.

The City Manager advised this was on the agenda for discussion and Council did not need to take action at tonight's meeting. He further advised that, if adopted, it takes sixty days to go into effect.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Wallace, Fawbush, Raines, NO – None, ABSENT – Hunnicutt, ABSTAIN – Mays, Council moved to adopt A Resolution to Increase the VRS Retirement Multiplier for Hazardous Duty Employees (LEOS) from 1.70% to 1.85%. (Insert)

Council had been provided A Resolution for discussion and potential consideration on a Retiree Health Insurance Program for the City of Norton.

The City Manager advised that this is per Section 15.2-1517 of a Code of Virginia statute which was adopted previously by the General Assembly. Jeff Shupe, the City's Finance Director, has discussed this program with the City Attorney.

Mr. Ward discussed the options available to the City and the costs involved. He further advised that it is the opinion of the City Administration to offer this insurance program for retirees at the Stand-Alone Rate and also advised that the Advantage 65 with Dental/Vision is also being offered to Medicare Eligible Retirees.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Wallace, Mays, Fawbush, Raines, NO – None, ABSENT – Hunnicutt, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Providing A Retiree Health Insurance Program for the City of Norton.
(Insert)

In their packets, Council had a copy of a check made payable to the Norton Industrial Development Authority in the amount of \$122,004.25 for approval.

Upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve a check made payable to the Norton Industrial Development Authority in the amount of \$122,004.25.

21650

Upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to go into closed meeting to discuss personnel as per Section No. 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

21651

Mayor Raines declared Council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to back into open meeting.

21652

Mayor Raines declared Council back in open meeting.

The Clerk then 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 Joseph Fawbush, seconded by William Mays, and passed by the following unanimous vote: YES – Wallace, Mays, Fawbush, Raines, NO – None, ABSENT – Hunnicutt, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

21653

Mayor Raines opened the floor for nominations to the Duffield Development Authority for a four year term which will expire on June 30, 2011.

William Mays nominated Mr. Fred L. Ramey to be reappointed to this Authority.

21654

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease.

Mayor Raines declared Fred L. Ramey reappointed to the Duffield Development Authority for a four year term which will expired on June 30, 2011.

In comments from the City Manager, Mr. Ward advised that:

The City's reservoir currently has a total capacity of under 103 million gallons. The City received one-tenth of an inch of rain in May which was the driest on record. The City is currently purchasing water from the Wise County PSA and will purchase water from Big Stone Gap when it becomes available.

The Best Friend Festival begins June 13th and runs to June 16th.

He was advised by the Police Department today that they have received a grant from the Department of Motor Vehicles in the amount of just under \$20,000. These funds will be used for the purchase of various equipment and to cover overtime costs.

21655

He would like to introduce the City's new Police Chief, Randy Mullins. This promotion is effective today.

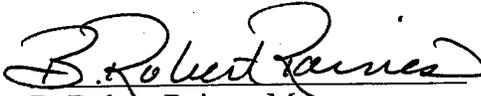
In comments from Council, Mayor Raines congratulated Police Chief Mullins and advised him that he had the full support of City Council and the City Administration.

In comments from the City Attorney, Mr. Bradshaw advised that he is moving forward on tax cases and is working on one case of someone challenging the assessment on a piece of property.

21656

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA


B. Robert Raines, Mayor

ATTEST:


Clerk