

The regular meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, December 18, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Robert Raines presiding.

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

Absent: Joseph Hunnicutt

The invocation was given by Father Tim Drake and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Dr. Lee Brannon, Superintendent of the Norton City Schools.

At this time, Councilman Hunnicutt took his seat on Council. 21784

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2007 meeting as presented. 21785

There was no response to the Mayor's call for visitors. 21786

A public hearing was held on A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds and the Issuance of a Bond Anticipation Note of the City of Norton, Virginia, and Providing for the Sale, Form, Details, and Payment of the Note and Authorizing Certain Related Actions.

Mr. Ward advised the purpose of this hearing is to adopt the above resolution for the Norton Elementary School Project for an amount not to exceed \$7,500,000. The public hearing has been duly advertised. The City Administration solicited proposals from various financial institutions and recommends SunTrust Bank, who is offering 3.05% fixed rate for two years. The debt can be retired at any time after one year. The proceeds from this bond will be invested after the closing, which will be held on December 20<sup>th</sup>. The City Attorney has looked over the documents and has approved them.

Mayor Raines advised that the application for a Literary Loan has been made.

There were no questions or comments from City Council prior to the public hearing. Mayor Raines opened the public hearing. 21787

There being no public input, the public hearing was closed.

There were no questions or comments from Council following the public hearing.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Joseph Hunnicutt, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Hunnicutt, Wallace, Mays, Fawbush, Raines, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds and the Issuance of a Bond Anticipation Note of the City of Norton, Virginia, and Providing for the Sale, Form, Details and Payment of the Note and Authorizing Certain Related Actions. (Insert)

Mr. Ward gave Council an update on the City's water reserves. As of Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, we had a total capacity in both reservoirs of 44.28 million gallons. This is an increase of over 40 million gallons in two weeks. The City had also had some rain during this time. 21788

Both the City Manager and Mayor Raines encouraged all water customers to continue to conserve water until this drought situation is over.

Dr. Terrance Suarez, President of Mountain Empire Community College, was present to give Council his semi-annual update on activities at the college. He briefly discussed enrollment and then went into detail on the AIMS Higher Scholarship Program. Also discussed was the 5% budget cut the college had received from the state. He advised that, although it was not easy, the college had absorbed the loss of funds with no personnel cuts.

21789

Also present tonight was Mr. Robert Isaac, the City's representative on the MECC Advisory Board. Dr. Suarez announced that Mr. Isaac had been selected as the Virginia Community College System's Board Member of the year.

Due to the disaster at Virginia Tech last spring, the College has devised an Emergency Preparedness Program and will be having a test of emergency procedures in the near future.

Dr. Suarez thanked Council for their continued support. Mayor Raines thanked both Dr. Suarez and Robert Isaac, the City's member on the MECC Advisory Board, for their work at the college.

Dr. Lee Brannon, Superintendent of the Norton City Schools, and Ron McCall, Chairman of the Norton City School Board, was present tonight to give Council an update on the Norton Elementary School Project and the Lawson-Fitchko Stadium Project.

Dr. Brannon spoke on the Stadium Project and gave Council members a handout with the amount of funds that has been expended on this project, which totals \$117,239.00. Dr. Brannon gave a brief synopsis of this which began in 2002 to the present time. The project, which called for demolition and rebuilding of the stadium, only received one bid and this was at a projected cost of \$1,698,250. The School Board determined that this cost was too substantial to bring to City Council. They, therefore, rejected the bid and began looking at other options. They are now looking at renovations to the stadium and have a local contractor under contract to do this work. They do not have a plan for the renovations nor an estimated cost. Once this is received, they will bring this information back to Council.

21790

After a brief discussion during which Dr. Brannon answered questions from Council members, Mayor Raines thanked him for his presentation.

At this time, Dr. Brannon gave Council an update on the Norton Elementary School Project. He advised that they should receive bids in mid-March and award a contract in April and start shortly thereafter. The first phase will be the construction of a gym which will entail the administrative addition and renovation and closing off of the new library area. This should run to February 2009. In March of 2009 through May of 2009, renovations will begin on the south or middle school wing of the building. During this phase of construction, they hope to relocate classrooms to new additions and to the other City properties if the City allows them to do so.

21791

In June of 2009 through August 2009, work will begin on the north or elementary wing of the school. The entire wing will be closed and, if necessary, classes will have to

be relocated as done earlier on the south wing. He further advised that during the two years of construction, the School Board plans to start school after Labor Day, which will allow for three months of summer construction.

Following his update, Dr. Brannon advised he would be willing to answer questions from Council. There were no questions from Council; however, Mayor Raines asked that Dr. Brannon continue to keep City Council advised of the progress on this project.

Mayor Raines thanked Dr. Brannon for both updates given tonight.

Mr. Ward advised Council that, in the fall of 2005, a sewer moratorium was issued by City Council for any areas outside the City limits. This was due to development in the northeast section of the City and concerns for the main interceptor handling the flow in that area. At that time, the City proceeded to work on a Grease Control Program. At the time the moratorium was initiated, the City commissioned a Comprehensive Sewer Study to be done. On February 2, 2007, the City entered into a contract with Mattern & Craig to do this study. They have done a lot of work this year and an outline of this work is included in Council's packet.

Present tonight to give a summary of this Comprehensive Sewer Study is Mr. Dave Wilson of Mattern & Craig.

Mr. Wilson advised the scope of the study was divided into six areas. These areas are: Mapping Updates, Flow Projections, Sewer Interceptor Models, Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Survey, Rate Study Assistance, and Report. Mr. Wilson then gave a brief summary of each of these areas.

Following these summaries, it was the conclusion of Mr. Wilson that, based on the information compiled, the City sewer lines are in poor condition and no new customers should be added to these lines until some work can be done on them. One of the worst problems is the Benges Branch Interceptor, a trunk line on which 25 major defects were found. He further advised that any projects funded should be projects within the City and not outside. Mr. Wilson stated that if the Benges Branch line were replaced or repaired, then the City would be in a position to do the Josephine Sewer Project. This is a project that the City had applied for Community Development Block Grants to fund and have been turned down. Funding for the Benges Branch Interceptor could possibly be obtained from the Southern Rivers Watershed Enhancement Program.

21792

At this time, Mr. Ward advised Council on the Southern Rivers Watershed Enhancement Program. He advised that this program has funds set aside by the General Assembly for sewer needs outside the Chesapeake Bay Area. In order to apply for funding from this program, a resolution needs to be adopted by Council. This resolution is the next item on tonight's agenda.

Mr. Wilson informed Council that they intend to finalize this study in February. He again advised Council that the City has significant issues within the sewer system that must be considered before taking on any other additions to this system.

Mayor Raines thanked Mr. Wilson for his report and advised that Council is looking forward to the final report.

Council had been presented with A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Authorizing the Application for Funding from the Southern Rivers Watershed Enhancement Program.

Mr. Ward advised Council that the City would be responsible for \$9,000 which would cover the costs for a preliminary engineering report, which if funded, will be reimbursed. This resolution covers upgrade and rehab of the Benges Branch Sewer Line Interceptor to Brownies Café on West Main Avenue. The deadline for submission of an application is January of 2008.

21793

Upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Hunnicutt, Wallace, Mays, Fawbush, Raines, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Authorizing the Application for Funding from the Southern Rivers Watershed Enhancement Program in the amount of \$972,932 to cover the Benges Branch Sewer Line Interceptor Rehabilitation. (Insert)

Council had a request for authorization to execute a lease/purchase agreement for a 2007 Volvo Backhoe.

Mr. Ward advised that the City received a bid from Koch Financial Corporation for a 2007 Volvo Backhoe.

After discussing this item with the City Attorney, Mr. Ward asked Council to table this item until the next meeting which will be on January 15, 2008. Mr. Bradshaw advised there is a problem due to the fact that the City's general indebtedness cannot exceed ten million dollars in a given year. For that reason, Mr. Bradshaw suggested that Council carry this over to the next meeting and then they would be able to approve and proceed with this lease/purchase agreement.

21794

Upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to table this item until their next meeting on January 15, 2008.

Mr. Ward advised that the next regularly scheduled council meeting is January 1, 2008 and this would be New Year's Day.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Joseph Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to cancel the January 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and have only one meeting on January 15, 2008.

21795

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

The annual Disclosure Forms are due in the Clerk's Office on January 15, 2007.

The individual pictures of Council members are ready and he then presented them to Council members.

21796

He wished to express his best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all members of Council.

Mayor Raines stated it had been a good year and Council is looking forward to another.

21797

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA

  
B. Robert Raines, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Clerk