

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, March 4, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor William Mays presiding.

Present: Mark Caruso, William Mays, Joseph Fawbush, and Terry Roop

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

Absent: Joseph Hunnicutt and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

The invocation was given by Rev. Ken Taylor and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Police Chief James Lane.

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

26069

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the February 18, 2014 meeting as presented.

26070

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

26071

A public hearing was held on the possible relocation of the City's polling place from the City Council Chambers to the Norton Community Center.

Mr. Ramey stated that Mike Brown, Chairman of the City's Electoral Board, came before Council on January 7th requesting this change. Mr. Ramey advised that a box type ad on this public hearing had been published three times in the Coalfield Progress.

Those present representing the Electoral Board were members, Mike Brown and Lisa Powers, along with Marie Muir, City Registrar. Mayor Mays asked Mr. Brown, Chairman of this Board, to give a brief synopsis of the positive affects this move would have for the citizens of Norton. Mr. Brown advised that there were more parking spaces, especially handicapped, bathroom facilities, more room for voters to be inside the building rather than waiting outside in the weather, a separate entrance and exit, more space to place voting machines ensuring more privacy for voters, machines can be set up the night before rather than the day of the election, and the registrar's office being located directly across the hall. A few electrical receptacles will need to be replaced at the Community Center. Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Brown for this information.

26072

There were no comments from Council prior to the public hearing.

Mayor Mays opened the public hearing.

There being no public comments, Mayor Mays closed the public hearing.

Following a brief discussion, Councilman Roop stated Mr. Brown had done a thorough job stating the positive aspects for this change of location. Upon a motion by Councilman Roop, seconded by Councilman Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to grant the request of the City of Norton Electoral Board to move the polling location from the City Council Chambers to the Norton Community Center.

Those present with the Electoral Board thanked Council.

Mrs. Muir advised the first election would be June 10th and that new voting cards will be in the mail fifteen (15) Days before the election.

Mr. Ramey advised that the members of the City's Tourism Committee have been working very hard, have been very productive, and are presenting to Council tonight their Strategic Plan for Tourism.

W.C. "Buzz" Witt, Chairman of the City's Tourism Committee, Carol Caruso, Bud Stewart, and Chris Jones, members of this Committee came forward to discuss this plan. Another member, Mike Craft, was unable to attend. Once adopted, this will allow them to apply for grants from the Virginia Tourism Commission.

All members present participated in the presentation of this Strategic Plan which contained their strategic goals, complete projects, top three priorities, and additional high priority items. Their goals consist of: Developing Partnerships, Creating Programs and Positions, Creating a City Center for Visitors which they hope to locate at the Benge's Rock location, Improving Infrastructure, and Implementing a Marketing Program.

Mr. Stewart advised that Council had already implemented and completed two of the signage requests they had sought. These are the new signage coming into the City by J. I. Burton High School, new signage that will be located at the Tipple Hill area once the Safe Routes to School Project is completed, and the new electronic downtown message board; however they hope to have additional signage at various locations.

The top three projects are signage, the development of the Benge's Rock area, and standing marketing banners.

In conclusion, they ask for Council's consideration on the following: Approve their Strategic Plan, add their capital improvement projects to the City of Norton's Capital Improvement Program priority list, fund signage, develop the Benge's Rock area, fund banners, consider a resolution that would declare the Flag Rock Recreation and Reservoir Area a Woodbooger Sanctuary, consider a resolution that would make the Flag Rock Recreation and Reservoir Area horse friendly, consider an ordinance that would make Norton ATV friendly, and consider a business sponsored historical walk in the downtown area.

Mayor Mays advised they had done a good job and their presentation was at a good time as the City's CIP meeting will be this Saturday.

Councilman Roop stated that tourism is vital and he appreciated all the hard work done by the Tourism Committee members. Councilman Caruso agreed.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Roop, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to adopt the City of Norton Tourism Committee's Strategic Plan as presented

The Mayor thanked them for the work they had done and for the work they will continue to do.

Council had been presented with a copy of a check in the amount of \$122,004.25 to the Norton Industrial Development Authority.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve the check to the Norton Industrial Development Authority in the amount of \$122,004.25.

Upon a motion by Councilman Hunnicutt, seconded by Councilman Caruso, 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. 26075
Mayor Mays declared Council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Roop, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to go into open meeting. 26076
Mayor Mays declared Council 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. 26077

Upon a motion by Councilman Hunnicutt, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by the following unanimous vote: YES – Caruso, Hunnicutt, Fawbush, Roop, and Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

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

The City's annual CIP Meeting will be held this Saturday, March 8th, at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers.

The Lonesome Pine Library Big Read Event is planned for Saturday, April 5th, at 6:00 p.m. at the Hotel Norton. They have invited Council to be honored guests at this event and give a brief welcome. He asked that Council members advise him if they will be able to attend. 26078

Mayor Mays asked for an update on City Attorney Bill Bradshaw. Mr. Ramey advised he had talked with him today and he had gotten released from the hospital on Monday evening. He should be back in the office next week. 26079

In comments from Council:

Councilman Caruso advised he has a conflict and will not be able to attend the April 5th Big Read Event sponsored by the Lonesome Pine Library. He extended his appreciation to City crews for the job they have done on snow removal and advised that he looked forward to implementing some of the ideas mentioned by the Tourism Committee tonight. 26080

Councilman Roop stated he was glad that Councilman Fawbush was in attendance after a bout of illness and hospital stay. 26081

Mayor Mays commended Police Chief Lane on the very professional TV interview he had given WCYB this week on weather conditions. 26082

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William J. Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:


_____, Clerk