

The regular meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, January 18, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers with Mayor Robert Raines presiding.

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

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

The invocation was given by Father Tim Drake and was followed by the pledge of allegiance which was led by Police Chief Sam Mongle.

Upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the organizational meeting of January 4, 2005 as presented and the minutes of the regular meeting of January 4, 2005 as presented.

20970

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

20971

Dr. Jim Knight and Ms. Valerie Lawson of the University of Virginia's College at Wise were present at tonight's meeting to make a presentation to Council. Dr. Knight thanked Council for the City's contribution toward UVA College at Wise's 50th Anniversary. Dr. Knight thanked the City for their donation, which was used toward a fireworks display, and presented Council with a framed picture taken during this display. Mayor Raines accepted this picture on behalf of Council and thanked Dr. Knight for this gift.

20972

Mr. Brian Blanton of the accounting firm of Thrower, Blanton, and Associates was present at tonight's meeting to discuss with Council the City's audit for the year ending June 30, 2004.

Mr. Blanton discussed the implementation issues regarding this audit due to the new requirements that are in place this year regarding GASB34 and auditing standards in general. He gave Council an update on the progress of the audit and advised that he hoped to be at the next Council meeting to present the completed audit to Council. A draft copy of this audit should be given to the City Manager by the first of next week.

20973

Mr. Blanton answered questions from Council.

Council had been presented in their packets A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Requesting the Virginia Department of Transportation to Include Two New Streets for Municipal Assistance Payments. Along with this resolution were the necessary VDOT forms and a map showing the new streets.

20974

Mr. Ward advised that the two streets being added are Commonwealth Drive and the relocated Hawthorne Drive. Being deleted is old Hawthorne Drive and the City has a net gain of two and one-half miles to be included for maintenance funds.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, 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 of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Requesting the Virginia Department of Transportation to Include Two New Streets for Municipal Assistance Payments. (Insert)

Mr. Ward gave Council a brief presentation on the 2004 Changes to the Personal Property Tax Relief Act. He advised that in 2004 the General Assembly capped at 70% the tax relief for citizens. As of fiscal year 2006, each municipality will receive the same amount each year, which is to be divided among eligible taxpayers. The City of Norton will receive approximately \$200,000.

The change in this Act creates two major issues for local governments. These issues are the timetable for state reimbursements and the amount of state tax relief local residents will receive. Each locality must adopt at least two new car tax rates. One rate will reflect the state reimbursement for assessments of less than \$20,000 and the second for the tangible personal property tax rate for assessments of \$20,000 and above. The City has proposed a Two-Tiered Tax Rate for assessments. The tax rate for assessments under \$20,000 will be 55-1/2 cents. The tax rate for assessments over \$20,000 will be \$1.85.

Mr. Ward advised that these changes to the Personal Property Tax Relief Act are going to be difficult to administer and to explain to our citizens.

Mayor Raines thanked Mr. Ward for this update.

Upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to go into closed meeting.

Mayor Raines declared Council in closed meeting.

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

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

Mayor Raines opened the floor for nominations to the City of Norton Highway Safety Commission.

Joseph Hunnicutt nominated Randy Castle, Bruce Rose, Gary Call, and Linville Reed to be reappointed to this commission for two year terms which will expire on January 28, 2007.

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

Mayor Raines declared Randy Castle, Bruce Rose, Gary Call, and Linville Reed reappointed to the City of Norton Highway Safety Commission for two year terms which will expire on January 28, 2007.

Mayor Raines opened the floor for nominations to the Norton Redevelopment and Housing Authority for a four year term which will expire on January 28, 2009.

William Mays nominated Margaret McAfee to be reappointed to this Authority.

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

Mayor Raines declared Margaret McAfee reappointed to the Norton Redevelopment and Housing Authority for a four year term which will expire on January 28, 2009.

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

Bids were opened on January 18, 2004 on the Frog Level Water Project and the low bid is within the budget. This project affects the area behind Prime Sirloin and serves several homes in Dorchester.

20981

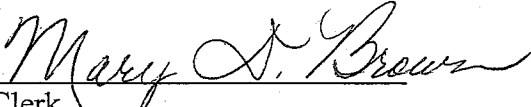
Two lanes of Hawthorne Drive are now open to thru traffic. The remainder of this road will be opened in the spring.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA


B. Robert Raines

ATTEST:


Clerk