

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, April 5, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

Present: Mark Caruso, Robert Fultz, Jr., William Mays, Joseph Fawbush and Dee Belcher

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

The invocation was given by the Reverend Roger Sloce and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Police Chief James Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the March 15, 2016 meeting as presented.

25844

During the Mayor's call for visitors, Mayor Mays announced that any public comments regarding the Proposed Park & Ride Improvements at the Clear Creek Park would be heard when Council came to that agenda item.

25845

Following Mayor's comment, there was no response to the Mayor's call for visitors.

Dr. Scott Hamilton, President of Mountain Empire Community College (MECC), was present and gave Council a brief update of activities and events at the college and discussed enrollment and economic development training classes offered for employees of new companies moving in to the area. He advised the college was partnering with the Center for Excellence in Manufacturing located in Duffield and that a grant from the Tobacco Commission allowed the college to purchase two machines to train students on enrolled in manufacturing classes. He gave Council the latest copy of "The View" which provides detailed information about the college and programs offered at MECC.

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Councilwoman Belcher asked Dr. Hamilton if the college was working with displaced coal miners.

Dr. Hamilton advised the college is working on a federal grant that will help train laid off or displaced coal miners that wish to receive training to move into a new profession.

Mayor Mays thanked Dr. Hamilton for his update.

Mr. Mike Brown, Chairman of the Norton Electoral Board, was present to update Council on the City's current DRE Voting Equipment and to request that Council authorize purchase new voting equipment. He stated due to the age of the current voting machines and issues experienced at the last primary the Electoral Board is recommending Council replace the voting machines before the November election. The Electoral Board and the Registrar have researched possible options and are recommending the Express Voting Machine and the DS200 Scanner and Tabulator. The Express Voting Machine is the most user friendly voting machine and the DS200 Scanner and Tabulator will provide a paper trail to verify voting.

25847

Following a lengthy discussion, Mayor Mays asked the City's Registrar Marie Muir to provide Council with more options to consider and to bring that information back to the next meeting for Council's consideration.

Mr. Ramey, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave Council the background on the Proposed Park & Ride Horse Park at Clear Creek Park that was originally presented to Council by Neil and Beth Walker in December 2015. On March 15, 2016 Councilman Caruso proposed a different Park & Ride concept. At the March 15th meeting, Council directed City Administration to evaluate the Park & Ride concept that was presented by Councilman Caruso. City Administration has completed the review of the Park & Ride concept proposed by Councilman Caruso and estimates the cost to be \$3,000.

During the Mayor's call for visitors, several residents from the Saw Mill area of Ramsey and others came forward and spoke in opposition to the latest Proposed Park & Ride Horse Park. Those that spoke in opposition to the proposal were against any portion of the park being taken for another use but the majority of those that addressed Council did not have an issue with the upper end being used for the Park & Ride. Most residents advised Council that the upper portion near the Nettle Patch was already being used by horse trail riders. Amber Fisher, 242 – 12th Street, S.E., presented council with a petition from residents in the Sawmill area opposed to the Proposed Park & Ride and pictures of Clear Creek Park being used by various individuals. Two of the speakers were completely against any Proposed Park & Ride Horse Park at Clear Creek Park. Three individuals spoke in favor of the Proposed Park & Ride but understood the residents' opposition to the proposed location inside the park. One of the speakers would like to see the Park & Ride as long as the proposed park did not encroach on any of the residents.

25848

After a lengthy discussion, Mayor Mays thanked everyone for attending the meeting and expressing their position to Council on the Proposed Park & Ride. Seventeen persons spoke to Council on the proposal at Clear Creek Park and Mayor Mays stated citizen dialogue with Council will assist Council in making a decision on the proposal.

Mayor Mays declared a ten minute recess.

25849

Mayor Mays declared Council back in open session.

25850

Mr. Ramey gave Council an update on the Proposed 2016 Norton Business Challenge. Postcards on the Norton Business Challenge have been mailed out and Councilman Fultz and Mr. Byron Cantrell, Chairman of the Norton Industrial Development Authority (NIDA), appeared on WCYB television promoting the program. Twenty-eight individuals are registered for the Challenge and the first class will be this Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn.

25851

In their packets, Council had one check to be confirmed. The check was to Freedom Ford Lincoln, Inc., dated February 18, 2016, in the amount of \$103,368.66 to purchase three vehicles for the Police Department.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to confirm the check to Freedom Ford Lincoln, Inc., as stated above.

25852

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to go into closed meeting to discuss personnel as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, as amended. 25853

Mayor Mays declared Council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to go back into open meeting. 25854

Mayor Mays 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 Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following unanimous vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert) 25855

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Wise County/City of Norton Youth Services Board for a four (4) year term to expire on May 2, 2020.

Councilman Caruso nominated Robert Fultz, Jr. to be reappointed to the Wise County/City of Norton Youth Services Board.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease. 25856

Mayor Mays declared Robert Fultz, Jr., reappointed to the Wise County/City of Norton Youth Services Board for a four (4) year term which will expire on May 2, 2020.

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the 2016 Virginia Municipal League Policy Committees.

Councilman Caruso nominated the following: Fred Ramey on the Community & Economic Development Committee, Andrew Greear on the Environmental Quality Committee, Jeff Shupe on the Finance Committee, Bill Bradshaw on the General Laws Committee, Christine Blair on the Human Development & Education Committee, and Steve McElroy on the Transportation Committee. 25857

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease.

Mayor Mays declared the individuals listed above to serve on the 2016 Virginia Municipal League Policy Committees as noted above.

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

The Board of Equalization had 22 appointments covering 31 parcels of land. The hearing process is completed and the Commissioner of Revenue has updated the Land Book and turned it over to the City Treasurer. Real Estate tax tickets should be printed and mailed within the next couple weeks. 25858

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable presented the City the "Green Locality" award on March 17th. The award recognized the Safe Routes to School Project and the sidewalk project.

Camping opened at Flag Rock on April 1st.

Mr. Ramey advised Council to RSVP if they plan on attending the Virginia Municipal League (VML) Regional Supper on June 15th in Big Stone Gap and the 2016 VML Conference on October 9 – 11 at Virginia Beach. Hotel reservations are now open for the conference and need to be made as soon as possible.

25859

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and a ceremony is scheduled for this Friday at 1:30 p.m., in front of City Hall.

There will be a public hearing on the Line of Credit at the next Council Meeting. The School Board may also present their budget that night, and Dr. Sue Cantrell, District Director Lenowisco Health District would like to update Council on couple items.

Placed at Council's desks are information on the Parks and Recreation Trash to Treasure Workshop on Thursday, April 21st and The Great American Cleanup scheduled for Saturday, April 23rd.

There were no comments from the City Attorney.

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In comments from Council:

Councilman Caruso asked when the next CIP budget workshop was scheduled.

Mr. Ramey advised the workshop was scheduled after the Council meeting on Tuesday, April 19th.

Councilman Caruso stated the City does not have a strategic plan, a vision statement, an up-to-date comprehensive plan or an ATV ordinance. He requested Council consider these items at a future meeting.

He asked City Administration to contact the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) to ask if the City could stock the reservoir with catfish.

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Mr. Ramey stated the emails he had forwarded to Councilman Caruso indicated that the DGIF was conducting testing to determine if catfish could be stocked and then the Department would get in line to receive the catfish. Mr. Ramey advised he would contact DGIF and ask if the City could stock the reservoir with catfish.

Councilman Fultz stated on Saturday the John I. Burton Forensics Team won the 1A state championship. The level of talent these students possess is amazing and he would like for at least one of them to come to Council and perform.

The Norton Business Challenge begins Thursday and he hopes the six classes will give individuals who have wanted to open a business the opportunity to do so.

25862

He is thankful to the Norton Industrial Development Authority for taking on the outside remodel of the Norton Farmers' Market building.

Councilwoman Belcher stated she attended the March meeting of the Southwest Virginia Workforce Investment Board Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) and \$1.8 million in grant funds will be available for 30 months for retraining the unemployed. The program will be based out of Lebanon and the initial award will be \$750,000. This grant is

25863

related to the Power Plan that Council previously supported and the Board is looking for Darrell Blankenship's replacement.

Councilman Fawbush stated the 2016 Woodbooger Festival is in the early planning stages. The date for this year's festival is October 14th and 15th. They are pursuing a national sponsor for the event and one of the requirements is that the organization is a 501(c) (3). He is currently working with a few local 501(c) (3) organizations to partner with to meet this requirement. They are also working with The Heart of Appalachia to promote the festival.

25864

Councilman Fawbush stated he is an elected public servant. His responsibility is to be accessible to citizens and to listen to their positions on issues. He believes communication is essential for public service and all elected and appointed officials should be available to the public.

Mayor Mays thanked Council.

25865

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk of Council