

The regular meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. in the Norton Rescue Squad Building 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 Rev. Shawn Easterling and was followed by the pledge of allegiance, which was led by Assistant City Manager Fred Ramey.

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, the minutes of the October 7, 2003 meeting were approved as presented.

20625

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

20626

Dr. Terrance Suarez, President of Mountain Empire Community College, was present and gave Council a brief update on the college. He advised that there had been a 1.5% increase in enrollment during the 2002-2003 school year.

20627

After a brief discussion, during which Dr. Suarez answered questions from members of Council, Mayor Raines thanked him for the update.

In their packets, Council had A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of a Not to Exceed \$1,850,000 General Obligation Refunding Bond of the City of Norton, Virginia, Providing for the Form, Details, and Payment Thereof, and Authorizing Certain Related Actions.

Mr. Ward advised that he and Mr. Shupe had met with a representative from the Virginia Resource Authority to see if there was an opportunity to reduce our existing debt. There are two bond issues that can be combined at a lower interest rate of under 4.4%. The first of these is the 1987 1.5 million dollar loan through the Farmers Home Administration (now Rural Development). This is a forty year term loan at 5% interest and will not be retired until 2028. The second is the 1993 Rural Development loan for the three new fire trucks in the amount of \$750,000. This is a twenty year loan at an interest rate of 5.625% and a retirement date of 2013.

20628

The City Administration advises that there is no down side to this bond issue. The approximate amount of savings to the City is \$114,000. Mr. Webster Day of Roanoke has been secured as bond counsel.

The City Attorney concurred with the City Administration on this matter.

Mr. Ward further advised Council that should the interest rate increase between now and the time of closing, he will reconsider proceeding on this matter; however, the bond counsel will have to be paid regardless.

The City Manager advised that he had given members of Council a new resolution tonight other than the one in their packets. This new resolution contained only one change and that was the amount, which is \$1,850,000 rather the amount of \$1,800,000 as stipulated on the resolutions in the packet.

Following a brief discussion and 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 and Sale of a Not to Exceed \$1,850,000 General Obligation Refunding Bond of the City of Norton, Virginia, Providing for the Form, Details and Payment Thereof, and Authorizing Certain Related Actions. (Insert)

Council had received a request to amend the 1991 water contract from the Wise County Public Service Authority. A letter from Danny Buchanan, Executive Director of the Authority, was included in Council's packets. This contract stipulates that we sell the Authority one million gallons of water per month for the Blackwood Industrial Park. Mr. Ward advised that the PSA is averaging purchasing 1.4 million gallons per month.

20629

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of Council that there are some issues regarding this matter and that the City Administration and City Attorney should work with the Wise County Public Service Authority and bring this back to Council at a later date.

The City Manager gave Council an update on the Virginia Municipal League Conference recently held in Roanoke. Mr. Ward advised that he, Mayor Raines, and Assistant City Manager Fred Ramey attended this conference. He advised that it was a very beneficial meeting and briefly discussed the workshops and sessions he attended.

Mayor Raines also advised that it was a good conference and stated that it gives an opportunity to share concepts and to network.

20630

In their packets, Council had a request for a budget amendment in the amount of \$63,159 to the 2003-2004 General Fund Budget.

Mr. Ward advised that the Fire Department had submitted an application and has been awarded a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This grant will have a 10% match, which is \$7,017. Mr. Ward advised that this money will come from the Fire Programs Budget. These funds will be used to purchase new breathing apparatus for the Fire Department.

20631

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Joseph Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to amend the 2003-2004 General Fund Budget in the amount of \$63,159 with the City's match of \$7,017 to come from Fire Programs Funds.

Council had a request for one water and one sewer tap for the Friends of Head Start, Incorporated located in the Esserville section of the county.

Upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to approve one water and one sewer tap for the Friends of Head Start, Incorporated.

20632

A check in the amount of \$160,000 made payable to the Norton City Schools was included in Council's packet for approval.

20633

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by Joseph Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve a check made payable to the Norton City Schools for \$160,000.

20633

Upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by Joseph Hunnicutt, 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.

20634

Mayor Raines declared Council in closed meeting.

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

20635

Mayor Raines 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 Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, 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)

20636

Mayor Raines opened the floor for an appointment to the Junction Center for Independent Living for a three year term which will expire on July 31, 2006.

20637

William Mays nominated Jeff Shupe to be appointed to this board.

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

Mayor Raines declared Mr. Jeff Shupe appointed to the Junction Center for Independent Living for a three year term which will expire on July 31, 2006.

In comments from the City Manager, Mr. Ward advised that he would like to thank the Norton Rescue Squad for the use of their facility for tonight's meeting and the refreshments furnished. He also advised that the City will open bids on the 21st Street Water Project next week.

20638

In comments from the City Attorney, Mr. Bradshaw advised that he had written a letter to a City landowner who was occupying a City alleyway. The landowner has advised that they do not want to get into a legal battle and will vacate the alleyway. Mr. Bradshaw advised that he will prepare a quick claim deed for the property owners to sign to resolve this matter. The entire matter should be resolved by Council's next meeting.

20639

Mayor Raines suggested the City may want to have this area surveyed to prohibit any future problems in this area.

In comments from City Council, Vice Mayor Mays advised that he would like to see the employees Christmas bonuses reinstated to the same amount as they were last year.

20640

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call

vote, Council moved to reinstitute the Christmas Bonuses to the City employees in the same amount as last year and the \$14,402 will be taken from Unappropriated Reserves.

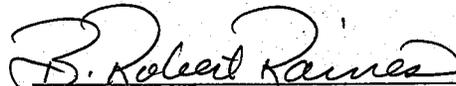
At this time, Mayor Raines advised that with Christmas Day being on Thursday this year and with the employees getting Christmas Eve and Christmas Day off normally, he felt that Council should adjust the time off for this holiday. Mayor Raines suggested that employees work one half a day on Christmas Eve and have both December 25th and December 26th off.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to give City employees one-half a day off on Christmas Eve and be off both December 25th and December 26th.

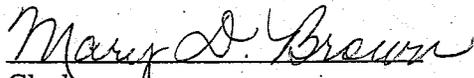
At this time, Councilman Hunnicutt advised that he would like to express his thanks to everyone for their support and prayers for his family during the past two weeks.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA


B. Robert Raines, Mayor

ATTEST:


Clerk