

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, March 3, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

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

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

The invocation was given by Pastor Roger Sloce and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Heart of Appalachia Tourism Executive Director David Woodard.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Caruso, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, council moved to adopt the minutes of the February 18, 2020, as corrected. On page 1, paragraph 4, the date of the adopted minutes should read “February 4, 2020” not “February 18, 2020,” and on page 5, the last sentence of Councilman Caruso’s comments should read “\$500 fine for littering” instead of “\$500 litter signs.”

There was no response to the Mayor’s Call for Visitors.

A public hearing was held concerning the intention of the City of Norton, Virginia, to propose the passage of Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of a General Obligation Taxable Line of Credit Note in a Principal Amount not to Exceed \$3,000,000.

Mr. Ramey, via a PowerPoint presentation, discussed the background and purpose of establishing a Line of Credit Note for the city. He said Davenport & Company, Inc., the city’s financial advisor, is recommending that the city accept the Request for Proposal (RFP) under Powell Valley National Bank for a five-year term. Their proposal had a fixed interest rate of 3.95%, the ability to draw down funds as needed with no additional fees for the unused line of credit, prepayment flexibility, and no bank closing fees. Mr. Ramey said to move forward with establishing the line of credit city council must hold a public hearing and approve the funding documents in council’s packet prepared by the city’s bond counsel, Sands Anderson, PC. He said the city attorney had reviewed and approved the documents in the council packet.

After a brief discussion, Mayor Fawbush opened the public hearing.

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

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Fultz, Belcher, Caruso, Mays, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – None, council moved to adopt A Resolution Authorizing the city’s bond counsel, Sands Anderson, PC., to move forward with the Issuance of a General Obligation Taxable Line of Credit Note in a Principal Amount not to Exceed \$3,000,000. (Insert)

The next agenda item was an update from Executive Director David Woodard on the Virginia Coalfield Regional Tourism Authority, doing business as Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority.

While Mr. Woodard gave council an update on the Heart of Appalachia (HOA), Joe Morton and Kim Short, HOA employees, provided members with a packet of information on

HOA and pins. He informed council that HOA has mainly developed into a marketing agency for the City of Norton and the seven counties HOA serves. He said the organization went through a rebranding and uses the new logo "Bringing you Home," which recently won an award at an Atlanta Tradeshow. Mr. Woodard shared HOA's goals of strategic marketing, increasing locality revenues, and promoting the region as a place to visit, live, and retire. He also shared the agency's marketing plans such as tabling at the Appalachian Backroads Trade Shows, sharing our music and culture in Raleigh, North Carolina, taking out print ads in Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine and others, and working with Spearhead Trails on several marketing initiatives. Mr. Woodard said HOA has new marketing ideas for the region that include an aggressive regional and national media awareness, working with similar organizations, an increased awareness in Richmond, and pushing other opportunities available in the area such as hiking, biking, rock climbing, music, and other items. Finally, Mr. Woodard said HOA is bringing in staff from various welcome centers in April to showcase the area and inform them about all the region has to offer. He said welcome center staff speak with a lot of travelers and this is one of the best ways to get the message out about what the area has to offer visitors.

After Mr. Woodard answered several questions, Mayor Fawbush thanked Mr. Woodard and his staff for the update.

In council's packet for review and consideration was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Southwest Virginia's Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) of Mountain Empire Older Citizens and Norton Police Department

Mr. Ramey said Police Chief James Lane was contacted by CAC and was advised that a few modifications needed to be made to the MOU between the two entities, and that the city attorney had reviewed the MOU.

Chief Lane added that CAC has trained professionals to work with children who may need to be interviewed and that CAC provides services that the city would want to offer its citizens.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the CAC and the Norton Police Department and authorized Chief Lane to sign the MOU.

Council had been presented in their packets with a Proclamation Proclaiming the Month of April as Fair Housing and Endorsing Fair Housing in the City of Norton.

The city manager told council as part of any grant through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development there is an obligation when under contract to fulfill an annual fair housing requirement. He said there are several things a locality can do to fulfill this requirement and this year city administration chose the concept of endorsing fair housing in the City of Norton as well as proclaiming April as Fair Housing Month.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt a Proclamation Proclaiming the Month of April as Fair Housing and Endorsing Fair Housing in the City of Norton. (Insert)

Included in packets for council consideration was a transfer to Norton City Schools, dated February 26, 2020, in the amount of \$150,000.00 to cover February payroll expenditures.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council moved to confirm the transfer to Norton City Schools, as stated above.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey told council that he expects the following three items to be on the March 17th council agenda: the city will hold a public hearing for a housing initiative on Southside; the director of the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority will attend the meeting to request that the city approves a refunding resolution for the most recent bond resolution; and the FY19 audit presentation.

Mr. Ramey asked council about having a workshop Saturday, March 7th. After a brief discussion with council, Mr. Ramey said he would email council members potential dates to schedule a workshop.

Mr. Ramey gave council members a packet containing a fact sheet, a map of downtown, a flyer, and application for the Norton Business Challenge and said the challenge is being advertised.

Mr. Ramey advised one of the bids for the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) Intersection Enhancements came within budget and the project has been forwarded to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for approval.

Mr. Ramey said a bid opening is scheduled for next week for the Project Intersection Highwall Removal project.

Mr. Ramey told council he provided members with copies of the latest monthly financials.

He said the tennis court ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled at 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 11th.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilman Fultz said his grandson Lucas Addison has been a page for the Virginia House of Delegates in Richmond since January 5th. He said today a mock session for the pages was held and they brought 26 bills to the floor and his grandson was Speaker of the House and he noted that the students did a great job.

Councilman Caruso said the Complete Count Committee meeting is scheduled at 5:00 p.m., Thursday, March 5th. April 1st is Census Day, and Councilman Caruso asked members to encourage every neighbor to register all family and household members.

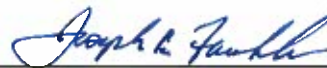
Councilman Caruso asked Mr. Ramey if he had received the measurements on the Ridge Avenue stacked stone wall.

Mr. Ramey said he had not received the report, but he expects it within the next couple of days.

Councilman Caruso said he looks forward to council's workshops and receiving the dates for the workshops.

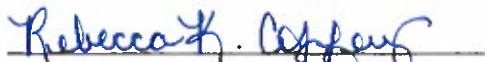
There being no further business to come before council, Mayor Fawbush declared the meeting adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:


Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council

