

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, April 6, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

Prior to roll call, Mayor Fawbush stated that the clerk was not in attendance and that the city manager would perform the clerk's duties during the meeting.

Present: Joseph Fawbush, Robert Fultz, Jr., William Mays, and Sarah Davis

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager, and Jeffery L. Shupe, Finance Director

Absent: Councilman Mark Caruso

The invocation was given by Councilman Robert Fultz, and Mayor Fawbush asked everyone to keep the family of Sammy Mullins, Jr., who worked in the city's public works department in their prayers.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Police Chief James Lane.

A corrected copy of the minutes of March 16, 2021, was provided to each member. Mayor Fawbush noted that on page 4 the appointment to the Southwest Regional Jail Authority was corrected to reflect Fred Ramey, Jr., appointed to the board.

Council Mays noticed that an error still remained in that section of the paragraph on Page 4 and that the naming of the appointee to the Southwest Regional Jail Authority needed to be corrected in both places.

The city manager advised that the clerk would correct the appointment name error to the Southwest Regional Jail Authority.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by the following vote: YES – Fultz, Mays, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, council moved to adopt the minutes of March 16, 2021, with the above stated correction.

During the Mayor's Call for Visitors, Gold Award Scout Candidate Angela Nauss of Girl Scout Troop 1066 was in attendance to provide an update on her Girl Scout Community Project to fund the illumination of the flag on Flag Rock.

Ms. Nauss said she had collected \$682 in project donations. She stated that after the cost of the light and materials she has a balance of \$300 she would like to donate to the city for as needed maintenance of the light.

Mayor Fawbush thanked Ms. Nauss for her project to light the flag on Flag Rock and she received a round of applause.

Next, Family Crisis Support Service, Inc., (FCCS) Director Marybeth Adkins spoke to council during the Mayor's Call for Visitors regarding structural issues with the building that is currently used as a homeless shelter.

Ms. Adkins said FCCS recently asked the city for a letter of support to possibly utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the structural concerns at the homeless shelter. She said the agency is looking at several properties with transportation and walking availability being a key component in the selection. Ms. Adkins said one of the properties the agency is considering is the old Glenn's Finer Homes property located adjacent to

the current homeless shelter but this property is zoned for light manufacturing (M-1). She said the current location of the shelter is ideal and the adjacent property would aid in keeping the shelter out of public view so the city might possibly receive a rezoning request in the future. Ms. Adkins proceeded to inform council of the structural issues Thompson and Litton discovered with the building, and she noted that the building could not be fully repaired. She told council that she wanted to inform members about discussions ongoing in the community and that she wanted to address any questions council may have about the homeless shelter.

After a brief discussion, Mayor Fawbush said there would be a couple of issues that would need to be addressed and he asked council if members would be inclined to appoint a committee to work with Ms. Adkins on these matters. He said he would like to appoint Councilwoman Davis, Councilman Caruso, and the city manager to the committee.

It was the consensus of council for Mayor Fawbush to appoint the committee.

Mayor Fawbush asked that the committee report recommendations back to council in the near future.

In council packets for consideration was a request from Norton City Schools for a FY20 supplemental local appropriation in the amount of \$47,852.33.

Mr. Ramey said Norton City School's FY20 unencumbered surplus has been audited and that Norton School Board Chairman Mr. Cody McElroy was in attendance to present the school's request for a supplemental local appropriation.

Mr. McElroy told council the school board is requesting that the school's FY2019-2020 unencumbered surplus in the amount of \$47,852.33 be appropriated to the school's Capital Improvement Fund to make upgrades at John I. Burton High School in the near future.

After a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Fultz, Mays, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT - Caruso, council moved to approve the local supplemental appropriation request from Norton City Schools in the amount of \$47,852.33 with monies to be placed in the school's Capital Improvement Fund.

The next agenda item was discussion of Norton City Schools FY 2019-20 financial encumbrances in the amount of \$297,842.73.

Norton School Board Chairman Mr. Cody McElroy stated that Norton City Schools is requesting council approve the request to carry over FY20 funds for encumbrances in the amount of \$297,842.73.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council moved to approve Norton City Schools encumbrances in the amount of \$297,842.73.

Council was presented two draft Cooperative Agreements with the Wise County and City of Norton Victim/Witness Program for authorization to execute.

Mr. Ramey noted that the agreements are in draft form and that city administration will not be asking for council's formal consideration at this time. Mr. Ramey said the city attorney has a few questions and that he would be discussing the agreements with Commonwealth Attorney Charles Slemph, but he would like for city staff to move forward with an overview of the agreements.

Police Chief James Lane told council the agreement lists what services the police department will provide victims and witnesses and he noted that these services would be provided anyway

with or without the agreement. He said the program is a great service and that the commonwealth's attorney office works closely with the police department.

Social Services Director Abe Rutherford stated that social services will provide the three services listed on the Victim/Witness Agreement and he noted that the department will provide access to support group(s) but social services does not provide the support.

After a brief discussion, Mayor Fawbush stated that Item 6-C was tabled until the city attorney has had an opportunity to address his questions with the commonwealth attorney.

In council's packets for consideration was a request from Mr. Shun Jin Hu of 5336 Esserville Road for one 5/8" water connection and one sewer tap.

Mr. Ramey said the request is outside city limits and must be approved by city council. He said the city's Water and Transmission Department (T&D) has checked for the availability of water and sewer at this site and both are available at this location.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to confirm the installation of one outside 5/8" water connection and one sewer tap for Mr. Shun Jin Hu of 5336 Esserville Road.

Mayor Fawbush stated that water and sewer taps are good for one year from the date of council approval.

A Resolution for the Local Public Safety 9-1-1 Telecommunicators Week of April 11-17, 2021, was presented for adoption.

Mr. Ramey said each year the city uses this opportunity to highlight dispatchers for their service. He said this resolution recognizes the city's dispatchers behind the scenes and the vital work they do. Mr. Ramey said last year dispatch operators answered 5,108 emergency E-9-1-1 calls and 30,727 non-emergency calls.

Police Chief James Lane told council police administration will recognize the dispatchers throughout the week, and he said he is proud of the 9-1-1 staff and their dedication to providing emergency services.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt a Resolution for the Local Public Safety 9-1-1 Telecommunicators Week of April 11-17, 2021. (Insert)

Council was presented A Resolution Declaring the Month of April 2021 as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Mr. Ramey said the goal is to draw attention to child abuse prevention and he noted that the number of child abuse cases have recently dropped due to children not being in school because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Ramey said educators play an important role in the prevention of child abuse because teachers and staff are usually the first line of defense.

Norton Social Services Director Abe Rutherford spoke briefly to council stating that Norton Department of Social Services (DSS) displayed pinwheels and posted signs at the city's south gateway entrance sign to bring awareness to Child Abuse Prevention Month and that DSS employees wear blue for the cause.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt a Resolution Declaring the Month of April 2021 as Child Abuse Prevention Month. (Insert)

A Resolution Declaring the Month of April 2021 as Autism Awareness Month was included in council packets for their consideration.

Mr. Ramey noted that April 2<sup>nd</sup> was World Autism Awareness Day and he said that part of the effort to highlight autism is to educate the public and to improve relationships in the community.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt the Resolution Declaring the Month of April 2021 as Autism Awareness Month. (Insert)

The city manager provided an update on COVID-19 and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020.

Via a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Ramey stated that since March 16<sup>th</sup> the city has had an increase of 11 new COVID-19 cases for a total of 253 cases. He reported that no deaths for the city were recorded during this period per the Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) website. He said Wise County has had an increase of 53 new COVID-19 cases for a total of 2,996 cases. Mr. Ramey said, per the VDH website, the county had a deduction or correction of one death during the reporting period. Mr. Ramey then provided a vaccine update for the state, city, county, and country, mentioning that 1,416,919 Virginians had been fully vaccinated.

Mr. Ramey reported no changes in CARES Act funding, except for various funding methods he has noticed being used to calculate the amount of money the city will eventually receive. But he said he doesn't consider the various funding scenarios official at this point and that the city should receive the first initial funding soon.

Mr. Ramey stated that the LENOWISCO Small Business Recovery Assistance Program the city is managing for the region is continuing to move forward and that the city had received the latest drawdown of \$114,000 for area businesses. He said the program has approximately \$300,000 remaining to support regional businesses before the grant is closed.

Mr. Ramey told council there have been no changes in the Municipal Utility Relief Program and that City Finance Director Jeff Shupe is currently reviewing utility accounts to potentially aid customers for round three of funding. He mentioned that Mr. Shupe was contacted about additional funding the city may receive that could continue assisting utility customers who qualify for this new program.

Confirmation of a check to DCI/Shires, Inc., dated January 21, 2021, in the amount of \$136,026.50 for improvement to the city's downtown pedestrian intersections was included in packets for council approval.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Fultz, Davis, Mays, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, council moved to confirm the check to DCI/Shires, Inc., as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Fultz, Davis, Mays, and Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, council moved to go into closed meeting for Personnel as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, as amended, and Section 2.2-3711 (A) (5) of the Code of Virginia for discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcements have been made of the business or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community, as amended.

Mayor Fawbush declared council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to go back into open meeting.

Mayor Fawbush declared council back in open meeting.

The city manager polled each member of council as to the Certification of Closed Meeting with each answering yes. Mr. Ramey then read a Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

Mayor Fawbush asked for nominations to the 2021 Virginia Municipal League Policy Committee.

Councilman Mays made a motion and nominated the list of candidates as recommended by the city manager to the 2021 Virginia Municipal League Policy Committee. The list included: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., - Community and Economic Development Committee; Andrew Greear – Environmental Quality Committee; Jeff Shupe – Finance Committee; William Bradshaw – General Laws Committee; Gina Wohlford – Human Development and Education Committee; and Stephen McElroy – Transportation Committee.

The motion was seconded by Councilman Fultz, passed by unanimous vote, and council moved that the nominations cease.

Mayor Fawbush declared the list of candidates recommended by the city manager, as noted above, to be reappointed to the 2021 Virginia Municipal League Policy Committee.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey advised that the March 16<sup>th</sup> bond refunding approved by council closed on March 31, 2021.

The city manager stated that the Norton Industrial Development Authority will be hosting the 2021 Norton Business Challenge beginning Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. He said six or seven participants will compete for six weeks for this year's challenge.

Mr. Ramey informed council that Norton Fire Chief Todd Lagow was appointed to the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors.

The city manager provided council with copies of the latest monthly financials and High Knob traffic counts.

Mr. Ramey asked council to mark their calendars Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, at 8:30 a.m., for the second budget work session. He asked council to contact him if anyone has a conflict with the date and time so the work session can be rescheduled.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilwoman Davis thanked Police Chief James Lane and the city's emergency personnel for the professional manner in which they handled a potential volatile situation at a local business on Monday.

Councilman Fultz noted that the E-9-1-1 Center is a large part of the city's public safety framework and that he appreciates the job performed by each employee. He also said he was somewhat surprised at the number of calls emergency personnel answered in 2020.

Mayor Fawbush thanked council for working together without difficulty, adding that city councils have always worked together extremely well throughout the history of the City of Norton. He said that council is also fortunate to have administration that keeps members well informed and that it is a pleasure to serve with this council and the citizens of Norton.

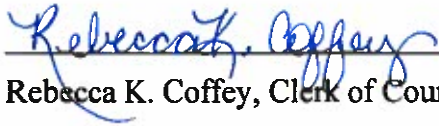
There being no further business to come before council, Mayor Fawbush declared the meeting adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council