

AGENDA

Norton City Council

August 17, 2021

6:00 P.M.

1. Roll Call
2. Invocation
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Minutes
 1. Meeting of August 3, 2021
5. Audience for Visitors
6. Public Hearing
 - A. A Public Hearing to Solicit Input on an Ordinance Creating and Designating a Central Absentee Precinct to be Located in the Registrar's Office at 201 Park Avenue NE.
 1. Public Hearing
 2. Comments by City Council
 3. Consideration by City Council
7. New Business
 - A. Discussion Regarding Possible Redevelopment of Property Owned by J. W. Construction Co., Located Along US 23 (Southbound) Near Exit #2.
 - B. Overview of Draft Vacant Home Demolition/Replacement Program.

- C. Update on the American Rescue Plan Act's Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funding.
- D. Confirmation of a Check/Transfer in Excess of \$100,000.
- A. Closed Meeting for Personnel as Per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) and of the Code of Virginia as Amended and Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7) of the Code of Virginia as Amended, Consultation with Legal Counsel and Briefings by Staff Members or Consultants Pertaining to Actual or Probable Litigation, Where Such Consultation or Briefing in Open Meeting Would Adversely Affect the Negotiating or Litigating Posture of the Public Body.
 - 1. Appointment to the Mountain Empire Regional Business Incubator Board for a Four-Year Term; Currently Tyler Giles Whose Term Expires 6/30/2021.

To 6/30/2025
 - 2. Appointment to the Norton Industrial Development Authority to Fill the Unexpired Term of Bryan Lewis.

To 5/10/2024
- 8. Comments by the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Council.
- 9. Adjournment.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, August 3, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

Present: Sarah Davis, Joseph Fawbush, and William Mays

Absent: Mark Caruso and Robert Fultz, Jr.

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager and Interim City Clerk

The invocation was given by former Mayor Robert Raines, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Norton City Police Department First Sergeant Greg Mays.

Mayor Fawbush said council members were presented corrected minutes of the July 20, 2021, council meeting at tonight's meeting. The updated minutes included the omission of 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 announcement has been made of the business's or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community, from the Closed Meeting portion of the minutes. The item was not discussed during the Closed Meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso and Fultz, council moved to adopt the minutes of the July 20, 2021, meeting, as amended.

The mayor said council was also given corrected minutes of the June 1 and June 15, 2021, council meetings at tonight's meeting, with the same omission of Section 2.2 – 3711 (A) (5) of the Code of Virginia, as this code section was not discussed during the Closed Meeting sessions of either council meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso and Fultz, council moved to adopt the minutes of the June 1 and June 15, 2021, meetings, as amended.

During the Mayor's Call for Visitors, Dalton Emershaw of 501 Oak Avenue, Norton, Virginia, informed council that he has heard that timber clear-cutting on what he referred to as the "Chestnut Flats" section of High Knob is supposed to take place. He voiced his concern about how this will impact the environment and the tourism/recreation endeavors the city has done and asked council to do whatever is possible to prevent this from happening.

The mayor thanked him for bringing this matter to the attention of council.

The city manager said the scope Mr. Emershaw is talking about is probably a couple thousand acres owned by Knob Development Corporation and some of that property from Hoot Owl Hollow up to the right side of the Flag Rock entrance is within the city.

Councilwoman Davis asked if there are any permits the property owner has to acquire from the city.

The city manager said he doesn't think so, but he will contact the property owner and see what is being planned.

The first new business item before council was a request to install a historical marker to commemorate the 1951 Little League All-Stars Baseball Team for being the first integrated team in Western Virginia. Via a PowerPoint presentation, the city manager provided a brief history of

the 1951 team and why installation of a historical marker in commemoration of the team is important.

Mr. Ramey said the request is to purchase and install a two-sided marker, similar to the historical marker in front of the Wise County/City of Norton Chamber of Commerce, on the 900 block of Park Avenue in proximity of the former Norton Little League Field. He said members of the 1951 team have commitments of donations to cover the cost of the marker, but would like for donations to be made directly to the City of Norton and for the city to purchase the marker with those donations.

At this time, the city manager welcomed Dr. Bill Kanto, who was a member of the 1951 Norton Little League All-Stars Team, as well as former Mayor Raines and Robert Stump, who played baseball in the league in 1951, and asked Dr. Kanto to address council about the commemorative marker.

Dr. Kanto thanked council for allowing him to speak and emphasized that the commemorative marker would honor the leaders of Norton, under the leadership of Dr. Charles Litton, who made the decision the league would be integrated and stood against segregation at that time. He said what is important is that Norton's leadership had the fortitude to take the stand that they did, even though they were under tremendous pressure to reverse their decision.

Councilwoman Davis asked if a sign is enough.

Dr. Kanto said members of the marker committee would like to have the marker unveiling during the Best Friends Festival next year with a parade like the one held in Norton the day of the 1951 Little League All-Stars game. He also explained that Mr. Ramey suggested that the marker could also include a mobile link to the City of Norton website where people could access more information about this historic event in Norton's history.

The city manager noted that this could also be a project in which the school system can become involved in retelling this story.

Mayor Fawbush commended Dr. Kanto and the committee for taking the steps to place the marker in downtown Norton and said he agrees that this is a fresh look at our current-day situation. He said he has always thought Norton is probably the most progressive area in Southwest Virginia in terms of racial relations and integration. He added that Norton can be proud of that history and of its leadership.

Councilman Mays said he believes the city manager should proceed with this project in a first-class way and keep council informed about what needs to be done.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Mays, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso and Fultz, council moved to allow donations for the marker to be made to the city and for the city manager to proceed with the purchase and installation of the 1951 Norton Little League All-Stars Team commemorative marker at the designated location as presented.

The mayor thanked the committee for its efforts and said council looks forward to the unveiling of the marker next year.

Next on the agenda was an update on new absentee voting requirements by Norton Electoral Board Member Mike Brown. Prior to the update, Mr. Brown announced that Registrar Marie Muir will retire August 31, 2021, and introduced R. Gwyn Carlton as Norton's new registrar, effective September 1, 2021. Mr. Brown said that prior to coming to Norton she served as the assistant registrar for Washington County, Virginia.

Mr. Brown reported a change in Virginia law took place July 1, 2021, with House Bill 1888. Code of Virginia, Section 24.1-712, as amended, requires the establishment of a central absentee voter precinct that will have at least three officers of election. He explained that these will be

paid positions and the officers will only work in the central absentee voter precinct. He said the establishment of a central absentee voter precinct, which will be located beside the registrar's office at the community center (201 Park Avenue NE), has to be done by city ordinance. Mr. Brown told council that the next election is November 2, 2021, and the central absentee voter precinct officers of election will have to work that election.

The city manager said the electoral board provided council with a sample ordinance in council packets and the city attorney drafted an ordinance that was distributed to council members. He said council could not adopt the ordinance tonight, but could begin the process by authorizing a public hearing that would take place at the August 17th council meeting.

Following a brief discussion about absentee voting procedures, Mayor Fawbush thanked Registrar Marie Muir, Mr. Brown and Ms. Carlton for addressing council and welcomed Ms. Carlton to her new position with the City of Norton.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso and Fultz, council authorized the city manager to advertise a public hearing to be held at the August 17th council meeting for discussion of An Ordinance Establishing a Central Absentee Voter Precinct at 201 Park Avenue N.E.

Council had been presented in their packets with A Resolution Approving the Planning District One Community Services Board Performance Contract for FY 2022 and FY 2023.

Mr. Ramey explained that the Code of Virginia requires that every city and county has to establish or join a community services board that contractually plans and provides publicly funded mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse services.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso and Fultz, council moved to adopt the resolution as presented. (Insert)

The city manager presented council with a draft overview of the Vacant Home Demolition Program's Vacant Home Demolition/Replacement Program and Dilapidated Home Demolition Program.

Mr. Ramey said as part of the city's FY 2021-2022 Budget council funded \$20,000 for these two programs - \$15,000 for the Vacant Home Demolition/Replacement Program and \$5,000 for the Dilapidated Home Demolition Program.

He said the Vacant Home Demolition/Replacement Program is a program the city has had, but hasn't had the ability to fund in recent years, while the Dilapidated Home Demolition Program is a new program in which council has shown interest.

The Vacant Home Demolition/Replacement Program seeks to offer an incentive to existing property owners and potential homeowners to demolish older dilapidated homes and rebuild a new home within a timely manner on the same lot or parcel. The \$15,000 allocated to this program will provide funding for two deferred loans of up to \$7,500 each per unit demolished.

At this time, Councilwoman Davis left the meeting. The meeting resumed once she returned to her council seat.

The Dilapidated Home Demolition Program seeks to offer an incentive to existing property owners to demolish abandoned, vacant, blighted, and dilapidated homes even though there is no intent to replace the home with a new structure. The \$5,000 in FY 2021-22 funding will not exceed \$2,500 per home to be demolished.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso and Fultz, council moved to approve the Dilapidated Home Demolition Program as presented. The motion was then amended to include the acceptance of an applicant who completed demolition of a home prior to the start of the Dilapidated Home Demolition Program as a program participant and, therefore, eligible for reimbursement. After further discussion, the consensus of council was to table action on the Vacant Home Demolition/Replacement Program draft until a few requested modifications are made.

The mayor said he believes this program is money well spent.

Council had been presented in their packets with A Resolution Defining Signature and Access Requirements for Various City Accounts, Investments, and Certificate Storage.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following roll call vote, YES – Davis, Mays, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso and Fultz, council approved the resolution as presented. (Insert)

The city manager provided council with a brief update on city funding from the 2021 Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSLFRF). He said not much has changed since the previous council meeting. City administration is still participating in information sessions to gain clarity on how the funding can be spent. He said the city is clear on the infrastructure, water line, sewer line and broadband efforts category, but city administration is still looking at how to best spend this funding. He said broadband efforts in the city should be minimal, but the city could easily spend the \$4.7 million in funding on water and sewer projects and still have more projects to do. The goal is to spread the money around and take care of as many different types of things as possible. He explained that before the city makes a list of possible projects, it is important for city administration to know what projects can be incorporate into the funding scenario.

Mr. Ramey reported that the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) funding review is going well and should be finished within the next couple of weeks, with a report being issued sometime later.

City Finance Director Jeff Shupe explained that some expenditure reclassifications may be required.

Mr. Ramey said a council work session will be scheduled once the city knows how the funding can be spent. He said the key area he is most interested in is what lost revenue monies can potentially be recaptured in the General Fund and he is hopeful there will be more flexibility with these funds.

Also in packets for council consideration was a transfer to Norton City Schools dated June 21, 2021, in the amount of \$730,177.50 to cover the General Obligation School Bond, Series 2012, payment. Principal totals \$625,000, while the interest is \$105,177.50.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following roll call vote, YES – Davis, Mays, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso and Fultz, council moved to confirm the transfer to Norton City Schools, as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Davis, Mays, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Fultz and 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 per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7) of the Code of Virginia,

as amended, for Consultation with Legal Counsel and Briefings by Staff Members or Consultants Pertaining to Actual or Probable Litigation, Where Such Consultation or Briefing in Open Meeting Would Adversely Affect the Negotiating or Litigating Posture of the Public Body.

Mayor Fawbush declared council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following vote, YES – Davis, Mays, and Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Fultz and Caruso, council moved to go back into open meeting.

Mayor Fawbush declared council back in open meeting.

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

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following vote, YES – Davis, Mays, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Fultz and Caruso, council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

The mayor announced that placed before council tonight was a resolution authorizing city council to authorize and approve the Virginia Abatement Fund and Settlement Allocation Memorandum of Understanding and directs the city manager or the city attorney to execute and enter into such a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the City of Norton.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by the following vote, YES – Mays, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Fultz and Caruso, council adopted the resolution as presented. (Insert)

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for nominations to the City of Norton Planning Commission for a four-year term to expire August 31, 2025.

Councilman Mays nominated Robert Mitchell Kennedy to be reappointed to the City of Norton Planning Commission for a four-year term to expire August 31, 2025.

Councilwoman Davis moved that the nominations cease.

The mayor declared Robert Mitchell Kennedy reappointed to City of Norton Planning Commission for a four-year term to expire August 31, 2025.

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for nominations to the Appalachian Community Action & Development Agency, Inc. (AppCAA) to fill the unexpired term of Delores Belcher which expires April 1, 2022.

Councilman Mays nominated Sarah Davis to be appointed to the Appalachian Community Action & Development Agency, Inc. to fill the unexpired term of Delores Belcher.

The mayor moved that the nominations cease.

Councilwoman Sarah Davis abstained from voting.

Mayor Fawbush declared Sarah Davis appointed to the Appalachian Community Action & Development Agency, Inc. to fill the unexpired term of Delores Belcher which expires April 1, 2022.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey thanked City Finance Director Jeff Shupe and City Engineer Stephen McElroy for filling in for him at the July 20, 2021, council meeting. He said he knew they would do a wonderful job and he is glad to have them on the City Team.

He advised that the city recently received notification that the School Resource Officer grant has been extended and that the city will receive an AmeriCorps/National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) Team the end of August. The team will do more trail development this year and will be invited to attend the September 7th council meeting.

A new wayfinding directional sign has been installed along the incoming lane at the Tipple Hill intersection. Mr. Ramey noted that this sign is the 11th wayfinding sign that has been installed throughout the city.

The city manager reminded council that the annual Virginia Municipal League Conference will be held October 3-5, 2021, in Leesburg, Virginia, and asked council members to let him know if they plan to attend.

He showed council a recently released Norton marketing video that is being featured on the city's social media.

He said he anticipates that Jerry Wharton will be on the September 7th council meeting agenda.

Mr. Ramey distributed copies of the latest High Knob traffic counts for council review.

Upcoming events noted by the city manager included: Gravelachia, a 35- and 90-mile cycling event on paved and gravel roads, August 7; High Knob Outdoor Festival with a community concert, August 20 and 21; Flag Rock Bio-Blitz, August 28; Mountain Fork Half Marathon, September 19; High Knob Hellbender 10K, October 2; Woodbooger Festival, October 2; Cloudsplitter 100, October 16.

He reported that as of August 1, 163 participants from 29 states, the District of Columbia and two counties have registered for the Cloudsplitter. So far, 74 participants have registered for the 100-mile event, representing 28 states, Panama (2) and Peru (3). Approximately 33 participants from 16 states and DC have registered for the 100K; 38 from 13 states including Hawaii have registered for the 50-mile; and 18 from eight states have registered for the 25-mile.

Mr. Ramey noted that 32 participants from four states had registered for Gravelachia with only two of those participants being from the local area.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilwoman Davis said she thought it was important for city employees to belong to the city's civic organizations and asked if the city pays for membership dues.

The city manager said to his knowledge the city has not funded membership dues for city employees in the past, but it is something council could address. He said historically city employees have participated in Norton's civic organizations, but not with memberships paid by the city.

Mayor Fawbush said it was a pleasure to meet Ms. Gwyn Carlton at tonight's council meeting.

He said there was an article by Mike Still in the Sunday, August 1, 2021, Kingsport Times News about how the Woodbooger has increased tourism in Southwest Virginia. The mayor said that while he and Parks and Recreation Director Rebecca Iozzi were participating in a photo shoot at Flag Rock for the article, they met two motorcyclists from Pennsylvania who said they had made a special trip to Norton to see the Woodbooger statue. He said the visitors said they were going to the Woodbooger Restaurant to eat and to Home Hardware and Furniture Company. He said they were impressed by the area hospitality and they planned on visiting again and bringing their families.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA

Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:

Fred Ramey, Jr., Interim Clerk of Council

**ORDINANCE CREATING AND DESIGNATING A CENTRAL ABSENTEE
PRECINCT IN THE CITY OF NORTON**

WHEREAS, Section 24.1-712 of the Code of Virginia authorizes the governing body to establish one or more central absentee precincts in the courthouse or other public buildings for the purpose of receiving, counting, and recording absentee ballots cast in the locality; and

WHEREAS, Section 24.2-101 of the Code of Virginia gives the city electoral board responsibility for administering elections in the city; and

WHEREAS, Section 24.2-710 of the Code of Virginia requires counting absentee ballots separately for each precinct after polls close on election day unless a central absentee precinct has been established; and

WHEREAS, a central absentee precinct will serve the best interests of the citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Council seeks to designate a central absentee precinct in the City of Norton,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council, that the Norton Code is hereby amended by the addition of Section 6.5 - Central Absentee Precinct.

Sec. 6.5 – Central Absentee Precinct.

- a. A central absentee voter precinct, as defined by §24.2-101 of the Code of Virginia, is hereby established and the local electoral board shall have the discretion to determine the elections for which the central absentee voter precinct should be used.
- b. The polling place of the central absentee precinct shall be at the Registrar's Office in the Norton Community Center located at 201 Park Avenue NE, Norton, Virginia 24273.
- c. The central absentee voter precinct shall conform in all aspects with §24.2-712 of the Code of Virginia, as well as all other federal and state election laws and regulations.

Adopted this 17th day of August, 2021.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA

Joseph Fawbush
Mayor

ATTEST:

Acting Clerk



August 3, 2021

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 at 6:00 PM in the Municipal Council Chambers located at 618 Virginia Avenue, N.W., Norton, Virginia. The purpose of the hearing is to solicit input on an ordinance creating and designating a central absentee precinct to be located in the registrar's office at 201 Park Avenue NE.

Information regarding the proposed amendment is Available for Inspection Monday through Friday between 8:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. in the City Manager's Office or available at www.nortonva.gov. Attendance and Comments at the Meeting are Encouraged and Welcome.

Fred L. Ramey, Jr.

City Manager

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

TO THE COALFIELD:

Please run in the Friday, August 6th and Friday, August 13th editions of the Coalfield Progress.

2021 SESSION**HB 1888 Absentee voting; procedural and process reforms, availability and accessibility reforms, penalty.**

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SUMMARY AS PASSED HOUSE: (all summaries)

Absentee voting; procedural and process reforms; availability and accessibility reforms; penalty. Makes various reforms to absentee voting processes and procedures, including those related to availability and accessibility. The bill requires certain actions to be taken to process absentee ballots returned before the day of an election, including verifying the correct completion of the voter affirmation statement, and provides for an opportunity for an absentee voter to make corrections to the statement in certain circumstances. The bill requires the establishment of drop-off locations for the return of voted absentee ballots. Additionally, a central absentee voter precinct is required to be established in each locality; currently, establishment is optional. On the day of the election, officers of election are required to begin processing absentee ballots in the central absentee voter precincts prior to the close of polls, but no ballot vote counts are permitted to be transmitted outside of the central absentee voter precinct before the close of polls; a violation of such prohibition is a Class 1 misdemeanor. When reporting election results to the Department of Elections, the general registrars are required to report absentee ballots cast early in person separately from all other absentee ballots. Additionally, a voter who has applied for and received an absentee ballot may choose to instead vote at his polling place on election day, and such voter shall be entitled to cast a provisional ballot. The bill requires a ballot marking tool with screen reader assistive technology to be made available for absentee voters with a print disability. Restrictions on the availability of absentee voting for first-time voters who registered by mail are repealed. The bill contains technical amendments for organizational and readability purposes.

FULL TEXT

01/08/21 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/13/21 21101608D [pdf](#) | [impact statements](#)

01/18/21 House: Printed as engrossed 21101608D-E [pdf](#) | [impact statement](#)

01/18/21 House: Engrossed bill reprinted 21101608D-E [pdf](#) | [impact statement](#)

AMENDMENTS

House committee, floor amendments and substitutes offered

House amendments adopted

HISTORY

01/08/21 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/13/21 21101608D

01/08/21 House: Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

01/13/21 House: Reported from Privileges and Elections with amendment(s) (13-Y 9-N)

01/15/21 House: Read first time

01/18/21 House: Read second time

01/18/21 House: Committee amendments agreed to

01/18/21 House: Engrossed by House as amended HB1888E

01/18/21 House: Printed as engrossed 21101608D-E

01/18/21 House: Engrossed bill reprinted 21101608D-E

01/19/21 House: Read third time and passed House (55-Y 43-N)

01/19/21 House: VOTE: Passage (55-Y 43-N)

01/20/21 Senate: Constitutional reading dispensed

01/20/21 Senate: Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

02/05/21 Senate: Continued to 2021 Sp. Sess. 1 in Privileges and Elections (15-Y 0-N)

Code of Virginia
Title 24.2. Elections
Chapter 7. Absentee Voting

§ 24.2-712. Central absentee voter precincts; counting ballots

A. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the governing body of each county or city shall establish one or more central absentee voter precincts in the courthouse or other public buildings for the purpose of receiving, counting, and recording absentee ballots cast in the county or city. A central absentee voter precinct shall be made by the governing body by ordinance; the ordinance shall state for which elections the precinct shall be used. The decision to abolish any absentee voter precinct shall be made by the governing body by ordinance. Immediate notification of either decision shall be sent to the Department of Elections and the electoral board.

B. Each central absentee voter precinct shall have at least three officers of election as provided for other precincts. The number of officers shall be determined by the electoral board and general registrar.

C. If any voter brings an unmarked ballot to the central absentee voter precinct on the day of the election, he shall be allowed to vote it. If any voter brings an unmarked ballot to the general registrar on or before the day of the election, he shall be allowed to vote it, and his ballot shall be delivered to the absentee voter precinct.

D. Absentee ballots shall be processed as required by § 24.2-709.1 by the officers of election at the central absentee voter precinct prior to the closing of the polls. In the case of machine-readable ballots, the ballot container shall be opened and the absentee ballots shall be inserted in the counting machines prior to the closing of the polls in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Department of Elections, including procedures to preserve ballot secrecy, but no ballot count totals by the machines shall be transmitted outside of the central absentee voter precinct until after the closing of the polls.

In the case of absentee ballots that are counted by hand, the officers of election shall begin tallying such ballots at any time after noon on the day of the election in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Department of Elections, including procedures to preserve ballot secrecy. No counts of such tallies shall be determined or transmitted outside of the central absentee voter precinct until after the closing of the polls.

The use of cellular telephones or other communication devices shall be prohibited in the central absentee voter precinct during such processing and tallying and until the closing of the polls. Any person present in the central absentee voter precinct shall sign a statement under oath that he will not transmit any counts prior to the closing of the polls. Any person who transmits any counts in violation of this section is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

E. As soon as the polls are closed in the county or city, the officers of election at the central absentee voter precinct shall proceed promptly to ascertain and record the total vote given by all absentee ballots and report the results in the manner provided for counting and reporting ballots generally in Article 4 (§ 24.2-643 et seq.) of Chapter 6.

F. The electoral board or general registrar may provide that the officers of election for a central

absentee voter precinct may be assigned to work all or a portion of the time that the precinct is open on election day subject to the following conditions:

1. The chief officer and the assistant chief officer, appointed pursuant to § 24.2-115 to represent the two political parties, are on duty at all times; and

2. No officer, political party representative, or other candidate representative shall leave the precinct after any ballots have been counted until the polls are closed and the count for the precinct is completed and reported.

G. The general registrar may provide that the central absentee voter precinct will open after 6:00 a.m. on the day of the election provided that the office of the general registrar will be open for the receipt of absentee ballots until the central absentee voter precinct is open and that the officers of election for the central absentee voter precinct obtain the absentee ballots returned to the general registrar's office for the purpose of counting the absentee ballots at the central absentee voter precinct and provided further that the central absentee voter precinct is the same location as the office of the general registrar.

1974, c. 428, § 24.1-233.1; 1978, c. 778; 1991, c. 3; 1993, c. 641; 1994, cc. 287, 742; 1998, cc. 549, 572; 2003, c. 1015; 2006, c. 297; 2008, c. 423; 2013, c. 501; 2014, cc. 540, 552, 576; 2015, cc. 313, 644, 645; 2016, cc. 18, 492; 2017, c. 711; 2021, Sp. Sess. I, cc. 471, 522.

The chapters of the acts of assembly referenced in the historical citation at the end of this section(s) may not constitute a comprehensive list of such chapters and may exclude chapters whose provisions have expired.

City of Norton

Inter-Office Memo

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager *FR*
CC:
Date: August 13, 2021
Re: Redevelopment of Property Owned by J. W. Construction

The owner of J. W. Construction Co., Jerry Wharton, has asked to approach City Council regarding the possible redevelopment of the property that he owns along US 23 (Southbound) Near Exit #2.

Thank You.

City of Norton

Vacant Home Demolition/Replacement Program

August 2021

Program Objective:

The City of Norton is committed to assisting with providing residential housing to its citizens and those desiring to locate in the community. This program seeks to offer an incentive to existing property owners and potential homeowners to demolish older dilapidated homes and rebuild a new home within a timely manner on the same lot/parcel. The City of Norton believes it is in the public's best interest to implement this program as it will provide opportunities for new homes, remove some dilapidated structures, and improve the overall aesthetics of the community.

Program Description:

The City of Norton has budgeted \$15,000 in the 2021-22 Budget to provide funding to property owners desiring to participate. The funding will be considered a deferred loan in an amount not to exceed \$7,500 per unit to be demolished. The deferred loan will be forgiven providing adherence to necessary guidelines set forth herein. This program will be administered by the City Manager's Office under the general policy guidelines of Norton City Council. Recipients of funding will be required to execute a legally binding agreement with the City of Norton. The program will operate on an annual basis until funds are depleted or City Council discontinues the program.

Definition of Dilapidated Housing:

For the purposes of participation in this program, dilapidated housing is any home that meets one of two criteria:

The home is more than fifty (50) years old and in the opinion of the owner should be demolished, or

The home, in the opinion of the Building Official, is not habitable and is in such a dilapidated state that it should be demolished.

Application Process / Requirements:

The City of Norton will accept letters of interest/applications from property owners on a first-come, first-served basis. Upon receiving a letter of interest/application, the City's Building Official will inspect the property, confirm lot location and ownership, and determine if there are any delinquent real property taxes due. A photograph of the

property will be taken and will be submitted along with the letter of interest/application and the report of the Building Official to the City Manager. The City Manager will either approve or disapprove the request. Included in the reasons for not non approval of a request would be the existence of past due taxes on the property, ownership cannot be verified, or the applicant making the request is not the owner. Once a request is approved, the applicant must agree to enter into a binding legal document with the City, agree to demolish the structure within a six-month timeframe, agree to build a new home consistent with the zoning for the lot within a one-year time frame from the date of demolition, and abide by all the rules and regulations as set forth by the City of Norton. All funding will be considered as a deferred loan, at 0% interest, until such time as the requirements contained in this program are met. Once the requirements of the program are met, the loan will be forgiven, and the property lien will be removed.

Approved Housing Type:

The type of housing to be constructed must comply with all aspects of the City's zoning ordinance, or any variance authorized by the Board of Zoning Appeals, and the building code. No application will be approved for any mobile home as defined in the City's zoning ordinance. New housing units must be permanently placed on the lot in order to be considered. Manufactured Homes are an approved housing type so long as they are permanently placed. The house must be designed to accommodate a single family or multi-family residence. A new housing unit will not be considered complete unless the structure is ready for occupancy as certified by the Building Official.

Payments of the Deferred Loan/ Grant:

The City will only make a deferred loan for the demolition and subsequent cleanup of a structure. No City funds will be used for any site or grade work or new home construction. Payments will be made by the City to the ~~contractor(s) hired by the~~ property owner after (1) **applicant has entered into a deferred loan agreement with the City within six months of approval of application;** (2) demolition of the structure and removal of debris has been completed; (3) applicant has submitted ~~at~~ all **qualifying receipts to the Building Official** related to the demolition and/or debris removal; and (4) **Building Official has reviewed and approved the invoice(s) and recommended payment to the City Manager.** ~~The demolition must be completed, and the debris removed from the property prior to any payment being made. to perform the demolition in one installment. The demolition must be completed, and the debris removed from the property prior to any payment being made. A certified invoice from the contractor must be submitted to the Building Official for review. Once received reviewed and approved, the Building Official will submit the invoice to the City Manager and a check will be written for the amount of the~~ **qualifying invoice(s), not to exceed \$7,500, to the contractor property owner** within 30 days from receipt.

Time Frames:

Once an application has been approved by the City Manager, demolition of the existing structure must not exceed six (6) months. New home construction cannot exceed twelve (12) months from the date of demolition. If these deadlines are exceeded, the applicant will be considered in default and repayment of the loan becomes immediately due.

This program adopted by the Norton City Council this the 17th day of August, 2021.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA


Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:

Fred Ramey, Acting Clerk of Council

City of Norton

Inter-Office Memo

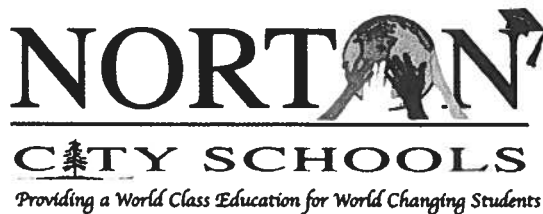
To: Mayor and City Council
From: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager 
CC:
Date: August 13, 2021
Re: American Rescue Plan Act and CLFRF

At this meeting, the City Administration will provide a brief update on the City's share of the American Rescue Plan Act's Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CLFRF) and an overview of the guidance that we have received to-date.

Thank You.

SCHOOL BOARD

Cody McElroy, Chairperson
Dr. Wes Campbell, Vice-Chairperson
Carol Caruso
Cheryl Redman
Mark Sturgill



DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT
Dr. Gina J. Wohlford
gwohlford@nortoncityschoools.org
Phone 276.679.2330
Fax 276.679.4315

TO: Jeff Shupe
FROM: Jacqueline Brooke
SUBJECT: Request for Funds

DATE: July 22, 2021

Norton City Schools requests a deposit of City Funds in the amount of \$250,000 to cover July 2021 payroll expenditures.

Thank you!