

The regular meeting of the Norton City Council was held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on Tuesday, March 5, 1996 at 7:30 p.m. with Mayor Robert Raines presiding.

Present: William Mays, Ron McCall, and Robert Raines

Absent: Roy Roberts, Jack Wallace

Also Present: E. W. Ward, City Manager, and Joe Pippin, City Attorney

The invocation was given by Rev. Jim Jenkins which was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by the Chief of Police Sam Mongle.

Upon a motion by Ron McCall, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the February 20, 1996 meeting as presented.

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

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A public hearing was held on A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Authorizing the City Manager to Make Application for a Community Development Block Grant. Mr. Ward advised this was the second of the public hearings on this item and he asked for Council's favorable consideration on same.

Ms. Welthy Soni, Business Start Director of People, Incorporated, who will handle this grant if it is awarded, was present and spoke briefly to Council. She advised this grant would be shared between the localities in the Lenowisco Planning District and Dickenson County and the amount of the grant will be \$160,000.00. Hopefully there will be some leverage for some additional funds from the Small Business Administration. The City of Norton will be making application for this Community Development Block Grant.

Mayor Raines opened the public hearing.

There being no public input, Mayor Raines closed the public hearing.

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Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Ron McCall, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia authorizing the City Manager to Make Application for a Community Development Block Grant. (Insert)

Mr. Steve Fritts of Barge, Waggoner, Sumner, and Cannon was present to give Council an update on the Parks and Recreation Study they had conducted for the City. Mr. Fritts had presented each member of Council with a copy of their report and presented some of these items to those present at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Fritts went over the steps in which they had conducted this study. A detailed survey of the City's existing facilities was conducted and they found it was more feasible to renovate our present Community Center rather than build a new one. He further advised that in a comparison with the State and National Standards, Norton was in pretty good shape.

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Following his presentation in which he covered the other aspects

of the City's parks and recreation facilities, Mr. Fritts entertained any questions from Council.

Council had in their packets a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Requesting the Virginia Department of Transportation to Include Two Additional Streets for Municipal Assistance Payments.

Mr. Ward advised that with the completion of the By-Pass, we have a new road, Lost Creek Road, which will be eligible for the maintenance plus nine additional streets that have been found which also should be eligible for maintenance payments. The total is well over a mile and would bring maintenance funds in the amount of \$10,000 to \$11,000 to the City.

Mr. Ward asked for Council's favorable consideration on this resolution in order that he might forward the necessary paper work to the Resident Engineer.

Upon a motion by Ron McCall, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Requesting the Virginia Department of Transportation to Include Two Additional Streets for Municipal Assistance Payments. (Insert)

Mr. Ward advised Council of the completion of the 1996 property reassessment and advised that this new assessment had generated an amount more than 1% of our old reassessment, which is something we haven't seen for several years. The new assessment numbers that we received were more than 1% of old reassessment and it has caused us to have to react to some provisions in the Code of Virginia. In 58.1-3321 of the Code, it states that when any assessment or reassessment of real property by a municipality results in an increase of 1% or more in the total real tax levied then that municipality shall reduce its tax rate of levy for the forthcoming tax year so as to cause such rate of levy to produce no more than 101% of the previous year's real property tax. Included in Council's packet was a Computation of % Increase in 1996 Reassessment. In following this computation, the percentage of increase in the tax levy effective January 1, 1996 is 15.1% which takes into account new construction in the rehabilitative tax credit that we are bound by. This amount of 15.1% is put into another formula to compute our new tax levy which is \$ .61 per \$100 of assessment and is effective January 1, 1996. Our old tax levy was \$ .70 per \$100 of assessment. Upon the City Manager's interpretation of the Code provisions, we will have to automatically lower our tax levy from \$ .70 to \$ .61 due to this increase in assessment. The City Attorney concurred with this.

The City Manager advised his reason for bring this to Council was to show them the method by which we calculated the new effective tax rate for the City and to ask for guidance on what Council's wishes are for the Administration for the preparation of the 1996-97 municipal budget. He further advised the Code also states this new tax levy goes into effect automatically, but also states, that the governing body after conducting a public hearing which cannot be held at the same time as your annual budget hearing, can increase that levy above the reduced rate if Council so desires.

Following a lengthy discussion and upon a motion by Ron McCall,

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seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council voted to authorize the City Manager to advertise a public hearing regarding setting the tax rate to \$ .70 per \$100 of real property and to approve the computation of the City Manager and the Commissioner of Revenue and attach to the minutes of this meeting a copy of the Computation of % Increase in 1996 Reassessment. (Insert)

Council had been presented with a copy of a check in the amount of \$180,000 to the Norton City Schools.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Ron McCall, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve a check in the amount of \$180,000 to the Norton City Schools.

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Upon a motion by Ron McCall, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel as per 2.1-344(A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

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Mayor Raines declared the meeting in Executive Session.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Ron McCall, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to go back into regular session.

Mayor Raines declared the meeting back in regular session.

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The Clerk then polled each member of Council as to the Certification of Executive Meeting with each answering aye. The Clerk then read the entire Resolution of the Certification of Executive Meeting. Upon a motion by Ron McCall, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Executive Meeting. (Insert)

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Mayor Raines advised that the City Attorney had advised Council that they may want to broaden their definition of the Housing Appeals Board and change the name to the Building Code Board of Appeals (Housing Appeals Board) to be more reflective to the Code.

Mayor Raines opened the floor for nominations to the Building Code Board of Appeals (Housing Appeals Board) for a five year term which will expire on 2/18/2001.

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William Mays nominated that Mrs. Barbara Collins be reappointed to this board.

Upon a motion by Ron McCall, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease.

Mayor Raines declared Mrs. Barbara Collins reappointed to the Building Code Board of Appeals (Housing Appeals Board) for a five year term which will expire on 2/18/2001.

In his comments, the City Manager:

Advised Council on Thursday and Friday, March 14th and 15th, citizens, council members, Planning Commission members, reporters, and anyone who wishes to attend can come to the Court Room to meet with our landscape architect who will have conceptual drawings of our downtown project. Citizens are encouraged to come in and give their ideas.

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There were no comments from the City Attorney.

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In comments from Council, Mr. McCall advised that the John I. Burton Basketball Team is going to the State Basketball Tournament this week. To defer some of the costs incurred, he would like for the City to donate some funds for these costs.

Upon a motion by Ron McCall, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved that they appropriate \$1,000 to John I. Burton High School to defer some of the costs for the basketball team going to the state tournament in Salem and if they proceed on to the next round and go to Lynchburg, an additional \$1,000 will be appropriated to help defer the costs of this trip. Said funds will come from Contingency.

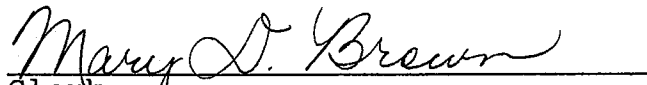
Mayor Raines advised that two Council members were out tonight. Mr. Wallace is out-of-town on a business trip in Chicago and Mr. Roberts is out-of-town on vacation. Both had been planned for some time and Council had been made aware of this. This is a rarity as 99% of the time, we have a full council present.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA

  
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B. Robert Raines, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Clerk