

The regular meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, May 16, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers 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. Peggy Goulet and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Police Chief Kenny Jackson.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2006 meeting as presented.

21361

At this time, Mayor Raines advised that tonight's agenda is being amended to include Item 7-E #3 – Legal – Consultation with Legal Counsel Pertaining to Probable Litigation as Per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7) of the Code of Virginia as amended.

21362

During the Mayor's call for visitors, Sister Beth Jaspers of the Advocacy Center spoke to Council on two issues: the first being the Advocacy Center is in need of some financial assistance. The assistance is needed to buy fuel for vehicles and also in the purchase of medications. The second item discussed was the annual RAM Expedition. She advised that one of the larger expenses was for port-a-lets, which costs approximately \$5,000. She asked Council to make a donation to go toward this expense.

After a brief discussion, Mayor Raines advised Sister Beth to come back to Council after they have a financial document in place and ask for some funds to be allocated to them.

21363

Mayor Raines took this time to thank Sister Beth, on behalf of Council, for her involvement in so many different activities and for her willingness to serve and for her expertise for taking the lead role in so many activities.

Sister Beth thanked the Mayor and Council for their time tonight.

A public hearing was held on the 2006-2007 budget of the Norton City Schools, totaling \$6,805,978 of which \$1,763,599 are local funds and a Capital Improvement Budget of \$40,000, all of which are local funds.

Mayor Raines advised that this public hearing had been duly advertised and the School Board presented their budget to Council at the last meeting. Present at tonight's meeting were Dr. John Sessoms, Superintendent of the Norton City Schools, Ron McCall, Chairman of the School Board, several members of the School Board, and Betty Mills, Administrative Assistant of the School Board.

Mr. McCall gave a brief synopsis of the 2006-2007 budget and answered questions from Council.

21364

He also discussed with Council the long-term capital requests. He stated there is still a need for the additional classrooms and gymnasium at the elementary school and the science labs and stadium at the high school.

Mayor Raines thanked Mr. McCall for his presentation.

Mayor Raines opened the public hearing

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

Mayor Raines advised that no action would be taken tonight. Action on this 2006-2007 budget of the Norton City Schools will be taken at the next council meeting on June 6, 2006. He further advised that Council appreciated the efforts of the School Board on this budget process. Mayor Raines advised that between now and the next budget cycle, there should be an agreed on process to proceed with these long-term projects.

A public hearing was held to consider a budget amendment to the 2005-2006 budget of the Norton City Schools in the amount of \$762,416.

Mr. McCall advised that a large portion of this amount (\$557,343.56) is for the Cafeteria Project. The remainder is for Title I Funds, Title II Funds, Technology Funds, E-Rate Funds, Construction Funds, and Algebra SOL Funds.

There were no questions from Council prior to the public hearing.

Mayor Raines opened the public hearing.

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

There were no questions or comments from Council after the public hearing.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Joseph Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve a budget amendment in the amount of \$762,416 to the 2005-2006 budget of the Norton City Schools with \$557,343.56 going toward the Cafeteria Project and the remainder going toward housekeeping items as listed above.

Dr. Terrance Suarez, President of Mountain Empire Community College, was present to give Council an update and presented Council members with a Fact Sheet on the college. He advised that MECC offers 30 associate degree programs and are looking at two additional programs to add in the fall.

Following a brief discussion, Mayor Raines thanked Dr. Suarez for his presentation.

Mr. Ward gave Council an update on the City's 2006-2007 proposed budget. He advised that these changes on the update are a result of the work session held on this budget following the last council meeting on April 25th. He stated the major changes deal with the School Board budget. The General Operating Fund has been amended by adding the requested increase in operations for the schools in the amount of \$102,104. The General Operating Fund has been amended by adding \$40,000 of small capital projects for the schools. The original request from the schools for these projects was \$76,915. A proposed increase in the residential and commercial garbage rates, which will generate approximately \$70,000 in additional revenue, is proposed. Also, the part time animal warden position has been changed to be a full time position.

Mr. Ward advised that in the original budget submittal, the amount of prior years reserves needed to balance the budget was \$261,530. Council had requested that the above mentioned items be incorporated into the budget while keeping the reserve amount needed to less than \$400,000. The proposed budget, with the above items, has a needed reserve to balance of \$362,934.

Mr. Ward is seeking guidance and permission to advertise the proposed 2006-2007 budget based on the above changes.

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of Council to authorize the City Administration to advertise a public hearing to be held at the June 6th council meeting on the 2006-2007 budget based on the changes discussed tonight. Action will then be taken at the June 20th council meeting on the budget.

In their packets, Council had been presented with a copy of A Resolution Action to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing. Mr. Ward advised that the City had to take some type of action on fair housing annually due to the City's participation in the CDBG Programs. We currently have CDBG funds on the City's Housing Project and ARC Grant Funds on the Norton/Big Stone Gap Interconnect Water Project.

21368

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 Action to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing. (Insert)

Council had been presented with a copy of a check in the amount of \$275,000 made payable to the Norton City Schools.

21369

Upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve a check made payable to the Norton City Schools in the amount of \$275,000.00.

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 and Consultation with Legal Counsel Pertaining to Probable Litigation as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7) of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

21370

Mayor Raines declared Council in closed meeting.

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

21371

Mayor Raines declared Council back in open meeting.

The Clerk then 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 William Mays, and passed 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)

21372

In comments from the City Manager, Mr. Ward advised that:

The Planning Commission is hearing a rezoning request at the present time. Unless the applicant withdraws his request, this will be coming to City Council in July.

The City has advertised for the position of Director of Social Services to replace Mr. Bill Stokes, who is retiring July 1, 2006.

The Comprehensive Sewer Study has been advertised and there has been interest shown by several engineering firms in the region.


Mr. Ward then showed Council the cover of the Appalachian Magazine, a publication of the Appalachian Regional Commission. The front cover has a picture taken from the upper campground at Flag Rock.

There were no comments from the City Attorney.

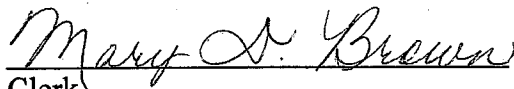
In comments from the Council, Mr. Fawbush advised he recently attended a Crooked Road Board Meeting held at the Country Cabin. Delegate Kilgore was present and presented the Crooked Road with a check in the amount of \$475,000 from the Tobacco Commission. Also, he then presented Councilman Fawbush with a check for the City in the amount of \$47,500 for the Josephine Country Cabin Water Project from the Tobacco Commission.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA


B. Robert Raines, Mayor

ATTEST:


Clerk

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