

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, November 19, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

Present: Mark Caruso, William Mays, Joseph Fawbush, and Terry Roop

Absent: Joseph Hunnicutt

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

The invocation was given by Rev. John Ellington followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Councilman Mark Caruso.

Upon a motion by Councilman Roop, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the October 29, 2013 meeting as presented.

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During the Mayor's audience for visitors, Mr. Michael Hunt, 1230 Chapman Street, S. W. spoke briefly to Council regarding a logging operation on this street within 100' of his property. He advised there are at least 30 children that play on this street and there are log trucks traveling this road. He advised he had talked with Winfred Collins, the City's Building Official, and had been advised by him that there were no zoning laws against this; however the City can monitor the area of soil and erosion. Mr. Hunt advised this diminishes the street, causes erosion problems, and affects property values. He then showed Council members pictures he had taken on his cell phone. He asked Council to pass an ordinance that would prohibit others from having to experience this type of operation in a residential area.

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Following a brief discussion, Mayor Mays asked Police Chief Lane to have this area patrolled due to the safety concerns and the City Attorney advised he would look at the current zoning ordinance to see if something can be done other than monitoring soil and erosion. The City Manager was asked to monitor this situation also.

Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Hunt for bringing this to Council's attention.

Mr. Ramey advised that as of today we have a total combined capacity in our reservoirs of 71.8 million gallons which is above average for this time of the year. In November, the City had a total rainfall of 1.9 inches and is not purchasing any water. This will continue to be an agenda item to keep Council informed.

25964

Mr. Wally Smith, Assistant Professor of Biology at UVA-Wise and a member of the Steering Committee of the Clinch River Valley Initiative, was present to thank Council for their support and give them a brief update of the accomplishments of the past year, some history of the organization that began in 2010, and their goals.

Following Mr. Smith's presentation, Mr. Todd Christensen spoke briefly on information given in a handout to Council members. After recognizing Buzz Witt, who was present at tonight's meeting and a member of his organization, he spoke of the

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progress his organization has made and advised they were hopeful to obtain a Clinch River State Park.

Following his presentation, Mr. Christensen answered questions from Council members.

Mayor Mays and members of Council thanked both Mr. Christensen and Mr. Smith for the job they are doing to promote tourism in our area.

Mr. Ramey advised that representatives of Norton Community Hospital were present to advise Council of the work being done on the 15th Street entrance to the hospital. He advised that a portion of this street is a City street for which the City receives VDOT funding and the City maintains this section of the road. The remainder of the street was developed by and is maintained by the hospital.

Mr. Mark Leonard, CEO of Norton Community Hospital, recognized Robert Leonard, Treasurer and member of the NCH Board of Directors, Freddie Mullins, General Counsel for NCH, and Bill Holden, Vice President of Facility and Construction Management for Mountain States.

Mr. Leonard advised that approximately one year ago the road began cracking and bowing. They began working with a geo-technical engineering group whose findings were that there was nothing conclusive. They then dug out a portion of the road, excavated down, and the conclusion was made by the geo-tech engineers that this was not caused by water. The problem had been there all along and the accelerated slippage and damage was caused by the new location of the helicopter pad and traffic.

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Leonard advised they plan to build the road back using 8,000 yards of dirt w/rock solidifying the road bed, then applying the asphalt and curbing. This should take a couple of weeks and be completed around the first of December.

Councilman Roop expressed his appreciation to Mr. Leonard and the hospital for the repairs to this road and advised that Norton Community Hospital had been a great partner to the City.

The City Manager advised that the new street, when completed, would still not meet VDOT specifications, but the road will be in better shape than it was previously.

Mr. Leonard then gave Council an update on the Medical Mall that will be built in the old Magic Mart Shopping Center. He advised that Building A renovations will start in December and should be turned over to them by February of 2015 and advised of the offices that will be moving there.

Building B will require demolition and construction and will begin in spring of 2014 and take 18 months to finish.

They will demolish 25,000-30,000 square feet and a greenway will be placed there opening up access to the hospital.

Mr. Leonard advised he will be glad to answer any questions from Council.

Mayor Mays asked about the helicopter service and was advised by Mr. Leonard that they are still talking with Wings Air Rescue regarding increasing their presence here.

Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Leonard for both updates and also for being such a good partner with the City.

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In their packets, Council had been presented with a memorandum from the Commissioner of Revenue regarding an erroneously assessed 2013 personal property tax for Mr. John Asbury, Jr. in the amount of \$32.14.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve a refund to Mr. John Asbury, Jr. in the amount of \$32.14 covering erroneously assessed 2013 personal property tax.

25968

Council had a copy of a transfer to the Norton City Schools in the amount of \$250,000 to cover October fringes.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to confirm the transfer to the Norton City Schools in the amount of \$250,000. (Councilman Roop's Disclosure Form)

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Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Roop, 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.

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Mayor Mays declared Council in closed meeting.

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

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Mayor Mays declared Council back in open meeting.

The Clerk 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 Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by the following unanimous vote: YES – Caruso, Fawbush, Roop, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – Hunnicutt, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

25972

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Building Code Board of Appeals for an unexpired term to expire on February 18, 2015.

Councilman Fawbush nominated Steven McElroy.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Roop, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease.

Mayor Mays declared Steven McElroy appointed to an unexpired term on the Building Code Board of Appeals which will expire on February 18, 2015.

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations of a student representative to the Wise County/City of Norton Youth Services Board for an unexpired term which will expire on July 1, 2014.

Councilman Roop nominated Megan Steffey.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease.

Mayor Mays declared Megan Steffey appointed to the Wise County/City of Norton Youth Services Board as a student representative for an unexpired term which will expire on July 1, 2014.

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

The City expects to receive a positive review of the Safe Route To Schools Project bids from VDOT later this week and unless Council deems otherwise, the City Administration will move forward with all contract and other associated documents once they are approved by the City Attorney.

The Regional Legislative Reception will be held in Richmond on January 16th at the Omni. Any Council member who would like to attend should advise him as soon as possible so that he can make reservations.

He had provided tonight to City Council the October Retail Sales Tax Report.

The Christmas Parade is scheduled for Sunday, December 1st at 6:00 p.m. with the Christmas Tree Lighting planned for 5:00 p.m.

City Offices will be closing at Noon on Wednesday, November 27th and be closed Thursday, November 28th and Friday, November 29th for the Thanksgiving holiday.

On behalf of the entire City staff, he extended to our citizens and Council a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday and reminded everyone to shop locally this holiday season.

In comments from the City Attorney, Mr. Bradshaw advised that he has run into an obstacle on a property in the current tax sale. Following a brief discussion, he advised Council that the best way to proceed is to dismiss the suit and then commence a new one.

In comments from City Council, Councilman Roop advised that he commended the City Attorney for his handling of the tax sales. After noticing one dilapidated property had been torn down, he advised that he wants the City to be much more aggressive on this.

Mr. Ramey advised the next step to being more aggressive is for the City to tear down these properties and put a lien against them. He further advised that this would require funding but this would be a good tool to put in the upcoming budget process. Following questions from Council, the City Attorney advised this would be cost effective.

Councilman Caruso advised he would miss the next meeting and this should be the last he will miss due to the class he is taking. He extended his thanks to Council for their patience in his absence.

Mayor Mays extended congratulations to the J. I. Burton Football Team, coaches, and others for qualifying to play in the second round of the State Play-offs

Councilman Roop stated that small school determination works as the academic team deserves congratulations also.

Mayor Mays extended best wishes to all for a happy Thanksgiving.


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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William J. Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk