

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, September 6, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

Present: Mark Caruso, Robert Fultz, Jr., William Mays, Joseph Fawbush, and Dee Belcher

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

The invocation was given by the Reverend Roger Sloce and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by First Sergeant Greg Mays.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Mays, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the August 16, 2016, meeting as presented.

26008

During the Mayor's Call for Visitors, Linda Leonard, volunteer organizer of Arts in the Park, came forward to inform Council of the upcoming schedule and to invite them to the event. She handed out a flyer showcasing various performers and food vendors for the event, adding they are trying to promote local talent and businesses at the show.

Ms. Leonard commented the recent renovations to the farmers' market building were a huge improvement to downtown and the business district is buzzing with people in the morning. She also noted once Dairy Queen has completed exterior renovations, the improvements will add to the appeal to visit the city center. She encouraged Council to attend Arts in the Park to keep the momentum to visit downtown moving forward.

26009

Mayor Mays thanked Ms. Leonard and the volunteers for their work on Arts in the Park.

Mr. Ramey advised the City would like to formally recognize citizens who had served on behalf of City Council as board and commission members once their terms expired or they resigned. Two of the three recipients that are to be presented with plaques are in attendance. At this time, Mayor Mays presented an award to William "Bud" Stewart for serving three years on the Norton Tourism Committee and a plaque to Robert "Bob" Isaac for 11 years on the Mountain Empire Community College Advisory Board.

26010

A plaque honoring Ethel Daniels for eight years of service on the City's Social Service Advisory Board will be delivered to her since she was not present.

Following the presentations, Mayor Mays asked Council to come forward and a picture was taken with the award recipients. After applause was given to Mr. Stewart and Mr. Isaac, the Mayor and Council members thanked each of them for their years of dedicated service to the City.

Mr. Stephen Mullins, Regional Power Grant Coordinator for the Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board (SWVA WDB), was present to update Council on the Power Initiative Grant for Dislocated Workers in the coal industry and related businesses. Mr. Mullins advised Council there were three Power Initiative Grants provided by three

26011

distinct federal funding agencies and the grant awarded to the SWVA WDB was through the Department of Labor. Mr. Mullins said the grant allows for retraining, retooling, and re-credentialing options for laid-off workers of the coal industry and related businesses. In addition, the grant offers nationally-recognized credentialing in Adventure Tourism to assist workers in establishing a small business to support the tourism and recreational industry currently being endorsed in the region.

Mr. Mullins answered a few questions from Council members and explained the current goals of the SWVA WDB are outreach and marketing. They will be holding a free picnic lunch in September at the Russell County fairgrounds in appreciation of the coal mining workforce and their families.

Mr. Ramey presented Council with a comprehensive overview and update, via a PowerPoint presentation, on the 2015 financial operations of the Norton Rescue Squad. Mr. Ramey advised the squad has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City and, under the MOU, the squad is required to provide Council with a copy of their tax return. In 2015, the City contributed \$25,000 to the squad with supplemental funding of \$2,200. For FY 2016-17, Council budgeted a total of \$50,000 with \$25,000 being specified for each year. So far in 2016, the squad has drawn down \$25,000 with additional funding of \$10,300. Mr. Ramey advised for FY 2017, the squad has drawn down \$8,200 of the \$25,000 budgeted and he anticipates that additional funding will be required for the squad to continue to operate.

26012

Mr. Ramey advised the squad received 1,032 calls during 2015, which is an increase over the past several years. The two sources of income for the squad, bingo games and transportation billings, show a slight increase over the previous year. The operating and payroll expenses for 2015 have decreased and the squad has fewer volunteers to assist with calls. The squad experienced a net loss for CY 2015 and the loss was offset by the selling of an vehicle. Mr. Ramey stated Council will need to review the MOU between the City and the Rescue Squad within the next couple of months.

Councilman Caruso stated the Rescue Squad Board of Directors is diligently working to resolve internal and external problems to ensure that the squad is a solvent organization and is prepared to provide services to the citizens of Norton.

Council had one transfer to confirm. The transfer was to the Norton City Schools dated July 27, 2016, in the amount of \$200,000 to cover July 2016 payroll expenditures.

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

26013

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to go into closed meeting to discuss personnel as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, as amended, and discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publically held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (3) of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

26014

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. 26015

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 Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following unanimous vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert) 26016

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Department of Social Services Board for a four (4) year term to expire on August 5, 2020.

Councilman Fultz nominated Dorie Stidham to be appointed to the City's Department of Social Services Board for a four (4) year term to expire on August 5, 2020.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the nominations cease. 26017

Mayor Mays declared Dorie Stidham appointed to the Department of Social Services Board for a four (4) year term to expire on August 5, 2020.

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

Mr. Ramey handed out the Virginia Municipal League's Magazine to Council and advised the City's gateway project is featured on page 2.

Copies of the new trail maps were placed on Council's desks. 26018

The Pro-Art 2016-17 Calendar of Programs was provided to each Council member, and the City has been give free tickets that can be used for each performance. Please advise City Administration if you are interested in attending any of the shows.

There were no comments from the City Attorney. 26019

In comments from Council:

Councilman Caruso advised the handrail at Legion Park has been repaired and it looks good.

He had recently seen an outdoor magazine that listed the top 10 outdoor towns in America. He stated it needs to be the City's goal to be included in the top 10 list of outdoor towns in the country. 26020

Councilman Fultz stated he was pleased to see East Park Avenue and the 11th Street intersection paved this year.

He said he enjoys the Arts in the Park event and he appreciates Linda Leonard's remarks on improvements to downtown and the growth in the City's business district. 26021

He also is glad to see people walking downtown and using the Safe Route to School (SRTS) access.

Councilwoman Belcher advised the City Manager she noticed tire marks on the new sidewalk in front of the Farmers' Market building and that she wanted him to be aware of this concern, especially because of the proximity of the tire marks to the building.

26022

Councilman Fawbush stated he visited Sugar Hill Brewery in St. Paul and that they are doing well and he wishes success to the business.

He also attended the grand opening of Zest Catering in the City's downtown on Saturday and they were very busy. He is glad to see area downtowns beginning to shift toward recovery and he wants Council to keep moving in that direction.

26023

Mayor Mays stated the area is finally starting to realize that what is beneficial for one locality is good for the entire area, and that localities are realizing that working together regionally is advantageous for everyone.

26024

He commended Mr. Ramey on the paving projects completed this year in the City and he read a "thank you" note from Martha Wells thanking the City for paving East Park Avenue and Guest River Road.


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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk of Council