

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, August 15, 2017, 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 Delores Belcher

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

The invocation was given by Pastor Gary Hill and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Police Chief James Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the July 25, 2017, rescheduled meeting and the August 1, 2017 regularly scheduled meeting as presented. 262411

There was no response to the Mayor's Call for Visitors. 262412

Included in Council's packets was a copy of a draft resolution regarding hunting in the Flag Rock Recreation Area. Mr. Ramey said at the last meeting it was brought to Council's attention that leaving Flag Rock open throughout the year was a conflict with City Code Section 14.144, which regulates hunting in the Conservation Zone. After discussion of the potential conflict, Council asked the City Attorney to draft a resolution amending Chapter 14, Section 14-144 to prohibit hunting in the Conservation Zone.

Mr. Bradshaw said the draft resolution eliminates the current provision of the City Code that allows the discharge of a firearm in the Conservation Zone for legal hunting purposes. He said the exception to City Code Section 14-144 prohibiting the discharge of a firearm within city limits would be for law enforcement purposes or self-defense. 262413

The City Manager said if the draft resolution is agreed upon by Council the next action is to advertise a public hearing on the proposed resolution to receive public input.

There were no comments from Council after Mr. Ramey's and Mr. Bradshaw's remarks and it was the consensus of members to authorize the City Manager to advertise a public hearing for the September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, on amending Chapter 14, Section 14-144 of the Norton City Code to prohibit hunting in the Conservation Zone within the corporate limits of the City of Norton.

In their packets, Council had a request from the City Manager to advertise a public hearing regarding the use of the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDARD) funding for the purchase of two new vehicles for the police department. 262414

After a brief discussion, Council was of the consensus to authorize the City Manager to advertise a public hearing related to the use of USDARD funds to purchase two new law enforcement vehicles for the Police Department.

Mr. Ramey advised that last year the City of Norton, along with Wise County and Scott County, were able to be included in the Friends of Southwest Virginia's (FSWVA) grant 262415

application to the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Program (ARC/POWER). He said Friends of Southwest Virginia received a \$3,000,000 grant last fall to create economic opportunities related to outdoor recreation in Giles County, Town of Haysi, Town of Damascus, and the City of Norton. Since the award, FSWVA has been working with City Administration on projects that involve Norton. Several High Knob areas, including High Knob Recreation Lake, are the focus of the economic investments. There are four items the City will be involved in under the grant program: the creation of High Knob Master Plan, improvements to High Knob Recreation Lake, construction of a parking lot at Devil's Bathtub, and construction of a destination center in the City of Norton at the entrance to High Knob. The destination center will be constructed on property owned by the Norton Industrial Development Authority (NIDA), so NIDA will enter into contracts with the grantee, Friends of Southwest Virginia, to expense the grant funds. Two of the projects, the Devil's Bathtub parking lot and improvements to High Knob Recreation Lake, will also be managed by NIDA, on behalf of the United States Forest Service. Mr. Ramey said City Administration is requesting Council's authorization for the ARC/POWER grant funds to flow through NIDA for these projects with city staff updating Council throughout the process.

After a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council authorized oversight and project management of the Appalachian Regional Commission's Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization grant funds to the Norton Industrial Development Authority.

Mr. Ramey informed Council that he had asked Police Chief James Lane to update Council on the Norton Police Department's Auxiliary Officer Program.

Via a PowerPoint presentation, Police Chief James Lane gave an update on the Norton Police Auxiliary Department. Chief Lane said the Auxiliary Officer Program was established in 1980 by City Council for the purpose of assisting the police department with patrol, event security, transports and other department tasks. He said, at that time, to become an auxiliary officer no testing was required, background checks were limited, and firearm use was the only required training. However, in 2011, the Department of Criminal Justice (DCJS) mandated auxiliary police officers were required to meet the same training as sworn law enforcement officers. Chief Lane said this requirement meant volunteers would need 18 weeks of training at the Police Academy and 120 hours of field training. Chief Lane said the new training requirement caused many volunteers to quit the program because they were not able to leave work for that length of time to receive training. It also caused others to lose interest in the program, so the police department suspended the Auxiliary Officer Program in 2012 as a result of DCJS's training requirements. Chief Lane said in 2014, the police department reinstated the Police Auxiliary Program because former Norton Police Officer Nick Ratliff met the DCJS auxiliary officer requirements and Mr. Ratliff wanted to continue to volunteer with Norton Police Department in this capacity. Chief Lane noted Mr. Ratliff is the department's only auxiliary officer and he is certified to train other volunteers to become auxiliary officers. Chief Lane went on to explain the benefits of having auxiliary officers and that it was his goal to recruit, train, and

maintain 10 auxiliary officers to assist the department with the many duties of law enforcement.

After fielding a few questions from Council, Mayor Mays thanked Chief Lane for his presentation.

Council had one transfer to confirm. The transfer was to Norton City Schools, dated July 28, 2017, in the amount of \$200,000 to cover payroll expenditures.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, 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 Norton City Schools as stated above.

262417

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, 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.

262418

Mayor Mays declared Council in closed meeting.

The City Attorney left at this time.

262419

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

262420

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

262421

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

All seven counties have adopted a resolution supporting the concept of revenue and cost sharing among each of the governing entities that results from a hydroelectric power plant being constructed within the region.

Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine has nominated the City of Norton as one of the 2017 Top Adventure Towns. The competition is separated into three categories based upon the size of the community. City Administration is encouraging everyone to vote for the City through the online voting link on the Blue Ridge Outdoors website.

262422

The first Cloudsplitter100 Trail Race planning meeting was held on Friday, August 11. Currently there are 100 people registered representing 24 states and two individuals from Canada. The City is encouraging volunteers to help with the event.

At the next Council meeting the new president of Mountain Empire Community College, Dr. Kristen Westover, will be in attendance to provide an update on the college. Also, City Administration would like to introduce the AmeriCorps/National Civilian Conservation Corps Team Delta 5 (AmeriCorps/NCCC Team Delta 5) that will be assisting with projects within the city over the next eight weeks.

He placed at each member's desk the latest Reservoir and Retail Sales Tax reports.

He also reminded Council that, there are several events scheduled in September and October: Dock Boggs Festival and Geocache Event are scheduled for Saturday, October 9th; High Knob Hellbender, Cloudsplitter100 Trail Race, and Woodbooger Festival are scheduled for Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup>.

In comments from Council:

Councilwoman Belcher said there will be a special Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO) meeting Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, at the Convocation Center on the campus of the University of Virginia's College at Wise, and Mr. Ramey will be attending the meeting with her.

262423

She thanked city residents for volunteering to assist the city, and city employees for their work they do each day. She said she is also looking forward to the City's future.

Councilman Fultz said the school will be watching the eclipse on Monday between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. Special glasses to watch the eclipse were provided for students through a grant that a John I. Burton teacher wrote and received.

262424

Councilman Caruso said he had some notes from a previous meeting regarding requests made from Mr. Chris Jones. He said that Mr. Jones requested a meeting between Council, Norton Industrial Development Authority (NIDA), and the Tourism Committee.

It was the consensus of Council that they would meet with NIDA and the Tourism Committee and Mayor Mays asked Mr. Ramey to coordinate the scheduling of the meeting.

Councilman Caruso also said Mr. Jones had requested a donation from the city for High Knob Recreation Lake improvements and he would like the request to be considered at the next council meeting.

Mayor Mays asked Mr. Ramey who accounted for the money the volunteer group was raising to improve High Knob Recreation Lake.

Mr. Ramey advised the High Knob Enhancement Corporation is the fiscal agent for the volunteer group that Mr. Jones is heading to upgrade High Knob Recreation Lake.

Councilman Caruso asked Mr. Ramey if he received the photo of the notice "do not place tents on grass area" and asked Mr. Ramey if that notice could be removed.

Mr. Ramey said he did receive the photo and the notice could be removed if Council advised City Administration to do so. Mr. Ramey said the notice was placed because campers would camp in the grass for a week and kill the grass.

262425

After a brief discussion, Council was in consensus to remove the notice on a trial basis to see if camping on the grass remains an issue.

Councilman Caruso asked Mr. Ramey if the posts for micro-camping discussed at the last council meeting has been reviewed.

Mr. Ramey advised that the topic has not been reviewed, and the City will have to be cautious about placing poles in the area because recreational campers require a large amount of space to park in the campground.

Councilman Caruso wanted to know if the Highway Safety Committee had discussed the school crossing beside the high school at the corner of Kentucky Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.

Mr. Ramey said the Highway Safety Committee will discuss the request at their meeting scheduled at the end of the month.

Councilman Caruso wanted to know if City Administration had any information on Mr. Andy Belcher's request.

Mr. Ramey said prior to the last council meeting, a work order had been placed and the City's Public Works Department had been working on the issue. He advised a curb had been installed to assist with water drainage but there is no space to install a guardrail that meets the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) standards. If the City places a guardrail that does not meet VDOT standards then the City takes on more liability.

Councilman Caruso said Council did not have an agenda for the upcoming workshop on Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. He asked if members wanted an agenda for the workshop.

Mayor Mays suggested Council not have an agenda and leave the workshop open for discussion.

Councilman Caruso asked Mr. Ramey if he had reviewed the National Rifle Association (NRA) Grant.

Mr. Ramey said he has reviewed the NRA grant and is going to have the city attorney review the document. Mr. Ramey asked Councilman Caruso to forward the completed grant application to him so that he and Mr. Bradshaw can begin reviewing it.

Councilman Caruso said the NRA Grant process does not allow applicants to print out the grant application. The application must be completed online and it can be saved on their website for reviewing. Councilman Caruso said that once Mr. Bradshaw has reviewed the grant information and approves of the language, then he and Mr. Ramey would need to complete the NRA Grant online together.

Mr. Ramey said once he and Councilman Caruso have completed the NRA Grant, then the grant must be presented to Council and Council must authorize City Administration to apply for the grant.


Councilman Fawbush advised Council he would be out of town this Saturday and would not be in attendance at the workshop. 262426

At this time, Councilman Fultz noted that traffic seems to have increased at the Farmers' Market and he commended city employees for their efforts on the market. 262427

Mayor Mays had no comments. 262428

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA

  
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William Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Clerk of Council