

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, May 4, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

Present: Mark Caruso, Sarah Davis, Robert Fultz, Jr., Joseph Fawbush, and William Mays

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager and Interim City Clerk

The invocation was given by Councilman Robert Fultz, and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Police Chief James Lane.

Mayor Joseph Fawbush welcomed a 2021 Forward Wise County Class participant.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by the following unanimous vote: YES – Fultz, Mays, Davis, Caruso, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – None, ABSTAIN – None, council moved to adopt the minutes of the April 20, 2021, meeting as presented.

During the Mayor's Call for Visitors, city resident Cheryl Redman, of 406 Chestnut Street, N.W., thanked council, city workers, and volunteers for the hiking trails on High Knob. She also said she was impressed that there was no trash to pick up along her hike.

The mayor thanked her for her remarks and said he would share her comments with everyone involved with the trails and keeping them litter free.

A public hearing was held to solicit input on the Proposed 2021-22 Budget for Norton City Schools in the amount of \$11,405,710.63.

City Manager Fred Ramey presented a brief overview of the Norton City Schools Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Proposed Budget, and he noted that the budget was advertised. He said the budget totals \$11,405,710.63 and is based on a projected average daily membership (ADM) of 785 students even though that figure is trending toward 810 students. Based on that budget, he said the required local effort (RLE) by the city is \$2,736,879, of which \$1,998,419 is operational funding, \$715,597 is Debt Service, and \$22,863 is Textbook Fund. He said this local funding is an increase of \$145,291 over last year's budget.

Mayor Fawbush opened the public hearing to solicit input on the Norton City Schools Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Proposed Budget.

Receiving no public comments on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Norton City Schools Budget, the mayor closed the public hearing and asked for comments from council.

Councilman Caruso said it was great to work with the school board and the leadership team and that he thinks it was a good budget year.

Councilman Mays said the school system has done a good job and the working relationship between the school system and the city is pleasant.

The mayor said he appreciates the school board and school administration and everything they do. He noted that things go so much better when there is more communication between every entity in the city.

Mayor Fawbush said the school system's FY 2021-2022 Budget will be included on the May 18, 2021, agenda for consideration by council.

Under old business, the city manager requested that authorization to execute two cooperative agreements with the Wise County and City of Norton Victim/Witness Program be tabled until the May 18, 2021, meeting or until those documents are ready. It was the consensus of council to do so.

A Resolution Declaring the Week of May 16-22, 2021, as National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week in the City of Norton was included in council packets for council consideration. Mr. Ramey said a council meeting rarely goes by that someone doesn't recognize the efforts of city EMS personnel. He said City Emergency Management Coordinator Todd Lagow informed him that National EMS Week is May 16-22, 2021, with a theme of "This is EMS: Caring for Our Communities." Mr. Ramey said it would be appropriate for the city to participate in this symbolic recognition of all city EMS workers, firefighters, police, medical dispatchers, and others who provide for our public safety.

The mayor concurred with the city manager's comments and said that the cooperation between the city police, fire and rescue agencies has been paramount in the last several years. He said cooperation is what it takes to serve the citizens of Norton and these agencies do an excellent job.

Councilman Fultz noted that the resolution contained in the council packets reads May 16-20, 2021, rather than May 16-22 2021, as stated on the agenda.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt the resolution declaring May 16-22, 2021, as National Emergency Medical Services Week in the City of Norton, with the date on the resolution being amended to May 16-22, 2021, rather than May 16-20, 2021.

The city manager provided an update on COVID-19 and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020 as of April 30, 2021.

Via a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Ramey reported that this is the first time the city has had this large of an increase in COVID-19 cases in quite some time. He reported an increase of 20 new COVID-19 cases in the city, for a total of 283 cases and no additional deaths. He said hopefully the increase in cases is an anomaly.

He said Wise County had an increase of 76 new COVID-19 cases for a total of 3,039 cases with three additional deaths reported.

Mr. Ramey then provided a vaccine update as of April 30, 2021, He said 1,091 Norton residents had been fully vaccinated, 9,388 Wise Countians had been fully immunized, and 2,610,676 Virginians had received full inoculation.

Mr. Ramey reported that the city has received several updates on CARES Act funding.

The city manager said metropolitan cities and counties will receive \$110.6 billion in funding directly from the federal government, while non-entitlement units of government, like Norton, will receive around \$20 billion in funding from the state within 30 days of receiving payment from the federal government. He said the city will receive the grant funding in two transfers in the same fiscal year: the first by May 11, 2021, and the second by March 11, 2022. Mr. Ramey explained that the grants are formula based and are not competitive, and governments will not have to submit an application or certification in advance to receive the funding. He said city administration still hasn't been informed about the grant amount, but he hopes to receive that information by the next council meeting.

Mr. Ramey said other guidance information the city received stipulates that the city may only use the grant for specific costs and those costs must be incurred by December 31, 2024. He said there are four types of qualified costs: 1. responding to the COVID-19 pandemic; 2. providing

pay to essential workers or grants to employers of essential workers; 3. providing government services to the extent of any revenue reduction resulting from the pandemic; and 4. making necessary investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

The city manager said he is hopeful the third cost guideline will provide some flexibility for the city. In reference to the fourth guideline, he said was contacted by Wise County Administrator Michael Hatfield about participating in a broadband infrastructure study which includes Norton, and he is hopeful the study will benefit the city.

Mr. Ramey stated that there is no change in the LENOWISCO Small Business Recovery Assistance Program and that City Finance Director Jeff Shupe and staff are still trying to close out the Municipal Utility Relief Program grant and additional funding from this program may be available.

Included in packets for council consideration was a transfer to Norton City Schools, dated February 24, 2021, in the amount of \$250,000 to cover February 2021 payroll expenditures.

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

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Fultz, Davis, Mays, Caruso, and Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – None, council moved to go into closed meeting for Personnel as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, as amended, and Section 2.2-3711 (A) (5) of the Code of Virginia for discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcements have been made of the business or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community, as amended.

Mayor Fawbush declared council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to go back into open meeting.

Mayor Fawbush declared council back in open meeting.

The city manager polled each member of council as to the Certification of Closed Meeting with each answering yes. Mr. Ramey then read a Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for nominations to the C-N-W Regional Wastewater Treatment Authority for a four-year term to expire May 15, 2025.

Councilwoman Davis nominated Robert Fultz, Jr., to be reappointed to the C-N-W Regional Wastewater Treatment Authority for a four-year term to expire May 15, 2025.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Caruso, ABSTAIN – Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved that the nominations cease.

The mayor declared Robert Fultz, Jr., reappointed to the C-N-W Regional Wastewater Treatment Authority for a four-year term to expire May 15, 2025.

The mayor opened the floor for nominations to the city's Community Policy and Management Team for four-year terms to expire May 4, 2025.

Councilman Caruso nominated Glenda Collins, Dawn Gilbert, Abe Rutherford, Heather Crouse, Virginia Roberts, Sarah Davis, and Cynthia Jessee to the city's Community Policy and Management Team for four-year terms to expire May 4, 2025.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved that the nominations cease.

The mayor declared Glenda Collins, Dawn Gilbert, Abe Rutherford, Heather Crouse, Virginia Roberts, Sarah Davis, and Cynthia Jessee appointed to the city's Community Policy and Management Team for four-year terms to expire May 4, 2025.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey said City Attorney William Bradshaw informed him that the Woodbooger Service Mark has been renewed for five years and following that renewal, the city will not have to refile for 10 years.

Updating council about the status of the significant April 19th water leak in the Roundtown section of the city, the city manager said once the leak was repaired and two negative water samples were taken, the boil water advisory was lifted April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The city manager said the Norton Business Challenge, which began April 21, has held two of the required six classes with 10 participants attending both classes. He said the classes have gone well and he is hoping to announce challenge grant winners in June.

He said he was pleased to report that Flag Rock officially opened April 30 for camping.

The city manager provided council with copies of the latest Parks and Recreation flyers for camping and the farmers market, the May Calendar of Events, and the High Knob Traffic Counts.

Mr. Ramey said the city intends to present the FY 2021-2022 Proposed Budget at the May 18 council meeting.

The city manager requested council authorization to advertise for a public hearing to apply for additional LENOWISCO Small Business Recovery Assistance Grant funding for area businesses. He noted earlier in the council meeting that interest has been shown by the participating counties for additional financial assistance from this program. He provided council with a draft public hearing notice.

The consensus of council was to authorize the city manager to advertise for a public hearing to apply for additional LENOWISCO Small Business Recovery Assistance Grant funding for area businesses

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilwoman Davis said this is the first time she has participated in the city budget process and she is so impressed that the Norton City Schools budget is already completed. She said she was also impressed with the council and city administration workshop and council has done a great job.

The mayor said prior to National Emergency Medical Services Week, May 16-22, 2021, he toured the Emergency 911 Center at Hotel Norton with Norton Police Chief James Lane. He said he is impressed with the equipment, dispatchers, their ease with handling emergency calls, and the available space for emergency communications.

There being no further business to come before council, Mayor Fawbush declared the meeting adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:



Fred Ramey, Jr., Interim Clerk of Council