

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, April 19, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

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

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

Absent: Mark Caruso

The invocation was given by Rev. Gary Hill, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Norton Police Department First Sergeant Greg Mays.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council moved to adopt the minutes of the April 5, 2022, council meeting as presented.

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

The city manager advised council that Jason Dales of 219 Craig Street, N.W., has requested council consideration for a special use permit to use city right-of-way located behind his property. He showed PowerPoint slides of the property being discussed and advised council that city public works personnel do not believe there are any city utilities located on the 15-foot undeveloped alley/paper street and city administration has not had any communication with adjacent property owners. Mr. Ramey said Mr. Dales would like to use the alley for potential parking.

Mr. Dales, who was present at the council meeting, said he had spoken with his neighbor, Mr. Tyler Giles, and Mr. Giles was not opposed to his request for a special use permit to use city right-of-way located behind his property for parking. He said he would like to clear and place gravel on the alley. He explained that he is a boat owner and parking has become a little congested on the street which makes parking his boat difficult at times.

Councilman Fultz asked if Mr. Dales planned to use the alley to access his property or for parking.

Mr. Dales confirmed the alley would be used for parking. He said last summer and this spring he cleared ivy, saplings, trees, and trash from the alley.

The city manager advised that the only neighbor who might need access to the alley would be Mr. Giles and Mr. Dales has already spoken with him concerning the alley.

Councilman Mays noted that some grade work would definitely need to be done and the city building inspector should look at it first to prevent possible drainage issues.

Mr. Dales said he had spoken with City Building Inspector Winfred Collins and was advised to consult the city manager concerning his request. Mr. Dales said there would be slight grade work, but nothing major.

Following a question about transferability of the special use permit, the city manager said the permit is a revocable special use permit and would not transfer to the new property owner should Mr. Dales sell his property. The next property owner would have to come before council and request a special use permit to use the city right-of-way behind the property.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council moved to authorize the city manager to issue a special use permit to Jason Dales of 219 Craig Street, N.W., to use city right-of-way located behind his property for parking.

Council members thanked Mr. Dales for approaching council with his request.

Mr. Dales thanked council for considering his request.

Via PowerPoint, Mr. Ramey provided a brief background and update on the Dilapidated Home Demolition Programs.

City council adopted the Dilapidated Home Demolition Program on August 3, 2021, and approved \$5,000 in FY2022 program funding. Council adopted the Vacant Home Demolition-Replacement Program on August 17, 2021, and approved funding for FY2022 totaling \$15,000.

Mr. Ramey provided an overview of the Dilapidated Home Demolition Program and told council that two dilapidated home demolition grants have been funded in the Southside community (442 Roberts Avenue and 100 8<sup>th</sup> Street SW). He also shared before and after photos of those program properties.

The city manager said interest has been shown for removal of another structure that has been on the city's dilapidated structures list for quite some time. He advised that the owner of the property is ready to move forward upon approval of grant funding by council.

Mr. Ramey asked council to consider providing another \$2,500 for future funding of the program in the FY2022 Budget or the FY2023 Budget.

He said no applications have been received for the \$15,000 in Vacant Home Demolition-Replacement Program grant funding and the additional \$2,500 could be taken from the \$15,000 in Vacant Home Demolition-Replacement Program grant funding since those funds have not been used.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following vote, YES – Mays, Fultz, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council approved providing another \$2,500 for the Dilapidated Home Demolition Program to be taken from the \$15,000 in Vacant Home Demolition-Replacement Program grant funding in the FY2022 Budget.

The city manager provided council with an update on the ongoing plans for the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA)/Blue Ridge Region of the SCCA proposed hill climb event being planned August 27 and 28 along Route 619 in Norton.

Mr. Ramey told council that the city, working with the SCCA, has submitted an application to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for permission to use Route 619 for the hill climb event.

The city manager said he talked to Norton Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator Todd Lagow, who will take the lead in working with the SCCA on this event because the city's role in the event is primarily public safety, specifically rescue and fire. Once the SCCA is finished with the hill climb event in Pineville, Kentucky, April 22 and 23, organizers will schedule a time in May to conduct a workshop in Norton to further plan the event details.

Mr. Ramey requested council authorization for city administration to continue to work with SCCA/Blue Ridge Region of the SCCA toward planning the Norton hill climb event so that city council's support is on record.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following vote, YES – Mays, Fultz, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council authorized city administration to continue working with the Sports Club of America (SCCA)/Blue Ridge Region of the SCCA on planning the August 27 and 28 Norton hill climb event.

The city manager said Chief Lagow is organizing a group of individuals that plans to attend the Pineville event Saturday morning.

Chief Lagow said he is looking for people who are interested in going to the Pineville event. He said the purpose of the trip is to learn as much about the hill climb event as possible in preparation for the Norton hill climb event.

Mayor Fawbush said he plans to travel to Pineville Friday evening to see the event festivities that are planned in downtown Pineville. He asked council members to inform the city manager of their plans to attend the Pineville hill climb event.

A Resolution Proclaiming the Month of May as Adult Abuse Prevention Month in the City of Norton was presented for adoption by council. The city manager invited Norton Department of Social Services Director Abe Rutherford to discuss the resolution and Adult Abuse Prevention events planned throughout May.

Mr. Rutherford said abuse and neglect of the elderly and disabled adult population is one of the most unrecognized and non-reported social problems in the United States with an estimate of only one in 24 cases of adult/elder abuse reported. He said there were 25 completed investigations of the abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults in the City of Norton in 2021.

The social services director said Norton DSS has partnered with Wise County Department of Social Services to conduct an Adult Abuse Awareness Luncheon from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursday, May 12, 2022, at the Norton Expo Center. He said the luncheon will include lunch, music, arts and crafts, and giveaways, as well as booths, blood pressure checks, vaccines, and a drug take back.

Norton DSS, Wise County DSS, and Commonwealth Catholic Charities will also have a Paint the Town Blue for Child Abuse Awareness Event on April 30, from 1-3 p.m., at the Norton Expo Center with music, food, inflatables, and activities for children. He noted that the state gave Norton DSS and Wise County DSS \$1,000 each for this event with no local match required. Coca-Cola, Doughmakers and other businesses have also contributed to Paint the Town Blue.

Both events are open to the public, and Mr. Rutherford distributed brochures for both events to council members.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council moved to adopt a Resolution Proclaiming the Month of May 2022 as Adult Abuse Prevention Month in the City of Norton. (Insert)

Included in packets for council consideration was a check to Powell Valley National Bank dated March 25, 2022, in the amount of \$127,802.78 for debt service payments.

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Davis, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote, YES – Mays, Fultz, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council moved to confirm the check to Powell Valley National Bank, as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso,

ABSTAIN – None, 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.

Mayor Fawbush declared council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, 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.

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

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following unanimous vote, YES – Mays, Fultz, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for nominations to the Norton Industrial Development Authority for a four-year term to expire May 10, 2026.

Councilman Mays nominated Ethel Daniels to be reappointed to the Norton Industrial Development Authority for a four-year term to expire May 10, 2026.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilwoman Davis, and passed by the following vote, YES – Mays, Fultz, Davis, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, ABSTAIN – None, council moved that the nominations cease.

The mayor declared Ethel Daniels reappointed to the Norton Industrial Development Authority for a four-year term to expire May 10, 2026.

The mayor entertained nominations for appointment to the 2022 Virginia Municipal League Policy Committees.

Councilwoman Davis moved that council accept the list of names to the 2022 Virginia Municipal League Policy Committees as submitted by the administration.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz that nominations cease, seconded by Councilman Mays, council approved the following VML Policy Committee reappointments: Fred Ramey, Jr., Community and Economic Development Committee; Jeffery Shupe, Finance Committee; William Bradshaw, General Laws Committee; Dr. Gina Wohlford, Human Development and Education Committee; and Stephen McElroy, Infrastructure Committee.

Mayor Fawbush declared the individuals listed above to serve on the 2022 Virginia Municipal League Policy Committees, as stated above.

In comments from the city manager:

At the January 18, 2022, council meeting, members authorized city administration to submit a grant application to the Economic Development Administration on behalf of the newly formed Forest Recreation Outdoor Group known as FROG. The city manager said the application was submitted and the city was notified last week that the application was not funded. He said FROG will look for alternative funding sources and the city will continue to serve as the applicant.

The city manager said even though the General Assembly has not completed its budget process, city administration would like council to consider scheduling a budget work session for the FY2023 Budget.

Mr. Ramey said the Flag Rock bathrooms are expected to open to the public by the weekend pending successful water sampling results.

For council review, the city manager provided monthly financial statements and the April Retail Sales Tax Report.

He also shared a historical note highlighting the achievement of former Norton resident Russell Dobyms, who broke two records in 1953. Mr. Ramey told council that Mr. Dobyms broke the world record for Altitude Without Payload for a Reciprocating Engine Helicopter at 22,110 feet (record still stands), and the 3k course record of four passes at 146.76 miles per hour.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilwoman Davis commended the city parks and recreation department and emergency management services for their work at the Easter Egg Hunt. She also thanked the Norton Lions Club for their participation with the annual event.

She requested that council keep the families of the murder/suicide tragedy that happened in Norton in their thoughts and prayers.

Councilman Fultz inquired about a possible date for the next council work session.

Council discussed having a possible work session at 8 a.m., Saturday, April 30, 2022, in council chambers.

The city manager said he would contact Councilman Caruso to see if he could attend the work session that date. If Councilman Caruso was available that date, Mr. Ramey said he would let council members know and would notify the press.

Mayor Fawbush said he is glad the demolition program is taking off and word is getting out about the program.

He said he plans to travel to Pineville, Kentucky, for the hill climb event this weekend.

The mayor noted that it is good to see that for eight out of 10 months retail sales tax revenue was higher than last year in the City of Norton.

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