

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, February 2, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

Present: William Mays, Joseph Fawbush, and Terry Roop

Absent: Mark Caruso and Joseph Hunnicutt

Also Present: E. W. Ward, City Manager and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

Mr. Ward advised that Councilman Caruso is in Richmond attending meetings with area legislators.

The invocation was given by the City Manager and was followed by the pledge led by the City's Building Official, Winfred Collins.

At this time, Mayor Mays amended the agenda to include Item 6-A-1 which is consideration of A Resolution of Support for the Regional Jail Authority.

24617

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Roop, and passed by unanimous vote Council moved to adopt the minutes of the January 19, 2010 meeting as presented.

24618

During the Mayor's call for visitors, Bonnie Elosser, Executive Director of the Pro-Art Association, spoke briefly to Council regarding this organization and presented handouts to Council. She advised that Pro-Art was facing cuts in funding and her main concern is for the preservation of public school programs. She then asked for Council's favorable consideration for a matching grant of up to \$5,000 from the Virginia Commission of the Arts. Also present representing the Pro Art Association was Robert Isaac.

24619

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Roop, and passed by unanimous vote, Council authorized the City Manager to apply for a matching grant from the Virginia Commission of the Arts for an amount not to exceed \$5,000.

Ms. Elosser thanked Council for their continued support.

Mayor Mays thanked both Ms. Elosser and Mr. Isaac for their work with the Pro-Art Association.

Ms. Judy Johnson of Big Stone Gap and a representative of the Census Bureau advised Council she is recruiting workers to conduct the census. She handed out information to Council members and asked for help in getting workers.

24620

Councilman Roop asked if a poster could be put in the lobby of City Hall and the City Manager advised that this has already been done.

During Ms. Johnson's presentation, Councilman Hunnicutt took his seat on Council.

24621

In their packets, Mr. Ward had supplied Council with a sample letter which he would like to be sent to the Governor and members of the General Assembly regarding the state budget. He advised Council that he, the Assistant City Manager, and Councilmen Caruso and Fawbush attended the legislative reception last week in Richmond.

He then gave Council a brief synopsis of what this letter will state and asked Council for authorization to draw up this letter for the Mayor's signature.

Councilman Roop stated he thought it was a good letter and felt that the City Manager should move forward.

It was the consensus of Council for the City Manager to prepare these letters to state officials for the Mayor's signature.

Mr. Ward advised he would get the letters out this week.

Council had been presented with A Resolution Making Reference to the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Budget Bill (HB30/SB30) Budget Amendments.

Mr. Ward advised he had attended a Southwest Regional Jail Authority Meeting last week and they discussed the impact of the budget cuts on them. The budget submitted cuts the per diem funding from \$8.00 to \$4.00. This will have a large impact on the counties, towns, and the City of Norton and puts a burden on the localities. The additional money required for the City to pay is an increase of \$13,000.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Hunnicutt, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by the following unanimous vote: YES – Hunnicutt, Fawbush, Roop, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – Caruso, Council moved to adopt A Resolution making Reference to the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Budget Bill (HB30/SB30) Budget Amendments. (Insert)

Mr. Ward advised copies of this resolution will be mailed out this week to area legislators.

The City Manager advised Council that the City has received several complaints from citizens regarding the removal of certain channels from the Comcast Cable line-up; particularly WDBJ, Channel 12, which is a CBS affiliate in Roanoke Va. and WYMT, Channel 13, a CBS affiliate in Lexington/Hazard, Kentucky. He is bringing this to Council's attention tonight for discussion and to bring this to the public's attention to help in keeping these two channels. He stated he had included a portion of the franchise agreement in Council's packets. Mr. Ward thinks it is appropriate for the City to write a letter to Comcast's representative advising these channels are very important to this area – especially WDBJ in Roanoke.

Councilman Fawbush advised that there was a problem with internet service during the December snowstorm and asked the City Manager to check to see if Comcast was going to update their equipment.

Following a brief discussion, the City Manager advised he will write a letter and mention the items discussed tonight. He will also mention this to the other area managers.

In Council's packets was a copy of a draft ordinance regarding Spot Blight. Mr. Ward advised that this had been discussed earlier, but was tabled due to statute changes by the 2009 General Assembly. Mr. Ward advised he is bringing this to Council's attention for discussion and to see if Council wants to move forward with a Spot Blight Ordinance.

The City's Building Official, Winfred Collins, was present to answer any questions that Council may have.

Mr. Ward advised that, if adopted, this ordinance would allow the City to acquire an individual's dilapidated property. He also stated that this ordinance would be used as a last resort. As of the latest inventory, there are fifty (50) dilapidated or blighted properties in the City and the City has recently had some success on one property.

The City Attorney spoke briefly on this proposed ordinance advising that it was not a cheap process and he would not recommend using it often. He then answered questions from Council members.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Roop, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council authorized the City Manager to go forward and prepare an ordinance for Council's consideration and advertise a public hearing.

24625

In their packets, Council was requested to amend the 2009-2010 General Fund Budget in the amount of \$16,000.

The City Manager advised that this is the \$16,000 discussed at the last meeting and is to be used on the improvements on lots in the Laurel Trails Sub-Division. These funds came from the selling of a home and lot from a low to moderate income owner to someone who is not a low to moderate income person. As discussed at the last meeting, these funds have to be spent in the sub-division.

24626

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Roop, and passed unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to amend the 2009-2010 General Fund Budget in the amount of \$16,000 with said funds to be used on the improvements of lots in the Laurel Trails Sub-division.

Mr. Ward advised that proposals on this project would be opened on Friday, February 5th.

Upon a motion by Councilman Hunnicutt, 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.

24627

Mayor Mays declared Council in closed meeting.

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

24628

Mayor Mays declared Council back in open meeting.

The Clerk then polled each member of Council as to the Certification of Closed Meeting with each answering yes.

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

24629

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Building Code Board of Appeals for a five year term which will expire on February 18, 2015.

Councilman Roop nominated Mike Reed to be appointed to this Board.

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

24630

Mayor Mays declared Mike Reed appointed to the Building Code Board of Appeals for a five year term which will expire on February 18, 2015.

In comments from the City Manager, Mr. Ward advised that on Friday, January 29, 2010 a groundbreaking was held for the Josephine Sewer Project. Congressman Rick Boucher was present. Council will be given updates on this project as well as others.

24631

Mayor Mays thanked those in attendance for representing him at this groundbreaking. He was unable to attend due to his work schedule.

In comments from the City Attorney, Mr. Bradshaw advised that the Circuit Court has authorized him to proceed with the sale of the last property in the City's Tax Sale.

24632

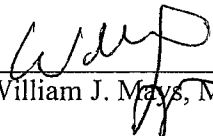
In comments from Council members, Councilman Roop advised that Dr. Jeff Perry will be present at the City of Norton School Board Meeting to be held on February 8th at the J. I. Burton Auditorium regarding the issue of school consolidation. He would like to have notice of this meeting put on the City's Channel 51.

24633

Councilman Fawbush advised the Josephine Sewer Project groundbreaking was very successful and the citizens of Josephine are very appreciative of the City and City Administration. He further advised that these citizens will have a better quality of life once this project is completed.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William J. Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk