

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, February 4, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

Present: Mark Caruso, William Mays, Joseph Fawbush, and Terry Roop

Absent: Joseph Hunnicutt

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

The invocation was given by Father Tim Drake and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Police Chief James C. Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Roop, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the January 21, 2014 meeting as presented.

26044

There was no response to the Mayor's call for visitors.

26045

Mr. Ramey advised that, for some time, City employees have been recognized when they reach certain milestones in their years of employment with a service award pin. Tonight the Council wishes to acknowledge thirteen (13) of the City's employees.

Mayor Mays, on behalf of Council, presented these pins to the nine (9) employees who were present. Council left their seats and congratulated each employee as they received their pins, which were presented to them by the Mayor. Those present and receiving service awards were: Andrew Greear 10 years, Ken Adams 15 years, Sam Pugh 15 years, David Mullins 20 years, James Freeman 20 years, Lonnie Williams 25 years, Fred Ramey 25 years, Mary Brown 35 years, and Gary Call 35 years.

26046

Receiving awards but not present were: Ed Dauphine, Water Plant, 10 years, James "Doodle" Adams, Public Works, 15 years, Tim Couch, Public Works, 15 years, and Jonathan Carter, Water Plant, 20 years.

After the presentation of these awards, applause was given to these employees and a group picture was taken with Council.

Mayor Mays expressed Council's appreciation of the years of service given to the City by these employees.

A public hearing was held to consider encumbrances for the year ended June 30, 2013 for the General Operating Fund totaling \$431,267. A list of these encumbrances were included in Council's packet.

Mayor Mays opened the public hearing.

There being no public comments, Mayor Mays closed the public hearing.

26047

There were no comments from Council members.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve the General Operating Fund encumbrances for the year ending June 30, 2013 in the amount of \$431,267.

The City Manager gave Council an update on the Norton Electoral Board request to consider relocating the polling location to the Norton Community Center from Council Chambers. Mr. Ramey advised that the Electoral Board had approached Council on January 7, 2014 with this request. At that time, the City Attorney advised he would research this request as to what the procedures would be should Council choose to pursue further.

In their packets, Council had a copy of a letter from the City Attorney. Mr. Bradshaw summarized this letter for Council members and advised that if Council so chooses, this relocation can take place.

Members of the Electoral Board along with City Registrar, Marie Muir, were present.

Following a brief discussion, Council authorized the City Manager to advertise a public hearing for the March 4, 2014 Council meeting. This public hearing will be advertised in a block style ad in the Coalfield Progress and through the City social media accounts.

Council was thanked by Ms. Muir and Electoral Board members for their support of this request.

Council had been presented with a copy of A Resolution of Support for the Virginia Plan to Increase Access for Uninsured. Present at tonight's meeting to discuss this with Council was Mr. Mark Leonard, CEO of Norton Community Hospital, Stacy Ely of Mountain States Health Alliance, and David Brash of Wellmont Health System.

Ms. Ely spoke to Council discussing the content of this resolution.

At this time, Councilman Hunnicutt took his seat on Council.

Ms. Ely advised that there has been a lot of controversy on the Affordable Care Act which deals with expanded care. This act has reduced the amount of payment to providers. The Supreme Court left one aspect of this act to states and that was Medicaid. There is now a gap in the Commonwealth of Virginia's coverage and hospitals are asking all jurisdictions to adopt this resolution of support. She advised this was a estimated financial impact to both MSHA and Wellmont of 36 million dollars between 2010 and 2016. Following a lengthy discussion during which all three individuals representing the hospitals spoke, Councilman Caruso stated he would like to have additional information on this; however due to the deadline for the submission of these resolutions, action will need to take place tonight.

Upon a motion by Councilman Roop, seconded by Councilman Hunnicutt, and passed by the following vote: YES – Hunnicutt, Fawbush, Roop, Mays, NO – None, ABSTAIN – Caruso, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of Support for the Virginia Plan to Increase Access for Uninsured. (Insert)

Ms. Bonnie Elosser, Executive Director of Pro-Art, handed out brochures and discussed with Council the activities they have been having and new programs that they are using. One of these programs entitled "Wise Jams" is being held here and has fifty (50) children enrolled teaching children to play musical instruments. This is held at Norton Elementary and Middle School. She also discussed another program sponsored

by Alpha Resources that she hopes to start in the City entitled "Real". This program has been used in two other locations and has been very successful.

She further stated that Council has been very supportive of Pro-Art and hopes that they will still support the Local Government Challenge Grant up to \$5,000.

Mr. Bob Isaac, a member of Pro-Art, advised that the programs have been remarkable. He stated they have a budget and stay within that budget. He further advised that the state looks at the Pro-Art Association as an exceptionally good organization and well managed.

26052

Mayor Mays thanked both Ms. Elosser and Mr. Isaac for their service with this organization.

The City Manager advised that Council has been doing a Local Government Challenge Grant for Pro-Art for many years. He advised the City has budgeted \$10,000 for the Pro-Art Association, which is a \$5,000 match by the State for the City's allocated amount of \$5,000. The deadline for submission of this grant is April 1, 2014.

Mr. Ramey further advised that the City will only be committed to matching whatever amount the State grants should the program be cut back.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Hunnicutt, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to support a 2013-2014 Local Government Challenge Grant Application for the Pro-Art Association in the amount of \$5,000, which will be matched by the state.

26053

Councilman Roop stated he was impressed that Pro-Art had paid off \$300,000 in debt in five years and are living within their budget. He advised their programs are very impressive and beneficial to students.

Mr. Ramey advised that Council had been discussing this since last fall a Permanent Pump and Haul Resolution and recently adopted one. The City Administration recently found out there is a need to also adopt A Permanent Pump and Haul Agreement and General Permit. At the time of the resolution adoption, Council authorized the City Administration to do whatever was needed and, in the City Manager's opinion, would have included this agreement and permit; however, he wanted this agreement and general permit passage recorded in the minutes.

Mr. Bradshaw stated that he had reviewed and approved the agreement and permit.

26054

Upon a motion by Councilman Hunnicutt, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to approve the Permanent Pump and Haul Agreement and General Permit and authorized the City Manager to send a copy to the Health Department with the recently adopted resolution.

Mr. Ramey advised that he had sent an e-mail to Dr. Comer, Superintendent, of the Norton City Schools regarding rescheduling the work session recently cancelled by the School Board. Dr. Comer advised they could meet either February 18th or March 4th. The City Manager asked Council how they wished to proceed on scheduling this work session.

Councilman Roop advised he was very disappointed that the pre-arranged work session planned for January 21st was cancelled – especially without any reason. The City Manager had spent a great deal of time preparing an extensive financial presentation to

discuss at this meeting and he was going to be very frank about the City's financial position. Both Mr. Ward, the City's previous City Manager, and current manager, Mr. Ramey, had to start cutbacks in operational budgets due to declining revenues for the past five to six years. The City Council has had to make difficult decisions over the past few years including pool closing, capital improvements, full-time and part-time positions, and limited pay raises and cost of living adjustments for City employees among many other items and have cut their expenditures to the bone.

Having been a proponent of the Norton City School System, as well as an employee, Mr. Roop shared this information with those present: In the timeframe of 2007-2008, the City decreased their General Fund Budget, not including school funding, by \$203,593. This budget also incurred another \$558,201 in increased costs for a total General Fund Budget impact of \$761,794. During the same timeframe, their contribution to the school system increased from \$1,890,219 to the 2013-2014 amount of \$2,393,593, which is an increase of \$503,374 and does not include the ten million dollars spent to renovate the Norton Elementary and Middle School and J. I. Burton plus updates done at the football stadium. Councilman Roop proceeded to list many of the needs and wants the City has and cannot consider due to budget constraints. Due to the School Board's decision not to consolidate with the county school system, even though Council voted to continue talks and negotiations, he feels that the school board has a duty and obligation to tighten their belts, rearrange some of their priorities, cut out all unnecessary spending, and streamline their operations as the City has done in the past and continues to do so. This could be done by reducing or freezing administrative salaries, reduce the number of administrators and/or staff members, cut all extended contracts for employees unless absolutely necessary and vital to school operations, and cut programs.

26055

Councilman Roop stated that he will not continue to vote to cut funding on much needed City programs and to deny pay raises for City employees when the school system is not being frugal and not willing to cut unnecessary and wasteful spending. In order to maintain a good and positive relationship between the two entities, the School Board needs to consider everything in their budget for possible cuts.

After Councilman Roop's statement, it was the consensus of Council to hold this work session on February 18th following the regularly scheduled Council meeting.
Insert (Councilman Roop's Disclosure Statement)

Council had included in their packets a copy of a check to Consolidated Pipe and Supply Company in the amount of \$111,386.47 and one to Wells Fargo Corporate Trust in the amount of \$102,750.00 for approval.

26056

Upon a motion by Councilman Hunnicutt, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve the check to Consolidated Pipe and Supply Company in the amount of \$111,386.47 and one to Wells Fargo Corporate Trust in the amount of \$102,750.00.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous 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.

26057

Mayor Mays declared Council in closed meeting.

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

26058

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

26059

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

He would like for Council members to check their calendars for the dates of Saturday, March 8th and 15th for the Capital Improvement Meeting. If there are any conflicts, please advise him.

He handed out to Council a brochure provided by Wings Air Rescue explaining their annual plan for coverage of the cost of any flight using their service within their service area. This information will also be shared with City employees.

26060

He is in receipt of some historic documents from 1969 where two men walked from our then sister city of Wyoming, Michigan to Norton for the City's Diamond Jubilee. A great granddaughter of one of the gentlemen sent these documents to Mayor Mays and they will be added to the City's historic files. The documents and key to the City were passed around for Council's viewing.

Council members were asked to go through the lobby and look at a new display put up by two City employees. It is a spring scene and very unique, highlighting recreational opportunities in the City.

There were no comments from the City Attorney.

26061

In comments from Council:

Councilman Caruso advised he was looking forward to working on the budget and advised that every position and every program is on the table.

Councilman Roop advised the pictures received from 1969 would be good to put on the City's website and congratulated Mr. Ramey and Mrs. Brown for their years of service to the City.

26062

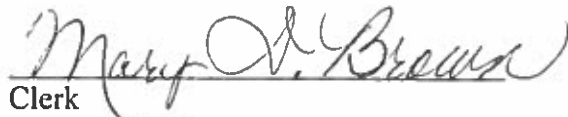
There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William J. Wags
Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk