

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, September 16, 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 Rev. Ken Taylor and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Norton Police Chief James C. Lane.

At this time, Mayor Mays advised he would like to amend the agenda to include Item 7-E Consideration to Accept a Rural Development Grant Award to Purchase Police Vehicles. 25265

It was the consensus of Council for the agenda to be amended.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the September 2, 2014 meeting as presented. 25266

There was no response to the Mayor's call for visitors. 25267

A public hearing was held to consider the proposed amendment to the fishing ordinance.

Mr. Ramey advised that this has been discussed by Council at several meetings. Councilman Caruso had asked for the consideration of a short term or three day fishing permit. In reviewing the current ordinance, Council decided to make several changes.

The City Manager went over these changes with Council tonight and advised he would be glad to answer any questions Council may have. 25268

Prior to the public hearing, Councilman Fawbush asked if in Section 20-51 that the word "upper" should be eliminated. He was advised that it should.

Mayor Mays opened the public hearing.

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

Upon a motion by Councilman Roop, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by the following roll call vote:

At this time, Councilman Hunnicutt took his seat on Council but did not vote on this item. 25269

YES: Caruso, Fawbush, Roop, Mays – NO: None, ABSENT: (during discussion, public hearing, came in at time of vote, but declined voting on item) Hunnicutt, Council moved to adopt An Ordinance of the City of Norton, Virginia Amending Article II Sections 20-31, 20-32, 20-51, 20-52, 20-55, 20-60, 20-61, 20-62, 20-70, 20-71, 20-72, 20-73, 20-74, and 20-75 of the Norton City Code related to fishing. (Insert) 25270

A public hearing was held on An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Amending Chapter 26.1 (Zoning) of the City of Norton City Code Pertaining to Accessory Uses.

Mr. Ramey did a brief history on this topic and advised that it was the consensus of Council, at its May 6th meeting, to table this item until after the budget process. He further advised that Winfred Collins, the City's Building Official, was present to give a brief synopsis of the current and proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. After this synopsis, Mr. Collins stated he would be happy to answer any questions from Council members. After answering questions from Councilman Caruso, the Mayor opened the public hearing.

Speaking in opposition of the proposed amendment change were Ms. Imogene Emershaw, 1227 Spruce Street and also owner of property at 1223 Spruce Street, Dalton Emershaw, Roy Davidson of Spruce Street, and Jerome Emershaw of 1237 Spruce Street.

Speaking in favor of the proposed amendment was Gerald Lawson of 1076 Laurel Avenue.

25271

After a lengthy discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Roop, seconded by Councilman Hunnicutt, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Caruso, Hunnicutt, Fawbush, Roop, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to Adopt An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Amending Chapter 26.1 (Zoning) of the City of Norton City Code Pertaining to Accessory Uses. (Insert)

David Rose of Davenport and Company was present to give Council an update on the proposed refinancing of an existing General Fund Bond. He presented each Council member with a booklet and then proceeded with the findings. They received three proposals and are submitting two for Council's consideration (BB&T and PNC).

He then advised that the BB&T proposal offered an interest rate which would be locked in for 12 years at the all-in rate of 3.15%. This would save the City \$18,000 in 2015 and a potential savings of \$3,300 every year thereafter for a total savings of approximately \$58,000 over the life of the loan.

25272

The PNC proposal would lock in an interest rate of 2.10% fixed for a period of seven years. After that, there would be a balloon balance. The City would have an up-front savings in fiscal year 2015 of approximately \$20,000 followed by annual savings of approximately \$7,800 for a total known savings of \$68,000. The balance at the end of the seven year term, needing to be refinanced, would be approximately \$722,000.

During this discussion, Councilman Hunnicutt left the meeting.

25273

Following a discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Roop, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Caruso, Fawbush, Roop, Mays, NO - NONE, ABSENT – Hunnicutt, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Accepting the BB&T Proposal and Authorizing the Issuance of Up To \$1,225,000 Principal Amount of General Obligation Refunding Bond of the City of Norton, Virginia and Providing for the Form, Details, and Payment Thereof. (Insert)

25274

Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Rose for his presence at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Wally Smith, Assistant Professor of Biology, at the University of Virginia's College at Wise gave Council an update via PowerPoint on the Green Salamander Survey conducted at the Flag Rock Recreation Area by himself and some of his students.

The conclusion of this study was that the Flag Rock Recreation Area has the most populous area known for green salamanders on the earth. He expressed his thanks and appreciation to Mr. Ramey for allowing them to conduct this survey on City property and advised they would like to continue to do so.

25275

When asked if there was some sort of grant funding that could be used to purchase a sign to designate this, Mr. Smith advised he thought there may be and that he would research this.

Councilman Caruso stated this could be just another area in which tourists or visitors would visit the City and the Flag Rock Recreation Area and thanked Mr. Smith for this study.

Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Smith for conducting this study and advising Council of his findings.

Council's next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 7th. Since two members of Council, along with himself, will be attending the annual Virginia Municipal League Conference, it was the consensus of Council to cancel this meeting. The next meeting of City Council will be Tuesday, October 21st.

25276

In their packets, Council had a copy of a transfer in the amount of \$110,000 payable to the Norton City Schools to cover payroll fringes and a copy of a check in the amount of \$173,737.29 to Consolidated Pipe and Supply Company for the Phase I Water Replacement Project.

25277

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve the transfer and check as specified above.

The request to consider the acceptance of a Rural Development Grant Award to purchase police vehicles was Council's next item for consideration.

Mr. Ramey advised he was just made aware of this. Council had authorized him to apply for this 50/50 match of funds earlier this year. The City is qualified for \$100,000, \$50,000 grant and \$50,000 loan, and could purchase three new police vehicles if Council approves. This would be a five year note for the \$50,000 loan.

25278

Following a brief discussion during which the City Manager advised that the Police Department fleet average over 90,000 miles or more and maintenance costs continue to escalate. No police vehicles have been purchased in two and one-half years.

At this time, Mayor Mays advised that he would abstain from any discussion or vote on this topic as he has a son who is a Norton police officer.

Vice Mayor Fawbush took over the meeting and upon a motion by Councilman Roop, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and authorized by the following vote: YES – Caruso, Fawbush, Roop, NO – None, ABSENT – Hunnicutt, ABSTAIN – Mays, Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a Letter of Condition with Rural Development for a 50/50 grant in the amount of \$100,000 for the purchase of three new police vehicles.

Mr. Ramey advised that City Council would need to hold a public hearing at a future meeting.

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

Copies of the latest Retail Sales Tax Report was provided to Council tonight.

He asked Council to be aware of an upcoming event that will be held at the Norton Community Hospital on September 29th at 11:00 a.m. The event, "We Believe in Wise County and the City of Norton" will celebrate recent investments and discuss upcoming improvements. They would like for someone from City Council to make a few remarks. Invitations will be forthcoming via mail.

The City participated in the Outdoor Exposition that was held this past week-end in Abingdon. Shayne Fields manned the City's booth as the City was asked to come and discuss the Mountain Bikes Trails. The City's booth was adjacent to that of Councilman Caruso and his wife, Carol's, promoting their business, Pathfinders Outdoor Adventures. Mr. Ramey advised the City will continue to participate in this event and other similar events.

25279

He advised Council of upcoming events in the City which consists of four separate fundraising runs in October and November.

The annual VML Conference will be held in Roanoke October 5th – 7th. Two Council members and himself will be attending.

In comments from the City Attorney, Mr. Bradshaw advised that the City Treasurer and he are preparing to sell four properties due to delinquent real estate taxes. Property owners still have time to meet with the Treasurer to pay these taxes.

25280

In comments from Councilman Roop, he commended the City Sheriff, City Treasurer, and the Commissioner for getting a good audit report from the State.

He stated the City is moving forward on dilapidated properties on Park Avenue NW and he appreciates what Mr. Collins and the City staff is doing on this.

25281

Councilman Fawbush stated that Flag Rock is a widely visited area. While camping there this week-end, he talked with people and advised them of the mountain bike trails. Also another citizen had advised that a visitor from Alaska had been there and said it was the second most beautiful spot they had visited.

25282

There are groups in the City working on a "Woodbooger Search" to be held on October 24th-25th. More details will be forthcoming and another meeting will be held on September 17th at 6:00 p.m. at the Flag Rock Recreational Area.

Councilman Caruso advised that it is the intention of the Tourism Committee to bring to Council a request for a Sasquatch, Big Foot, or Woodbooger, area to be designated and advised it would be one of six areas in the country.

25283

He expressed his thanks to Shayne Fields, Fred Ramey, and others for the work on the booth at the Outdoor Exposition held this past week-end in Abingdon.

The Heart of Appalachia Tourism Committee meeting was sponsored on Monday by the City and he expressed thanks to Mr. Ramey and his employees for their work on this.

Thanks were also expressed to his wife, Carol, and this committee, as she is a member.

Thanks were extended to Council for the changes in the fishing licenses as adopted tonight.

The Kiwanis and Benges Revenge Event was held this week-end with over 40 riders.

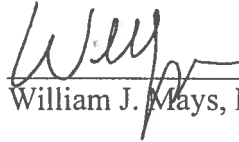
He wants to continue all that can be done to make the City of Norton the central hub of Southwest Virginia and stated that tourism is going to change the economy.

Mayor Mays welcomed Jenay Tate to tonight's meeting. It had been a while since she has been in attendance at one of our meetings.

25284

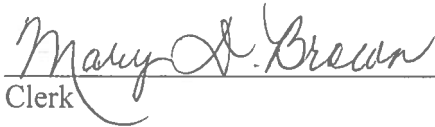
There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William J. Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk

