

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, April 21, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

Present: Mark Caruso, Robert Fultz, William Mays, Joseph Fawbush, and Delores Belcher

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

The invocation was given by the City Manager and the pledge of allegiance was led by Police Chief James C. Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, the minutes of the April 7, 2015 meeting were adopted as presented. 25476

There was no response to the Mayor's call for visitors. 25477

A public hearing was held to solicit input on the consideration of an amendment to the 2014-2015 City of Norton School Budget in the amount of \$230,050.32.

Mr. Ramey advised that the City of Norton School Superintendent, Dr. Jeff Perrigan, had spoken to Council at a previous meeting regarding this amendment, at which time Council authorized a public hearing to consider the amendment.

Dr. Perrigan spoke to Council advising that the school system is in receipt of \$123,000 which covers a discrepancy in the distribution of sales tax plus a Security Grant, and additional Title One Funds. They plan to use these funds to purchase a new school bus, new bleachers on the visitors' side of the J. I. Burton Ball Field, new computer lab in the Title One Lab, and additional tutoring. All of these total \$230,050.32. The Superintendent answered questions from Council members. 25478

Mayor Mays opened the public hearing.

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

Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve an amendment to the 2014-2015 Norton City Schools Budget in the amount of \$230,050.32.

Dr. Perrigan thanked Council for their assistance in this matter.

Dr. Perrigan spoke to Council regarding their budget for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. He advised that there will be no cuts to Kindergarten through Grade 12. The Virginia Retirement System Employer Rate in the fiscal year changed from 14.5% to 14.06% for professional employees. They are offering a 1.5% pay raise for SOQ positions with a local match requirement of \$11,000. He then, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave a summary of their budget request asking for local required share/effort match from the City of \$1,791,079 and an additional local amount of \$534,402 including Debt Service and the Jobs for Virginia Graduates Program for a total of \$2,325.481 and a total budget of \$8,034,362 based on a total ADM of 815. 25479

Dr. Perrigan then answered questions from Council members. He advised the School Board has approved the budget.

Following a discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the City Manager advertise a public hearing to be held at the May 5th City Council Meeting on the City of Norton 2015-2016 School Board Budget.

Prior to the next agenda item, Councilman Caruso advised he would abstain from any discussion and vote on the item of consideration of a refund for a 2015 business license to Pathfinders Outdoor Adventures in the amount of \$67.32.

Mr. Ramey advised that Pathfinders Outdoor Adventures submitted and paid for a 2015 business license. They, at a later date, requested changes, which were the addition of an owner and the type of business. This required a new business license and refund of the original.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, ABSTAIN- Caruso, Council moved to approve a refund in the amount of \$67.32 to Pathfinders Outdoor Adventures.

Mr. Ramey, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave Council a Preliminary Budget Summary for the City of Norton's 2015-2016 Budget as had been previously discussed with Council. Following this presentation, he is soliciting additional feedback Council may have before the formal budget presentation.

He discussed with Council budget revenues and expenditures, shortfalls, and cuts in proposed modifications such as no capital projects, modifications in health insurance, discretionary funded agencies cut by 10%, and removal of the line item of contingency.

Revenue Enhancements contain an increase of ten cents in the Cigarette Tax, an increase in the Vehicle License Tax of \$5.00, and a Real Estate Tax increase in the amount of ten cents per one hundred dollars of assessed value for a total of ninety cents per hundred dollars of assessed value.

After this, there remains a \$60,000 gap. The City Administration proposes that the City ask the Norton Industrial Development Authority to make a partial note payment with their funds, thereby reducing the City contribution by that amount.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved that the City Manager present the City's budget at the May 5th meeting.

Mayor Mays and members of Council thanked both Mr. Ramey and Jeff Shupe, Finance Director, for their many long hours of working on this budget.

The City Manager thanked Council for their assistance in this budget process.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, 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 Mays declared Council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to go into open meeting.

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

25484

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Norton Industrial Development Authority for four year terms to expire on May 10, 2019.

Councilman Fawbush nominated Barbara Caruso and Robert Leonard to be reappointed to this Authority.

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At this time, Councilman Caruso advised he would abstain from both discussion and vote on this item as he is related to Barbara Caruso.

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

Mayor Mays declared Barbara Caruso and Robert Leonard reappointed to the Norton Industrial Development Authority for four year terms which will expire on May 10, 2019.

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Highway Safety Commission to fill an unexpired term which will expire on January 31, 2016.

Councilman Caruso nominated David Daniels.

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

Mayor Mays declared David Daniels appointed to the Highway Safety Commission to fill an unexpired term which will expire on May 5, 2016.

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

He gave a brief update on the Safe Routes to School Project which is progressing due to good weather, the Phase III Water Project has one area done and they are making substantial progress, and 3rd Street Subsidence Project, which is being reviewed by the Division of Mines, Minerals, and Energy. This subsidence appears to be mine related.

He updated Council on a Proposed Regulation Amendment regarding elk that the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) will be considering after a comment period. He provided Council with a copy of a resolution that Council adopted in 2009 in support of VDGIF's Elk Restoration Plan. Councilman Caruso stated that he believed elk could be a big tourist attraction and that was why Council adopted the resolution in 2009. After a brief discussion, Mayor Mays asked the City Manager to once again share a copy of the City's 2009 resolution. Mr. Ramey advised that he would submit comments to the VDGIF on behalf of City Council.

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He supplied Council with the latest Retail Sales Tax Report.

He advised of the upcoming events for the Keep America Beautiful Day in the City with the Adopt-a-Truck Program until April 27th; Clean Your Files Day, Friday, April

24th from 12:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; and the Great American Cleanup on Saturday, April 25th from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

In comments from the City Attorney, Mr. Bradshaw advised that he is continuing on the delinquent tax sale and that two properties sold on Monday of this week. He advised it is a slow process.

Mayor Mays advised he was happy this was being done.

Councilman Caruso stated his appreciation to the City Manger for the budget synopsis. He stated he would like for Council to look at whatever ordinances the Town of Abingdon have to see what it would take to get down town merchants to abide by to clean up their buildings. He stated that it needs to be cleaned up if tourism is to grow within the City. The City Manager stated this would be a good project for the Down Town Merchants Association. Councilman Caruso stated that this group may be reorganized in the fall.

He handed out a folder to each member of Council containing a vision and mission statement that he will discuss with Council at the May 16th meeting.

Councilman Fultz also extended thanks to both Mr. Ramey and Mr. Shupe and to his partners on Council for the work on the budget. He was happy to see ideas keep coming in that we can utilize.

He advised that the next meeting to discuss the down town real estate would be discussed at the May 16, 2015 meeting.

In personal news, he commended his wife, Kelly, for her upcoming run in the Music Center Marathon for St. Jude's Children Hospital in Memphis. She will run this Saturday and has raised over \$2,600 for St. Jude's.

In comments from Councilwoman Belcher, she also thanked both the City Manager and Mr. Shupe for the long hours spent on the budget preparation. It was a good presentation by the City Manager tonight.

Councilman Fawbush also expressed thanks to Mr. Ramey and Mr. Shupe for the long hours on the budget. The Woodbooger Statue is up at the Flag Rock Recreation Area and has been paid in full. The dates of October 16th and 17th have been selected for the Woodbooger Event at Flag Rock. It is hoped to be made bigger and better.

Councilman Fultz also advised Council of a video that Dr. Chris Starnes had posted on Facebook of the Flag Rock bike trails, which were taken by his drone.

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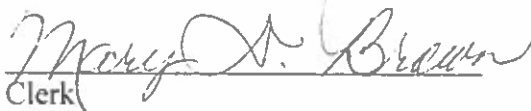
There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William J. Mays Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk