

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, October 1, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

Present: William Mays, Robert Fultz, Jr., Joseph Fawbush, and Mark Caruso

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager

Absent: Delores Belcher

The invocation was given by Pastor Roger Sloce and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Police Chief James Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, and Caruso, NO – None, ABSENT – Belcher, council moved to adopt the minutes of the September 17, 2019, meeting as presented.

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

At this time, Mayor Fawbush asked for the consensus of council to amend the agenda to include, under Item 7-E-1, consideration of Wise County/City of Norton Health Department request for city council sponsorship of a rabies clinic.

It was the consensus of council to amend the agenda to include under Item 7-E-1, consideration of Wise County/City of Norton Health Department request for city council sponsorship of a rabies clinic.

Mr. Ramey said at the September 17<sup>th</sup> meeting that council considered a draft resolution in support of the Community Remembrance Project and decided to add Councilman Fultz's recommendations regarding Norton native Bruce Crawford. Mr. Ramey said he prepared a redraft that includes information on Mr. Crawford, but he would like to work with Preston Mitchell, who presented the Community Remembrance Project at the September 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, to add Mr. Mitchell's comments about Bruce Crawford to the resolution.

It was the consensus of council to table Item 6-A to allow Mr. Ramey the opportunity to meet with Preston Mitchell to add Mr. Mitchell's remarks to the resolution regarding Bruce Crawford.

The next agenda item was a presentation by the AmeriCorps/National Civilian Conservation Corps Team Bayou 5.

Mr. Ramey said Team Bayou 5 was introduced to council at the September 17<sup>th</sup> meeting and that the city appreciates the work they have performed for the city.

Team Leader Zack Thompson told council the team has completed over a half-a-mile on the Campground Trail System and they have enjoyed being based in the city and visiting different places in the area. He then informed council about the different aspects of working on the trail system and volunteering, while other team members told council about working the Naturalist Rally, the upcoming Hellbender race, the Woodbooger Festival, recruiting area youth for AmeriCorps, and showed a video of the team working on the Campground Trail.

On behalf of council, Mayor Fawbush thanked Team Bayou 5 for their work in the city and for being good community advocates. He presented a plaque to each member and a group

photo was taken with council. Council then thanked the AmeriCorps team for their service to the community.

Council had been presented a Virginia Department of Health (VDH) 2020 Drinking Water Construction/Financial Assistance Funding Offer for Clear Creek Phase III Waterline Replacement Project.

The city manager, via a PowerPoint presentation, showed the Phase III Waterline replacement which would extend from a section on Liberty Avenue to Fox Run and would include the addition of two fire hydrants. He said VDH has offered a grant/loan funding package for the total waterline replacement budget totaling \$155,956. The city manager said the city has been approved for \$77,978, as a principal forgiveness (grant) and \$77,978, as a loan for a term of 30 years and an interest rate of 2.5 percent. Mr. Ramey noted there is the possibility of a 2.3 percent interest rate at a term of 30 years depending upon the loan package being closed within 12 months of the award letter. He said city administration's recommendation is to approve the funding package.

After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of council to approve the funding package and authorize city administration to work on the terms of the loan.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Caruso, NO – None, ABSENT – Belcher, council moved to authorize the city manager to execute the Virginia Department of Health 2020 Drinking Water Construction/Financial Assistance Funding Offer for Clear Creek Phase III Waterline Replacement Project.

The next agenda item was an authorization to refund erroneously assessed 2019 Personal Property Taxes.

Mr. Ramey said the Commissioner of Revenue has determined that 2019 personal property taxes for Dwayne Mac Hopkins were erroneously assessed, so a refund in the amount of the \$210.00 is due to Mr. Hopkins.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council authorized a refund to Dwayne Mac Hopkins for erroneously assessed 2019 personal property taxes in the amount of \$164.64.

Council had been presented in their packets two erroneously assessed 2019 Real Estate Public Service Taxes.

The city manager said the State Corporation had not provided an assessed value prior to the city's first-half Real Estate Public Service Tax billing, so a correct assessment could not be determined. Therefore, refunds are due to Celco Partnership for Real Estate Public Service Taxes in the amount of \$263.57, and to Windstream KDL for Real Estate Public Service Taxes in the amount of \$86.90.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Caruso, NO – None, ABSENT - Belcher, council authorized refunds for erroneously assessed 2019 Real Estate Public Service Taxes to Celco Partnership in the amount of \$263.57 and to Windstream KDL in the amount of \$86.90.

The city manager stated it was time to discuss the 2020 Independence Day fireworks display and he noted that July 4, 2020, is on a Saturday.

Mr. Ramey said the city has three options to consider 2020 for the Independence Day Celebration: Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup>. He noted June 27<sup>th</sup> was the only date that did not have a rescheduling conflict for the next day due to weather.

After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of council to hold the 2020 Independence Day Celebration on Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, and to increase the budget from \$12,000 to \$15,000.

The city manager advised he was contacted by LENOWISCO Health District and the agency is concerned about the presence of rabies in the area. The director is requesting that the city sponsor a rabies clinic on Saturday, October 26, 2019, at Powell Valley Animal Hospital in Big Stone Gap. The city manager said the health department will advertise and handle all activities related to the clinic at no cost to the city.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to approve the request from LENOWISCO Health District to sponsor a rabies clinic on Saturday, October 26, 2019, at Powell Valley Animal Hospital in Big Stone Gap.

In packets for council consideration was a check to W-L Construction and Paving, Inc., dated August 9, 2019, in the amount of \$112,637.62, to cover first-half FY20 paving and purchasing asphalt for patching by city crews.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council moved to confirm the check to W-L Construction and Paving, Inc., as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Caruso, NO – None, ABSENT – Belcher, council moved to go into closed meeting for Personnel as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1), consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7) and for the Discussion or Consideration of the Acquisition of Real Property for a Public Purpose, or of the Disposition of Publicly Held Real Property, Where Discussion in an Open Meeting Would Adversely Affect the Bargaining Position or Negotiating Strategy of the Public Body as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (3), of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

Mayor Fawbush declared council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to go back into open meeting.

Mayor Fawbush 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 Mays, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for nominations to the Mountain Empire Older Citizens Advisory Board for a two-year term to expire on September 15, 2021.

Councilman Caruso nominated Michele Knox to be reappointed to the Mountain Empire Older Citizens Advisory Board for a two-year term to expire on September 15, 2021.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved that the nominations cease.

Mayor Fawbush declared Michele Knox reappointed to the Mountain Empire Older Citizens Advisory Board for a two-year term to expire on September 15, 2021.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey said the city is waiting on the contractor to begin milling the 11<sup>th</sup> Street tennis courts so city crews can begin removing the poles. He said city and school representatives met to discuss a color scheme for the new courts and Dr. Wohlford asked if a logo could be placed on the courts. Mr. Ramey advised he is looking into the superintendent's request. He noted that a black coated fence will replace the old fencing around the tennis courts and new signage will be installed.

Mr. Ramey advised council that September has been the driest month so far for 2019. He said the city has a total of 73 million gallons of water in the reservoirs, and that the city has started purchasing water from Wise County Public Service Authority.

Mr. Ramey said the city hosted an Aid Station Meeting for Cloudsplitter Ultra 100 Trail Race volunteers on September 24<sup>th</sup>, and as of today, 131 runners had registered for the race.

Mr. Ramey told council Dixie Sturgill Hill, retired paraprofessional from Norton Elementary and Middle School, passed away today, October 1<sup>st</sup>. He said Mrs. Hill's husband Jim Hill served many years on Norton Police Department's Auxiliary Police Department.

Mr. Ramey said he provided council with the latest traffic counts for Flag Rock Recreation Area and High Knob, and also provided a sample ballot of the upcoming November local election for their review.

Mr. Ramey said upcoming events include the High Knob Hellbender and the Woodbooger Festival scheduled for Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>.

He said the Virginia Municipal League (VML) Conference is planned for October 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in Roanoke.

Mr. Ramey told council the Cloudsplitter Ultra 100 Trail Race is scheduled for October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilman Fultz noted that before council meets again, the High Knob Hellbender, the Woodbooger Festival, and the Cloudsplitter Ultra 100 Trail Race will have taken place and it will be a busy two weeks for the city.

He said John I. Burton Raiders will be hosting the Eastside Spartans Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup> for John I. Burton Hall of Fame Inductee introductions with the hall of fame dinner following on Saturday at Hotel Norton.

Councilman Fultz said John I. Burton High School's homecoming will be Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, and the homecoming parade is scheduled for Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>.

At this time, Councilman Caruso noted the annual Kiwanis Spaghetti Supper is also scheduled for Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup>.

Councilman Fultz also noted he drove downtown on the evenings of Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup> and the city center was crowded with people visiting local restaurants.

Councilman Caruso echoed Councilman Fultz's comments that the next couple weeks will be busy for the city. He stated to Chief Lane that the Police Department will have an increase in visitors and that his department will be the city's "ambassadors in uniform."

At this time, Mr. Ramey said council members were invited to the Cloudsplitter kickoff on the evening of Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, and that he would send members a reminder email.

Mayor Fawbush said there seems to be more excitement and participation in the Woodbooger Festival this year. He said he received a message from a lady in Alaska who will be visiting family in Lee County on the weekend of October 5<sup>th</sup>, and that she stated she explicitly scheduled her trip on October 5<sup>th</sup> so she could attend the Woodbooger Festival.

Mayor Fawbush shared that he would be speaking again this Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> on WLSD Radio at 8:30 a.m., and WAXM Radio at 9:00 a.m.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



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Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

*Mark A. Caruso, V. Mayor*

ATTEST:



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Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council