

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on February 1, 2011 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: E. W. Ward, City Manager and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

The invocation was given by the City Manager and was followed by the pledge led by Councilman Terry Roop.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Roop, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the January 18, 2011 meeting as presented.

24954

During the Mayor's call for visitors, Ms. Valerie C. Stanley, the Communications Workers Association LPAT Coordinator VA Congressional District 9, and Ms. Marye Rowlett, Norton Area Vice President of the Communications Workers of America, spoke briefly to Council regarding HB2367/SB1368 that are coming before the General Assembly in its current session. These bills, initiated by Verizon, if adopted, will affect Southwest Virginia's land line and will also affect jobs as Verizon has been downsizing. Ms. Stanley then discussed the impact these bills would have on the area.

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

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Ms. Rowlett distributed handouts to Council members and both then answered questions from Council members.

Following a brief discussion, Council thanked both Ms. Stanley and Ms. Rowlett for the information furnished tonight.

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Mr. Donald Purdie, President of the Wise County/City of Norton Committee of 100, spoke to Council regarding the Local Composite Index and the affect it would have on both the City and Wise County in regard to the Norton City Schools consolidating with the Wise County School System.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Mr. Purdie presented handouts to Council members.

Mr. Purdie asked Council to request the City Attorney to obtain an Attorney General's opinion on the following: Should the City and County consolidate, under current law, would the Local Composite Index for both municipalities be based upon the lowest fiscal capacity measure assigned by the Commonwealth to one of the merged school divisions? Mr. Purdie advised he would be willing to answer questions from Council members.

24958

Following a brief discussion, Councilman Roop advised this may be the most difficult and most important decision Council will have to make and he is trying to keep an open mind; however, in his opinion, it is not all about money but giving control of the education of Norton's children over to Wise County.

Councilman Hunnicutt advised that, should this consolidation take place, Norton should have strong City representation on the School Board.

Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Purdie for his presentation.

Mayor Mays advised that it was an honor and pleasure to have present at tonight's meeting seven City employees that are eligible for service pins

The City Manager advised that the City is blessed by its workforce and that those who are being recognized tonight represent 145 years of service.

Those being honored were: Jeff Shupe for 10 years of service; Marie Muir, Mike Lintz, Rebecca Coffey, Barbara Muir for 20 years of service; Randy Mullins for 25 years of service, and Tommy Roberts for 30 years of service. These individuals came forward and received their pins from Mr. Ward, shook hands with Council, and received a standing ovation from those present. The Assistant City Manager also took a group picture.

Brian Blanton of Thrower, Blanton, and Associates was present tonight to give council members a copy of the financial audit for the City of Norton for the year ended June 30, 2010.

Mr. Blanton gave Council a brief synopsis of this audit and advised that the City had received a clean unqualified opinion, which is the highest rating that can be received. He also advised there were vast improvements in the Social Services Department with regard to compliance with state law in the areas of compliance and internal controls. Council was advised, that after reviewing the audit, should they have any questions he would be happy to come back to another meeting to answer any questions they may have. Thanks were also extended to Mr. Ward, Mr. Shupe, City Staff, and School System for their cooperation in compiling the information needed for this audit.

Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Blanton for his presentation.

Ms. Bonnie Elosser and Mr. Robert Isaac, representing the Pro-Art Association, were in attendance at tonight's meeting to request Council's support for a Virginia Local Government Challenge Grant in the amount of \$5,000 which will be matched by the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

Also speaking briefly to Council tonight was Carmen Cantrell, Director of the Harris Library Art Gallery, of the Lonesome Pine Regional Library in Wise, request \$500 in matching grant funds for the Harris Library Art Gallery. Ms. Cantrell advised, if approved by Council, these funds would come from the \$5,000 challenge grant received by the Pro-Art Association.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to authorize the City Manager to submit an application for a Local Government Challenge Grant in the amount of \$5,000 for the Pro-Art Association which is to be matched by the Virginia Commission for the Arts. Council also reserved the right to reduce the amount of this grant if they saw the necessity to do so.

Mayor Mays thanked both Ms. Elosser and Mr. Isaac for the work they have done and continue to do for this organization.

In their packets, Council had a Governing Body Resolution regarding a \$12,750 from the Emergency Management Program Grant (EMPG) Competitive Grant Program (CFDS #97.042) from the National Preparedness Directorate, United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for an EOC in a Box.

Mr. Ward advised that Todd Lagow, the City's Emergency Services Coordinator, had secured this grant which is a 50% matching grant. Mr. Lagow's salary can be used for the match.

24962

Following a motion by Councilman Hunnicutt, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Caruso, Hunnicutt, Fawbush, Roop, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt A Governing Body Resolution for an Emergency Management Program Grant (EMPG) Competitive Grant Program (CFDS #97.942) from the National Preparedness Directorate, United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for an EOC in a Box in the amount of \$12,750, which is a matching grant. (Insert)

Council had copies of three checks in their packets for approval. The first of these was to Baker's Construction & Excavation in the amount of \$229,828.85 which covers Phase 1 – Pay Request #7 on the Benges Branch Sewer Rehabilitation Project. Check #2 is payable to Estes Brothers Construction in the amount of \$220,938.05 for the Josephine Sewer Extension Project Payment Request #6. Check #3 is made payable to Wells Fargo Corporate Trust in the amount of \$101,631.25 for VML/VACO Series 2006C., which is for the viaduct project.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Hunnicutt, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve the three checks to Baker's Construction & Excavation, Estes Brother Construction, and Wells Fargo Corporate Trust as listed above.

Upon a motion by Councilman Hunnicutt, seconded by Councilman Caruso, 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.

24964

Mayor Mays declared Council in closed meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Hunnicutt, Council moved to go back into open meeting.

24965

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 Hunnicutt, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, 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)

24966

Mayor Mays opened the floor for nominations to the Norton Redevelopment and Housing Authority for four year terms which will expire on January 28, 2015.

Councilman Caruso nominated Renee Robinson and T. J. Flanary to be reappointed to this Authority.

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

Mayor Mays declared Renee Robinson and T. J. Flanary reappointed to the Norton Redevelopment and Housing Authority for four year terms which will expire on January 28, 2015.

There were no comments from the City Manager.

In comments from the City Attorney, Mr. Bradshaw gave an update on pending tax suits.

In comments from Council members, Councilman Caruso expressed his thanks to the City staff for their hard work on the audit. He further advised that June 4th is National Trails Day and that all seven counties and the City of Norton that comprise the Southwest Virginia Recreational Authority, are working on community events that will be held on that day.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William J. Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk