

The rescheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, October 28, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. with Mayor Robert Raines presiding.

Present: Robert Raines, William Mays, and Joseph Fawbush

Absent: Joseph Hunnicutt, Jack Wallace

Also Present: E. W. Ward, City Manager and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

The invocation was given by Rev. John Ellington and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Police Chief Randy Mullins.

Upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the October 7, 2008 meeting as presented.

22066

During the audience for visitors, Rev. John Ellington spoke briefly to Council and thanked them for the presentation of a proclamation Council had adopted at their last meeting in support of pastoral care. Appreciation was also given to Mayor Raines for being the keynote speaker at this event.

22067

Mr. Herman Brinkley, a resident of Spruce Street and Manager of Walmart, spoke briefly to Council praising the Norton Police Department. He has had occasion to call on them, personally and business-wise, and they have always been very professional. He further advised he or Walmart could not have asked for better service in either circumstance.

During Mr. Brinkley's comments to Council, Councilman Hunnicutt took his seat on Council.

22068

Mayor Raines thanked Mr. Brinkley for his comments.

22069

At tonight's Looking Back series, the City Administration choose the topic of Public Safety and Mr. Ward presented a brief PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Ward advised that public safety includes not only the Police Department, but Fire Department, Traffic Control, Rescue Squad, Emergency Services, Correction and Detention, Animal Control, and Building Inspection.

Twenty years ago, the average salary of a police officer was \$14,457. There was no E-911, no debt service, no financial support of the Rescue Squad, Animal Control was contracted through the County, and Juvenile Detention was a minimal expense.

In 1991, the City began operation of an E-911 system, which was one of the first in the region. This system has been upgraded since its inception. In 1992, the City purchased three new Fire Department vehicles, financed through Rural Development, totaling \$475,000 and a used equipment truck for the Fire Department was purchased in March 2005 at a cost of \$65,000.

In 1992, the City purchased a facility on West Main Avenue to house the Norton Rescue Squad for \$115,000. This facility also acts a community center for the City and

City residents. In 2001-2002, the City began making an annual contribution of \$50,000 to the Rescue Squad.

To date, all police vehicles are equipped with video cameras.

In May of 2001, the City joined in with the counties of Planning Districts 1 and 2 to form the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority and Mayor Raines served as Chairman for two years. In April of 2003, this Authority issued debt in the amount of \$99.8 million dollars to construct regional jails. These facilities are located in Abingdon, Duffield, Haysi, and Tazwell. Mr. Ward advised this was an excellent example of regional cooperation.

Mr. Ward then discussed other challenges that Council is to be faced with in the future; such as E-911 upgrades, a Public Safety Facility, and a combining of services.

Mayor Raines thanked Mr. Ward for this presentation.

The City Manager gave a brief update on the City's water situation. As of October 23rd, we have a combined reservoir total of 53 million gallons of water. We continued to hold our own and purchase water from the Wise County Public Service Authority and Big Stone Gap.

He will continue to monitor the situation and keep Council informed.

Council had received a request from Eddie G. Fultz, 904 Campbell Avenue, N. W. for a Special Use Permit to use City right-of-way to install a concrete pad to use as a parking location. Mr. Fultz was present and spoke briefly to Council.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to approve the Special Use Permit to Mr. Fultz and asked that he advise his adjoining property owners of his intent and see that they have no problems with this. He was further advised that this is a revocable permit.

Mr. Fultz thanked Council for their consideration of this request.

Council had been presented with a contract from the Wise County Board of Supervisors requesting to purchase ten (10) equivalent residential sewer connections (ERCs) for the Esserville Industrial Park.

Following a discussion on this contract and upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve the agreement between the Wise County Board of Supervisors and the City of Norton to purchase ten (10) equivalent residential sewer connections for the Esserville Industrial Park in the amount of \$200,000 as discussed and amended by Council and with the special conditions inserted in the Use Permit. Also some wording, as discussed by Council, is to be changed. Payment for these ERCs is to be made upon execution of the contract by Wise County.

The City Manager is to notify the County of Council's actions tonight.

Council had a request from Wellmont Health Systems for exemption from real property taxes for property owned in the City of Norton.

The City Attorney advised that he has been working on this for over a year with Wellmont and their attorneys. Mr. Bradshaw advised that Council has gone through this

procedure previously with a church located in the City and there are several issues that need to be handled. One issue, should Council decide to proceed, is the advertisement of a public hearing at the next meeting. This advertisement needs to run one time only five days before the public hearing. Should Council adopt an ordinance pertaining to this, then the effective day shall be 30 days after passage and the exemption will be effective January 1, 2009.

22074

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council authorized the City Manager to advertise a public hearing on the Wellmont Health System's request for exemption from real property taxes for property owned in the City.

The City Attorney and City Manager are to work together on the wording of this advertisement.

Council had been presented with a sample Resolution Authorizing a Transportation Project through the Virginia Department of Transportation's Urban Construction Program. This resolution would authorize the Virginia Department of Transportation to initiate and proceed with the Hawthorne Signalization and Improvement Project.

Mr. Ward stated that this resolution, if and when adopted, will designate an Urban Highway Project in the City. In order to adopt this resolution, a public hearing will need to be held on it. Further, this project would have priority over the Tipple Hill 4-Lane Project.

22075

Following a discussion and upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Joseph Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to advertise a public hearing on A Resolution Authorizing a Transportation Project through the Virginia Department of Transportation's Urban Construction Program.

Mr. Ward advised that Governor Kaine had spoken at the Virginia Municipal League's Conference last week in Norfolk. Representing the City at this annual conference was the City Manager, Mayor Raines, Councilman Fawbush, and Assistant City Manager Fred Ramey. He advised that there is another round of budget cuts coming and that the Commonwealth was in a recession. He further advised there will be a 2.5 billion dollar shortfall in the next biennium.

22076

The City Manager advised that he had held a mandatory staff meeting today with constitutional officers and department heads advising them of this situation and advising them to look at their respective budgets and curtail all but essential purchases and to prioritize the elements of their budgets. During November, he will meet with each department head and develop a plan locally to address this economic downturn. As of today, the City has not seen a decline in our revenue stream. Local revenues are pretty much stable. This will be a very difficult budget for the City. He will continue to monitor this situation and keep Council updated.

Mayor Raines thanked the City Manager for this update.

Council had a copy of an electronic bank transfer in the amount of \$774,449.32 made payable to the Norton City Schools.

Upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by Joseph Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to confirm an electronic transfer to the Norton City Schools in the amount of \$774,449.32.

2207

Upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by Joseph Hunnicutt, 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.

22078

Mayor Raines declared Council in closed meeting.

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

22079

Mayor Raines declared Council back in open meeting.

The Clerk then 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 Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by the following unanimous vote: YES – Hunnicutt, Raines, Mays, Fawbush, NO – None, ABSENT – Wallace, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

22080

In comments from the City Manger, Mr. Ward advised:

There will be no City Council meeting on November 4, 2008 due to the Election and the next scheduled meeting will be November 18th.

22081

A decision was made administratively that Halloween will be observed on Thursday, October 30th rather than Friday, October 31st.

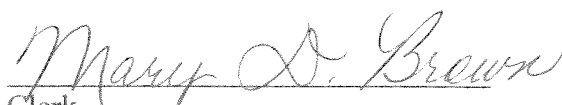
There were no comments from the City Attorney or Council.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA


B. Robert Raines, Mayor

ATTEST:


Clerk