

The rescheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, August 16, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

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

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

The invocation was given by the Reverend Freddie Powers and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Police Chief James Lane.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by the following vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Mays, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the July 12, 2016, meeting as presented.

25989

During the Mayor's call for visitors, Chris Jones, volunteer organizer of the High Knob Music Festival, came forward and to update Council on the event's success.

Prior to his update of the 2016 festival, Mr. Jones, the City's representative on the Heart of Appalachia, informed Council that the tourism authority is having a very successful marketing campaign through television and magazine advertisements and they are pleased with the number of contacts from individuals wishing to visit the area.

Mr. Jones reported that the High Knob Music Festival held at the High Knob Recreational Lake was a success, pointing out that everyone involved with the event, including performers donated their time. In addition to the music, organizers tried to promote the history of High Knob and provide more focus on the Recreational Lake. He stated approximately 700 people attended this year's music festival and all the feedback has been positive. In preparation for next year's festival, the National Forest Service is going to improve current infrastructure and explore the possibility of building a stage and adding electrical service. Volunteers are looking forward to a bigger event next year and have begun fundraising plans for next year's event.

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Council members thanked Mr. Jones and the volunteers for their effort on the music festival. Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Jones for his report on the festival.

At this time, Mr. Ramey stated he had invited a recently retired City employee, Ms. Teresa Hylton, to tonight's meeting. He advised, Ms. Hylton has retired after nearly 35 years of service to the City and has served in several capacities during her tenure at the City. She has served as Cashier/Clerk, Utility Billing Supervisor and Payroll Clerk and her latest position was Executive Assistant. Ms. Hylton has been a dedicated and professional employee and she will be missed.

25991

Mayor Mays, on behalf of Council, presented Ms. Hylton with a plaque honoring her years of service and dedication to the City.

After the presentation of the plaque, applause was given to Ms. Hylton and a group picture was taken with Council.

Included in Council's packets was a copy of completed projects by the Black Diamond Resource Conservation and Development Council (Black Diamond RC&D).

Mr. Ramey advised that Mr. William Worrell, Extension Agent for the Virginia Cooperative Extension located in Russell County, was present to update Council on the organization and agency activities.

Mr. Worrell thanked Council for inviting him to speak about the Black Diamond RC&D and he proceeded to give a brief overview of the history of the organization. Mr. Worrell said the Black Diamond RC&D was established in 1992 as a 501-C3 non-profit organization of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. He then explained how the board is structured and that after federal funding was removed the agency remained semi-active as a non-profit organization and the board members became basically volunteers. However, in 2014 the organization received some funding to hire a part-time staff person to coordinate projects. He went on to describe the types of projects the agency undertakes and what has been completed during FY 2015-2016.

25992

After fielding a few questions from Councilman Caruso and the City Manager, Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Worrell for his presentation.

The next agenda item was a request from Appalachian Natural Gas Distribution Company (ANGD) to horizontally directional bore Hawthorne Drive to install a 4 inch gas main in the shoulder of Hawthorne Drive to provide natural gas to additional businesses along Hawthorne Drive.

Mr. Ramey advised Council that representatives from Appalachian Natural Gas were present to discuss this proposed expansion.

Via a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. John Ebert, President of Appalachian Natural Gas, presented Council with an overview of ANGD's request and explained that the project is basically a line extension connecting two systems for liability purposes. He advised Mr. Diogenes Herrera, Director of Operations, and Mr. Brandon Atwood, Operations Supervisor were in attendance and could answer any questions Council may have regarding the project across City right-of-way.

Mr. Herrera explained the graphic to City Council and noted ANGD has a separate easement request for property owned by the Norton Industrial Development Authority. He then answered several questions from Councilman Caruso.

25993

Mayor Mays asked the City Attorney the best way to handle ANGD's request.

Mr. Bradshaw advised he had discussed the request with Mr. Ramey and the extension should be handled through a permitting process instead of an easement to protect future development within the City. He informed Council the separate request before Norton Industrial Development Authority (NIDA) will be handled differently and ANGD will be providing some of the permitting information. The permit can then be brought back to Council for approval or Council can authorize the City Manager to sign the permit.

Mayor Mays stated he did not want to delay ANGD's project and suggested Council authorize the City Manager to endorse the permit.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to authorize the City Manager to sign the permit for Appalachian Natural Gas Distribution Company to install a gas line across public right-of-way.

Mr. Dylan Reilly, University of Maryland Landscape Architecture Masters Student, was in attendance to give Council an update on his Master's Thesis on the Proposed Norton Riverwalk Project.

Via a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Reilly provided Council with a broad overview of his research and shared his proposed design of the Riverwalk Project. He informed Council that his goals for the project are community engagement and to create a conceptual plan for the Riverwalk based upon his discussions with citizens. He explained the route of the proposed Riverwalk and advised the project should be constructed in two phases. He said he hopes the community will remain engaged in the project until completion. He noted that all the information he has gathered and the proposed design will be presented in spring 2017.

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Mayor Mays, on behalf of Council, presented Mr. Reilly with a plaque thanking him for his work on the project and that his research will provide Council with a better vision for the Riverwalk

After the presentation of the plaque, applause was given to Mr. Reilly and a group picture was taken with Council.

Council had been presented in their packets with A Resolution Approving the Financing Terms for the Purchase of Election and Public Works Equipment.

Mr. Ramey advised City Administration has been working with the Financing Division of the Virginia Municipal League/Virginia Association of Counties (VML/VACO) to finance the lease/purchase of new electronic voting equipment and new equipment for the Public Works Department that Council approved earlier. By financing the lease/purchase of equipment together the City is able to obtain a better rate and a resolution approving these terms must be approved by Council to proceed with financing. City Administration will have additional documents for review by the City Attorney once this step is completed.

25995

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Approving the Financing Terms for the Lease/Purchase of Election and Public Works Equipment. (Insert)

In Council's packets was A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Enter Into a Grant Agreement with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

Mr. Ramey advised that the Virginia Department of Transportation now requires localities to adopt a resolution to officially accept grants awarded by VDOT. The City has received the VDOT Primary Extension Grant and this resolution will allow the City to move forward with the acceptance of this grant.

25996

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Enter into a Grant Agreement with the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Council had one transfer to confirm. The transfer was to the Norton City Schools dated July 5, 2016, in the amount of \$662,853 to cover General Obligation School Bond, Series 2012 payment, due July 15, 2016.

25997

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher and passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to confirm the transfer to the Norton City Schools as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, 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, consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation as per Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7) of the Code of Virginia, as amended, and discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publically 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.

25998

Mayor Mays 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.

25999

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.

26000

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)

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

The City received a grant to hire a school resource officer and that officer will be hired by the end of the week. At the beginning of the school year, the Police Department has placed a police officer in the school system each weekday and will continue to do so until an officer is hired for that position.

The Reservoir Water Report has been placed at each Council Member's desk.

The City has applied for a Virginia Municipal League (VML) Achievement Award for the Safe Routes to School project. He is optimistic that the City will be considered for the award.

Council has been provided with a pad of tear off brochures that displays City businesses, recreation, and public facilities. This is the third printing and includes the most recent additions to the downtown business district.

Paving will begin next week on Guest River and East Park Avenue. The City received top bids for this year's paving which will allow for additional roads to be paved this year.

The latest Retail Sales Tax Report has been provided at each Council Member's desk.

26001

The Norton Business Challenge winner, Zest Catering, has scheduled Grand Opening from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., Saturday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>. All-you-can-eat hors d'oeuvres will be served at the grand opening at a cost \$10 per person.

There were no comments from the City Attorney.

26002

In comments from Council:

Councilwoman Belcher had no comments

26003

Councilman Caruso thanked Mr. Ramey for emailing the property map for the upcoming delinquent tax sale.

He thanked Mr. Ramey for the new tear off brochures and stated they hand out a lot of the tear off maps at his business.

He stated he receives requests from tourists needing directions from Norton to several of the scenic locations in our area. A map directing individuals from Norton to Flag Rock, Devil's Bathtub, High Knob Tower, and the High Knob Recreational Lake would greatly assist tourists in finding these sites.

Mr. Ramey said he would advise the County that maps are needed for these tourism sites.

Councilman Caruso asked for an update on the need to purchase water from the County.

Mr. Ramey said the reservoirs have approximately 83 million gallons and the City is currently in Stage 1 of the Water Plan and is purchasing roughly 300,000 gallons daily from the Wise County Public Service Authority.

Councilman Caruso stated if the reservoirs reach a level where the City will have to purchase additional water beyond the mandatory requirement from the County the City should ask citizens to conserve water.

26004

Councilman Caruso advised Scout Leader Teddy Huff wants to build them a recreational information kiosk in Norton and is requesting a possible location for the new scout project.

He stated the handrail on the bridge at Legion Park Trail is leaning and he hopes the City can repair the handrail as soon as possible since the trail is the first visible trail on High Knob.

Mr. Ramey said Jane Sandt recommended marking the trail "Extreme Trail" and he thinks this is a good suggestion for this trail.

Councilman Caruso asked for an update on the banner program.

Mr. Ramey advised that Councilman Caruso raised \$1,400 for the banner program and he is hopeful that the City may be able to use a portion of a grant to purchase the remaining banners for downtown.

Councilman Fultz congratulated the volunteers for their work on the High Knob Music Festival held at High Knob Recreational Lake. He has heard many positive comments about the event.

He congratulated Zest Catering on the business's upcoming grand opening.

He said he has visited Woodbooger Grill and had a good dining experience.

26005

Councilman Fawbush said the Woodbooger plaques have been ordered and that he is meeting with the City's Superintendent of Public Works and Norton Parks & Recreation Maintenance Department to discuss building a stone kiosk for the plaques.

26006

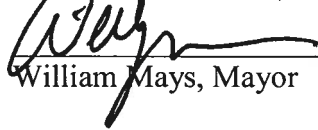
He has begun fundraising for the 2016 Woodbooger Festival and received commitment from Jack Links to provide beef jerky and Cabela's has agreed to contribute a donation to the festival.

Mayor Mays asked Council to look at their calendars so that a planning meeting could be scheduled. It was the consensus of Council to schedule a work session on Saturday, August 27<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA

  
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William Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Clerk of Council