

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, November 15, 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 Reverend Freddie Powers and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by CubMaster Chuck Slemp and Tiger Cubs Pack 603.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Mays, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the November 1, 2016, meeting as presented.

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During the Mayor's call for visitors, David Fields, owner of Gold-N-Things Precious Metals & Consignment, 752 Park Avenue, N.W., informed Council that he would like to expand his business by becoming a legally licensed pawnshop. He advised that he had researched federal, state, and local requirements for opening this type of business and has spoken with several City officials about the process. He said the City currently does not have any laws regulating pawn and he requested Council consider adopting ordinances so he can convert his business to a pawnshop.

Mayor Mays asked the City Attorney how Council should proceed with this request.

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The City Attorney stated that in anticipation of this request he reviewed the statute and Council is empowered by the Code of Virginia to adopt ordinances regulating pawn. He said anyone wishing to become a pawnbroker is required to obtain a pawnbrokers license from the City. There are many regulations governing pawn and the entire process is extensive. He noted he had prepared a draft ordinance for Council's review should members desire to move forward.

After a brief discussion, Council elected to review the draft ordinance prepared by the City Attorney and to place the request on the December 6 agenda.

Members of the AmeriCorps/National Civilian Conservation Corps' NCCC River 5 Team were present to update Council on trail development at the Flag Rock Recreation Area. Via a Power Presentation, Julia Metz, Elyse Highstreet, and Sadie Scott described the work the team has completed over last three weeks on the Magnolia Trail.

Ms. Metz said the team has learned new skills and it was interesting to see the trail begin to develop with hand tools, and then with machinery. She said the team never realized building trails would help the economy and they have really enjoyed the City's hospitality.

Ms. Highstreet said the team must complete an Even Better Ifs (EBI) after an assignment to assist the AmeriCorps in improving the experience. She said the team recommends staying in a location longer than three weeks to finish an assignment, and to take two consecutive days off to be able to volunteer in the community. She said the team

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was able to volunteer at the Southwest Virginia Museum and Historical Park for their Halloween event. She noted that the weather here has been colder than what they have been used to working in over the last several months but the team adjusted.

Ms. Scott informed Council that the team had one day of inclement weather so they worked on the ceiling at the Community Center and assisted the Lions Club sorting toys and clothes. She said on their free days the team visited Wal-Mart, walked around the campus of University of Virginia's College at Wise, attended a Halloween party at Camp Bethel, visited the High Knob Tower, and helped the Southwest Virginia Museum and Historical Park.

At this time, Mayor Mays thanked the NCCC River 5 Team for their work on the trail and for their community service all throughout the country. He presented a plaque to each member and applause was given to the team. A group picture was taken with Council and members thanked the AmeriCorps team for their service to the community.

Mr. Mark Leonard, Chief Executive Officer of Norton Community Hospital, was in attendance and advised that he had a two-part presentation on the hospital and the potential merger of Mountain States Health Alliance and Wellmont Health System. Mr. Leonard then introduced couple individuals accompanying him to Council. Mr. Leonard, via a PowerPoint presentation, informed Council about the current operations and patient services of Norton Community Hospital and Dickenson County Hospital. He talked about providing health services at the University of Virginia's College at Wise and the partnership the college and Norton Community Hospital have enjoyed for over 20 years. He said Norton Community Hospital is celebrating the one year anniversary of the opening of the Healthplex, and that FitOne has doubled membership at the new location.

The second part of the presentation focused on the proposed merger of Mountain States Health Alliance and Wellmont Health System. Mr. Leonard stated that the proposed merger was announced in 2015 and the Southwest Virginia Health Authority approved the application in 2016. He said until the merger is approved, the two entities operate as competitors and certain issues cannot be discussed between the two organizations due to antitrust laws. He stated that the motivation for the merger is public health, population, and economic challenges in the area. He noted since 2010, 76 rural hospitals have closed and the current way of operating is not sustainable. Mr. Leonard said that the proposed merger includes all hospitals remaining operational for five years as clinical and healthcare institutions after the merger and they are committed to improving the community's health and enhancing health care services.

Mayor Mays thanked Mr. Leonard for his update and for serving on the Norton Rescue Squad Board.

Council packets contained a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Norton and the Norton Rescue Squad, Inc. Mr. Ramey explained the Norton Rescue Board has faced some big challenges and has worked hard to make the rescue squad a viable organization. He said that he believes there is a bright future for Norton Rescue Squad and the MOU between the two entities needs to be updated.

Councilman Caruso said that the Norton Rescue Squad Board has updated the MOU and the new bylaws were approved at the last board meeting. He said the rescue squad will need a great deal of help from the City to move forward into a sustainable organization.

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After a brief discussion and upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following roll call vote: Yes – Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSTAIN – Caruso, ABSENT – None, Council moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Norton and Norton Rescue Squad. (Insert)

Council had been presented in their packets A Resolution Recognizing November as Adoption Awareness Month. Mr. Ramey said the purpose of the resolution is to bring attention to the public that children need to be adopted and that citizens must become foster parents.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Recognizing November as Adoption Awareness Month. (Insert)

Council had one transfer to confirm. This transfer was to Norton City Schools, dated October 26, 2016, in the amount of \$150,000 to cover October payroll expenditures.

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 Norton City Schools as stated above.

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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, 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.

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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 back into open meeting.

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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 Councilman Fultz, 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)

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

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Mr. Ramey said that he and the City's Emergency Management Coordinator Todd Lagow would like for Council to consider establishing a burning ban due to the lack of rain and dry conditions.

City Council was of consensus that the dry conditions created a danger for the area and that the situation necessitates an emergency declaration. As a result of extremely dry conditions and upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution Establishing a Burning Ban Due to the Lack of Rain. (Insert)

Mr. Ramey noted the energy lease payments for Norton City Schools have been classified as an operational expense by the Department of Education. As a result of the recent ruling, the budget and the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Norton City Schools will not be affected.

He placed at each member's desk a copy of the latest monthly Retail Sales Tax Report.

The City has 57.6 million gallons of water storage at the reservoir. City Administration has increased social media messages highlighting the drought conditions and asking citizens to voluntarily conserve water.

The second annual Dairy Queen Turkey Trot 5k is Thursday, November 24.

The third annual Santa Fun Run is scheduled for Saturday, December 3.

There were no comments from the City Attorney.

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In comments from Council:

Councilwoman Belcher had not comments.

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Councilman Fultz said that the Community Thanksgiving Dinner at the Catholic and Episcopal Churches is scheduled on Thanksgiving Day. He said the dinner feeds about 600 community members.

He said the Christmas Parade is Sunday, December 4.

Councilman Fultz said he enjoyed the attendance of the Tiger Cubs and he is pleased to see the parents and pack leaders instilling the American way of life in the area youth.

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He said he has always held the Norton Rescue Squad in high esteem and he considers them a City asset. He noted emergency services are vital to the citizens of Norton and he is glad that Council is doing more to ensure the success of Norton Rescue Squad.

Councilman Caruso noted that the monthly sales tax revenue has been down the past six months. He noticed that Joy Manufacturing is hiring and he is hopeful that the economy will improve.

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He said that he read the Farmer's Almanac and it states that our area will have a rough winter with heavy snow.

Councilman Fawbush said he attended the seventh grade luncheon at Norton Elementary and Middle School (NEMS) on November 15. He said the kids were prepared for discussion and inquisitive. He explained how Council sets a budget and appropriates money and they seemed to understand the process. He also commended the kids on how they approached school administration for changes to school policies and stated this is how

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you make amendments to rules and guidelines you disagree with and not by protesting or rioting.

Councilman Caruso asked about the dates for the Legislative Reception.

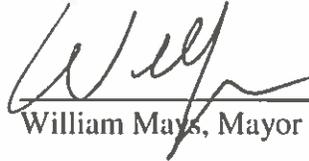
Mr. Ramey advised that the reception is scheduled for January 25-27, 2017 at the Omni Hotel in Richmond. 26112

Mayor Mays congratulated Councilman Caruso and Councilman Fultz on their re-elections and for their commitment to serve the community. 26113

He also wanted to congratulate the Electoral Board for a smooth election.

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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Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council