

The rescheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, July 25, 2017, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

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

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

The invocation was given by Boy Scout Troop 301 Life Scout Chaplain Dominic Sluss and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Boy Scout Troop 301

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the June 20, 2017, meeting as presented.

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There was no one present for the Audience for Visitors.

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At this time, the City Manager introduced the U. S. Forest Service's Interim U. S. District Forest Ranger Felipe Cano.

Mr. Cano thanked Council for allowing him to introduce himself and informed Council he has 18 years of service with the U. S. Forest Service. His background is in wildlife biology but he has worked in timber, recreation, and with national partnerships. He plans to continue working with the City and to share the concerns of the City and the local Forest Service with the Roanoke Division. He advised the issue with the Cloudsplitter Race 100 route proposed on a portion of Forest Service property has been resolved and the race has been approved to proceed on Forest Service land.

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Council welcomed Mr. Cano to the area and said they look forward to working with the Forest Service.

Eagle Scout candidate Isaac Meade, of Boy Scout Troop 301, was present to give an update on his project to install a kiosk at Flag Rock. Via a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Meade informed Council the kiosk was completed after 259 volunteer hours and he explained how the kiosk was built. Mr. Meade pointed out that he included three wooden rosettes on the structure that depict Flag Rock and that the kiosk is handicap accessible. Mr. Meade thanked the City, Council, Mr. Ramey, volunteers, and many businesses for their assistance in helping him complete his Eagle Scout Project. He presented Council with a metal plaque to approve as the last detail to install on the kiosk, and handed the Mayor a document to sign as endorsement he had completed the Eagle Scout Project.

At this time, Dr. Wally Smith, a biology professor at the University of Virginia's College at Wise, came forward to discuss what materials would be placed in the two informational panels of the kiosk. Dr. Smith said one of the panels would be dedicated to enlightening the public about the Green Salamander and other animals in the Flag Rock Recreation Area and the second panel would be used by the City to highlight information about recreation, maps, trail systems, etc. Dr. Smith said Brian Gratwicke, a conservation

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biologist at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, donated a photo of the Green Salamander for the kiosk. He said reminders for visitors to place garbage in trash receptacles and for sightseers not to paint graffiti on the rock were included. He said the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) had asked that their logo be included along with the City's and the college's logos since they have been partners in the research with the college.

At this time, Mayor Mays thanked Isaac Meade for his work and leadership on the Green Salamander informational kiosk and presented him with an Outstanding Service Award. Applause was given to Mr. Meade and a group picture was taken with Council, Troop 301, and Dr. Smith.

Mr. Chris Jones, volunteer organizer of the High Knob Music Festival, was present to request funding for planned improvements at the High Knob Recreational Area and to give an update on the music festival held June 17.

Mr. Jones said the High Knob Music Festival took place June 17, in conjunction with the Best Friend Festival, and featured six musical groups. He said this year's event included food vendors and volunteers selling t-shirts as a fundraiser for the festival. He estimates attendance at this year's music festival doubled bringing 1,200 people to the High Knob Recreation Area for the event. He said the High Knob Music Festival Committee was pleased with this year's audience.

Mr. Jones, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave an overview of the work that volunteers had done to prepare the High Knob Recreation Area for the festival. He estimates that volunteers worked approximately 250 hours to prepare the site and raised over \$10,000 for the music festival and future projects. Mr. Jones said the Committee has set aside \$2,000 in a Project Fund for future site improvements and \$2,000 in a Music Fund for next year's festival. He said the Committee hopes to offer a greater variety of music next year and would like to update the electrical, install a new roof over the stage, enhance the lighting, install new seating, and make the venue handicap accessible. Mr. Jones shared several upcoming fundraisers and informed Council that Virginia Tech is currently coding the DNA of fireflies found on High Knob to determine if it is the same synchronous firefly species that is observed by thousands of visitors every year in Gatlinburg. He said the committee is actively fundraising and he is asking Council for a contribution to assist with future planned improvements to the High Knob Recreation Area.

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The City Manager shared that Mr. Jones is working with the High Knob Enhancement Corporation to be the fiscal agent for both the Music Festival and Project Fund accounts for the High Knob Music Festival Committee.

At this time, Mr. Chris Jones, also Chairman of the Norton Tourism Committee, advised that the Tourism Committee is requesting a meeting with City Council, the Norton Industrial Development Authority (NIDA), and the Tourism Committee to determine the City's vision and direction for the future. He said the purpose of the meeting between the three entities is to allow the Tourism Committee to share its vision, determine what NIDA can offer, and receive Council's input.

At this point, Mr. Jones returned his discussion to the High Knob Music Festival and said the committee would appreciate any donation from the City for improvements to the High Knob Recreation Area.

Council thanked Mr. Jones for the update on the High Knob Music Festival.

The City Manager advised that, earlier in July, the Norton Little League 11 and 12-year-old Girls Softball Team qualified for the State Softball Tournament in McLean. Mr. Ramey reminded Council since they did not have a meeting in July prior to the State Tournament, that he polled members via telephone, and Council expressed they were willing to contribute \$1,500 for the trip. Mr. Ramey said Mr. Sam Adams, Player Agent for the Norton Little League 11 and 12-year-old Girls Softball Team, has completed the City's Donation Application and is asking for assistance with the expenses incurred during participation in the tournament. At a later date, Norton Little League will provide Council with a financial report detailing the total cost of the trip but they estimate the cost to be \$8,000.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following roll call vote: YES – Caruso, Fultz, Fawbush, Belcher, Mays, NO – None, ABSENT – None, Council moved to confirm the \$1,500 contribution from unappropriated reserves to Norton Little League 11 and 12-year-old Girls Softball Team to help defray costs for the State Tournament in McLean.

Included in Council's packets was a request from Mr. Joshua Scott Marshall of 4535 James Road for a water tap. Mr. Ramey said the request is outside City limits and must be approved by City Council. Mr. Ramey said Mr. Marshall was moving back to the area and due to time constraints, needed the water tap so that his home could be set prior to the beginning of school starting in August. Mr. Ramey said he polled Members, via the telephone, and the consensus of Council was to approve the outside water tap.

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Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to confirm the installation of one outside water tap request for Mr. Joshua Scott Marshall of 4535 James Road, as previously approved via telephone discussions.

Council had been presented in their packets with A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Enter into Grant Agreements with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

Mr. Ramey said the City has received funding for two projects through VDOT. The first grant is a Primary Extension Grant in the amount of \$150,000 to mill and pave a portion of Kentucky Avenue. The second VDOT Grant, the State of Good Repair, in the amount of \$316,000, is for bridge replacement. The project will replace the bridge on Main Avenue located near Brownies Cafe. Both of these grants will be administered by the City Staff and require authorization by Council for City Administration to enter into the agreements with VDOT.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to authorize the City Manager to Enter into the Primary Extension Grant and the State of Good Repair Grant between the City of Norton and the Virginia Department of Transportation. (Insert)

Council had one transfer to confirm. This transfer was to Norton City Schools, dated July 5, 2017, in the amount of \$670,353.75, to cover the General Obligation School Bond, Series 2012 payment, due July 15, 2017.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by the following 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.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, 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 Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, 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.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

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

The City's Independence Day celebration was well attended and he asked Council to be considering the schedule of events for next year's fireworks. He advised July 4, 2018, will be on Wednesday and that City Administration will receive next year's firework's contract in the upcoming months and will need to schedule a date for next year's event.

Mr. Ramey provided Council with a resolution to locate a hydroelectric power plant in the Coalfield Region and advised he will be placing it on the next agenda. He explained area legislators had held a meeting the week of July 17th and had asked for an elected or an appointed representative from each of the seven coal producing counties and the City to attend the meeting. Mr. Ramey said Vice Mayor Fawbush attended the meeting on behalf of the City and stated the purpose of the resolution was to show support for regional cooperation and sharing of any tax revenues and cost derived from the hydroelectric power plant among all the city and county governments located within the seven coal producing counties.

Vice Mayor Fawbush added local legislators, Terry Kilgore, Todd Pillion, Ben Chafin, and their aides, attended the meeting, as well as approximately 10 representatives from Dominion Energy. He said they explained the project, but the main goal was to encourage revenue sharing between the seven coalfield counties across the region.

Mr. Ramey provided each Council Member with the latest Water Quality Report.

The latest Retail Sales Tax Report had been placed at each member's desk.

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Mr. Ramey said the Appalachia Training Center, Central and Bland High Schools Alumni will hold their reunion at 8:00 p.m., Saturday, August 12th at the Holiday Inn. They would like the mayor or council member to provide the welcome at their reunion, if available.

Rick Watts and Treavor Calhoun have planned a Geocaching Event at Flag Rock on September 9th. They will provide Council with information on this event at the next meeting.

The Virginia Municipal League (VML) Conference is scheduled October 1-3 in Williamsburg. Please advise if you wish to attend so that room accommodations can be made on Council's behalf.

In comments from Council:

Councilman Caruso said Mr. Andy Belcher visited his store and informed him that the road is cracking and caving in around the front of his home. Mr. Belcher said water running down the road is running into his yard and home. He also said due to the downhill slope, narrow road, and the road breaking off, he is concerned a car will end up in his living room. Councilman Caruso said Mr. Belcher requested he ask the City to place a water barrier and install a guardrail to prevent a car from entering into his home. Councilman Caruso advised he has spoken with Mr. Ramey regarding Mr. Belcher's request.

Councilman Caruso advised Mr. Lev Smith dropped by his store and asked if the City would place a "Welcome to Norton Little League J. T. Caruso and 'Little' Lev Smith Fields" sign on Third Street N.E. facing the road.

Councilman Caruso said another citizen came to the store and complained that campers are not allowed to place a tent on the grass in the upper campground. They are requesting that campers be allowed to set up tents on the grass instead of on the graveled areas.

Mr. Ramey said Flag Rock would be on the August 15 agenda and that would give Council an opportunity to discuss the location of tent set ups in the upper campground.

Councilman Caruso said it was suggested to him that the City place posts in the upper campground to allow micro hammock camping.

Councilman Caruso said there is a decrease of \$74,369 in sales tax revenue from last year which equates to \$7 million less in sales. He said collectively downtown businesses have to do something different which leads him to the email he sent out about having four annual workshops. He would like to have the following annual workshops: a Comprehensive Plan Workshop, Ordinance Review Workshop, Downtown Revitalization Workshop, and City Organizational Review with the City Manager to determine if the City is right-sized. Councilman Caruso said Council can give guidance on right-sizing departments and assist in finding inefficiencies.

Councilman Caruso thanked the City Manager and Director of Finance Jeff Shupe for preparing the Best Friend Festival (BFF) Cost Analysis. He said he is surprised at the cost of the BFF and said Council needs to decide if this event should be funded in the future. He stated in 2018 he cannot justify funding \$20,000 for a five-day event.

Councilman Caruso thanked Mr. Ramey for the City Organizational Chart, depicting employee names that he had requested. He stated this document will assist him and Council in filling two positions in the City-an assistant city manager and a tourism

director. He said by Council performing an organizational review it will allow members to determine in which department the City can assume risk to find money to fill the assistant city manager and tourism director positions.

Councilman Fultz stated he has a different perspective on the Best Friend Festival (BFF). He said he consistently hears there is nothing to do in Norton. He believes the BFF provides a service to our citizens and if the event has a cost then it is worth it for the community and the area.

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Councilman Fultz stated he received two suggestions from the public; the first suggestion was to pave the road in front of John I. Burton High School. The second suggestion was to clean the rock wall on Park Avenue along the 900 Block.

At this time, Councilman Caruso thanked the City Manager for having the sidewalk cleared on Kentucky Avenue near the high school. He said he would like for a red crosswalk to be installed like the crosswalks on Park Avenue.

Mr. Ramey said to install a red crosswalk the road would have to be paved. He stated the plan is to have a crosswalk complete with signage and sidewalk to the planned Destination Center on Route 619.

Councilman Caruso stated he feels the red crosswalk should be installed before the one-to-two year construction plans begin on the Destination Center.

Mr. Ramey said a crosswalk could be painted quickly on Kentucky Avenue at the High School but to do the red crosswalk he estimates the cost to be \$20,000.

Councilman Caruso said he would like for the consensus of Council to do a crosswalk.

Mayor Mays said a painted crosswalk would suffice at this time.

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Councilman Caruso said a "School Crossing" sign would need to be placed at the crosswalk.

Mayor Mays asked Police Chief James Lane to bring the "School Crossing" sign before the Highway Safety Committee.

Mr. Ramey said City Administration would have to look at Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Standards before placing any type of school signage in the area.

Councilman Caruso said that he would like another crosswalk placed on the opposite end of Kentucky Avenue near Carter Machinery where residents on Kentucky Avenue cross the road to attend the movies. He said there is currently a crosswalk but it is not visible.

Councilwoman Belcher said she will be attending a Community Policy Board Conference on October 4-6 in Williamsburg for the Planning District One Board.

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Councilman Fawbush said the Hydroelectric Power Plant is a viable project and will be revenue sharing between the Lenowisco and Cumberland Plateau Districts. He said between the design and build phase it will take 10 years to complete.

He attended a Jail Authority meeting today and the board passed the budget. He said the City will receive a refund of \$60,000 on this past year's contribution.

The Virginia Coalfield Coalition is undecided on the Sunset Digital Communications buyout of Bristol Virginia Utilities OptiNet but he thinks the matter will be settled within the next two of months.

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Councilman Fawbush commented the upper and lower campgrounds were almost at capacity this weekend and noted people are now fishing from kayaks.

Councilman Fawbush said that Mr. Andy Belcher also talked with him about the road in front of his home. Councilman Fawbush said he would pass along his concerns to City Administration and the City would look into the issue.

Mayor Mays stated he wanted the resolution supporting the Hydroelectric Power Plant on the next Council agenda, however, if everyone has read the resolution and council members have no issues with the resolution as presented, Council can approve the resolution this evening.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the Resolution Supporting the Proposed Regional Revenue and Cost Sharing Amount the City and County Governments within Virginia's Coalfield Region and for Any Tax Revenue and Cost Derived from a Hydroelectric Pumped Storage Facility Proposed to be Constructed within the Region. (Insert)

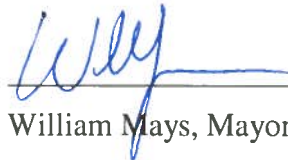
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Mayor Mays noted the City lost an important person and a lifelong member of the Norton Rescue Squad. Mr. Corbit "Tib" Coffey passed away and he was a great contributor to the City.

Councilman Fawbush thanked the Norton Police, Fire and Rescue Squad Departments for participating in Mr. Coffey's service.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council