

The regular meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, August 21, 2001 at the Council Chambers with Mayor Robert Raines presiding.

Present: Jack Wallace, Robert Raines, William Mays, and Joseph Fawbush

Absent: Joseph Hunnicutt

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

The invocation was given by the Rev. Shawn Easterling and was followed by the pledge of allegiance, which was led by Police Chief Sam Mongle.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the August 7, 2001 meeting as presented.

19972

During the audience for visitors, Jack Kennedy, Clerk of the Wise County Circuit Court, spoke briefly to Council and invited them to attend the Civic Future Symposium on Wednesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, at Mountain Empire Community College. He also introduced to Council Mr. Chad Fore, who is working with him on a GIS Project. Once the City fills the vacancy in their GIS Office, he would like for that individual to work with Mr. Fore to map some City property.

19973

Mr. Kenny Robinson and Mr. Garland Fraley of the Virginia Department of Transportation were present to give Council an update on the Traffic Signal Replacement Project.

Mr. Robinson advised that, of the eight intersections being resignaled, each are about 40% - 50% complete. During the replacement of sidewalks at 6<sup>th</sup> Street, they discovered material underneath that was unsuitable to hold the new sidewalk; therefore they are going to have to replace the under layer, install new conduit, and replace the sidewalk. The biggest potential delay on this project is getting poles and mast arms from the supplier. Within the next two weeks, some milling and paving will begin.

19974

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

Mayor Raines expressed his concern regarding the ramp placed at one business on the 600 block of Park Avenue, which has handicapped patrons. Mr. Robinson advised that he hoped to have this sidewalk replaced in approximately 2 weeks and that they have advised this business that they will work with them in any way to get their patrons inside the office.

The Assistant City Manager, Fred Ramey, presented Council with a slide show on the progress of the Hotel Norton Project. He advised that this project is approximately 20% complete.

Mr. Ramey discussed with Council costs on this project since two changes have been made that make the total estimated price 2.2 million dollars. He also advised Council as to the origins of funding and of potential tax credits that may be available as part of this

project from historic tax credits, both from the State and the Federal governments. He briefly went over these figures with Council.

Following this presentation and discussion and upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council authorized the Norton Industrial Development Authority to pursue whatever steps are necessary to see if the hotel project qualifies for the Historic Tax Credit.

Mayor Raines expressed appreciation to Mr. Ramey for this presentation.

Ms. Laura Weldon, Executive Director of the Rural Areas Development Association (RADA) was present to discuss with Council the appointment of city representation to their Board. If Council so chooses, they may have 6 members appointed. No more than one third of the members may come from government, up to one third may be from business or industry, and at least one third must be representatives of the poor.

Ms. Weldon passed out handouts to the members of Council and briefly went over their various programs.

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of Council to try to attend the next RADA meeting, which will be held on Monday, August 27, at the Ramada Inn in Duffield at 6:00 p.m. before deciding whether they will participate on this board.

Ms. Weldon was thanked by Mayor Raines for this presentation.

Mr. Ward asked Council for authorization to submit two applications to the Appalachian Regional Commission since the deadline for applying is August 29<sup>th</sup>.

The first of these applications is for \$500,000 in grant funds for the Big Stone Gap/Norton Interconnect Project. This application is being prepared by Lenowisco.

The second application is being developed by K. W. Poore and Associates and is in the amount of \$233,100 for the Laurel Trails Subdivision Housing Project.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to authorize the City Administration to proceed with two applications to the Appalachian Regional Commission. One grant is for \$500,000 for the Big Stone Gap/Norton Interconnect Project and the second is for \$233,100 for the Laurel Trails Subdivision Housing Project.

Council briefly discussed the first meeting in September, which will be September 4<sup>th</sup>, the day following Labor Day.

Upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to cancel the first meeting in September.

Upon a motion by Joseph Hunnicutt, seconded by Joseph Fawbush, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to go into closed meeting to discuss personnel as per 2.1-344(A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, as amended and discussion of a prospective business and the expansion of an existing business where no previous announcement has been made of the business' interest in expanding its facilities or locating in the community as per 2.1-344(A) (5) of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

Mayor Raines declared Council in closed meeting.

19975

19976

19977

19978

19979

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by Joseph Hunnicutt, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to go back into open meeting.

19980

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

19981

Mayor Raines read excerpts from a letter from Mr. John Shermyen, President and CEO of LogistiCare Solutions, Inc., stating that they were confirming their intent to utilize the fifth floor space of the Hotel Norton as well as the sixth floor, which was previously discussed by Mr. Ramey in his earlier presentation. They anticipate having 65-75 employees in the Hotel Norton by December of 2002 with the staff being divided between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors.

19982

Upon a motion by Joseph Fawbush, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council authorized the changing of the scope on the Hotel Norton Project to include the fifth floor for LogistiCare and authorized NIDA to secure funding to complete the fifth floor.

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

Due to the announcement from LogistiCare tonight, the City staff is going to aggressively pursue changing the \$538,5000 loan from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to a grant since there will be more than 22 new jobs in the building.

19983

He plans to make the reservations for the Virginia Municipal League Conference next week and he asked that Council members advise him if they will be attending.

The fourth annual City of Norton /Town of Wise Softball Game will be held on Sunday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 in Wise.

If any member of Council would like to tour the Hotel Norton, the City staff will be glad to arrange a visit.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA

B. Robert Raines

B. Robert Raines, Mayor

ATTEST:

Mary D. Brown  
Clerk