

The regular meeting of the Norton City Council was held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on Tuesday, April 2, 1996 at 7:30 p.m. with Mayor Robert Raines presiding.

Present: Roy Roberts, Jack Wallace, William Mays, Ron McCall, and Robert Raines

Also Present: E. W. Ward, City Manager, and Joe Pippin, City Attorney

The invocation was given by Rev. Jim Jenkins which was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by the Chairman of the Norton City School Board, Marty Hagy.

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by Roy Roberts, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the March 19, 1996 meeting as presented.

17455

There was no response to the Mayor's call for visitors.

17456

A public hearing was held to consider a real property tax increase as a result of the General Reassessment.

Mr. Ward advised the reassessment that recently occurred in the City and that will be effective January 1, 1996, ended up being \$124,923,400 on real property as compared to the previous year's assessment of real property of \$105,168,260 which resulted in an increase of more than 1% over the previous year's assessment. The Code of Virginia in Section 58.1-3321 states that when any annual assessment of real property by a City results in an increase of 1% or more in the total real property tax levy, the City shall reduce its rate of levy for the forthcoming tax year so as to cause such rate of levy to produce no more than 101% of the previous year's real property tax levy. This causes our tax rate to reduce from \$ .70 per \$100 of assessment to \$ .61 per \$100 of assessment. The governing body, after conducting a public hearing which cannot be held at the same time as the annual budget hearing, may increase the rate above the reduced rate or the \$ .61 rate if they deem it necessary. This was brought to Council previously and Council advised the City Manager to schedule this public hearing that would have the tax rate remain at \$ .70 per 100 - up from the \$ .61 previously mentioned; therefore the purpose of this public hearing is to allow citizen input on this proposal to leave the real estate tax rate at \$ .70 per \$100 of assessment.

There were no comments from Council prior to the public hearing.

Mayor Raines opened the public hearing.

17457

Speaking against this rate of increase was Mr. George Hunnicutt, Jr. and Mr. Kenneth Hankla.

There being no additional public input, Mayor Raines closed the public hearing.

Councilman Roberts read a chart giving the analysis of the new reassessment and Mayor Raines gave the amounts of various selected localities in our area which show we are at the lower end of these rates.

Following a discussion and upon a motion by Ron McCall, seconded by Roy Roberts, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council

authorized the City Manager to incorporate the amount of \$ .70 per \$100 of assessment in his '96 - '97 budget preparation work.

Also the citizens were urged to meet with the Board of Equalization if they feel there is a problem with their reassessment.

Mr. Marty Hagy, Chairman, Norton City School Board, presented Council with their '96 - '97 budget and also gave them an update on various renovation projects.

In summary of their budget, Mr. Hagy advised they were seeking a total of \$1,658,913 from the City for a total budget in the amount of \$4,589,695. He also advised that he and Vice Chairman, Cliff Daniels, would be glad to answer any questions of Council.

Following a discussion, it was the consensus of Council for the School Board to use any surplus funds that they may have to cover the Capital Improvement Projects they have planned.

Mayor Raines expressed thanks to Mr. Hagy and to the School Board for the job they have done.

At this time, Council decided to have a budget work session after the next Council Meeting on April 16, 1996 and hope to hold a public hearing on the School Board Budget at the first meeting in May.

Council had been presented with A Resolution of Commitment to the Esserville Sewer Line Project.

Mr. Ward advised that the City in September 1995 submitted a preliminary proposal to the Appalachian Regional Commission for a upgrade to our Esserville sewer line which will cover approximately 6,000 feet of line to be upgraded from 8" to 12" for 4,200' and from 12" to 15" for approximately 1,700'. This was submitted as a result of the prospect of developing the industrial park at Esserville. We have been advised by the Governor's Office to submit a formal application and also we have been notified that we would be in line for funding in the amount of \$402,927 to complete this project. The deadline for submission of this project is April 16th and the total project cost is approximately \$500,000 which means there is \$100,000 of local monies that needs to be committed to this project.

Following talks with Wise County, it has been decided that we should jointly share in the development of this park as it would benefit both the City and County. This \$100,000 in local monies needed will be split on a 50/50 basis with Wise County. This resolution is needed to put in the application process showing Council's intent to fund the City's share of this project.

Following a brief discussion and upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of Commitment to the Esserville Sewer Line Project. (Insert)

Council had been presented with a request to sell surplus City property by sealed bid.

Mr. Ward advised this is the old Ramsey Sewer Plant Property which needs some demolition work to be done and general clean up work. The City Administration is asking that Council consider authorizing the City to advertise for bids for sale of the Green House portion of this property which would require the successful bidder to come in and

remove the green house from the premises. City Code specifies how we are to dispose of surplus or obsolete property and the proper procedure to do this is through a competitive bid situation.

Upon a motion by Roy Roberts, seconded by Ron McCall, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council authorized the City Manager to advertise for sealed bid to sell the property located at the old Ramsey Sewer Plant site as identified by the City Manager.

Council had been presented with A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Declaring the Month of April 1996 as Keep America Beautiful Month in Norton.

17461

Mr. Ward advised Council of the various events which will take place during the month.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia Declaring the Month of April 1996 as Keep America Beautiful Month in Norton. (Insert)

Council had been presented with A Joint Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia and the Town Council of the Town of Wise, Virginia Amending and Restating the Terms and Conditions of a Document Entitled "Norton-Wise Water-Sewer Agreement" Which Was Originally Approved August 13, 1984.

17462

Mr. Ward advised this agreement set forth the utility development which allowed the Wise County Shopping Plaza and the Ridge View Shopping Plaza to be built. The City supplied the sewer and the Town of Wise the water. One of the aspects of this agreement is that the City has the authority to purchase water from the Town of Wise in situations where we need to. This has been done several times. Also the water line that is stated in this agreement that would provide the City emergency water is the water line that runs through the Industrial Park. With the development of the Industrial Park, the water is going to be ultimately supplied by the Wise County Public Service Authority in that area and will be a problem if the City needs water from the Town of Wise as far as getting water through that line in the future. This joint agreement amends our 1984 agreement only from the standpoint of changing the point of delivery of water. We would no longer identify our point of delivery as to the Industrial park line, but through the water line that comes down Wise Mountain by Barnettes. The resolution in Council's packet covers all this and was adopted by the Town of Wise on March 25, 1996 and they forwarded it to us.

After the Clerk read the title of this resolution and upon a motion by Ron McCall, seconded by William Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt a Joint Resolution of the City Council of the City of Norton, Virginia and the Town Council of the Town of Wise, Virginia Amending and Restating the Terms and Conditions of a Document Entitled "Norton-Wise Water-Sewer Agreement" Which Was Originally Approved August 13, 1994. (Insert)

Council had a copy of a check in the amount of \$125,000 made payable to the Norton City Schools.

Upon a motion by Roy Roberts, seconded by Jack Wallace, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve a check in the amount of \$125,000 made payable to the Norton City Schools.

17463

In his comments, the City Manager advised:

The Annual Chamber of Commerce Gala will be held April 13th at the Holiday Inn at 7:00 p.m. He has tickets for Council members wishing to attend.

At Noon Saturday, April 6, the upper reservoir will open for fishing at High Knob and also the Big Benge Fishing Contest sponsored by the Norton Fire Department will be held.

In comments from the City Attorney, Mr. Pippin advised that Council had in their info packets that Century Communications advised us that they were raising the cable rates. In 1993, the City qualified as a franchising authority to regulate basic cable services. Virginia law states that the City is granted all the powers of the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992 which he feels was amended in 1994, 1995, and 1996. He would like Council's permission to look into this and respond to this letter.

It was the consensus of Council that Mr. Pippin should look into this and get back to Council on this.

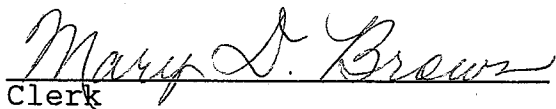
Also on the Joint Resolution with the Town of Wise on the Norton-Wise Water/Sewer Agreement, there is an typing error as to the year 1987 and this should be 1984. He advised the Mayor should just mark through that and change it to read 1984.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA

  
B. Robert Raines, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Clerk