

The regular meeting of the Norton City Council was held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on Tuesday, December 6, 1994 at 7:30 p.m. with Mayor Raines presiding.

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

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

The invocation was given by Father Tom Collins, which was followed by the pledge led by the Director of Social Services, Bill Stokes.

Upon a motion by Jack Wallace, seconded by Roy Roberts, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the November 15, 1994 meeting as presented.

17078

During the Mayor's call for visitors, Mr. Danny Price, 298 Gott Street, spoke to Council requesting a guard rail placed in front of his home due to the slope of the terrain and also requested that the steps leading to his lot from 10th Street have handrails re-installed. He stated he had been before the Highway Safety Commission and both requests had been approved.

17079

The City Manager advised Mayor Raines that the City is working on these items.

Council had been presented with the 1993-94 Financial Audit by the firm of Thrower and Thrower. Mr. Bardin Thrower was present and gave Council a brief synopsis. He advised Council that he would answer any questions they might have.

Following a brief discussion, Mayor Raines thanked Mr. Thrower for their presentation.

17080

Mr. Thrower also extended a thank you to the City Manager and his staff and the Constitutional Officers and their staffs for help in conducting this audit.

Council had in their packets a request from the Commissioner of Revenue asking for a re-evaluation of the Real Estate Tax Exemption for the Elderly. The present ordinance was passed in 1979 and states that the yearly income is not to exceed \$12,000 and the net worth not to exceed \$20,000. The current exemption is \$100.00.

The State Code calls for guidelines with income not to exceed \$30,000 and combined financial net worth at \$75,000.

1708

Due to the Commissioner's being out of town, Mr. Ward spoke on her behalf regarding this request. She is asking should we up these limits somewhat to more reflect the changes that have occurred in the past 15 years and the style and cost of living of individuals in the City of Norton.

If any changes are made on this ordinance, we need to draft an ordinance, advertise a public hearing, and then consider it for adoption.

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of Council that the City Manager work with the Commissioner of Revenue and get some figures to bring back to them for review.

There was a request to authorize the City Attorney to petition for a Writ of Special Election Concerning the Clerk of the Circuit Court's Position.

Mr. Pippin advised that due to the recent death of Mr. Gary Rakes, Circuit Court Clerk, the Code provides that a petition needs to be filed in the Wise County Circuit Court within 15 days of his death. Mr. Pippin had recommended to Karen Mullins, who represents the Wise County Board of Supervisors, that it be a joint petition wherein she would sign for the County and he would sign for the City. After this petition is filed, then the three judges in the 30th Judicial Circuit will then make a decision on the interim appointment to serve until the special election person has been elected and qualified and then to establish a special election at the time of the next general election which would be in November of 1995. The interim appointment will cover 11 or 12 months and the person elected will serve the remainder of Mr. Rakes' term to December 1999.

Upon a motion by William Mays, seconded by Roy Roberts, and passed by unanimous vote, Council authorized the City Attorney to sign the Joint Petition for the Writ of Election on behalf of the City Council.

Councilman McCall advised that since nothing was done in our budget process for this year, he would like to make a motion stating the following on employee bonuses. First, he would like to continue to use the long term plan that recognizes years of service. Second, he would like to look at the median salary of our employees and incorporate a bonus of 1-1/2% of that amount. This is to be given to our full time employees including Constitutional Officers and Social Services employees.

To our part time employees averaging less than 30 hours per week, they will get their regular years of service bonus plus 1/2 of the median salary computation.

This motion was seconded by Roy Roberts, and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

In his comments, the City Manager advised:

He had attended the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Wise County Shell Building and passed to Council a Certificate of Appreciation to the City that he had received.

That due to Governor Allen's recent action advising for the elimination of the BPOL Tax over a five year period, he has advised our legislators how this will affect the City. The amount of money lost covers approximately 10% of our annual General Fund Budget.

Mayor Raines advised that this would be a significant hit on the City and asked that a resolution be brought to Council for passage stating our concern and dismay on this item. He also requested that we talk with the towns in Wise County and see if it would be possible to present resolutions as a group to our legislators.

Mr. Ward is to bring this resolution to Council at the next meeting for passage.

He and the Assistant City Manager had been working on the City of

Norton Flag and he passed out several examples that they had come up with for Council's comments.

In comments from Council, Mayor Raines advised that at the last election the resolution to elect school boards was approved. There is a process involved in this that needs to be started on by the City Attorney which has to be submitted and approved by the Attorney General's Office in Washington, D. C. He would like to suggest directing the City Attorney to go ahead and start this process.

1708

Upon a motion by Roy Roberts, seconded by Ron McCall, and passed by unanimous vote, Council directed the City Attorney to begin work on the process for the election of the City of Norton School Board Members.

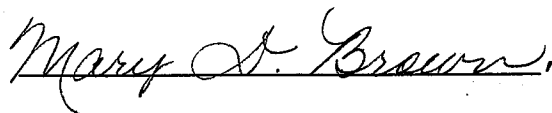
Mayor Raines also commended everyone associated with the City's annual Christmas Parade. All comments he has received were that it was the best parade we had ever had.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA


B. Robert Raines, Mayor

ATTEST:

, Clerk