

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held Tuesday, January 15, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor Joseph Fawbush presiding.

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

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager, and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

The invocation was given by Pastor Gary Hill and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by First Sergeant Greg Mays.

Upon a motion by Councilman Mays, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by the following vote: YES – Mays, Fultz, Fawbush, Caruso, Belcher, NO – None, ABSENT – None, council moved to adopt the minutes of the December 4, 2018, and January 2, 2019, meetings as presented.

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During the Mayor's Call for Visitors, recently elected Norton City School Board Chairman Cody McElroy came forward and formally introduced himself to council. Mr. McElroy said he looks forward to working with council, strengthening the bond between the two boards, and he appreciates all council does for the city school system. Council members congratulated Mr. McElroy on his recent election and thanked him for his comments.

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Mr. Ramey said each year the City likes to recognize employees who have reached certain milestones in their careers with the city. Those recognized represented over 200 years of service to the community.

Those honored were: Pam Boggs, David Mullins, Mike Rhoades, Rhonda Robbins, Ann Minor, Bill Glines, Kristy Wells, and Jason McConnell for 10 years of service; Andrew Greear for 15 years of service; Tim Couch for 20 years of service; Jonathan Carter for 25 years of service; and Lonnie Williams and Fred Ramey, Jr., for 30 years of service.

On behalf of council, Mayor Fawbush expressed appreciation for the years of service given by each employee and presented individual service pins to those in attendance. Following the pin presentation, a group photo was taken with council, and the employees were honored with applause.

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Continuing with special presentations, Mayor Fawbush asked former Mayor William Mays to come forward and the mayor presented him with a plaque honoring him for 10 years of service as mayor of the Norton from January 6, 2009, through January 3, 2019. Mayor Fawbush thanked Councilman Mays for his dedication to the city and a photo was taken with Mayor Fawbush.

Former Mayor Mays thanked council for the recognition and noted it has been an honor and privilege to serve as mayor because he has served with remarkable council members.

The next agenda item was the annual overview of the City of Norton Parks and Recreation Department by Director Michelle Knox.

Ms. Knox, via a PowerPoint presentation, gave council an update on the department's events held during 2018. She said a variety of classes, camps, and special activities were

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held for adults and children, and she noted the Trash to Treasure and Senior Exercise classes were among the most popular. Ms. Knox said the department received a state litter grant for litter prevention programs and recycled 17.14 tons of plastic, cardboard, paper, and aluminum. She said the department was able to utilize the AmeriCorps Team River 3 volunteers to mark storm drains as part of the environmental program for 2018. Ms. Knox stated 404 campsites were rented in Flag Rock Recreation Area compared to 264 campsites in 2017, and 60 shelters were rented from April to October. Also, Samantha Robinson-Lo'Ren completed a summer internship with the Parks and Recreation Department and instructed a theatre camp. Ms. Knox said 2018 was a very busy year with one or more activities scheduled every week during the summer, and during the other months multiple events and activities were held every month.

Mayor Fawbush thanked Ms. Knox for the update on the 2018 Parks and Recreation activities.

City Parks and Recreation Director Michele Knox and Special Projects Coordinator Katie Dunn spoke briefly to council giving them an update on activities currently planned on the 2019 Calendar of Events. Ms. Dunn said the first 2019 event was held at the beginning of January with the "First Month Hike." Ms. Knox said they added a "Snack and Paint" class to the calendar this year and had 21 participants. They continued sharing the many activities planned for this year with hopes of making some events larger. They also noted if funds can be raised they will add a summer concert series to the calendar which will be held at the Norton Friends and Farmers Market.

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After a brief discussion, Mayor Fawbush thanked Ms. Knox and Ms. Dunn for the update.

In packets for council consideration was a funds transfer to Norton City Schools dated October 30, 2018, in the amount of \$150,000.00, to cover October 2018 payroll expenditures.

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Upon a motion by Councilwoman Belcher, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, council moved to confirm the funds transfer to Norton City Schools, as stated above.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, 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.

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Mayor Fawbush declared council in closed meeting.

The city attorney was released at this time.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilman Mays, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to go back into open meeting.

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Mayor Fawbush 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 Mays, seconded by Councilman Fultz, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved to adopt A Resolution of the Certification of Closed Meeting. (Insert)

Mayor Fawbush opened the floor for two nominations to the Norton Rescue Squad Board of Directors for two one-year terms to expire February 1, 2020.

Councilman Caruso nominated Delores Belcher and William Mays to be reappointed to the Norton Rescue Squad Board of Directors for one-year terms to expire February 1, 2020.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Fultz, seconded by Councilwoman Belcher, and passed by unanimous vote, council moved that the nominations cease.

Mayor Fawbush declared Delores Belcher and William Mays reappointed to the Norton Rescue Squad Board of Directors for one-year terms to expire February 1, 2020.

In comments from the city manager:

Mr. Ramey reminded council that disclosure statements are due by February 1st.

He said city administration is currently advertising for reassessment services and if council wanted to participate in the selection of a property assessor to let him know as soon as possible.

He provided council members with a copy of an award the Water Plant received for providing 12 consecutive months of the recommended state allowance for fluoride content.

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Mr. Ramey prepared a packet for council that included highlights from the weekly City Manager Report for 2018.

He gave each council member copies of the latest monthly financials, latest Retail Sales Tax Report, the upcoming holiday schedule, and a blog post from a participant of the 2018 Cloudsplitter Ultra 100 Trail Race.

Mr. Ramey said he would like to schedule a work session with council at 8:00 a.m., Saturday, January 19th, in the Municipal Council Chambers to update council on projects.

The following comments were made by council members:

Councilman Mays recognized Todd Lagow for his efforts to obtain grants for Norton Rescue Squad and for moving the squad forward in a positive direction.

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Councilman Fultz commented it is good that Norton Rescue Squad is doing well and that he would like to see it continue moving forward.

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Councilman Caruso stated he would like for council to authorize the city manager or mayor to reach out to recently elected Norton City School Board Chairman Cody McElroy and Vice Chairman Dr. Campbell to reinstate preliminary budget meetings as in the past.

He asked the city manager if the District Executive of the Boy Scouts of America Brian Falin had contacted him to schedule their banquet at the Hotel Norton.

The city manager said Mr. Falin had not contacted him.

Councilman Caruso suggested council pass a resolution declaring a bear and snake awareness month.

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Mr. Ramey said Wildlife Biologist Seth Thompson of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) will attend a February council meeting and discuss a potential bear archery season.

Councilman Caruso said he hopes council can work with the schools to resurface or completely rebuild the tennis courts either with a grant or a public/private partnership.

Mayor Fawbush said due to the cancellation of the December 18th meeting council did not receive an update from the engineer on the Ridge Avenue Wall and Wildlife Biologist Seth Thompson was scheduled to speak as well. He asked the city manager if he would have the engineer on the Ridge Avenue wall attend the next meeting and provide council with an update, and reschedule Seth Thompson of DGIF.

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Mr. Ramey said the assessment of the Ridge Avenue wall indicated the most movement occurred in February 2018. He said it might be beneficial to the city to inspect the wall after February because weather conditions during that month have the greatest potential to impact movement of the wall. He suggested having the engineer provide an update at the first meeting in March after the wall is inspected for February or he can have the engineer provide an update at the February 5th meeting.

Both Mayor Fawbush and Councilman Caruso said residents have asked about the status of the wall and they would like an update as soon as possible. It was decided to discuss the wall at the work session on Saturday.

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

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



Joseph Fawbush, Mayor

ATTEST:


Rebecca K. Coffey, Clerk of Council