

September 16, 2020

The Norton City Council met in regular session Wednesday, September 16, 2020, at 5:30 p.m., with Council President Dennis Gilhousen presiding. Other council members present were Dean Liddle, Robert Bowman, and Ron Briery. Gerald Jones and Donna Foley were present by speaker phone, in accordance with the open meetings act. Mayor Jerry Jones was absent. Others present were Larry Knapp, Zachary Peterson, Crystal Richard, Jeff LeClair, Troy Blevins, Donna Liddle, Reva Benien, Cynthia Cullumber, Gerry Cullumber, Jody Enfield, Karen Griffiths, James Moreau, and Darla Ellis.

Motion was made by Ron Briery and seconded by Robert Bowman to approve the September 2, 2020 city council meeting minutes. Vote taken. Motion carried.

The following building permits were presented:

Dan Sisk - \$ 9,000 – Re-roofing and reconstruction of front dormer at 301 Warsaw

Mike & Jan Volgamore - \$15,000 - Construct ground level addition to house at 410 W. Wilberforce

Zachary Peterson of Walter, Walter & Peterson was present to request that an exception be made for former Police Officer Crystal Richard regarding her sick leave payout following her resignation. He stated Crystal served the City exceptionally during her time as the Police/Court Clerk and as a Police Officer, and also filled in as acting court clerk several times while she was a Police Officer when the position was vacant. The City changed their policy in 2019 regarding payout of sick leave upon termination and he asked that an exception be made. Motion was made by Dean Liddle and seconded by Donna Foley to waive the city's policy and pay her for ½ of her accrued sick pay for her exceptional service. Ron Briery stated the Personnel Committee discussed changing the policy in 2019 and there were no objections so a resolution was passed by the council. Vote taken. Motion failed 2-4 with Dean Liddle and Dennis Gilhousen voting yes and Ron Briery, Gerald Jones, Donna Foley, and Robert Bowman voting no.

Jeff LeClair asked about the recent string of burglaries in town and asked if the police department has 24-hour coverage. Assistant Chief Jody Enfield stated normally there is 24-hour coverage but they are short staffed right now, and so they currently do not have 24-hour coverage every day. The department will be back to full staff by the end of the month and will be back to 24-hour coverage at that time. Chief Cullumber stated the police department is working very hard to solve these crimes and hopes to have it resolved soon.

Donna Liddle stated the Car Show was successful again this year; due to the pandemic, all sponsorships from last year were honored again this year. She presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the City for their help with the car show each year. She also reminded everyone of the US-36 treasure hunt this weekend and stated the Goodwill truck will be accepting donations in the City parking lot next week.

Troy Blevins, Norton County Emergency Manager, was present to give an update on the Sparks money. He stated he is waiting on a few things from the State and hopes to have some direct aid available to distribute to various entities in the near future.

City Administrator James Moreau introduced Larry Knapp, who has been hired as the new Electric Distribution Supervisor for the City on a permanent part-time basis. Larry has over 40 years of experience in electrical line work, and will be meeting with the Utility Committee in the near future.

James stated Norton City/County Economic Development is working on a housing grant to spur the housing initiative and has requested a letter of support. Motion was made by Ron Briery and seconded by Robert Bowman to approve a letter of support to the Hansen Committee for the Norton County Housing Strategy. Vote taken. Motion carried.

James also stated he has been contacted regarding the possibility of refunding several bond issues to save the City money with the significantly lower interest rates being offered. He stated if there are no savings, it would not cost the City anything. Motion was made by Ron Briery and seconded by Dean Liddle to authorize James to proceed with working with Rick Ensz of Cooper Malone McClain, Inc. to see if it would be beneficial to refinance the City's USDA general obligation bonds and the KDHE revolving loan funds. Vote taken. Motion carried.

James stated Mayor Jones has commitments from all members for the Tree Board and will make the appointments at the next council meeting.

Donna Foley reported the Parks Committee is ready to start work on the plan for Roadside Park. Motion was made by Donna Foley and seconded by Dean Liddle to authorize the development of a plan for Roadside Park to include a Travel & Tourism kiosk, improvements to the children's playground equipment, and workout equipment for adults; when the plan is developed, it would be presented to the city council for approval. Vote taken. Motion carried.

Donna stated a former Norton resident is willing to donate her firm's landscape/architect services to help with the Roadside Park plan at no charge. Members of the Parks Committee, Pride, Chamber of

Commerce, Travel & Tourism, Moms 4 Kids, Live Well Norton, and Farmers Market will all have input during the plan development. Donna Liddle is working on finding an area for the girl scouts' storage, so the red building could be used. The property owners and property lines will need to be determined.

Donna Foley announced that this is her last council meeting, as she will be moving out of Norton. The council thanked her for her service and wished her well.

Dean Liddle reported the Public Safety Committee met and discussed the procedures for abatement of nuisances and abandoned vehicles. City Attorney Karen Griffiths is working with the police department and the code inspector and will prepare a sample resolution to be used after the 10-day notice expires.

Motion was made by Ron Briery and seconded by Robert Bowman to approve Resolution #13-2020, amending the City of Norton Employee Handbook and Norton Personnel Rules, by revising pay ranges for certain employee positions on the pay scale. Vote taken. Motion carried.

Ron Briery reported the Airport Board is working with Diane from Olsson Associates on plans to have the south part of the runway sealed; she is working with FAA on funding for the project.

Motion was made by Ron Briery and seconded by Dean Liddle to approve Appropriating Ordinance #18 as a whole. Vote taken. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Ron Briery to adjourn. Council adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

COUNCIL PRESIDENT _____
Dennis Gilhousen