

**10 Robertson St.
Meeting Number 19 of Radford City Council, F.Y. 2020-2021**

The "New River" City
May 10, 2021

Radford, Virginia

City Council had a closed session at 6:00 for the purpose of Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body; and evaluation of performance of departments, under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1).

Ms. Foster made a motion, seconded by Mr. Burress to convene a closed meeting for the purpose of Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body; and evaluation of performance of departments, under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1).

VOTE:

AYES: Ms. Foster, Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton
NAYES: None-0

Mr. Burress made a motion to adjourn the closed meeting, Ms. Foster seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Ms. Foster, Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton
NAYES: None-0

CERTIFICATION OF THE CLOSED MEETING:

Ms. Huntington made a motion that nothing was discussed other than for which the closed session was convened, Ms. Foster seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Ms. Foster, Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton
NAYES: None-0

The regular meeting of the Radford City Council was convened at 7:00 p.m. on May 10, 2021 in the Radford City Council Chambers, located at 10 Robertson Street Radford, VA. The Mayor of the City, Raymond David Horton, was present and presiding. Other members of City Council present were Mr. Onassis Burress, Ms. Jessie Foster, Mr. Forrest Hite and Ms. Huntington.

Others present were as follows:

Mr. David Ridpath, City Manager
Mrs. Jenni Wilder, City Clerk

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

NONE

COUNCIL RESPONSE:

NONE

PROCLAMATION:

SUBJECT: National Police Week

SUMMARY: The week of May 9-15, 2021 has been nationally designated as “Police Week”, to honor the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice and to those who put their lives in danger each day protecting and serving our communities. A Proclamation has been prepared for City Council consideration for a local designation declaring the week of May 9-15, 2021 as “Police Week”.

ACTION: Mr. Hite made a motion to approve the proclamation as presented, Mayor Horton seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton

NAYES: None-0

SUBJECT: National Emergency Medical Services Week

SUMMARY:

The week of May 16-22, 2021 has been nationally designated as “Emergency Medical Services Week”, to honor the men and women who serve in the field of emergency medical services, as well as recognize the importance of out of hospital care, lifesaving skills, training and education. A Proclamation has been prepared for City Council consideration for a local designation declaring the week of May 16-22, 2021 as “Emergency Medical Services Week”.

ACTION: Ms. Foster made a motion to approve the proclamation as presented, Mr. Burress seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton

NAYES: None-0

PRESENTATION:

SUBJECT: International Association of Fire Fighters

SUMMARY: Members of the Radford Fire and EMS Department are advancing membership consideration in the International Association of Fire Fighters. The Professional Association is membership based with focus on benefits, training, mitigating employee rights and lobbying legislation impacting the occupation. Virginia legislation approval last year, allows for “collective bargaining” association in local governments begin May 1, 2021 with local approval. Jessica Burton, presented an overview of expectations from the City and organizational plans.

SUBJECT: Police Department Annual Report

SUMMARY: The Police Chief, Jeff Dodson, presented the calendar year 2020 Annual Report. The report will include departmental data, community outreach and crime prevention activities, accreditation standards, as well as its mission and work towards Twenty-First Century Policing.

PUBLIC HEARING:

SUBJECT: Ordinance 1751-Cigareete Tax Increase

SUMMARY: The City of Radford has a tax on “tobacco” and “cigarette” products of .15 per pack. The rate has been level for over a decade. Radford has had the tax option since 2004. The state has now given counties similar authority. The rate in Christiansburg is 40 cents/pack and the rate in Blacksburg is 30 cents per pack. Several of the surrounding counties and towns are considering implementing a 40 cent rate. An Ordinance has been prepared for City Council

consideration to increase the Radford rate. A 2 cent tax per cigarette is the maximum rate allowed by the state. The Council discussed the proposed Ordinance at the April 12 and 26, 2021 meeting including the rate, enforcement and ordinance implementation details. A public hearing was scheduled on the Ordinance and a tax rate proposed at 40 cents/pack. The public hearing has been advertised, as required.

Mayor Horton opened the public hearing at 8:42 p.m.

There were no in person comments; however, the following comments were submitted electronically.

From: w. stone <wstone972000@yahoo.com>

Sent: Sunday, April 25, 2021 5:29 PM

To: David Horton; Naomi Huntington; Onassis Burress; Jessie Foster; Forrest Hite

Subject: Tobacco taxes in Radford

Dear Council Members,

Please note my objections to increased taxes on Cigs. or other Tobacco related products sold in the City of Radford. I own Buckos Pantry at 1700 W. Main St. and during this difficult time in retail with covid, employee shortages, hikes in the wages mandated by the State government and the weakened economy in general I believe increased taxes would only motivate the citizens of Radford to go outside of the city to shop. Retail business in general is very difficult these days evidenced by the amount of local owned businesses that have dwindled in the past few decades and have been replaced by national chains. As a loyal tax payer please consider the hardship this would impose on the small business community in our city.

Thanks for your service and consideration, Bill Stone

NATO

DATE: May6,2021

TO: Mayor David Horton and Members of the Radford City Council

FROM: Thomas Briant, Executive Director

The National Association of Tobacco Outlets (NATO), a national retail trade organization, represents retail stores located in Radford that sell tobacco products. These retailers are very concerned about the proposal to increase the tax on cigarettes. As detailed in the attached letter, these concerns include the following:

- Radford will receive \$4.47 million dollars in federal stimulus funds under the American Rescue Plan, which should negate the need to raise any taxes, including cigarette taxes.*
- The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in retailers losing on average 65% of their sales in gasoline, snacks, beverages and tobacco products.*
- A new cigarette tax will cause customers to patronize retailers in neighboring localities that do not assess a local cigarette tax, resulting in further lost sales for Radford retailers.*
- Retail employee jobs and retail store viability will be put at risk by customers going elsewhere to purchase cigarettes and other products.*

- *A new tax is contrary to Radford’s economic development and business support goals listed on the city’s website.*
- *Cigarette taxes are among the most regressive kind of taxes and will financially impact lower income individuals to a greater degree.*

Please take into consideration the concerns of our retailers as outlined in the attached letter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Contact Information:

*Thomas Briant
NATO Executive Director
17595 Kenwood Trail
Minneapolis, MN 55044
952-683-9270
info@natocentral.org*

Mayor Horton closed the public hearing at 8:44.

OLD BUSINESS:

SUBJECT: Ordinance 1751-Cigarette Tax Increase

SUMMARY: The City of Radford has a tax on “tobacco” and “cigarette” products of .15 per pack. The rate has been level for over a decade. Radford has had the tax option since 2004. The state has now given counties similar authority. The rate in Christiansburg is 40 cents/pack and the rate in Blacksburg is 30 cents per pack. Several of the surrounding counties and towns are considering implementing a 40 cent rate. An Ordinance has been prepared for City Council consideration to increase the Radford rate. A 2 cent tax per cigarette is the maximum rate allowed by the state.

ACTION: Mayor Horton made a motion to approve the Ordinance with an amended effective date of September 1, 2021. There was no second.

ACTION: Mayor Horton made a motion to approve the Ordinance as presented, Ms. Foster seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton
NAYES: None-0

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:

Mr. Ridpath stated Senior Banners for the Class of 2021 are up and there is a parade on Thursday the 20th of May. The Armed Forces banners and flags are up on the bridge and paving procurement is out. Finally the Water Plant got the Gold Award.

Ms. Wilder spoke about the Highlander Half Marathon and 5K that was held over the past weekend and how exciting it is to see Tourism up and running again.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Ms. Huntington spoke that it is national nurse's week as well, what a year it has been for them. Ms. Huntington congratulated Dr. Alyssa Huntington who successfully defended her dissertation in engineering mechanics.

Ms. Foster asked a question about the open positions within the City that are budgeted.

Mr. Burress wished an Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

Mr. Hite expression of gratitude to all of our officers and the families here in Radford.

Mayor Horton expressed his gratitude to those who serve others. May 19 is the Ride of Silence in the City of Radford. Farmer's Market is going on. The City made the VML Gold Star for excellence program.

Mr. Burress made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 seconded by Mr. Hite

VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Burress, Ms. Foster, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton

NAYES: None-0

ATTEST:

Jennifer Wilder, City Clerk