

CITY OF MULBERRY, ARKANSAS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – May 16, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Mulberry City Council was held Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Center at 606 Church Avenue.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jimmy Moore	Sheila Trent
Bobby Tweedy	Kimberly Bruce
Stacy Muntz	Gary Baxter
Carla Dickerson	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Wilma Peevy

OTHERS PRESENT:

Steve Hurley	Mandy Oestreich
Shannon Gregory	Darren Fields
Dwayne Fields	Danielle Carty
Monica Freeland	Sadat Rice
Scott Oestreich	Maria Duncan
Lori Layne	Bob Muntz
James Abbey	Jeff Brown

Mayor Gary Baxter called the Council Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., led in prayer, and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance. Steve Hurley took roll. A quorum was established.

Jimmy Moore made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and previous months minutes. Sheila Trent seconded the motion. All present council members voted yes.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Chief of Police Shannon Gregory gave the Police Department report stating the department had 163 calls, 42 reports, 97 traffic stops, 28 traffic/criminal citations, 433 business checks and issued 84 clean up orders.

Fire Chief Jeff Brown gave the Fire Department report stating that the department had 5 grass fires, 29 medical calls, 1 motor vehicle accident with no injuries, 1 service call and 7 10-22's (a 10-22 means to disregard/cancel the last message). Chief Brown went on to discuss the upcoming events on the Fire Department's calendar. The burn trailer will be coming to station number two for the fireman to use for training. He then discussed the utilization of a new app called Chief 360. He stated that this was an app on their phones that would alert when a call was coming in. A grant was utilized to put in TV screens, Wi-Fi, and I-pads to utilize the Chief 360 application. He expected to have the Chief 360 application set up and in use by June 1st. The Peterbilt tanker at station # 2 has not been forgotten, they are just working around everyone's schedule to have this up and running by July. He went on to state they are going to try and use the lift trucks from Compass Cold Storage to lift the tanks onto the truck. He stated that he was putting the word out that the old engine was for sale. The fireworks show will be held June 24th starting at 4 pm. Three fireman and two auxiliary firemen are taking the first responder class in Van Buren, and they should be certified by the end of June. The Fire Department is selling tickets for a Cash Drawing to be held at the fireworks show. He went on to discuss the plans for the funds from the Melodies of Mulberry event (once awarded) for a flat bottom boat and was also going to use auxiliary money to purchase a sonar system for the boat, to aid in water-based search and rescue assignments.

Public Works Director Dwayne Fields gave his report stating the department was coming along nicely with the water line replacement on Carter Avenue, Holman Street and Mulberry Avenue. He stated that they are approximately ninety percent complete now. He discussed the replacement of the bridges at the City Park. Stacy Muntz asked about the Sewer Blowout Machine. Mr. Fields replied that they have not had a chance to work with it yet as they were trying to stay ahead of the paving crew on the water line projects. Bobby Tweedy asked about the potholes in town and when those were going to get fixed. Mr. Fields replied that once the water line projects were complete, he should be able to get to the potholes. Stacy Muntz asked about Mr. Fields parking in the street when working onsite. Mr. Fields stated that some roads are not big enough to be out of the way when stopped and stated that he attempts to stay out of the way when possible. He added that he tries to move as fast as possible when he does have to park in the street. Kimberly Bruce asked about the flooding at the intersection of Alma Avenue and Mary's Lane and after it rains. Mr. Fields replied that he knew about that and stated that a 12-inch culvert needed to be removed and replaced with an 18-inch culvert. Mr. Fields stated that this project was on the list to get fixed after the water line projects were complete.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Baxter discussed the lease agreement with an option to purchase on the City owned property on Highway 64 to be used for a laundromat. He stated that Lori Layne had agreed to the terms of the lease provided. Discussion ensued. Bobby Tweedy made a motion to approve the Lease Agreement. Sheila Trent seconded the motion. All present members voted yes.

NEW BUSINESS

The Mayor discussed the upcoming reading of Ordinances would be a first reading only. A Public Hearing is set for June 5th at noon at the Courthouse located at 6506 Church Avenue. He stated that Dennis Sternberg with the Arkansas Rural Water Authority would be present at the Public Hearing.

Steve Hurley read the first reading of ORDINANCE NO. 2023-02 AN ORDINANCE SETTING WASTEWATER/SEWER RATES FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE MULBERRY CITY WASTEWATER SYSTEM AND OR FOR OTHER RELATED PURPOSES.

Steve Hurley read the first reading of ORDINANCE NO. 2023-03 AN ORDINANCE SETTING WATER RATES FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE MULBERRY CITY WATER SYSTEM AND FOR OTHER RELATED PURPOSES.

Steve Hurley read the first reading of ORDINANCE NO. 2023-04 AN ORDINANCE SETTING WATER FREES FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE MULBERRY CITY WATER SYSTEM AND FOR OTHER RELATED PURPOSES.

Steve Hurley read the first reading of ORDINANCE NO. 2023-05 AN ORDINANCE SETTING WASTEWATER/SEWER FEES FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE MULBERRY CITY WATER SYSTEM AND FOR OTHER RELATED PURPOSES.

Mayor Baxter discussed a Right of Way Easement for the Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative Corporation for the electrical lines down to the City Lake for the aerators going in there. The City Attorney had looked at this document and found it to be appropriate. Assistant Water Superintendent Darren Fields was called up to answer questions. Discussion ensued. Stacy Muntz made a motion to approve the Right of Way Easement. Sheila Trent seconded. All present members voted yes.

MAYOR'S REPORT AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Baxter said that he talked to the engineer on the Water Treatment Plant expansion and was told that the plan specifications and full cost estimate would be completed this Friday (May 19th) and sent to the State. Mayor Baxter went on to give an update on the Highway 64 water line relocation for the bridge on Little Mulberry. He stated that the engineers were going to be talking to the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) asking for relief on the funding of the moving of the water line since the City had not planned on this, and it only came up

because of the Highway Department. The engineer had given Mayor Baxter an example of a similar situation where ARDOT did provide funding relief. The sidewalk bid opening on the Church Avenue sidewalk from 64 to 10th street went well. Western Millwright had won the bid on the project. They are the same company that won the bid on the Food Pantry project as well. He pointed out that the concrete work done at that project was done well. He then went on to update the Council on the progress of the Food Pantry and discussed that things were progressing nicely on that project. He discussed the progress of the gas company and water company setting up separate meters for the Food Pantry and noted that the Food Pantry would have a separate meter of their own for Gas, Electric and Water. The Mayor then updated the Council on the progress of the Pickleball project. He noted that the concrete had been poured and they were waiting for the concrete to season. The surface and fencing for the court should be ready in June. Mayor then discussed the latest information on the Industrial Park paving project. He then discussed the ribbon cutting for the Compass Cold Storage and announced the ribbon cutting will be on May 31st at 10 am.

Jimmy Moore asked if the paving on the streets was going to start soon. Mayor Baxter stated that it had already began.

Maria Duncan spoke on her road (Duncan Road) not being a city street and asked if the road could be graded by the City. Mayor Baxter said if they provide the materials, the City will do the work. He asked her to get with Darren Fields to work that out.

With no further business to discuss Stacy Muntz made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kimberly Bruce seconded the motion. All present members voted yes.

This meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

These minutes were taken by Steve Hurley.

APPROVED: 

Gary D. Baxter, Mayor

ATTEST: 

Carla Dickerson, Recorder-Treasurer