CITY OF MULBERRY, ARKANSAS

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – August 20, 2024

The regularly scheduled monthly session of the Mulberry City Council convened on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at precisely 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the City Council Center, located at 606 Church Avenue, Mulberry.

Gary D. Baxter, Mayor

Carla Dickerson, Recorder-Treasurer

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kimberly Bruce, Ward 2 Position 2

Bobby Tweedy, Ward 2 Position 1

Wilma Peevy, Ward 3 Position 1

Stacy Muntz, Ward 1 Position 2

Jimmy Moore, Ward 3 Position 2

Sheila Trent, Ward 1 Position 1

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Steve Hurley, Assistant to the Mayor

Sadat Rice

Shannon Gregory, Police Chief

Beth Rice

Darren Fields, Water Superintendent

Michael Holloway

Alex Walker, Public Works Director

Kyle Parker

Tammy Watts, Director Ralph D. Graff Library of Mulberry

Jason Sumpter, Assistant Fire Chief

Call to Order

Mayor Baxter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., leading the gathering in prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Assistant to the Mayor Steve Hurley, conducted the roll call, confirming the presence of a quorum.

Approval of Consent Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the July regular meeting and the August 1st special meeting were presented. Kimberly Bruce motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Stacy Muntz. The motion was approved unanimously.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Police Department Report – Police Chief Shannon Gregory:

- Chief Shannon Gregory reported 159 calls, seventy-one traffic stops, twenty citations, eight arrests (five misdemeanors and three felony), nine assist outside agency reports, eight accidents, and 464 business checks. Plans for the annual Shop with a Cop and a chili supper fundraiser were announced.

Fire Department Report – Assistant Fire Chief Jason Sumpter:

- Assistant Chief Jason Sumpter reported fifteen calls, including two vehicle accidents, two vehicle fires, two grass fires, six medical calls, one hazardous condition, and two general service calls.

Public Works Department Report – Public Works Director Alex Walker:

- Director Alex Walker reported on twenty-seven service calls, ongoing leak repairs, and plans for road maintenance.

Ralph D. Graff Library of Mulberry Report – Director Tammy Watts:

- Tammy Watts highlighted increased attendance and programs, mentioning significant community engagement and upcoming changes in response to the new school schedule.

OLD BUSINESS

- **No Old Business**

NEW BUSINESS

1. CARDS Sanitation Rate Increase Proposal

- **Presenter:** Blake Tarpley, CARDS Waste Services
- **Request:** 5% rate increase, debated and reduced to 4% following the contractual allowance.
- **Ordinance 2024-07:** Read by Steve Hurley.
- **Motion to Suspend the Reading of Second and Third Readings and Read by Title Only:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Second for Suspension:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote on Suspension:** Passed unanimously.
- **Motion to Approve Ordinance 2024-07:** Bobby Tweedy
- **Seconded:** Jimmy Moore
- **Vote for Ordinance 2024-07:** Unanimously approved after discussion and amendment.

2. Public Meeting

- **Commencement:** 7:34 PM
- **Purpose:** Discussion on bond issues relating to water treatment plant improvements.
- **Clarifications on Bonding and Financing:** Mayor Baxter discussed the implications and mechanics of bond financing for water treatment plant improvements with citizens.
- **Public Queries:** Residents Michael Holloway, Kyle Parker, and Sadat Rice expressed concerns and sought clarifications regarding the impact on local taxes and utility bills.

- **Conclusion:** Mayor Baxter addressed all questions, emphasizing the project's necessity and financial strategy using bonds.
- **End:** 7:44 PM

3. **Updating Official Posting Locations**

- **Ordinance 2024-04:** To update the designated posting locations for public notices.
- **Ordinance 2024-04:** Read by Steve Hurley.
- **Motion to Suspend the Reading of Second and Third Readings and Read by Title Only:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Seconded for Suspension:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote on Suspension:** Passed unanimously.
- **Motion to Approve Ordinance 2024-04:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Seconded:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote for Ordinance 2024-04:** Unanimously approved.

4. **Bond Issues for Water Treatment Plant**

- **Discussion on Bond Issuance:** Mayor Baxter explained the financing strategy involving bonds.
- **Ordinance 2024-05:** Authorized the issuance of water and sewer revenue bonds.
- **Ordinance 2024-05:** Read by Steve Hurley.
- **Motion to Suspend the Reading of Second and Third Readings for Ordinance 2024-05 and Read by Title Only:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Seconded for Suspension for Ordinance 2024-05:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote on Suspension for Ordinance 2024-05:** Passed unanimously.
- **Motion to Approve for Ordinance 2024-05:** Jimmy Moore
- **Seconded for Ordinance 2024-05:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote for Ordinance 2024-05:** Passed unanimously after respective motions and discussions.
- **Ordinance 2024-06:** Authorized the issuance of water and sewer revenue bonds.
- **Ordinance 2024-06:** Read by Steve Hurley.
- **Motion to Suspend the Reading of Second and Third Readings for Ordinance 2024-06 and Read by Title Only:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Seconded for Suspension for Ordinance 2024-06**: Sheila Trent
- **Vote on Suspension for Ordinance 2024-06:** Passed unanimously.
- **Motion to Approve Ordinance 2024-06:** Bobby Tweedy
- **Seconded:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote for Ordinance 2024-06:** Passed unanimously after respective motions and discussions.

5. **Grant Applications**

- **Resolution 2024-12:** Authorizing the Mayor to apply for a grant to develop a smoke-free public trail.
- **Resolution 2024-12:** Read by Steve Hurley.
- **Motion to Approve:** Jimmy Moore
- **Seconded:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Vote for Resolution 2024-12:** Unanimously approved.
- **Resolution 2024-13:** Authorizing the Mayor to apply for financial assistance for water system improvements.
- **Resolution 2024-13:** Read by Steve Hurley.
- **Motion to Approve:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Seconded:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote for Resolution 2024-13:** Passed unanimously.

6. **Property Sales for Economic Development**

- **Resolution 2024-14:** Authorized sale of property at 104 N Main to Melton Perez.
- **Resolution 2024-14:** Read by Steve Hurley.
- **Motion to Approve Resolution 2024-14:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Seconded:** Stacy Muntz
- **Vote for Resolution 2024-14:** Passed unanimously.
- **Resolution 2024-15:** Authorized sale of property at 101 Reynolds Street to the Melton Perez.
- **Resolution 2024-15:** Read by Steve Hurley.
- **Motion to Approve Resolution 2024-15:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Seconded:** Jimmy Moore
- **Vote for Resolution 2024-15:** Passed unanimously.

7. **Vehicle Purchase and Trade-In**

- **Resolution 2024-16:** Authorized the purchase and trade-in of two Dodge Ram trucks to replace older city vehicles.
- **Resolution 2024-16:** Read by Steve Hurley.
- **Purpose:** To minimize repair costs and downtime by upgrading the city's fleet.
- **Motion to Approve:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Seconded:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote for Resolution 2024-16:** Passed with majority approval. Stacy Muntz voted no.

8. **Legislative Audit Results Discussion**

- **Topic:** Review of the latest Legislative Audit findings.
- **Details:** Mayor Baxter and the council reviewed the results of the recent audit, discussing the implications and necessary actions to address highlighted issues. It was noted that there were no reportable findings in the audit.

9. **Water Line Replacement Project**

- **Discussion:** Public Works Director Alex Walker addressed the council regarding the need for water line replacement between Mary's Lane and Ninth Street, reducing the scope from the previously discussed area due to frequent water leaks.
- **Funding Request:** Alex requested approval to purchase materials and cover associated costs for the project, totaling approximately $13,750. The funds were proposed to be transferred from the Water Improvement Sales Tax fund.
- **Motion to Approve Fund Transfer:** Jimmy Moore
- **Seconded:** Bobby Tweedy
- **Council Vote for Fund Transfer:** Unanimously approved.
- **Follow-up:** Alex Walker confirmed plans to coordinate with suppliers to initiate the repairs promptly.

➢ **Mayor's Report**

- **Announcements:** Mayor Baxter mentioned upcoming developments, including a new Citizens Bank and a Dollar General store. He highlighted the planning and zoning meeting to address a parking variance for the new Dollar General store, noting it does not require City Council action but is public knowledge. The store at the corner of Highway 64 and Ninth Street sought and received a variance to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 50 to 40.
- **Additional Discussion:** The Mayor also touched on various infrastructure projects and upcoming changes, including the chip and seal on Highway 215 and the potential impact on local streets due to heavy truck traffic related to school construction. He reassured the council about measures to manage this impact.

ADJOURNMENT

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

This meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m. The next scheduled City Council meeting will be on September 17, 2024.

Minutes written by: Steve Hurley

APPROVED: Gary D. Baxter

Gary D. Baxter, Mayor

ATTEST: Carla Dickerson

Carla Dickerson, Recorder-Treasurer