CITY OF MULBERRY, ARKANSAS

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – October 15, 2024

The regularly scheduled monthly session of the Mulberry City Council convened on Tuesday, October 15, 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:

Sheila Trent, Ward 1 Position 1

Stacy Muntz, Ward 1 Position 2

Bobby Tweedy, Ward 2 Position 1

Kimberly Bruce, Ward 2 Position 2

Wilma Peevy, Ward 3 Position 1

Jimmy Moore, Ward 3 Position 2

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Steve Hurley, Assistant to the Mayor

Donna Staton

Shannon Gregory, Police Chief

Don Staton

Darren Fields, Water Superintendent

Kay Baxter

Jason Sumpter, Assistant Fire Chief

Steve Tankersly

Alex Walker, Public Works Director

Cathy Adams

Tammy Watts, Director Ralph D. Graff Library of Mulberry

Jeremy Shores, P.E. – Hawkins Weir Engineers Inc

Ashlie Ross, Western Arkansas Planning & Development District

Isaiah Fields

Ronnie Adams

Channon Phipps

Scott Oestreich

Sadat Rice

Mandy Oestreich

Eli Clardy

Eric Pierce

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:

Steve Hurley, Executive Assistant to the Mayor, called the roll:

- Present: Kimberly Bruce, Jimmy Moore, Stacy Muntz, Wilma Peavy, Sheila Trent, Bobby Tweedy
- Absent: None
- A quorum was declared.

Approval of Consent Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes

The Council reviewed the August regular minutes and financial statements.

- Motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Jimmy Moore and seconded by Stacy Muntz.
- The motion was unanimously approved.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Police Department Report – Police Chief Shannon Gregory:

- Chief Gregory reported 115 calls, fifty-four traffic stops, eighteen citations, seven arrests (six misdemeanors and one felony), and 407 business checks for August.
- Chief Gregory also shared a successful fundraising event, "Christmas with a Badge" chili supper and pie auction, which raised $7,226. The event was held at the Fairgrounds and had a strong community turnout. He announced that tickets for a rifle raffle to be drawn on December 14 were still on sale, with the funds supporting the program. Last year, the "Christmas with a Badge" program supported 155 children with $100 each for Christmas shopping and provided sixty turkey dinners. The department expects similar participation this year.

Fire Department Report – Assistant Fire Chief Jason Sumpter:

- Assistant Chief Jason Sumpter reported thirteen calls, including one vehicle fire, two brush/grass fires, and ten medical calls.

Public Works Department Report – Public Works Director Alex Walker:

- Service calls completed: 22
- Sewer-related calls: one
- He highlighted the community's use of the recycling center, with sixty-seven visits recorded for the month. Walker also addressed several ongoing maintenance projects, including mowing and general upkeep around the city. He provided updates on work related to Mary's Lane and Alma Avenue, where the department encountered some unforeseen issues with utility lines impacting project timelines. Council members asked about specific road and ditch maintenance projects, with Walker confirming plans for repairs.

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

Library Director Tammy Watts shared activity data for the Ralph D. Graff Library for October:

- **Total visits:** 2,285
- **Programs offered:** 28
- **Program attendance:** 252
- **Passive program participation:** 237
- **Books checked out:** 1,117
- **Books checked in:** 924
- **Computer usage sessions:** 109
- **Wi-Fi sessions:** 1,165

Watts noted increased participation in the Meal Monday's program, which supported sixty-six children from Mulberry. The library also revived the "Thousand Books Before Kindergarten" program and held a voter registration day on September 17, where six individuals registered. Additionally, the library hosted its first Local Author Expo on September 28, featuring fourteen local authors, and participated in the Crawford County Fair with crafts and sign-ups for library cards and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

OLD BUSINESS

- **No Old Business**

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Resolution 2024-17: Approval of Upfront Engineering Fees for Sewer Line Extension on Highway 215**
   Steve Hurley read Resolution 2024-17.

- **Motion to approve:** Jimmy Moore
- **Second:** Sheila Trent
- **Discussion:** Council discussed funding from the sewer half-cent sales tax.
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved

2. **Ordinance 2024-09: Backflow Prevention and Cross-Connection Control**
   Ordinance 2024-09 was introduced for the first reading, requiring three readings.

- **Motion to suspend second and third readings and read by title only:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Second:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved

Ordinance 2024-09 was read by title only.

- **Motion to approve Ordinance 2024-09:** Jimmy Moore
- **Second:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved

Emergency Clause Vote

- **Motion to approve the emergency clause:** Kimberly Bruce
- **Second:** Sheila Trent
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved

3. Discussion on 454 North Main

- The Mayor read a statement provided by the City Attorney concerning the property at 454 North Main.

Mayor's Report

- Updates on ongoing road repairs and infrastructure projects in the city.
- Progress on grant applications for future street improvements.
- Upcoming city events, including community fundraisers and holiday activities.
- Acknowledgment of the successful installation of new equipment in city parks and improvements in city services.

Public Comments:
Resident Eric Pierce addressed the Council to express his dissatisfaction with the city's trash collection services. He reported that his trash had not been collected for two consecutive weeks, despite his efforts to contact the service provider. Mr. Pierce emphasized the importance of reliable waste management and urged the Council to investigate the issue and ensure consistent service for all residents.

In response, Mayor Gary Baxter acknowledged Mr. Pierce's concerns and assured him that the council would investigate the matter promptly. The mayor directed Public Works Director Alex Walker to review the current waste management contract and address any service deficiencies. Council members also discussed the possibility of implementing a more efficient system for residents to report service issues in the future.

Additional Council Comments and Announcements
Council members expressed gratitude for city cleanup efforts and discussed upcoming infrastructure projects and citizen concerns regarding utility and waste management services.

ADJOURNMENT

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

This meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m. The next scheduled City Council meeting will be on November 19, 2024.

Minutes written by: Steve Hurley

APPROVED: Gary D. Baxter

Gary D. Baxter, Mayor

ATTEST: Carla Dickerson

Carla Dickerson, Recorder-Treasurer