CITY OF MULBERRY, ARKANSAS

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – November 19, 2024

The regularly scheduled monthly session of the Mulberry City Council convened on Tuesday, November 19, 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:

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:

Sheila Trent, Ward 1 Position 1

OTHERS PRESENT:

Steve Hurley, Assistant to the Mayor

Olivia Clawson

Shannon Gregory, Police Chief

Isaiah Fields

Darren Fields, Water Superintendent

Kay Baxter

Jason Sumpter, Assistant Fire Chief

Kandan Mobley

Alex Walker, Public Works Director

Seth Fisher

Tammy Watts, Director Ralph D. Graff Library of Mulberry

Chad Coats, Utilities Specialist Arkansas Department of Transportation

Larry Hart, Friends of Mulberry

John Garner

Cathy Adams

Ronnie Adams

Debbie Peters

Scott Oestreich

Sadat Rice

Mandy Oestreich

Sherry Jones

Marie Crandell

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, Bobby Tweedy
- Absent: Sheila Trent
- A quorum was declared.

Approval of Consent Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes

The council reviewed the minutes from the October Regular and Special Meetings and the October Financial Statements.

- Motion to approve: Kimberly Bruce
- Seconded by: Jimmy Moore
- Vote: Unanimous approval.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Police Department Report – Police Chief Shannon Gregory:

- Police Chief Shannon Gregory reported 147 calls, twenty-seven reports taken, sixty traffic stops, three citations, six arrests (five misdemeanors and one felony), and 428 business checks for October.
- Police Chief Shannon Gregory provided updates on the "Christmas with a Badge" program, which seeks to raise additional funds to meet its $5,000 goal for shopping events with local children during the holidays.

Fire Department Report – Assistant Fire Chief Jason Sumpter:

- Assistant Fire Chief Jason Sumpter presented the October activity report:
- Twenty-three calls, three grass fires,1 utility pole fire, sixteen medical calls, one motor vehicle accident, one smoke investigation, and one cancelled call.
- Assistant Fire Chief Jason Sumpter shared plans for the Christmas Parade on December 7th, highlighting the evening parade's schedule, vendor opportunities, and float judging. He noted that Chief Brown would oversee the event in his absence due to a vacation.

Public Works Department Report – Public Works Director Alex Walker:

- Thirty-three service orders completed.
- 113 participants in the city's recycling program
- Three water leaks repaired.
- 12 hours of hydrant flushing completed, with more planned for November.

- Public Works Director Alex Walker updated the council on the completion of the Alma Street waterline replacement, explaining that the new infrastructure addresses the previous year's recurring issues that resulted in three citywide water outages. Walker also noted that PaveCon was scheduled to begin asphalt repairs in December, with concrete work already completed.

Water Superintendent Darren Fields

- Superintendent Darren Fields addressed the recent brown water incident caused by debris and sediment entering the system during a period of heavy rainfall. He detailed corrective actions, including cleaning intake screens and implementing enhanced monitoring systems. Fields emphasized the importance of planned infrastructure upgrades, including pump replacements and improved metering, as part of the water treatment plant expansion.

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:

- **Programs offered:** twenty-nine with 411 attendees.
- **Books checked out:** 1,146.
- **Computer usage sessions:** eighty-one
- **Wi-Fi sessions:** 1,128 Wi-Fi users
- Director Tammy Watts highlighted successes such as the Halloween event and the Pilcrow Foundation Children's Book Project Grant, which will fund future improvements. She also discussed plans to install benches for outdoor Wi-Fi users and those seeking shaded seating.

OLD BUSINESS

- **No Old Business**

NEW BUSINESS

1. **East Tank Maintenance Contract Lawsuit:**
   Superintendent Fields detailed the city's ongoing lawsuit against a contractor responsible for maintaining the East Tank. Despite multiple attempts to enforce the contract, the company failed to clean and repaint the tank as required. The council was updated on the city's legal strategy to recover the $205,000 estimated cost for the necessary repairs.

2. **Waterline Relocation Project:**
   Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) Utility Specialist Chad Coates presented a proposal for relocating the city waterline affected by the Little Mulberry Creek Bridge replacement project. The estimated $495,330 project cost would be financed through a 10-year, 0% interest loan.

- Motion to table the agreement for review of a finalized draft: Stacy Muntz

- Seconded: Kimberly Bruce
- Vote: Unanimous approval.

3. **Friends of Mulberry - Adopt-a-Spot Program:**
   Larry Hart introduced a proposal for the Friends of Mulberry to beautify the Four Corners area using funds raised through community initiatives. The council authorized the city to request the necessary Adopt-a-Spot documentation from ARDOT.
- Motion: Stacy Muntz
- Seconded: Kimberly Bruce
- Vote: Unanimous approval.

4. **Industrial Park Pump Replacement:**
   Fields and Walker outlined the urgent need to replace aging pumps at the industrial park lift station. Resolution 2024-20 authorized the transfer of $81,587.75 from the sewer sales tax fund to cover the replacement.
- Steve Hurley read Resolution 2024-20.
- Motion to approve: Jimmy Moore
- Seconded: Bobby Tweedy
- Vote: four in favor, one against (Stacy Muntz).

5. **Resolution 2024-19 - Encroachment Issue at 349 West 5th Street:**
   Steve Hurley read Resolution No 2024-19. The council approved a resolution to resolve a boundary line encroachment affecting a property sale.
- Motion: Kimberly Bruce
- Seconded: Jimmy Moore
- Vote: Unanimous approval.

6. **Flower Shop Lease/Sale Discussion:**
   The council postponed a decision regarding the future use of the city-owned flower shop building until December, allowing time to evaluate options for leasing or selling the property, including the walk-in cooler.

Mayor's Report

- The city received a $9,453.71 grant for pickleball court enhancements, including solar lighting and windscreens.
- Updates were shared on the Silver Bridge replacement, expected to be drivable by year-end.
- Upcoming city events, including community fundraisers and holiday activities.
- Citizens Bank will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new Mulberry branch on December 4th at 11:00 AM.
- Construction on the Dollar General site is delayed until Spring 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

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

This meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m. The next scheduled City Council meeting will be on December 17, 2024.

Minutes written by: Steve Hurley

APPROVED: _____
Gary D. Baxter, Mayor

ATTEST: Carla Dickerson

Carla Dickerson, Recorder-Treasurer