

**CITY OF GASSVILLE, ARKANSAS
MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 21, 2017**

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Gassville, Arkansas was held on Tuesday, November 21, 2017 at the Gassville Community Center. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Mayor Jeff Braim, Presiding Officer.

The Mayor led those in attendance in saying the pledge of allegiance to the flag and a word of prayer. Upon the calling of the roll, those in attendance were Council Member Kayla Holland, Council Member Tim McFarland, Council Member Anita Seaman, Council Member Rick Peglar, Council Member Ralph Bird, Mayor Jeff Braim, and Recorder-Treasurer Jeff Lewis. Council Member Naomi Lassen was absent. Department Heads also in attendance were Water and Street Superintendent Tony Flippin and Wastewater Treatment Facility Superintendent Cody Sutterfield.

The minutes from the October 21, 2017 regular City Council meeting were presented for approval. Council Member Bird moved to approve the minutes as submitted. This motion was seconded by Council Member Seaman. There were no additions or corrections asked for, whereupon the Mayor called for the vote. Council Members Holland, McFarland, Seaman, Peglar, and Bird voted for the motion. There were no nays, and the Mayor declared the motion carried and the minutes to stand approved.

The financial report for the month of October was presented for approval. Council Member Peglar moved to approve the financial report as presented. This motion was seconded by Council Member McFarland. There were no questions or changes asked for, and the Mayor then called for the vote. Council Members Holland, McFarland, Seaman, Peglar, and Bird voted for the motion. There were no nays, and the Mayor declared the motion carried and the financial report to stand approved.

In the absence of Police Chief Mayfield, the Mayor gave the police department report for the month of October. It was accepted into the record without objection.

In the absence of Fire Chief Johnson, the Mayor gave the fire department report for the month of October. It was accepted into the record without objection.

The Mayor gave the building inspection report for the period of October 16th through November 13th. It also was accepted into the record without objection. Council Member Peglar asked about the current status of the Casey General Store that is to be built at the intersection of U. S. Hwy 62 and State Highway 126. The Mayor stated that the project is awaiting final approval from the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department with respect to the modification of the intersection and the traffic signal there. A new roadway into the property will be built and turned over to the city. The city

will have responsibility for construction of only about 90 feet of the proposed new roadway.

In other reports, the Mayor stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission will be conducting a public hearing on December 12th at 6:00 PM to consider a petition for rezoning from Jeff and Roxanne Donner for property at Hwy 62 and Whitaker Ln. The petition requests the property be rezoned from Commercial C2 to Residential R2.

Council Member Peglar gave a report from the Cotter-Gassville Joint Sewer Commission. He reported there was a pre-construction conference held a week and a half ago concerning the elevated sewer pipe along the walking trail at Cotter that is being replaced. In attendance were the engineer, the contractor, representatives from the funding agency, the Mayors of Cotter and Gassville, and the commission members. The project will get underway as soon as the new pipe is delivered. There is a 60 day window for completion. In other news, he reported that the collection system and the wastewater treatment facility are operating well and that work crews have been taking advantage of the good weather. A component of the monitoring system of the camera used in the collection system went out. The component has been shipped to Kentucky for repair. Council Member Peglar also went on to explain particulars with the situation with the elevated sewer pipe and how the engineer is recommending a two phase project. Phase I, the phase now being undertaken, will resolve the current deficiency by replacing the corroded pipe with new pipe that is coated inside to prevent corrosion caused by gases released from sediment remaining in the line. The modification will also provide a vent so that those gasses can escape. Phase II would come later at significant cost and involve eliminating the old wet well and replacing an entire section of line with a new system that would be pressurized to prevent sediment from building up.

There was no unfinished business to address.

Under new business, council first heard from Mr. Brian Haas, CPA, who presented council with a draft of the 2016 audit of the water/wastewater system. After a period of questions and answers, Mr. Haas stated he would returned next month with the final version of the audit. Mayor Braim stated that the new sewer system expansion project on the East side of town requires an auditor to work with the contractor and funding sources. Mr. Haas has agreed to assume that responsibility as well. Council Member Peglar mentioned that an audit is also required as part of the elevated sewer line replacement project that he previously spoke of and must be submitted within 180 days of project completion. Mr. Haas stated he would contact the funding source, ANRC, to find out exactly what they will need on that project.

The Mayor announced that Fire Chief Bill Johnson is retiring at the end of this year and presented council with **Proposed Resolution No. 2017-08**. This resolution would appropriate additional money into the General Fund 2017 budget to increase the wages (\$13,688), FICA (\$849), and Medicare (\$199) line items to allow for the pay-out of the Fire Chief's accumulated and unused vacation days, comp time, sick time, and length-of-service compensation. Council Member Bird moved to read **Proposed Resolution No. 2017-08**. This motion was seconded by Council Member Peglar. Upon the Mayor's calling for the vote, Council Members Holland, McFarland, Seaman, Peglar, and Bird voted for the motion. There were no nays, and the Mayor declared the motion carried. Thereupon, Recorder-Treasurer Lewis read aloud the proposed resolution entitled:

"RESOLUTION 2017-08. A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE 2017 OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE GENERAL FUND (EXPENSES) AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

Council Member Peglar moved to approve the resolution as read. This motion was seconded by Council Member McFarland. After discussion, the Mayor called for the vote. Council Members Holland, McFarland, Seaman, Peglar, and Bird voted for the motion. There were no nays, and the Mayor declared the motion carried and the resolution to be passed.

The Mayor presented the City Council with his proposed operating budget for the city for fiscal year 2018. He reported that he had met with the department heads and worked with them in preparing his budget. He highlighted certain areas to council:

- a. The proposed budget includes a 1% raise for city employees, which would be distributed to each employee equally by way of a 16 cent per hour raise each.
- b. The APERS rate is increasing from 14.75% to 15.32%.
- c. Health insurance premiums through AML are going down. The city will now be at class 5 level, resulting in a \$40 savings in premiums for each employee.

At this point, Council Member Holland stated she does not agree with the 1% raise being distributed in equal amounts to each employee. She prefers the 1% to be applied across the board with each employee receiving a 1% increase in his or her individual wages. This prompted lengthy discussion on this point. Council Member Peglar moved that the Mayor's proposed budget be altered to provide that the proposed 1% wage increase be applied across the board and based on each employee's individual rate of pay, rather than each employee receiving the 16 cent per hour raise the Mayor proposed.

This motion was seconded by Council Member Bird. After further discussion, the Mayor called for the vote. Council Members Holland, McFarland, Seaman, Peglar, and Bird voted for the motion. There were no nays, and the Mayor declared the motion carried.

Discussion then continued on ways to adjust employee benefits and compensation. It was suggested to look at amending the employee policy manual to provide additional vacation compensation and to look at some kind of longevity pay incentive. The Mayor will work-up a proposal based upon council discussion and present it next month.

Continuing with areas of the proposed budget:

- d. The Mayor said there are currently 4 or 5 separate trash companies doing business in Gassville. He suggests council look into doing a bidding process to select a single company for trash pick up service, noting that the City of Yellville just went through that process, assisted by NWAEDD, of which Gassville is also a member.
- e. The budget includes funding for a new part time lawn maintenance employee. This position was previously treated as a contractor laborer, but after discussion with Attorney Ron Kincade, it was deemed necessary to carry the person as a part time employee for various reasons. The lawn maintenance employee will be mowing both city parks, the cemetery, around the city hall, fire, and police departments, the old library, and around the Welcome to Gassville signs. The appropriation will be in the street department, however general fund can supplement the funding for the position if needed to.
- f. The sewer department budget provides for the 6% depreciation fund transfers required by agreement with ANRC on the elevated sewer line project.
- g. The city was notified by Baxter County that due to an internal audit at the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration it was determined that a merchant in Mountain Home overpaid county sales tax for a period of three years. The overpayment is being withheld from the entities that received it. \$26,000 will be withheld from the next remittance to Gassville. The merchant was not identified.

- h. Superintendent Flippin discussed issues with repairing the Case backhoe that was purchased a couple of years ago. The equipment has approximately 600 hours of use on it. Repairs are being covered under warranty, but the success of the repair work will be questionable as there are some problems with the backhoe that are puzzling the technicians.
- i. The Mayor said he will call a budget meeting during the first part of December after the November financial report has been completed.
- j. Council Member Peglar asked if the proposed budget included funding to address the drainage issue identified in Red Apple Acres. Superintendent Flippin stated it did not, but that an additional appropriation could be added to allow for the installation of larger culverts to remedy the problem.

Following discussion on the proposed budget, the Mayor updated council on several items, to-wit:

1. The property at 213 West Main Street that was damaged by fire several months ago and has yet to be cleaned up has recently been sold. The Mayor feels confident that the new owner will clean up the property promptly.
2. The Mayor attended a status meeting on November 2nd on the South School Street reconstruction project. Work officially commenced on October 27th. During the construction company's working hours, the speed limit on School Street will be reduced to 15 mph and will be posted by signs. Only one lane will be open at times and flaggers will be stationed when needed.
3. A city employee breakfast will be held Wednesday morning, November 22nd at 8:00 AM. Council Members were invited to attend.
4. The issue of a one time wage adjustment for the Mayor was brought up. The budget already includes funding for a \$250 additional payment to the Mayor, however the City Council would need to approve such a payment before it could be made. Council Member Bird moved to authorize the payment of \$250 to the Mayor as a one time wage adjustment. The motion was seconded by Council Member Holland. The Mayor called for the vote. Council Members Holland, McFarland, Seaman, Peglar, and Bird voted for the motion. There were no nays, and the Mayor declared the motion carried.

Three being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM upon motion of Council Member Bird, seconded by Council Member Holland, with all members voting in favor.

Submitted by: Jeffrey W. Lewis
Jeffrey Lewis,
Recorder-Treasurer

Approved by: Jeff Braim
Jeff Braim,
Mayor