Crossett City Council met in regular session October 15, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the Crossett Library.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

Present: Mayor Scott McCormick, City Attorney James Hamilton

Councilmember’s: Valerie Martin, Crystal Marshall, Eddie Rowe, CT Foster, Lynn Rodgers, James Knight

Absent: Clerk/Treasurer Jesse Walthall

Mayor McCormick called the meeting to order with prayer and Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilman Knight to approve the minutes of the September 17 regular meeting and special meetings of October 3 and October 8, 2018. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilwoman Marshall to approve the September, 2018 financial report. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCormick introduced Mr. Sam Selig with Integrity to the council. Integrity has presented a proposal for energy savings for the City of Crossett. The original scope of work would be an expense of about $1.3 million with an annual payment amount of around $89,000. Council had expressed concern about the expense to the city. Mr. Selig presented an amended proposal with over $800,000 worth of work and an annual bond payment of $59,000. Mr. Selig explained that a solar farm would eventually produce 90% of the city’s electricity and changing out lighting to LED lights would save an astronomical amount annually. Councilwoman Marshall expressed concerns that the savings indicated would not be actual savings, but projections of savings on maintenance cost. Mr. Selig explained that his company has to guarantee the savings or they are responsible for paying the difference. Councilwoman Marshall added that she has spoken to Crossett Airport Director Todd Freeman about a possible location for the solar farm if we proceed with this project. Councilwoman Marshall asked for a breakdown of the cost of construction for each of the projects included in this proposed scope of work. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilwoman Marshall to table this until more information can be obtained. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and subject was tabled.

Mayor McCormick explained that Mr. Howard Beatty, Chairman of the Crossett Economic Development Foundation, has presented a letter asking for a letter of commitment for the City of Crossett in order to apply for grants for the Crossett Sewer project. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilwoman Martin to prepare the letter and authorizing Mayor McCormick to sign. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Councilwoman Rodgers requested a working session meeting between the Crossett Sewer Committee, Crossett City Council and the Community Sewer Committee to discuss possible options for revenue for the sewer project. The meeting was set for November 13 at 4:00 at the Crossett Economic Development Foundation.

Mr. Claude Spainhour, Chairman of the Crossett Sewer Committee, informed the council that if the accumulated funds are normally $200,000 per year. The past few years they have fallen well under that. In order to bring revenues up where they should be a 24% rate increase would be needed. He also explained that if a USDA grant is obtained, they will set the rates. The rates which they will set will be much more than 24% increase. Mr. Spainhour also explained that whichever direction they go with for funding the project, an environmental narrative will be necessary. This survey will cost around $50,000.00. He reminded the council that in 2015 the Crossett Sewer Committee invested $180,000 for the plan. He asked that the city find a different source to pay for the survey. Mr. Beatty added that the money spent for the survey would be reimbursed by grant funds once the grant is approved.

Councilwoman Crystal Marshall spoke to the council concerning the Halloween Block party approved in the September meeting. This party was scheduled to take place in the Lakewood neighborhood. Mrs. Marshall stated that the original idea was intended to have a good time while keeping the participants and the residents of the neighborhood safe. She added that she had the best of intentions and has had school groups, businesses and many members of the community be involved. However, she has had negative feedback from some of the residents and other community members with concerns that no traffic would be allowed in the neighborhood. The intentions were to have roads blocked off to through traffic and allow residents in and out as needed, but most of the traffic would be walking. Councilwoman Marshall asked to cancel the party for this year and hopefully have a better plan for next year. One member of the audience, Linda Herron, spoke in opposition of the plan. She stated that she takes her grandchildren to that neighborhood for trick-or-treating every year. Because she is disabled, she would not be able to walk the distance. She asked if the plans could include something for disabled children and adults. Motion by Councilwoman Marshall, seconded by Councilwoman Rodgers to cancel the block party for this year and discuss more for the 2019 Halloween season. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mr. Derrick Evans, who has requested of the council to consider naming something in honor of his nephew – Jeremy Evans asked that this issue be postponed. His nephew is currently playing basketball in Turkey and would like to wait until he can be here.

Councilwoman Rodgers addressed the council on the street and sanitation issues. She stated that the permit granting the city permission for a control burn will soon expire. The crew is trying to get as much of the debris cleared as possible before it does expire, but a permanent solution is desperately needed. A composting permit could take up to a year to be granted and the city would have to purchase property for the plant. Mrs. Rodgers has been working with Director of Public Works, Jeff Harrison, looking into a burn curtain for the city. Councilwoman Rodgers added that the only choice is to stop picking up debris or find a means to dispose of it properly. She asked Mr. Harrison to explain to council what he had found.

Mr. Harrison passed out a flier on the Air Curtain Burner S-220 model. The cost of this equipment along with the cleanout rake which would be required would be around $125,000. This would eliminate the need for the chipper as all material would be burned rather than chipped. A front-end loader will need to be purchased as well to load the burner. A city employee would be required to learn the procedures and maintenance of the equipment. Air quality would need to be closely monitored.

Councilwoman Rodgers reminded the council that when the committee to study garbage rates and procedures met, they recommended that the city begin charging for the extra pickups. An ordinance was proposed that increased the rates on the books slightly. Rodgers added that in 1999, a referendum was passed and the city stopped charging for the extra pickups, but this should be lifted and appropriate fees be charged.

Crossett Economic Development Foundation Director Mike Smith offered to look into grants which may help pay for the equipment.

Director of Public Works Jeff Harrison asked council for permission to place liens on properties cleaned by the city. Those properties are as follows:

 609 West 10th Avenue $2,175.87

 302 West 8th Avenue $4,282.65

 900 West 8th Avenue $3,053.33

 505 West 8th Avenue $2,331.83

 602 West 8th Avenue $1,846.48

Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Rowe to allow Mr. Harrison to proceed with liens on the said properties. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCormick presented a proposed ordinance to allow Crossett Local Fire Pension to consolidate with Arkansas Local Police and Fire Retirement System and granting a 3% COLA in July of each year.

Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilwoman Martin to have City Attorney Hamilton read proposed Ordinance 2018-5 for the first reading in its entirety. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read ordinance. Motion by Councilwoman Martin, seconded by Councilwoman Marshall to suspend the 3-day reading rule and read proposal for 2nd reading by title only. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read by title only. Motion to further suspend the rules and read proposed ordinance for 3rd and final reading by title only. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read by title only. Motion by Councilwoman Martin, seconded by Councilman Knight to adopt Ordinance 2018-5. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Foster to approve the emergency clause attached to Ordinance 2018-5. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCormick asked council for permission to sign contracts with Crossett Economic Development Foundation for the year of 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 and the Lease Agreement for the building located at 125 Main. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Knight to grant permission. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

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Jesse Walthall, Clerk/Treasurer Marshall S. McCormick, Mayor