Crossett City Council met in regular session September 16, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Crossett Library.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

Present: City Attorney James Hamilton

Councilmember’s: Cary Carter, Dale Martinie, James Knight, CT Foster, Sheila Phillips, and Crystal Marshall

Absent: Mayor Scott McCormick, Clerk/Treasurer Jesse Walthall

In the absence of Mayor McCormick, Alderwoman Crystal Marshall served as President Pro Tempore.

PPT Marshall opened the meeting with prayer and pledge of allegiance.

Mrs. Marshall asked that the first order of business be electing an alderman to serve as President Pro Tempore any time the mayor is not available. Motion by Councilman Knight, seconded by Councilman Martinie to elect Crystal Marshall to serve in the position when Mayor is not available. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilman Knight to approve minutes of August 19 regular meeting and special meeting of September 6. Roll call vote. All vote yes.

Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilman Knight to approve the financial reports for the month of August 2019. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Code Enforcement Officer Tony Jones addressed the council on a matter with dilapidated property located at 404 Oak. The owner of the property has been sent letters since before 2017, and has not replied. The house is now on the schedule for demolition. Owner of the property, Dennis Moon is asking for an extension. Director of Public Works Jeff Harrison advised him that he could only allow a 7-day extension. Longer than that would have to go before the council. He was informed of this meeting and that this matter would be on the agenda for discussion. Mr. Moon stated that he had a prior appointment. Mr. Harrison asked Mr. Jones to speak on his behalf concerning this issue.

Mr. Jones added that proper procedures have been followed and all legal issues have been satisfied. Councilman Martinie asked if citations could be written for houses in violation. He added that the procedure is a long process and there may be more creative ways of getting property owners to clean up their properties. Mr. Jones explained that many times the homeowner is not able to be located or deceased. Councilman Martinie expressed that one of the main concerns of citizens is the unsightly properties. He added that if procedure has been followed, it shouldn’t even have to come before the council. Mr. Jones explained that this is a special case and for any potential repercussions on the homeowner’s part, Mr. Harrison felt the council should be aware. PPT Marshall added that if an extension was to be granted, she feels that a detailed plan for clean-up should be presented and there has been no attempts at this.

Motion by Councilman Knight, seconded by Councilman Carter to set a precedent for council to never allow extensions if all proper procedures have been followed. Roll call vote. All vote yes.

PPT Marshall introduced Dianne Marter with the Crossett Water Commission. Mrs. Marter presented the council with a copy of the city ordinance stating that all funds shall be collected at the city hall. She asked the council to approve that CWC will no longer take payments for Crossett Water or West Crossett Sewer bills. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilman Knight to allow CWC to enforce this ordinance. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed. Councilman Carter inquired as to the status of the computer update. Mrs. Martinie explained that this is still in the process.

PPT Marshall recognized Sativa Carpenter. Mrs. Carpenter is currently employed as director of Options, a non-profit organization which aids victims of domestic abuse in Southeast Arkansas. She has accepted an appointment by the state of Arkansas as program coordinator for Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence Youth and Family Services. She added that this is quite an honor and will proudly be a voice for southeast Arkansas at the state level.

PPT Marshall presented a proposed ordinance establishing a policy for medical marijuana. Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Martinie to have City Attorney Hamilton read the proposed ordinance in its entirety. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Hamilton read. Motion by Carter, seconded by Martinie to suspend the 3-day reading rule and have city attorney read the proposal for second reading by title only. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read by title only. Motion by Carter, seconded by Martinie to further suspend the rules and read proposed ordinance for third and final reading by title only. Roll call vote. Motion passed and Hamilton read by title only. Motion by Carter, seconded by Foster to adopt Ordinance 2019-3. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passes and Ordinance 2019-3 was adopted.

City Attorney Hamilton presented a resolution calling for a public hearing on October 1 at 6:00 p.m. at the Crossett Library to discuss issuing of water capital revenue bonds. Motion by Councilman Knight, seconded by Councilman Foster to have proposed resolution read by Hamilton. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilman Knight to adopt Resolution R-2019-8. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Resolution R-2019-8 was adopted.

Mr. Dan Pevy, Crossett Port Authority Board President, updated council on the port and RV park. He explained that thus far in 2019 revenue is down around 40% due to flooding conditions on the river. During floods in the fall, a boat slip broke lose and has had to be manually tied off. This is a specialty service and only two quotes have been received for the repair. One of the quotes is for equipment only and will still require hiring another firm for installation. The acceptable quote is for $25,490. Mr. Pevy is asking council to consider splitting this expense with the port authority. He added that the port is willing to pay, but is hoping that if something comes up, the city will assist in the payments.

Mr. Pevy requested that the city approve the appointment of Johnny Ray Swan and Denise Gifford to replace David Harbour and Charlotte Miller on the Port Authority Board. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilman Knight to accept the appointments. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mr. Pevy recommended that rates for boat slip rental increase from $45 to $65. Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Foster to increase rates. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

 Mr. Mike Smith, Crossett Economic Development Director, informed the council that there are more companies than ever before considering locating in Crossett. He gave updates on Grapevine Company, a pellet and lumber company, metal company, bio-energy company and a solar farm.

Mr. Charles Noble spoke to the council on behalf of Crossett Sewer Committee. He stated that Mr. Spainhour has been in contact with ANRC asking for likely interest rates. The current hold-up is with ANRC, but is being checked on regularly.

Crossett Fire Chief Leroy Higginbotham informed council that he has located a 2016 Dodge ¾ ton pick-up truck at Holt Auto Group to be used for a brush truck. The truck has 52,000 miles on it and will cost $32,500. The current brush truck is a 2006 and is needing many repairs. This will be purchased with Fire Act 833 funds.

Fire Chief Higginbotham introduced Michael Willhite as his Assistant Fire Chief. Steve Craig retired in July and Mr. Willhite has been acting as interim since. Motion by Councilman Knight, seconded by Councilman Martinie to approve the appointment of Mr. Willhite to Assistant Chief for Crossett Fire Department. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

PPT Marshall asked council to consider revising the ordinance for farmers market. Current ordinance allows only produce to be sold on the site. She would like to change it to allow for more handcrafted or homemade items. Marshall added that the intention is to prohibit yard sales or boxed merchandise sales, but to allow for any handcrafted or homemade items. Motion by Martinie, seconded by Foster to modify the existing ordinance. Roll call vote. All vote yes. PPT Marshall will get with City Attorney and help determine wording for the modification.

Mr. Vershall Hogan asked the council to consider sidewalks on tree streets between 9th Avenue and 1st Avenue. He added that there are many walkers and cyclist on those streets and is concerned about safety issues, especially on Cedar Street. He suggested the city look into grants and programs to help with the expense of sidewalks.

 With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

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