Crossett City Council met in regular session July 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Crossett Public Library.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

Present: Mayor Crystal Marshall, City Attorney James Hamilton

Councilmember’s: Dale Martinie, CT Foster, Cary Carter, Kerstin Mondragon, and Sheila Phillips were present and James Knight participated via conference call.

Absent: Clerk/Treasurer Jesse Walthall

Mayor Marshall called the meeting to order with prayer and pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Marshall introduced Louis Majia, the new business owner of Cynergy, Inc.

Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilwoman Mondragon to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2020 council meeting. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Foster to approve the financial statements of June 2020. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Marshall updated the council on the Covid-19 economic update. So far, the city has only experienced about a 10% decline in revenues from fuel taxes. However, due to an audit by AR Department of Finance, we experienced a 33% shortfall in the sales tax revenue received in June. When consulting with ADF, they indicated that this is the direct result of a company overpaying on estimated tax reports and should be a one-time hit. We remain cautiously optimistic.

Mr. Mike Smith, Crossett Economic Development Foundation Director, introduced Mr. Bill Spivey for presentation of an amended PILOT agreement and ordinance for RES Renewables (Solar Energy, LLC). Mr. Spivey explained that the changes made to this proposal are to correct dates. The original proposal limited the time of the agreement and this will allow more or less time for the completion of the solar farm. The PILOT agreement will begin the first year after the project is placed in service. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilman Carter to have City Attorney Hamilton read the proposed ordinance in its entirety. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion carried and Hamilton read Proposed Ordinance 2020-4. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilwoman Phillips to suspend the 3-day reading rule and read the proposal for 2nd reading by title only. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read for second time by title only. Motion by Councilwoman Mondragon, seconded by Councilman Carter to further suspend the 3-day reading rule and read for 3rd and final time by title only. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read by title only. Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Mondragon to adopt Ordinance 2020-4, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE AMENDMENT OF THE PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY AND CROSSETT SOLAR ENERGY, LLC. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and ordinance was adopted. Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Phillips to adopt the emergency clause associated with this ordinance. Roll call vote. All vote yes.

Mayor Marshall updated the council on the zoo property clean-up. She explained that the city is making progress. Some cages and fencing have been sold and Monroe Zoo is planning to remove the remainder of the cages by the end of this week. Mayor Marshall also stated that the city has been working with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission on a plan to eliminate the alligator grass around Lucas Pond. AR Game and Fish recommended a chemical to use and suggested the grass be sprayed in small batches in order to preserve the ecosystem in the area. City crews sprayed the first section last week and plan to spray the second section next month.

Mayor Marshall explained that the municipal parking lots, including the lot behind Dr. Barry Thompson’s office, Baker’s Pharmacy and other municipal lots is on the priority list. Because of other issues, such as streets and drainage collapse, this hasn’t been started. She has been in contact with Dr. Thompson and is keeping him updated on the progress. No definite date was given for beginning the project, but it is still considered a priority.

Mayor Marshall updated the council on the wastewater project. Grant application is ready and awaiting a glitch with the city’s DUNS number. As soon as this is corrected, the application will be submitted. The next step is for Crossett Sewer to enter a Memorandum of Understanding with Arkansas Natural Resource Commission.

Mayor Marshall asked Mr. Greg Sivils, Crossett Water Commission president, to give update on the water meters. Mr. Sivils explained that there has been a lot of confusion from citizens because of high water bills. These new meters are extremely accurate and measure much more water than the old meters. The Crossett Water Commission was experiencing more than 20% water loss. This will be eliminated with these meters. Mayor Marshall encouraged citizens to contact her office or Crossett Water Commission if there are issues with these meters or water bills.

Mayor Marshall asked the council to approve the appointment of Councilwoman Sheila Phillips to the Crossett Library Board. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilman Carter to approve the appointment. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Marshall asked the council to approve the appointment of Chase Carlson as chairman of the Crossett Recreation Commission. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilwoman Phillips to approve the appointment. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Marshall informed the council that a crew from the street and sanitation department has worked on cleaning up around the 6th Avenue Ballpark. Still needs work, but making progress.

Mayor Marshall informed the council of several grant applications that Cherub Alford, Amanda Freidman and she submitted last week. These include grants for the Crossett Youth Center, Crossett Food Pantry, Boys and Girls Club, Crossett Girl Scout Hut, Crossett Boy Scout Hut, tennis courts and others. No awards have been confirmed yet, but the applications have been submitted.

Mayor Marshall presented a proposed resolution to submit with grant for broadband improvements, A RESOLUTION STRONGLY SUPPORTING A GRANT APPLICATION FOR HIGH SPEED INTERNET SERVICE UPGRADES WITHIN THE CITY OF CROSSETT AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO PREPARE AND FILE SUCH APPLICATION. She explained that this resolution, along with letters from Crossett Schools, Chamber of Commerce, Crossett Economic Development Foundation, ACMC, Senator Cheeseman and Representative Burch will be added to the application to enhance the city’s chances of receiving funding. Motion by Councilwoman Mondragon, seconded by Councilman Knight to have City Attorney Hamilton read the proposed resolution. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read the proposal. Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilman Martinie to adopt Resolution R-2020-13. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and resolution was adopted.

Mayor Marshall informed the council that an idea from a city employee has been implemented and the city has started a public dirt pile. This dirt is collected when the city has to dig up sewer lines or drainages. The dirt is available to the public and located east of the sports complex. Dirt must be shovel-loaded. No other equipment can be used.

Mayor Marshall presented two resolutions for collection of 5 mills ad-valorem taxes for the city general and 2.4 mills for operation of the Crossett Library. Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Martinie to have City Attorney Hamilton read proposed resolution 2020-11 A RESOLUTION TO LEVY FIVE (5) MILLS GENERAL PROPERTY TAXES ON REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE CITY OF CROSSETT, ARKANSAS FOR THE YEAR 2020, TO BE COLLECTED IN THE YEAR 2021. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read the proposal. Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Phillips to adopt Resolution R-2020-11. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and resolution was adopted.

Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Foster to have City Attorney Hamilton read proposed resolution R-2020-12 A RESOLUTION TO LEVY TWO AND FOUR TENTH (2.4) MILLS ON PERSONAL AND REAL PROPERTY IN THE CITY OF CROSSETT FOR THE PURPOSE OF FUNDING ON-GOING MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION EXPENSES OF THE CROSSETT PUBLIC LIBRARY, TO BE COLLECTED IN 2021. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read the proposal. Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilman Carter to adopt Resolution R-2020-12. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and resolution was adopted.

Todd Freeman, manager at Crossett Airport, addressed the council concerning grant applications. Federal Aviation Association offers a 100% grant for refurbishing runway and taxiway lights at the Crossett Municipal Airport. A proposed resolution was presented to allow the airport commission to apply for the grant. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilwoman Phillips to have City Attorney Hamilton read proposed resolution R-2020-10. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read the proposal. Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Mondragon to adopt Resolution R-2020-10 A RESOLUTION SEEKING GRANT ASSISTANCE FOR THE RUNWAY AND TAXIWAY LIGHTING REHABILITATION PROJECT AT THE CROSSETT MUNICIPAL AIRPORT (AIP NO. 3-05-0015-013-2020). Roll call vote. All vote yes and Resolution R-2020-10 is adopted.

Mr. Freeman explained that a second grant from the Arkansas Division of Aeronautics is also available. This is a reimbursable grant and requires invoices to be paid before submitting for grant proceeds. This will cause a cash flow problem for the airport. Mr. Freeman asked the council to approve a short-term loan (up to 90 days) to cover initial expenses to be paid off as the grant proceeds are received. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilman Knight to approve the loan if needed. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Marshall presented two company proposals for garbage trucks, one from Rivercity Hydraulics and one from Arkansas Municipal Equipment. Both proposals are for leased equipment and include quotes for 2 rear-loading garbage trucks and a side-arm truck and carts. Mr. Jamie McCoy, sales representative for Rivercity Hydraulics, was present to answer any questions the council had concerning the quotes. Councilman Martinie asked if a quote had been obtained from Dumas Motor Company. He will seek a quote for equipment from this company. Several council members expressed interest in the one-armed truck. Mayor Marshall expressed concerns with the impact this may have on the citizens of the city. A special meeting was scheduled for July 30 at 6:00 at City Hall to discuss.

Councilman Carter discussed junk pick-up in the city. He reminded the council that when the program for charging citizens for junk pick-up was started, it was to be re-evaluated after a year to see if it was working. He added that he has met with Director of Public Works Jeff Harrison, Asst. Clerk/Treasurer Lisa Gulledge and citizen Bob Rush. Councilman Carter stated that it is the consensus of this group that the program needs to be modified. He asked that the charges for the extra pick-up be eliminated and increase garbage rates by $1.00 per month. Extra pick-up will be on Wednesday each week. Citizens will still be required to call in to schedule pickups, but if city crew is in the neighborhood and sees items on the street, they will be allowed to pick it up. City crew will not drive the streets every week looking for extra pick-ups. Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Martinie to have City Attorney Hamilton amend the ordinance to make said changes. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilman Carter to have City Attorney Hamilton read proposed resolution R-2020-8 which was presented at the June meeting and tabled by Councilman Martinie. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read the proposal. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilwoman Phillips to adopt Resolution R-2020-8 - THE CITY OF CROSSETT IS ESSENTIAL: IN SUPPORT OF FAIR, DIRECT FEDERAL EMERGENCY SUPPORT TO REOPEN AND REBUILD LOCAL AMERICAN ECONOMIES. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Resolution was adopted.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Jesse Walthall, Clerk/Treasurer Crystal Marshall, Mayor