Crossett City Council met in regular session December 21, 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: CT Foster, Cary Carter, Kerstin Mondragon, Sheila Phillips, Dale Martinie, James Knight participated via conference call.

Absent: Clerk/Treasurer Jesse Walthall

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

Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Phillips to approve the regular meeting of November 16, and the special council meetings of November 30 and December 3. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Mondragon to approve the November financial statements. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Marshall presented a resolution honoring the late David Harbour for his service as alderman for the City of Crossett. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilwoman Phillips to have City Attorney Hamilton read the proposed resolution. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read proposed resolution R-2020-15. Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Knight to adopt Resolution R-2020-15. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Marshall updated the council on the status of grants. FEMA grant for COVID relief has been submitted. Additional direction was provided for update on the grant application. Several other grants are also being researched for city projects.

Mayor Marshall informed the council that she has worked diligently with department heads, Mr. Terrell, county officers and Arkansas Municipal League officers in the preparation of this proposed budget. Well over $400,000 in capital and operating expenses were cut compared to the 2020 budget. Mayor added that there is a lot of uncertainty for the upcoming year, but she feels that the presented budget proposal will be a beginning guideline. She also stated that she will be keeping a close watch over the revenues each month and if she sees a decline in any revenue source, will bring it back to the council for more reconsideration. Motion by Councilwoman Mondragon, seconded by Councilwoman Phillips to have City Attorney Hamilton read proposed resolution R-2020-16. Roll call vote. Carter – no, Mondragon – yes, Martinie – no, Phillips – yes, Foster – yes, Knight – yes. With a 4-2 vote, the motion passed and Hamilton read the proposed ordinance. Mayor opened the floor for discussion. Councilman Carter stated that he still has concerns with the budget. He doesn’t feel like enough cuts have been made. Mayor Marshall reiterated that this is just a guideline and we may have to do more extensive cuts if the revenue truly shows a decline. Councilman Martinie stated that each department should be challenged to find ways to make additional cuts. Mayor reminded that this proposal has cuts in each department with total cuts of over $400,000. She added that additional cuts will mean cutting services and employees and doesn’t feel like that is a good option at this time. Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilman Knight to adopt Resolution R-2020-16 and the 2021 budget. Roll call vote. Carter – no, Mondragon – yes, Martinie – no, Phillips – yes, Foster – yes, Knight – yes. With a 4-2 affirmative vote, the motion passed and the resolution was adopted.

Mayor Marshall gave an update on the broadband expansion. Target date for completion is December 30 and projected date for services to be available for residents and businesses is late January.

Mayor Marshall expressed gratitude to Crossett Economic Development Foundation for the purchase of the “Scott McCormick Sports Complex” signage that has been added at the entrance of the complex. Mayor is hoping to plan a dedication ceremony in the coming months.

Mayor Marshall asked council to approve the appointments of Marilyn Harney, Angela Carpenter, Justin Burt and Jim Toon to the Crossett Cemetery Board. Motion by Councilwoman Mondragon, seconded by Councilman Carter to approve the nominations. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Marshall asked council to approve appointment of Chris Freidman, Robby Freeman and Marlis Brown to the Crossett Recreation Commission. Motion by Councilwoman Mondragon, seconded by Councilwoman Phillips to approve the nominations. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Marshall announced with bittersweet emotions that Clerk/Treasurer Jesse Walthall has submitted a letter of resignation after 22 years of service with the city. She added that though he will be greatly missed, she is happy for him to begin this new chapter in this life relocating to Hamburg, Arkansas to live with his daughter. Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Martinie to accept the resignation. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Marshall added that even with this sad news, we are fortunate to have Mr. Clark Terrell an expert in municipal finance who is currently serving Eudora and Dermott as their certified accountant and has served the city of Crossett on retainer as an accountant for the past 5 years. Mayor Marshall asked that Mr. Terrell be approved for the position. Motion by Councilman Martinie, seconded by Councilman Foster to appoint Mr. Terrell to this position. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Mr. Terrell will serve the remainder of the term (until December, 2022) as Clerk/Treasurer. At that point Mr. Terrell can choose to run for the elected position.

Motion by Councilman Knight, seconded by Councilman Foster to have City Attorney Hamilton prepare a resolution honoring Mr. Walthall for his service to the city of Crossett to be presented at the January, 2021 council meeting. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Marshall expressed gratitude to Councilman Martinie for his dedicated service as an alderman for the City of Crossett. Motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Mondragon to have City Attorney Hamilton prepare a resolution honoring Mr. Martinie for his service. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Councilman Martinie stated that it has been a pleasure to serve on the Crossett City Council and expressed his gratitude to his fellow aldermen and the citizens of the city.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Jesse Walthall, Clerk/Treasurer Crystal Marshall, Mayor