Crossett City Council met in regular session January 26, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the Crossett Public Library.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

Present: Mayor Scott McCormick, Clerk/Treasurer Jesse Walthall, City Attorney James Hamilton

Councilmember’s: Valarie Martin, Crystal Marshall, Eddie Rowe, James Knight,

C.T. Foster, Lynn Rodgers

Absent: None

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

Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Rodgers to approve the minutes of the regular December 19, 2016 meeting as well as special meetings of December 7, December 20 and December 28. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers seconded by Councilman Foster to approve the tentative financial statement of December 2016. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Councilwoman Rodgers updated the council on the Plan of Action Committee. The committee has met and discussed the potential of changing to once per week pickup. A logistic study is scheduled. Along with trash pickup, the committee is also looking into the leaf vacuum, chipper, mowing and other services this department offers. Councilwoman Rodgers stated that the committee is considering all options in the best interest of both the citizens and the city.

Councilwoman Martin expressed that she would like to see a representative from each department attend the council meetings in order to answer questions and address concerns.

Mayor McCormick reminded council that an evaluation of the city property located at 307 Main is still incomplete. Mayor added that he has discussed the issue with Bob Bridges, a local real estate agent, and Scott Ellam and will continue the conversations.

Councilwoman Rodgers asked again if time clocks were being used in each department. Prices have been obtained, but no system has been implemented in any department other than the police department.

Mayor McCormick informed the council that Media 3 still has not paid their franchise tax. The last payment made was for the first quarter of 2015. Councilwoman requested that an officer of the company be present at the February council meeting.

Mayor McCormick asked council’s pleasure for conducting meetings for 2017. Mayor asked that Valerie Martin and James Knight be added to signature cards for city accounts.

Councilwoman Rodgers requested that finance meetings continue on the 2nd Monday of each month. She also asked that working sessions be considered when topics need to be discussed. Council agrees that regular meetings should be held on the 3rd Monday of each month when the date does not fall on a holiday. The meeting for February will be held February 27th since the regular date is on President’s Day.

Mayor McCormick requested that someone be appointed to conduct meetings in his absence. Motion by Councilman Rowe, seconded by Councilwoman Marshall to have Councilwoman Rodgers conduct council meetings if Mayor McCormick is unable to attend. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Councilwoman Rodgers discussed the littering ordinance. She asked if a penalty clause could be added to the ordinance. Mayor McCormick asked City Attorney Hamilton to amend the ordinance to stipulate same charges as the state.

Councilwoman Rodgers inquired as to the status of a contract between the city of Crossett and Ashley County Jail for holding city inmates. She feels that all verbal agreements should be codified with a legal contract. This eliminates questions and gray areas. Mayor McCormick asked that Police Chief JW Cruce, City Attorney James Hamilton and Ashley County Sheriff Tommy Sturgeon meet and work on this contract.

Councilwoman Martin asked if the city of Crossett is hiring a fire marshal. Fire Chief Bo Higginbotham explained that this position is being filled from within the department. The position has been vacant for several years and Deron Boykin has been assuming the responsibilities that belong to the fire marshal. A promotion from within the ranks will fill this position and the marshal will also be responsible for keeping up with maintenance records on equipment, inspections and will act as safety supervisor on each fire. This will be a salary position and will be paid the same as assistant chief.

Councilwoman Marshall expressed concerns regarding the trail around Lucas Pond. She stated that places in the sidewalk around the pond are nearly impassible. Mayor McCormick added that the drainage crew has addressed that issue and are currently working on a solution.

Councilwoman Marshall also inquired as to the restrooms at the playground area of the city park being locked. Mayor McCormick explained that the restrooms were part of the CARD lease and because of renovations to the facility have been locked. Councilman Knight asked if CARD would be considered in breach of contract since they are no longer operating a zoo. Mayor McCormick added that there are other issues with the lease agreement as well and requested that someone from CARD be asked to attend the regular February meeting to inform the council of their intentions.

Mayor McCormick presented an ordinance to proceed with the lease of a knuckleboom truck. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilwoman Martin to have city attorney read proposed ordinance. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read the proposed ordinance.

Mayor McCormick noted several changes that need to be made to the ordinance. This issue was tabled until ordinance can be corrected.

Councilman Knight expressed concerns with the Crossett Airport. He feels that someone needs to be trained to operate the facility when the current director Rusty Atchison retires. Mayor McCormick agreed and stated he will talk to some of the airport commission members and discuss further at a later date.

***STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS***

Mayor McCormick presented the City of Crossett State of the City address. He commended the department heads and the council on a job well done. Mayor stated that 2016 was better than years past. Each department had taken measures to save money in their budgets. Several unsightly conditions were addressed and with more money budgeted to enforcement of the clean-up ordinance, he feels that even more action will be taken to keep Crossett beautiful. Mayor McCormick expressed appreciation to former councilmembers Robert Freeman and Candace Jeffress and welcomed new aldermen Valerie Martin and Crystal Marshall. Mayor added that he looks forward to working with the council in 2017.

Mayor McCormick asked council to consider resolutions honoring Mr. Freeman and Mrs. Jeffress. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Knight to have City Attorney Hamilton prepare resolutions. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mr. Don Rodgers addressed the council. Mr. Rodgers stated that February 9, 2017 is the date scheduled for the Crossett Chamber of Commerce Banquet. Guest speaker for that event will be Barry Switzer. Mr. Switzer is a native of Crossett who has gone on to become a legendary football player, coach and advocate. Mr. Rodgers asked the council to declare February 9 as Barry Switzer Day. Mayor McCormick added that he also like to present Coach Switzer with a key to the city. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilwoman Martin to make this proclamation. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCormick opened the floor to the audience.

Charlotte Hollimon inquired as to the difference in a working session meeting and a special meeting. Mayor McCormick explained that no decision can be made at a working session.

Councilwoman Martin asked how past due citations are being collected. Police Chief Cruce explained that if fines are not paid in advance of the court date or the person doesn’t show up to court to answer the citation a warrant is issued. If an agreement is made and not upheld, a failure to comply order is issued and license can be suspended until the citation is taken care of.

Councilwoman Marshall asked that the agenda for meetings be posted on the City of Crossett website and on the city’s Facebook page.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

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