

REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 5, 2021

Be it remembered that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Ocean Springs met in a Regular Meeting at City Hall in the City of Ocean Springs at 6:00 p.m. on January 5, 2021. The Mayor presiding, Aldermen Gill, Authement, Bellman, Cox, Papania, Blackman, and Impey were present. Also present were City Attorney Will Norman, City Clerk Patty Gaston, Deputy City Clerk Vicky Hupe, Fire Chief Derek McCoy, Police Chief Mark Dunston, Planning & Grants Administrator Carolyn Martin, Building Official Darrell Stringfellow, Public Works Director Allan Ladnier, Human Resources & Risk Management Director Mindy McDowell, Parks & Recreation Director Stephen Glorioso, and Executive Assistant to the Mayor & Board Meggan Brown.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

Alderman Papania gave the invocation and the Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion was made by Alderman Authement, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to accept the agenda.

PRESENTATION

Liz Elmore, Allen Stanfield, and Lauren Thurman from OSPREYS requested the Board's assistance to match funds for a People for Bikes grant. They said they would like to partner with the City to provide bike racks and bike repair stations in the City parks and Downtown. A letter of intent is due before January 22nd. Motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Bellman and unanimously carried to authorize the Mayor to submit a letter of intent pledging up to \$7,000 to be used to match grant funding from People for Bikes.

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Angela Johnson, agenda item 6-a, explained that she lives in the only house now on Clairborn Street behind Quakes Ice Creamery. She said it is a narrow street and Quakes customers block it and she is unable to get to her house and is worried if there were an emergency, emergency vehicles would not be able to access. She said people waiting at the train tracks also cut through. She requested the City close off the street to through traffic.

Douglas Roll, agenda item 6-a, explained that he purchased an overgrown, vacant property on Clairborn Street and demolished it to build a 13 space parking lot for his business, PT Solutions, with proper permitting. He said the parking lot is one way with traffic entering from Holcomb Boulevard and exiting on Clairborn Street. He said closing

Clairborn Street is not an option for him as it would cause a safety issue for parking lot traffic.

OLD BUSINESS

Fire Chief McCoy requested permission to purchase a training tower (Exhibit 5-a). He said after required research, WHP Training Towers were determined to be a sole source provider for the specific type of training facility. He said it would be the only fire training facility in Jackson County and the only prefab modular of its type in the state. The training tower will be able to be utilized by all public safety agencies and surrounding municipalities. He said the City's fire rating should change to a Class 4 which will mostly benefit commercial. He expects the timeline for completion to be approximately 12 weeks. Motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Cox and unanimously carried to authorize the purchase of a Fire Department Training Tower as quoted by Jahnke & Sons Construction Inc. dba WHP Training Towers, a sole source provider, for the amount of \$192,279.00.

NEW BUSINESS

The Planning & Grants Administrator said she has discussed the traffic issues of Clairborn Street and developed some options (Exhibit 6-a). She recommended the first step would be to add striping and place more obvious signage throughout the area and the parking lot. She said the road cannot be widened. Alderman Cox requested Public Works clean up debris from the street and that Waste Pro garbage dumpsters need a specific place to be set. Motion was made by Alderman Cox, seconded by Alderman Blackman and unanimously carried to add signage to the parking area and Claiborne Street as recommended by the Planning & Grants Administrator and clean and clear the sides of the street for striping.

Alderman Authement requested the Arts & Culture Coordinator position report directly to the Mayor and be removed from Parks Department. The Parks & Recreation Director requested the position remain with the Parks Department for at least a year.

The City Clerk said during City elections, Ward 1 currently votes at City Hall. She said not only are there a few issues having a polling place at City Hall with the Mayor's office being on the property and the need for the Police Department to have access to the building at all times. Many Ward 1 residents have questioned why they travel across town to vote in City elections when most vote at Grace Baptist Church for non-city elections. She requested the Ward 1 polling place be changed to Grace Baptist Church for City elections, the church would charge \$150 per election. She added that when the Ryan Youth Center is used as a polling place for Wards 3 and 4, the larger gym area will need to be used moving forward. Motion was made by Alderman Gill, seconded by Alderman Authement

and unanimously carried to relocate Ward 1 polling place for City elections from City Hall to Grace Baptist Church located at 3707 Bienville Blvd.

Motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Impey and unanimously carried to authorize rescheduling the February Recess meeting from Tuesday, February 16th, a City holiday, to Wednesday, February 17, 2021.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Bellman and unanimously carried to approve the Consent Agenda.

- a) Authorize to extend the resolution proclaiming the existence of a local emergency enacted March 16, 2020, regarding the COVID-19 outbreak (Exhibit 7-a)
- b) Authorize to waive the \$75 Special Event Application fee and the \$250 Civic Center rental fee for the VFW Post 5699 hosting a community food drive Saturday, January 16, 2021 beginning at 11:00 am; they are a registered 501c3 non-profit (Exhibit 7-b)
- c) Approve Special Event permit application for the VFW 5699 Community Food drive; Saturday, January 16, 2021; starting at 11:00 am until all food is gone; overtime cost may be incurred by the City (Exhibit 7-c)
- d) Approve Special Event permit application for Epilepsy Awareness 10k Winter Classic; Saturday, January 23, 2021; starting at 9:00 am until 11:00 am; starting at YMCA – Pine Drive – East Beach Drive – Halstead Road – Government Street back to YMCA; no overtime incurred by the City (Exhibit 7-d)
- e) Approve Special Event permit application for Valentine 8K Run; Saturday, February 13, 2021; starting at 9:00 am until 11:00 am; Beach Pathway; no overtime cost incurred by the City (Exhibit 7-e)
- f) Authorize to extend the resolution proclaiming the existence of a local emergency enacted March 11, 2019, for Front Beach Drive due to the incapacitation of street lights along Front Beach Drive; extend for 30 days (Exhibit 7-f)
- g) Accept December 2020 Aged Receivable Report for utility billing (Exhibit 7-g)
- h) Ratify advanced per diem for Fire Academy; check #118163 and check #118164 both in the amount of \$560.00 (Exhibit 7-h)
- i) Ratify check to MS Department of Revenue in the amount of \$60.25 for unmarked vehicle tags (Exhibit 7-i)
- j) Authorize addendum to the rental agreement for Civic Center with Northwood Church 2021 for Sunday rentals (Exhibit 7-j)
- k) Authorize unmarked police vehicle unit #2003, last four of VIN 2744; finding identifying marks would hinder official criminal investigations by police (Exhibit 7-k)
- l) Human Resources action items (Exhibit 7-l):

- a. Accept the resignation of Patrolman Heather Horne, effective December 30, 2020; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- b. Authorize removal of Patrolman Nicole Shavers from probationary status to full-time status effective immediately
- c. Authorize removal of General Services Officer Ross Taylor from probationary status to full-time status effective immediately
- d. Authorize removal of General Services Officer Paul Moshenrose from probationary status to full-time status effective immediately
- e. Accept termination of Probationary Water Laborer #2411, effective December 28, 2020; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- f. Authorize removal of Maintenance Worker Quintine Anderson from probationary status to full-time status effective immediately
- m) Approve Residential Short Term Rental permit for 1403 Bowen Avenue PID #60137062.000 (Exhibit 7-m)
- n) Approve Residential Short Term Rental permit for 15 Gulfview Drive PID #61110015.000 (Exhibit 7-n)
- o) Accept Code Enforcement Report through December 29, 2020 (Exhibit 7-o)

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

City Clerk:

Motion was made by Alderman Cox, seconded by Alderman Gill and unanimously carried to approve the docket of claims; the Board finds that all expenditures are appropriate and authorized by law (Exhibit 8-a).

Motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Authement and unanimously carried to approve the monthly budget report (Exhibit 8-b).

Police Department:

The Police Chief said under the seatbelt grant the city would be reimbursed an hourly rate for over 80 hours for any law enforcement officer working the program. He presented a resolution allowing salaried officers to work the seatbelt detail to be paid an hourly rate and over 80 hours will be reimbursed by the grant for either regular time or overtime which will not occur until 86 hours are worked. Motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Bellman and unanimously carried to adopt a Resolution authorizing overtime for seatbelt enforcement (Exhibit 8-c).

Human Resources & Risk Management:

The Human Resources & Risk Management Director said both the Finance and HR Committees have met to discuss and develop a change in the salary scale for the Police Department to recruit and retain officers. She said they are wanting to recruit lateral transfers with an increase in Patrolmen, Police Sergeant, and Police Lieutenant salaries,

which would begin at the next pay cycle starting January 9th. She also recommended adjusting the current pay scale for all employees increasing each step to a 3% increase rather than the current 2% at the beginning of FY21-22, October 1, 2021. Motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Bellman and unanimously carried to increase the Police Salary Step Scale and institute pay increases effective 1/9/2021 for Patrolmen, Police Sergeants and Police Lieutenants; institute 2% pay increases for five employees that are Topped Out on the current pay scale effective 1/9/2021 and increase the entire Salary Step Scale from 2% to 3% at the beginning of FY21-22 as described in Exhibit 8-d.

The Human Resources & Risk Management Director said the Families First Coronavirus Response Act requirement for emergency paid sick leave for COVID-19 expired December 31st but employers can extend at their discretion. She said she met with the other Department Heads and they recommended extending the emergency paid sick leave until March 31st if an employee is quarantined by a doctor or tests positive for COVID-19, due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Jackson County. Motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Impey and unanimously carried to adopt the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Policy Extension for Coronavirus which authorizes the carryover of unused 2020 Emergency Paid Sick Leave until March 31, 2021.

Building Department:

The Building Official is still having difficulty getting arborists to submit written reports with any options other than removal for the tree damaged by Hurricane Zeta at Fort Maurepas because of the liability of the situation. The City Clerk said there is a 60-day window to identify all damages caused by Hurricane Zeta and a decision needs to be made for reimbursement purposes. She also added that the playground cannot be repaired until the tree is addressed. Alderman Papania said an arborist will not give a definite answer, the reimbursement timeline and the recommendation from the City Attorney creates a dilemma that no decision will be universally liked by citizens. Alderman Impey said MMSC will not insure Fort Maurepas Park as long as the tree is standing therefore, the City's liability is too great to keep the tree. Alderman Authement said it is a difficult decision but based on the arborist finding and MMSC's decision not to insure the park, the tree needs to be removed. Motion was made by Alderman Authement, seconded by Alderman Gill and unanimously carried to move forward with the tree at Fort Maurepas Park removal as such was damaged beyond repair as a result of Hurricane Zeta and is an imminent safety concern.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

James Lewis, Ward 5, brought up a jar of nails and said he stepped on a nail while walking in the Spanish Cove Subdivision roadway. He asked about the JCUA letter he received regarding the hefty fees that are being implemented. The Public Works Director said that Ocean Springs already has the regulations in place that are required by JCUA and that

the main issue would fall on commercial owners, not households. Mr. Lewis asked if the residents are aware of the policy. The Mayor said he would make sure it is added to the City's website. The City Attorney said they are reviewing and trying to extend the deadline. Mr. Lewis said Spanish Cove Subdivision has diesel fuel on roadways staining the asphalt and there is still an issue with the drainage pipe on the east side of the roadway. The Planning & Grants Administrator said they have photographed the area of concern and sent it to the developer to make them aware of the situation.

ALDERMAN'S FORUM

Alderman Authement asked the Planning & Grants Administrator if the kiosk damaged near the Biloxi Bay Bridge could be removed rather than repaired. She responded that the kiosk was installed by MDOT not the City. He requested the kiosk area be cleaned up and the McPherson Pier sign removed and cleaned up. He added that the pier needs to have a more secure barrier so that people cannot go on the pier until it is repaired. The Parks & Recreation Director said it will be addressed.

Alderman Papania said Ashley Place Subdivision's entrance was damaged by Hurricane Zeta, which is on the City right-of-way. The HOA has raised \$4,500 of the \$6,400 cost to repair. Motion was made by Alderman Papania, seconded by Alderman Gill and unanimously carried to authorize expenditure of \$1,900 from Ward 4 funds to repair damages to city right-of-way in or around Ashley Place Subdivision as a result of Hurricane Zeta.

Alderman Papania proposed if a disaster occurs, rather than using ward funds to repair subdivision entrances and fences on City property or right-of-ways, to consider using City funds. Alderman Gill agreed saying it depletes the ward funds to make repairs as well as the HOA funds. The Planning & Grants Administrator requested it be taken on a case by case basis because in the current code new subdivisions would not have signage in City right-of-way. The City Attorney added that ownership would have to be determined. Alderman Authement suggested the Finance Committee discuss. Alderman Papania requested the City Attorney bring recommendations on how to handle different situations.

Alderman Blackman asked the Planning & Grants Administrator about the Government Street Sidewalk Project. She responded that there has been a hold up getting the materials delivered due to the holidays. She said preparing for phase 2 has begun with BMA and MDOT. He requested Public Works move forward and to give a timeframe for repairing a damaged pipe under a mailbox in Bienville Place, the sinkhole at the Promenade Subdivision and 2 mailboxes on Government Street.

Alderman Impey asked the Public Works Director about the paving project with Jackson County. He responded that he is meeting with the paver in the morning. Alderman Impey added that there is a pot hole on Riley Road at the Hwy 90 intersection. He said the Oak

tree that was planted in Trentwood Park by the Girl Scouts in memory of Sophia Meyers is now gone. Motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Cox and unanimously carried to authorize purchase from a local nursery, a mature Oak tree using Ward 6 and Alderman At Large ward funds to replace a tree in Trentwood Park not to exceed \$200.00.

Alderman Cox requested the Water & Sewer Departments review and put in water taps before any paving is done.

Alderman Blackman asked the representatives from Overstreet Engineering present at the meeting if the City was paying for their presence even though nothing related was on the agenda. They replied no.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

Motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Impey and unanimously carried to recess the meeting until 6:00 p.m. on January 19, 2021.

Meeting ended at 7:57 p.m.

Betty Norton 2/2/2021
City Clerk Date

Glen Dixon 2/2/2021
Mayor Date