

## **RECESS MEETING OF OCTOBER 19, 2021**

Be it remembered that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Ocean Springs met in a Recess Meeting at City Hall in the City of Ocean Springs at 6:00 p.m. on October 19, 2021. The Mayor presiding, Aldermen Burgess, Authement, Wade, Cox, Blackman, and Impey were present. Alderman Papania was absent. Also present were City Attorney Robert Wilkinson, 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 Assistant Director Chris Kostmayer, and Payroll Administrator Jennifer Simmons.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

Dr. Barnett gave the invocation and Alderman Cox led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to accept the agenda.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Allison Hawkins with Southern Mississippi Planning & Development District (SMPDD) spoke about the Revitalization Program through their Economic/Workforce Development Division (Exhibit 3-a). She said the program has been used in Biloxi, Gautier, and Hattiesburg. She said the funding is based on the increase in tax revenue generated by the new revitalized development with a reimbursable grant through SMPDD. She said there would be a tri-party agreement between the City, development, and SMPDD. The increased sales tax would come from the state, the City's 18.5 %, the development would then get the agreed-upon percentage minus a 10% admin fee payable to SMPDD. She offered to facilitate a workshop to further explain the program in detail.

Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Cynthia Sutton gave an update on the festival season in Ocean Springs, specifically the Peter Anderson Festival. She said their objective is to generate revenue for businesses and increase the quality of life for the residents. She said at Peter Anderson this year the booths will be 6' apart and the food parks will be divided into different areas.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

The Planning & Grants Administrator said Ace Hardware is appealing the Zoning & Adjustment Board (ZAB) decision regarding wall signs on the building at 2933 Bienville Blvd. The UDC allows for only one wall sign with a maximum size of 75 square feet. She

said ZAB decided that since this business has two facades, it would allow the maximum of 75 square feet signs on each side of the building, rather than limiting to one per the code. The appeal is to allow a single 50 square foot "ACE" sign on one facade and the other facade would include 5 individual signs totaling 140 square feet. She said this is an unusual situation since this is a corner store in a shopping center and the UDC does not address buildings with two facades, which is the basis for ZAB allowing a sign on each frontage. Alderman Blackman said this situation will need to be addressed in the UDC. Ace Hardware owner Carlton Paris said the five individual signs are their "best brands" and he believes that the spacing and number of signs are what is aesthetically best for that facade of the building to be viewed from Highway 90. He said even though their store's square footage is smaller and as a minor tenant only allows for the one sign, Ace Hardware is the anchor store in the shopping center. Alderman Cox expressed concern about setting a precedent. A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Cox to grant the appeal and allow one 50 square foot sign on one facade and 5 individual signs totaling 140 square feet on the other facade of Ace Hardware. The motion passes with Aldermen Authement, Wade, Cox, and Blackman voting aye; and Aldermen Burgess and Impey voting nay.

Item 5-b, discuss establishing a protocol for committee creation and member selection was not discussed, no action.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to approve the Consent Agenda except for item 6-c pulled by Alderman Blackman and item 6-g(b) pulled by Alderman Cox.

- a) Authorize road closure of Government Street between Magnolia Avenue and Ward Avenue, set up to allow parking in the OS Lumber Parking Lot on October 30, 2021, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for the Spooky Springs at the Scary C event (Exhibit 6-a)
- b) Approve Run/Walk permit application for Gulf Coast Running Club Fall 5-K and 1-mile Race; Saturday, November 13, 2021, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.; OS Bridge Front Beach 5-K Route and Fort Maurepas; no cost to the City, the applicant pays associated event cost (Exhibit 6-b)
- c) Approve Special Event permit application for WAMA presents Silent Light Festival; Friday, December 17, 2021, from 4:00 p.m. to midnight.; WAMA 510 Washington Avenue with road closure from Senior Center to the corner of Joseph Street and Washington Avenue; no cost to the City, the applicant pays associated event cost (Exhibit 6-c)
- d) Ratify check for \$477.21 to Sam's Club Direct for the membership fee and cleaning supplies (Exhibit 6-d)
- e) Accept OSPD monthly report for September 2021 (Exhibit 6-e)
- f) Accept OSFD monthly report for September 2021 (Exhibit 6-f)

- g) Human Resources action items (Exhibit 6-g):
  - a) Accept the resignation of Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen Meggan Switzer, effective October 13, 2021; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
  - b) Authorize the employment of Sarah Harris, Project Manager, Step 5, \$31.89 hourly rate; effective on or about November 1, 2021; pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
  - c) Accept the resignation of Patrolman Demarion Williams, effective October 7, 2021; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
  - d) Accept the resignation of Drainage Laborer Charles Singler, effective October 8, 2021; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
  - e) Accept the resignation of Sewer Laborer Dajuan Husband, effective October 19, 2021; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
  - f) Accept the resignation of Drainage Laborer Cody Franklin, effective October 27, 2021; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
  - g) Authorize the employment of Hayden Taylor, Sewer Laborer, Step 1, \$12.88 hourly rate; effective October 28, 2021; one-year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- h) Approve request of Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the existing primary dwelling unit and the construction of a new single-family dwelling at 501 Rayburn Avenue PID #60137584.000; Historic Preservation Commission recommends approval (Exhibit 6-h)
- i) Approve request of Certificate of Appropriateness for minor renovations and repairs at 1101 Iberville Drive PID #601191164.000; Historic Preservation Commission recommends approval (Exhibit 6-i)
- j) Approve request of Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of 2 ½ story single-family dwelling at 107 Iberville Landing Drive PID #61155004.000; Historic Preservation Commission recommends approval (Exhibit 6-j)
- k) Authorize to request Reallocation from Tidelands Award: FY19-P412-01: OS Front Beach Infrastructure Stabilization Improvements To Tidelands Award FY18-P501-02 in the amount of \$67,000 (Exhibit 6-k)
- l) Accept Building Department Report for September 2021 (Exhibit 6-l)
- m) Accept Code Enforcement Report through October 14, 2021 (Exhibit 6-m)
- n) Accept Tree Application recommendations – Tree Applications through October 13, 2021 (Exhibit 6-n)
- o) Authorize the demolition of the structure in excess of 50 years at 511 Martin Avenue (Exhibit 6-o)
- p) Approve the Facility Use Agreement with Martial Arts Academy William Oster for the use of the Parks Department "big room" at 400 Alice Street (Exhibit 6-p)
- q) Authorize award of bid for fuel supply delivery to Eagle Energy for a one-year term (Exhibit 6-q)

Alderman Blackman said item 6-c needs to be pulled until the next meeting so that departments can meet regarding the event prior to approval.

Alderman Cox said the Board should have been more involved in the interview process for the Project Manager position since it is similar to a Department Head position and requested the Board be involved moving forward. A motion was made by Alderman Cox, seconded by Alderman Authement, and unanimously carried to authorize the employment of Sarah Harris, Project Manager, Step 5, \$31.89 hourly rate; effective on or about November 1, 2021; pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### CITY CLERK:

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to approve the Docket of Claims; the Board finds that all other expenses are lawful and appropriate (Exhibit 7-a).

Alderman Blackman requested a cap be put on the sewer adjustments because they are becoming more frequent and costly. The City Clerk said she would review the reason why the system is not catching the leak before it becomes a major issue. She said the policy does limit adjustments to once a year but is concerned about setting a cap. A motion was made by Alderman Cox, seconded by Alderman Authement, and unanimously carried to adjust the water/sewer accounts listed on Exhibit 7-b; with the finding that the customers did not receive the benefit of the utility and the excess usages were due to unforeseen circumstances (Exhibit 7-b).

## **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

The City Clerk thanked Macedonia Church for providing lunch to public servants today.

Dr. Bill Moore said Jackson County has changed Ocean Springs Library to be the first library in the county to be repaired.

## **ALDERMAN'S FORUM**

Alderman Burgess addressed the Code Violation Report which has incorrect wards listed. The Building Official said it has been addressed with the new Code Enforcement Officer.

Alderman Authement said off-road recreational vehicles are becoming a problem Downtown and requested the low-speed vehicles be removed from Ordinance 2018-10. The City Attorney said the Ordinance could be amended to only allow golf carts but

asked about the vehicles already permitted. Alderman Authement said they will need to be re-permitted in January and really should not have been permitted since they are able to exceed 25 mph. A physical inspection was suggested when giving the permit sticker. A motion was made by Alderman Authement, seconded by Alderman Impey, and unanimously carried to remove low-speed vehicles from Ordinance 2018-10 and only allow golf carts.

Alderman Cox asked the Public Works Director about the missing Shearwater Bridge light, who replied that the light was broken in a storm. Alderman Cox requested quotes to replace the Shearwater Bridge light.

Alderman Blackman said the Civic Center sign has been hit and needs repair. Also, there is a pedestal memorial sign that is missing, the Public Works Director said that is an MDOT sign. Alderman Blackman requested that the Bienville Place sidewalk and repairs be completed before Halloween.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Cox, and unanimously carried to accept the resignation of Warrants Officer William Martin effective immediately and authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position (Exhibit 9-a).

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Cox, and unanimously carried to approve the promotion of Patrolman Chris Meadows to Sergeant, effective October 30, 2021, Step 3, \$21.22 hourly rate; six-month probationary period and authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position (Exhibit 9-b).

Alderman Impey asked for the status of the Trentwood Drainage Project. The Public Works Director said the lay-down yard is ready. The Planning & Grants Administrator said the Notice to Proceed was effective yesterday and an agreement for use of the lay-down area needs to be signed. Alderman Impey said Sparklight has extended service to Baywood and has not completed the burial of cables.

The Mayor said Weaver Electric has started replacing lights on the Biloxi-Ocean Springs bridge with wire covers to prevent vandalism. The bridge lighting project will take approximately 120 days to complete and while working on the walking track lights the track will be closed.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Authement, and unanimously carried to go into closed session to determine the necessity of going into executive session.

The City Clerk returned to the meeting and announced that a motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to remain in executive session to discuss personnel in the Mayor's office, personnel in the Police Department, and potential litigation regarding loud and obnoxious behavior.

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to come out of an executive session where no action was taken.

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting until 6:00 p.m. on November 2, 2021.

Meeting ended at 7:50 p.m.

Betty Maston 11/2/2021  
City Clerk Date

[Signature] 11/2/2021  
Mayor Date

