

**REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 27, 2007**

A Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Natchez, Mississippi, was held in the City Council Chamber at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 27, 2007. Mayor Phillip C. West presided at the meeting, which was opened with prayer by Reverend John Scott, Sr. Christian Hope Baptist Church.

MAYOR & BOARD PRESENT	ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT	CITY OFFICIALS & DEPARTMENT HEADS
Phillip C. West Mayor Joyce Arceneaux-Mathis Alderwoman, Ward 1 J. "Ricky" Gray, Jr. Alderman, Ward 2 Bob Pollard Alderman, Ward 3 Theodore West Alderman, Ward 4 David Massey Alderman, Ward 5 Jake Middleton Alderman, Ward 6		Donnie Holloway, City Clerk Everett Sanders, City Attorney Darlene D. Williams, Dep. City Clerk Brett Brinegar, Grants Coordinator Paul Dawes, Building Official Rick Freeman, Traffic Dept. David Gardner, Water Superintendent Patricia Gibson, Personnel Director Henry Harris, Recreation Temple Hendricks, Mayor's Secretary Ron Ivey, Public Works Director Darlene Jones, Comm. Dev. Director Mike Mullins, Police Chief Dennis Story, City Planner Eric Smith, Public Works Administrator Ralph Tedder, Recreation Director Katie Sthalcup, Natchez Democrat William Terrell, Bluff City Post

MINUTES APPROVED

A motion was made by Alderman West to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of February 13, 2007 and approve as submitted. The motion was seconded by Alderman Pollard. The motion carried unanimously.

ACCEPTANCE OF BIDS

Traffic Inventory

Mayor West opened the bids received for the City of Natchez Traffic Sign Upgrade project.

Traffic Control Products	\$73,804.00
Rocal	\$31,232.99

Vulcan Signs	\$52,157.38
Custom Products Corp.	\$60,588.01

Mayor West requested a motion to take the bids under advisement.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis and seconded by Alderman Pollard to take the bids under advisement. The motion carried unanimously.

ATTACHMENT

VISITORS WELCOMED

Mayor West welcomed all visitors to the meeting. He reminded everyone of the policy that allows all visitors to speak for three (3) minutes before the board.

A. Basil Lanneau - Natchez Music Festival

Mayor West recognized Mr. Basil Lanneau.

Mr. Basil Lanneau thanked the Mayor and Board for allowing him to speak. He noted that a presentation was made in June, 2006 on behalf of the Natchez Music Festival requesting assistance for funding. He said his purpose tonight was to remind the Board of the need for the assistance. Mr. Lanneau said during the private meeting the reception was good and the support for the festival and what it has done for Natchez has been broad based and universal. Mr. Lanneau said he was present to answer questions and to encourage the Board to help take some action before the season will start this year. He said the festival has done a lot over the past seventeen (17) years and created a brand for the town within the arts that no city in Mississippi has been able to do. He said there are many cities throughout the country that would like to have a similar music festival. Mr. Lanneau said there has been a large amount of support from the citizens, businesses, and the leadership of Dr. Blackburn. In recent years part of surviving has been enabled through the support of Alcorn State University. He said there is a need for additional monetary support. The artist side of Natchez is benefitting from the disadvantage of Hurricane Katrina. There will be an expansion of arts outside of music and opera into other visual sites. He said the one thing that is well established is the Festival of Music.

Mayor West requested comments. He noted that there will be a work session on March 6, 2007 and this matter will be discussed.

B. Jim Sanders - Public Safety

Mayor West recognized Jim Sanders.

Mr. Sanders thanked the Mayor and Board for allowing him to be on the agenda. He said there has been concern regarding public safety and asked that he be allowed to address them. Mr. Sanders said

in regard to the lighting on the bridge, he contacted Janet Sullivan on several occasions and they were repaired. Currently there are lights out on both bridges and should be addressed immediately. There is a metal light pole down on John R. Junkin Drive that has not been replaced. Mr. Sanders said on October 24, 2006 he submitted a letter of concern to Entergy pointing out lights that should be replaced throughout the city. He said in the past he has tied yellow tape around lights to be repaired and they were repaired within three/four working days. With the tourist season approaching the concerns should be addressed. The flag at the Visitors Center should have a light because it is flown after dark.

Mr. Sanders said the other concern is the number of delapidated houses throughout the community. There are vehicles that are parked on property. The concerns are small compared to the bigger picture. He said if small things are taken care of somehow the bigger picture does not seem as big. Mr. Sanders in regard to the Pecan Factory, the concern is while there was a safety issue involved, there is an even bigger issue now. He presented photographs of the site to be entered into the record. The photograph indicated that in 2005 a plate covered the cistern on the site and February 27, 2007 the hole is larger and uncovered. The second photograph showed that the hole measures 7 feet wide and filled with water. Mr. Sanders said this is truly a safety issue. He said this should be addressed immediately. The caution tape is not serving the purpose of keeping children away from the area. Mr. Sanders said a fence should be placed around the hole.

ATTACHMENT of photographs

Mayor West said the Pecan Factory site was part of the discussion of the board. He requested comments from Attorney Sanders in regard to where the city stands on the matter.

Attorney Sanders said notice was issued to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History referencing the cistern indicating that it was a hazard. Attorney Sanders said due to the restraining order there was no steps for the city to take and he inquired about what the Department of Archives and History had planned to do. He said the case is being discussed and the resolution of the matter will be forth coming. Attorney Sanders said during the course of the resolution his plan is to bring the matter to the attention of the judge and ask him to take a look at the site.

Mr. Sanders questioned the liability if there is an accident.

Attorney Sanders said he would not say where the liability would fall. He said the major concern of the City of Natchez is the health and safety of the community.

Mayor West thanked Attorney Sanders for his comments.

Alderman Gray said the photographs should be mailed to the individuals involved at the level of Archives and History to speed the process up. He said he would not like to see an individual fall in the hole following a rain.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said the television stations should be notified of the situation. She

said this would inform everyone across the state of what is going on and that the City of Natchez is trying to handle the situation and is being stopped.

Mayor West asked that the board go out of the regular order of business to allow Reverend John Scott, Sr. to make a presentation to the City of Natchez.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis and seconded by Alderman Gray to go out of the regular order of business to allow Reverend John Scott to make a presentation to the City of Natchez. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor West recognized Reverend Scott.

Reverend Scott said he asked to be placed on the agenda to make a presentation to Mayor West and the City of Natchez.

Mayor West thanked Reverend Scott on behalf of the City of Natchez.

Reverend Scott said there are several members of the Klu Klux Klan listed in the book. He noted that the KKK is a secret society founded in the southern states, after the Civil War to reestablish and maintain white supremacy. It is a secret society organized in Atlanta Georgia in 1915 as the invisible empire, Knight of the Klu Klux Klan. The society is anti black, schematic catholic. It uses terrorist methods to identify terrorism. Terrorism is the act of terrorizing, use of force or threats to demoralize, intimidate as a political weapon of policy. Terrorism is to fill with terror, make submit by use of threats and violence.

Mayor West asked that the Board remain out of order to adopt the Resolution declaring March as the American Red Cross month. Mayor West read the resolution.

ATTACHMENT

Mayor West requested a motion to return to the regular order of business.

A motion was made by Alderman Pollard and seconded by Alderman Massey. The motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

NATCHEZ POLICE DEPARTMENT, Chief Mike Mullins

Chief Mullins recognized Officer Benjamin Davis. Chief Mullins noted that Officer Davis retired

after twenty (20) years of service with the United States Army, a veteran of three wars and has returned to Natchez.

Mayor West welcomed Officer Davis back to Natchez.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT, Dennis Story

Mr. Story noted that there are six (6) orders for grass cutting and the property owners were notified and have chosen not to correct the situation. Mr. Story requested authorization to have the properties cleaned and the cost adjudicated as a lien on the property.

Mayor West requested comments.

A motion was made by Alderman Massey and seconded by Alderman West to authorize the cleaning of the properties and have the cost adjudicated as a lien against the properties. The motion carried unanimously.

ATTACHMENT

Alderman Gray noted that properties were presented to the board to be cut and have not been addressed. He asked at what point will the city start cutting the approved work orders for grass cutting. Alderman Gray said a resident on Lincoln Street has complained to him and the supervisor of the district about the situation. Alderman Gray said the weather will be changing soon and the grass and weeds will start growing. He questioned the procedure to be used to handle the old cases and the cases to be added regarding grass cutting.

Mr. Ivey said the inmates would be used to continue the grass cutting. He said there are several projects going on and grass is cut on Wednesdays. Mr. Ivey said the list goes on and on and the locations presented by Mr. Story are on the list. Mr. Ivey said they are making process and hopefully will get caught up.

Alderman Gray said a better process is needed along the lines of grass cutting. He said if the department heads continue to bring properties to the board for approval and they are never cut the situation is not being handled. Alderman Gray said there should be a way to alleviate the problem. He asked if the inmates could be used to handle the project.

Mr. Ivey said the grass cutting is being handled by the inmates.

Alderman Gray asked if there could be an additional crew of inmates added to help with the back log of lots and to get caught up. He said if the situation is not corrected it will fall farther behind.

Mr. Ivey said he will contact the prison authority and see what the process is to make the request for additional inmates. He said he will have to have a security person for each five (5) inmates.

Alderman Gray asked that the City Attorney check and see if off duty officers can be used to supervise the inmates while off duty and be paid.

Mayor West said this could be researched.

Mr. Smith said he was informed that the individual over the inmates do not have to be deputized. He said the prison authority in Woodville agreed to provide as many inmates as requested by the city.

Alderman Gray said that would alleviate the problem if there were additional crews during grass cutting season.

Alderman West said for informational sake there was a meeting held between Mr. Smith, Mr. Story, Mr. Dawes, Alderman Gray and himself. Alderman West said they discussed the monies provided for the demolition projects and how the sites would be determined. Alderman West said the money would be leveraged and do exactly what Alderman Gray has hoped for.

Mayor West requested comments.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT, Ralph Tedder

Mr. Tedder noted that bids were received for the resurfacing of the two North Natchez Tennis Courts. After reviewing the sole bid submitted, Project #12106REC from Australian Court Works in the amount of \$7500.00 he recommended the acceptance of the bid. Mr. Tedder said the document were reviewed by the City Attorney and City Engineer.

Mayor West questioned the estimated amount.

Mr. Tedder said the estimated amount was \$6,000 and the submitted bid was for \$7,500.

Mayor West requested additional comments.

A motion was made Alderman Middleton and seconded by Alderman Gray to accept the sole bid submitted by Australian Court Works in the amount of \$7500.00 for the resurfacing of the North Natchez Courts. The motion carried unanimously.

ATTACHMENT

GRANTS DEPARTMENT, Brett Brinegar

Ms. Brinegar said the archeological survey will start on the Forks of the Road site. She said there will be surveyors covering the site for several days marking off investigation areas. Ms. Brinegar said the preliminary report was returned from the feasibility study company which is being reviewed by herself and

Kathleen Jenkins and will be made available to the Mayor and Board. Following approval of the document it will be available for the public to review at City Hall.

Mayor West requested comments.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, Darlene Jones

Mrs. Jones introduced the President of the Mayor's Youth Council, Hope Stephens.

Mayor West recognized Hope Stephens and noted that the Youth Council is working really hard.

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT, Patricia Gibson

Monthly report submitted for January, 2007 and February, 2007

ATTACHMENT

MUNICIPAL COURT, Judge Jim Blough

Municipal Court Report for January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006.

ATTACHMENT

CITY OFFICIALS' REPORTS

ALDERWOMAN ARCENEUX-MATHIS

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis commented on the report provided by Mr. Sanders regarding the poor lighting on the bridge.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to contact the Mississippi Department of Transportation regarding the improper lighting on the Ms-Lou bridges and request a plan for upgrade. The motion was seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said the street lights in Ward 1 should be addressed by Entergy because there are several that are not working properly. She said there are no lights in the Natchez College area and there should be additional lighting. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked that Chief Mullins contact Entergy about the broken lighting throughout the city.

Chief Mullins said he will ask that the police officers on the night shift identify the lights that should be repaired and submit the pole numbers to him and he will contact Entergy.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked that Attorney Sanders look into the possibility of an addition to the personnel policy. She said she has a problem with reading in the newspaper that a department head is speaking on behalf of the City of Natchez. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said the board is elected to make policies and the department heads are hired to carry out policies. She said the board did not make a decision on the prison, although there was a presentation by the Board of Supervisors regarding the possible location. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said the board did not take a position on prisons in Adams county. She noted that individuals are allowed the right to speak although not to speak for the Aldermen of the City of Natchez. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said she has a problem with individuals speaking for her when she did not have a chance to vote on a policy that would provide jobs into the community. Until a stand is made, a policy is declared and voted on, or an agreement made there should not be employees speaking on behalf of the board.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to authorize the City Attorney to develop a policy for adoption to address the concerns of the board regarding city employees speaking on behalf of the City of Natchez Board of Aldermen without permission. The motion was seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Pollard said he was not aware of the problems but he would like to discuss the matter after the meeting.

Mayor West requested comments.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said Mrs. Carolyn Vance Smith invited the Natchez High Magical Singers to sing for a reception held for Senator Cochran. She said on that evening she wore the hat of choir director and lobbyist for the 1.6 million dollars. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said she was given the name and number of Kay Webber, Special Assistant to Senator Cochran. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said the choir performance was enjoyed by Senator Cochran who agreed to visit Natchez when he is invited.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked that Temple Hendricks contact Ms. Webber and schedule an appointment with Senator Cochran when the board members are in Washington, D.C.. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said the choir attended the district festival and participated in eight categories and received eight (8) superior awards. She said the choir will go to Chicago for competition.

ALDERMAN GRAY

Alderman Gray said the City of Natchez recognize athletes in the school districts for performance in competitions. He said the Natchez High Choir directed by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis won superior awards every year during festivals and should be recognized by the board. Alderman Gray asked that the Natchez High Choir is invited to perform and be recognized.

Mayor West thanked Alderman Gray for his comments and said he would like to have the choir attend a meeting.

Alderman Gray said he received the paperwork on an abandoned house dated January 22, 2007 which gave the property owner thirty (30) days to respond. He requested clarification from Mr. Dawes on the next steps in the process.

Mr. Dawes said he will present the request for demolition to the Mayor and Board for approval and he will proceed with the demolition.

Alderman Gray noted that on April 26, 2007 the Mississippi Fire Academy will hold a program designed for elected and public officials to familiarize officials with the basic operation of the local fire departments. He asked that members of the board attend the program.

Alderman Gray said the board agreed that the Natchez Housing Authority director meet with the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. He said he read in the newspaper about three grants the housing authority applied for. Alderman Gray said there should be a meeting to discuss the housing concerns of the board.

Mayor West said he did make contact with Mr. Alan Ingram when the board discussed the matter. Mayor West said when the meeting was scheduled Mr. Ingram had a conflict and the meeting was not rescheduled. He was made aware of the request made by the board to attend the meeting.

Alderman Gray said the MML college scholarship applications are available for students. He said the application should be provided to students at the local schools.

Alderman Gray requested that Mr. Ivey place Seals Lane on the schedule for repairs.

Mr. Ivey said Seals Lane is on the schedule.

Alderman Gray thanked the Public Works Department for the continued work they have done in the past.

Alderman Gray said Mrs. Dunkley is in charge of the renaming of Wilson Road to Pilgrim Blvd. He said the application was submitted to MDOT for review and asked that Mr. Gardner inform him when the approval is granted. Alderman Gray said the renaming of the street will be a great celebration. He asked that everyone visit the Pilgrim Baptist Church.

Alderman Gray said there should be a hot line for citizens to report delapidated houses to the Inspection Department. Alderman Gray requested the telephone number for the Inspection Department.

Mr. Dawes said the number is listed in the telephone book, (601-445-07512).

Alderman Gray said the citizens of Natchez should call the Inspection Department to report delapidated houses in the neighborhoods.

Alderman Gray thanked his constituents for attending the meeting.

ALDERMAN POLLARD

Alderman Pollard asked Mayor West if there was an update from the Legislature regarding the street overlay project.

Mayor West said he talked with the lobbyist who was meeting with Senator Bill Hughes about the conference report. Mayor West said he will have an update on the matter within a few days.

ALDERMAN WEST

Alderman West requested an update from Attorney Sanders regarding the concerns of a citizen about the Carpenter School Apartments.

Attorney Sanders said he contacted the manager of the Carpenter School Apartments and because the City of Natchez does not have jurisdiction over the property there is nothing to be done.

Alderman West said during a work session he would like to have Mr. Ingram explain how the City of Natchez is the conduit for federal dollars and has no voice in matter.

Alderman West said on behalf of the Natchez Senior Citizen Center, Mrs. Bartley requested approval of resolutions authorizing submittal of applications to the Mississippi Department of Transportation Grant Proposals.

A motion was made by Alderman West and seconded by Alderman Gray to approve resolutions authorizing Sabrena Bartley to

- 1) Make official Application to the Mississippi Department of Transportation for Section 5311 Rural General Public Transportation Program operating funds;**
- 2) Publish in local newspapers the intent to apply, and public hearing notice;
- 3) Authorize Mayor Phillip West and Attorney Everett Sanders to sign all necessary documents upon review.

The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Alderman West and seconded by Alderman Gray to approve resolutions authorizing Sabrena Bartley to

- 1) Make official Application to the Mississippi Department of Transportation 5310 Elderly and Disabled Transportation capital funds;
- 2) Publish in local newspapers the intent to apply, and public hearing notice;
- 3) Authorize Mayor Phillip West and Attorney Everett Sanders to sign all necessary documents upon review.

The motion carried unanimously.

ATTACHMENT

ALDERMAN MASSEY

Alderman Massey presented the report for the Public Works Department.

ATTACHMENT

Alderman Massey thanked city employees for their concern during his illness.

ALDERMAN MIDDLETON

Alderman Middleton presented the report for the Recreation Department.

ATTACHMENT

CITY CLERK'S REPORT, DONNIE HOLLOWAY

NO REPORT

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT, EVERETT SANDERS

NO REPORT

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor West said the Work Session is scheduled for March 6, 2007 and the regular scheduled Board Meeting of March 13, 2007 has been canceled due to the number of Aldermen attending the National League of Cities Conference in Washington, D.C.

Mayor West asked the board to nominate candidates to serve on the Natchez Preservation Commission due to the resignation of Andy Sartin.

NEW BUSINESS

A motion was made by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to ask the City Attorney to research the pros and cons of having the Natchez Housing Authority as part of the city government. The motion was seconded by Alderman Gray.

Mayor West requested comments.

Alderman West asked if the motion is to bring the Natchez Housing Authority under the direction of the City of Natchez.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said at one point the city was look for information on bring the Natchez Water Works Department and the Natchez Housing Authority under the City of Natchez. She said the request is for information on if this could be done and what would be the advantages. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said in some areas the Housing Authority is a part of city government.

Alderman West asked that the motion be amended to include that the research include the process of the City of Natchez forming a Housing Department.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said the addition would be accepted as a friendly amendment.

Mayor West noted that there was an amendment to the motion. He requested a second.

The amendment to the motion was made by Alderman Gray. The amendment to the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor West requested discussion on the original motion.

The original motion carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said as public properties chairperson she discussed with the previous Mayor the concern of Waste Management moving to the county and the city would lose money. She said after discussing the matter with Mr. Holloway it was found that the city would not lose as much money as expected. She said she would like Attorney Sanders to research the possibility of bring the building back under public properties because she would like to examine the site as a possible parking area for downtown events.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis and seconded by Alderman Gray to ask that Attorney Sanders research the possibility of bring the Waste Management building back under public properties and examine the site as a possible parking area for downtown events. The motion was seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman West said there are several appointment to be discussed in the upcoming work session.

Mrs. Eva Dunkley asked that the board close the meeting with a moment of silence for the health of Jennifer Steckler, the niece of Donnie Holloway who is battling leukeima.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Alderman Pollard and seconded by Alderman West to adjourn the Regular Meeting of February 27, 2007. The motion carried unanimously.

PHILLIP C. WEST, MAYOR

ATTEST:

DONNIE HOLLOWAY, CITY CLERK