

**REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 22, 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 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 22, 2007. Mayor Phillip C. West presided at the meeting, which was opened with prayer by Reverend Steve Pearson, Community Chapel Church of God.

MAYOR & BOARD PRESENT	ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT	CITY OFFICIALS & DEPARTMENT HEADS
<b>Phillip C. West</b> Mayor  <b>Joyce Arceneaux-Mathis</b> Alderwoman, Ward 1  <b>Bob Pollard</b> Alderman, Ward 3  <b>J. "Ricky" Gray, Jr.</b> Alderman, Ward 2  <b>Theodore West</b> Alderman, Ward 4  <b>David Massey</b> Alderman, Ward 5  <b>Jake Middleton</b> 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 Paul Johnson, Fire Chief Darlene Jones, Comm. Dev. Director Mike Mullins, Police Chief Eric Smith, Public Works Administrator Dennis Story, City Planner Ralph Tedder, Recreation Director Katie Sthalcup, Natchez Democrat

**MINUTES APPROVED**

**A motion was made by Alderman Massey to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of May 8, 2007 and approve as submitted. The motion was seconded by Alderman West. The motion carried unanimously.**

**VISITORS WELCOMED**

Mayor West welcomed all visitors to the meeting and asked that all comments be limited to three (3) minutes. He thanked all friends and citizens of Natchez Adams County for attending the meeting.

- A. Natchez Fire Department - Recognition of new Firefighters

Mayor West recognized Fire Chief Johnson.

Chief Johnson said he was honored to attend the meeting and recognize two new firefighters. He introduced John Hughes and noted that he is a native of Natchez. The second firefighter hired was Jonathan Perry who was not present. Chief Johnson said Mr. Hughes passed the CPAT and was waiting to go to the Fire Academy.

Mayor West requested comments.

Alderman West asked that Chief Johnson explain the CPAT.

Chief Johnson said the CPAT is the physical agility test firefighters have to pass at the academy prior to continuing on with the seven week program.

Mayor West welcomed firefighters Hughes to the City of Natchez family.

B. Walter Brown, Attorney

Attorney Brown said there were three issues to be addressed before the Board. He said the first is the follow up on the adoption of the joint resolution to approve the site on Highway 84 as a prison site for Corrections Corporation of America. He presented the Memorandum of Agreement to be executed by the Mayor which is required by the Mississippi Development Authority as part of the application. Attorney Brown said he reviewed the document with the Board which sets out the responsibilities between the City of Natchez, Adams County and Corrections Corporation of America to apply for the grant. He said he could report to the Board that Corrections Corporation of America is very anxious about starting the project. The target date set is July 1, 2007 for the start of construction. The project is a \$99 million dollar project of which \$5 million in infrastructure. The State has been generous in providing funds. Mr. Brown said through the Economic Development Authority and Natchez Water Works the time line can be maintained which is very important to have the grant approved at the State level. Attorney Brown said Governor Barbour has been asked to expedite the process, which would be helpful to the City of Natchez and Adams County.

Mayor West requested comments.

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to adopt the Joint Resolution Memorandum of Agreement between the three agencies, City of Natchez, Adams County, and Corrections Corporation of America for the approval of the Highway 84 site for the prison. The motion was seconded by Alderman Pollard. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Attachment**

Mayor West said the record should reflect that the City of Natchez, Mayor and Board of Aldermen are in support of the proposal and any Economic Development that would be an asset to the community.

Attorney Brown said several months ago the Board initiated the revamping of the development code and zoning map of the City of Natchez Planning Department. He said the process has been completed by the consultant, Corinne Fox. The latest draft of the code was provided for review by the board. Attorney Brown said he consulted with Mr. Story, City Planner and the code was not recommended for adoption by the Natchez Metropolitan Planning Commission. Attorney Brown said the Planning Commission requested additional time to review the document. He said one component to be addressed is the composition of the new board. Currently there are nine(9) members appointed by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen and three (3) appointed by the Board of Supervisors to make up the twelve (12) member board. He said under the proposal that has been discussed, the Natchez Metropolitan Planning Commission will be dissolved and there will not be county participation in the process. Attorney Brown said the matter was discussed with the Board of Supervisors and they were advised of the plan, and there was no expressed willingness to continue to participate. Attorney Brown said that was not forthcoming. He said once adopted there will be a City Planning Commission. The charter will need to be amended due to the ex officio members that should serve on the commission. He said the charter has not been followed in many years.

Attorney Brown recommended the adoption of a charter amendment which requires publication, permission from the Governor and the Attorney General as well as submission to the Attorney General of the United States on the voting rights act. Attorney Brown asked that the Board only adopt the portion of the charter that deals with the commission itself and the consistence of the commission of nine (9) members, the existing members of the Planning Commission, five (5) members of the Zoning Board of Adjustment which will makeup a fourteen (14) member board for a limited period of time. Attorney Brown said there will only be nine (9) members on the City Planning Commission.

Mayor West requested comments.

**A motion was made by Alderman Massey and seconded by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to go out of order for the adoption of an ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.**

Mayor West opened the floor for discussion.

Alderman Pollard said he would like more feedback from the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment members regarding the combining of the two groups.

Attorney Brown said the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment members met on May 17, 2007 in a joint meeting and were informed of what would be done regarding membership and they recommended that it be adopted in the proposed form. Attorney Brown said the matter is not urgent, but there is a ninety (90) day period from the time the code is adopted to the point of it going into effect.

Mayor West requested comments from Mr. Story.

Mr. Story said the Natchez Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Natchez Metropolitan Planning Commission members have had several joint meetings to discuss the Development Code and the changes thereto. He said he talked with all the members and some are in favor of being reappointed to the new

commission while others said they would allow their terms to expire and not be reappointed. Mr. Story said it is a personal matter of their choice whether they want to be reappointed. There was no problem with the constitution of the new Planning Commission.

Alderman Middleton stated that there are some members who do not wish to continue to serve on the current boards.

Alderman Pollard asked if there was any opposition from the board members.

Alderman West asked if there was a split decision of a seven-seven vote how would business be handled.

Attorney Brown said the request would fail if there is a seven-seven vote. He said there is not full member attendance of either board on a regular basis. Attorney Brown said there would have to be a vote of eight in favor of the motion for any decision.

Alderman West asked if anything can be done to assure that business is handled regularly.

Attorney Brown said the commission will have less than fourteen members if all do not wish to be reappointed. He said there will not be a major problem with the make up of the new commission. He said with the Site Plan Review Committee, there are usually full majority votes on decisions.

Alderman Pollard asked if both boards would be dissolved.

Attorney Brown said only the Zoning Board of Adjustment will be dissolved. The Planning Commission will work under the new Development Code.

Mayor West requested comments.

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to adopt the charter amendment to include the new composition of the City Planning Commission as outlined and described in the Development Code. The motion was seconded by Alderman West.**

Mayor West requested comments on the motion.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said the Board has been looking at the adoption of the Development Code for several years and everyone is aware of what was being done and why. She said the new commission is necessary and the Board of Aldermen should move forward.

Alderman West asked that a friendly amendment is made to the motion to not fill the expired term of the Planning Commission member who is up for reappointment.

Attorney Brown asked that the friendly amendment not be made a part of the original motion to amend the charter.

Alderman West agreed with Attorney Brown and withdrew the friendly amendment.

**The original motion carried unanimously.**

### **Attachment**

Mayor West said before a motion is entertained the question should be who would like to remain on the commission before any individual is not reappointed. He said it may be necessary for the individual to continue to serve in comparison to someone else on the commission. Mayor West asked that the reappointment of individuals be examined before a decision is made. It would be addressed at the next board meeting or in the next work session.

**A motion was made by Alderman Massey to return to the regular order of business. The motion was seconded by Alderman West. The motion carried unanimously.**

Mayor West noted that the Development Code and the Zoning Map were on the agenda for adoption. He said the Board is not in a position at this time to address the adoption of such document.

Alderman West asked that information is provided at the next work session on the development code and the members who would be eligible to continue to serve.

Mayor West said a work session is scheduled for June 5<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00p.m.

### **C. Janet Minor - Summer Programs at the Library**

Mayor West recognized Ms. Janet Minor

Ms. Minor presented a personal invitation to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen to attend the summer library program. She said the program kick-off will be held on Thursday, June 7, 2007 at the City Auditorium. Ms. Minor said the reading program is good for the children in the community. A children's book author will open the program with a magic show. Mr. Little, the author will present children with an autographed copy of the book he will be reading. The price of the book has been discounted to \$5.00 to allow everyone a chance to purchase the book. The discount will allow all children to have their own copy of the book. Ms. Minor said she was excited to visit the program provided by Mr. Little and invited everyone to attend the opening ceremony. She said there will be several characters to visit during the summer program.

Mayor West questioned the original cost of the book being discounted for the children.

Ms. Minor said the original cost of the book is \$15.95. She said on the day of the presentation the book will be sold for \$5.00 to the children attending the celebration.

Mayor West questioned the number of children to participate in the program.

Ms. Minor said the enrollment will be more than the 2,000 registered last year.

Mayor West said he discussed the program with Ms. Minor and agreed to ask the board to amend the library fund budget \$1,000 to help fund the summer program. He said the amount would be taken from the general fund. Mayor West said there are a small number of activities for the children and if assistance can be given to keep them busy the better the community will be.

**A motion was made by Alderman West and seconded by Alderman Gray to authorize the amendment of the library budget to include \$1,000 for assistance of the summer library program and the purchase of autographed books. The motion carried unanimously.**

Alderman Gray noted that Ms. Minor is working hard with the program and every child should be provided the assistance necessary to learn to read. Alderman Gray commended Mayor West for the amendment to the library budget.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked that Ms. Minor contact the Adams County Association of Educators regarding sponsorship.

Alderman Gray said an individual requested information on purchasing a number of books for the children attending the program. He said he would give the contact information to Ms. Minor.

Alderman Massey challenged the Adams County Board of Supervisors to match the \$1,000 donation provided by the City of Natchez.

Ms. Minor thanked Mayor West and the Board of Aldermen and asked them to attend the opening ceremony.

## **Attachment**

**A motion was made by Alderman West to allow Jacquelyn Letcher to address the Board. The motion was seconded by Aldermen Gray. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **C. Jacquelyn Letcher, 200 LaSalle Street**

Mayor West recognized Mrs. Jacquelyn Letcher.

Mrs. Jacquelyn Letcher, 200 LaSalle Street, noted that four years ago she purchased property adjacent to her property from two different owners. She said she did know there was a city easement between the properties until it was cleaned and cleared. Mrs. Letcher said she was informed by the city that a fence could not be placed across the easement. In the meantime the gate was removed to allow the neighbors to get to the rear of their properties. She said there is a problem, she spent \$4,000 for the fence

and \$8,000 to have the property cleaned and the neighbors are currently throwing debris on the property that belong to the City of Natchez. She said she was told that city officials are not sure what to do about the situation. The same official came to her house when the neighbors called about the fence being installed because of the easement.

Mayor West said he was not familiar with the situation. He requested comments from Mr. Dawes.

Mr. Dawes, Building Official said he did remember talking with Mrs. Letcher about the city easement. He said the problem is the neighbor is placing debris in the bayou behind their property and it is not construction material, it is limbs and leaves.

Mrs. Letcher said Mr. Willie B. Jones, Code Enforcement Officer visited the site and verified that there is trash being thrown in the bayou. Mrs. Letcher said the easement is blocked now with trash and debris. She said her property line extends into the bayou. Mrs. Letcher said it was illegal for her to block the easement and it is illegal for the debris to be dumped into the bayou.

Mr. Dawes said the property referenced is an unopened city alley.

Mayor West requested clarification on the removal of the fence.

Mrs. Letcher said she had to remove the gate not the complete fence. She presented photographs of the property. She pointed out the easement that was not being maintained by the City of Natchez. Mrs. Letcher said she has owned her property for eighteen (18) years and the area was never maintained by the city.

Mr. Dawes said the debris on the lot was discussed in the past as well as the removal of the gate. He said he is not aware of the dumping on property.

Mayor West said the gate technically should not have been installed across the city easement and this prompted the city to take action.

Mrs. Letcher said the gate was installed and removed four (4) years ago.

Alderman Massey said he thought if the city did not maintain a right of way and the adjacent property owners maintained it and included it with their property it eventually became the property of the adjacent owners. Alderman Massey said the Attorney who handled the transaction should have required a survey of the property to determine the correct property lines. He said there are many individuals who take over city property.

Alderman Gray said he was made aware of the situation when Mrs. Letcher had to remove the gate. He said the current problem is the illegal dumping on the property and in the bayou. Alderman Gray said Mrs. Letcher did have the property cleaned and she did maintain it for many years.

Mrs. Letcher said before she acquired the property the easement was grown up with shrubs, trees and grass. She said she paid to have the property cleared. The property was maintained because it was adjacent to her property and she had children. The city was contacted several times and they never responded. Mrs. Letcher said once the area was cleaned and beautified it was recognized as city property again.

Mr. Dawes said the property was always recognized as city property.

Mrs. Letcher said the city should have kept the property cleaned and maintained.

Mayor West said there were several issues mentioned in regard to the property. He asked Attorney Sanders to look into the matter and provide a report in terms of what was done and what the possible alternatives would be to assist in resolving the problems.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Alderman Massey referenced the Water Works rate increase to be in compliance with the bond issues. He said the city is not in compliance and it is illegal.

**A motion was made by Alderman Massey to approve the changes to the water rates. The motion was seconded by Alderman Pollard.**

Mayor West requested comments.

Alderman Middleton asked if there was a letter from the State indicating that the City is not in compliance.

Mr. Gardner said there is a letter from the auditors saying that the city is in violation and states that there is a violation of the health department requirements. He said there is also a copy of the health department requirements that state that you have to be within a certain area of income. Mr. Gardner said the city is not in compliance with the income requirements. There is not a letter from the State although it will be submitted for the audit of next year. The audit is one year behind and there were no violations last year. Mr. Gardner said the audit will be available for inspection to the Health Department this year.

Alderman Middleton asked Mr. Gardner how he felt about the new industries, casinos and hotels coming into Natchez.

Mr. Gardner said he felt good about the rise in the economy. He said there must be available funds available now and there are none. Mr. Gardner said the rate increase is structured to be implemented over a five (5) year plan. He said if the water rate can be increased and issued now to allow the city to get back on financial ground it would be spread out over five years. If this is possible it will not be anticipated to have another rate increase during year 2, 3, or 4 which will be minimal.

Alderman Middleton asked if the vote would be on a five year rate increase plan.

Mr. Gardner said the vote would be on a five year plan but the Board will review the recommendation of the Water Board on an annual basis in the five year plan.

Alderman Middleton asked why the rate increase could not be on a one year plan.

Mr. Gardner said the request was for the amount needed to get back into compliance and that would be a lot more than what is being requested on the five year plan. He said if everything was placed on the one year plan there would be a much larger rate increase.

Alderman Middleton asked if there would be enough with the one year increase.

Mr. Gardner said the first year of the five year plan will not be enough. He said it will take five years to get into compliance based on the projections provided by the auditors. He said this is because of the loss of customers since the last rate increase in 1994. There is not enough water being sold.

Alderman Middleton said he is not comfortable with the five year plan increase.

Mr. Gardner said the increase is based on a five year plan. Everything is set, and there is a rate increase the first year and built in for the second, third and fourth year. He said this will not be implemented unless approved by the Mayor and Board each year. Mr. Gardner said at that time if the economy has turned around and more water is sold then the plan can be adjusted. Mr. Gardner said the water system must be in compliance if not it will be cited in the audit, the bond issues and with the Health Department.

Alderman West questioned the consequences of being cited.

Mr. Gardner said the City will lose the current bond capacity rating if cited, and be cited and fined by the Health Department.

Alderman West said with the influx of new businesses coming to the area would that be enough to suffice.

Mr. Gardner said the wait was too long and now it must be done immediately. He said the rate increase must be done at this time for everything to function properly in the future.

Alderman West questioned the amount of the increase per household.

Mr. Gardner said on an average household the increase would be six dollars. He said that would be three dollars for water and three dollars for sewer per month per household.

Alderman Massey questioned the comparison between the city and county water rates.

Mr. Gardner said the city rate is seventy percent lower than the county rate.

Alderman Pollard said as Chairman of the Water Commission the increase has been a long time coming. He said there was a lot of discussion in the past and it is now time to act on the request. He said some things are necessary that are not popular. Alderman Pollard said the increase is necessary to keep the Water Board in compliance.

Alderman Gray said he has concerns with the increase at the present time. He said when he was first elected there was a free month of water given to each household. He did not understand how the city could give water to customers and now there is an increase of six dollars per household. Alderman Gray asked Mr. Gardner if the private agencies are being charged for the installation of water lines for new developments. He asked if any water/sewer lines are installed free of charge.

Mr. Gardner said the private agencies are required to install the water lines. He said the water works will install the main on the highway but the developer is responsible for the infrastructure for the development. He said the infrastructure is at the cost of the developer.

Alderman Gray said there was an increase in the garbage collection and now the increase for water. He said there is a large amount of money being spent at the Water Works. He said you should not say you are out of compliance and you need money and then there are large purchases for the department.

Mr. Gardner said there have been no unnecessary purchases.

Alderman Gray said since 2000 the employees of the Water Works have had raises whereas other departments could not provide raises. There was a problem with that because it was unfair for some departments to have a raise every year and other departments were not able to do the same. Alderman Gray said the auditor should have examined the books closer when raises were issued, and new equipment purchased. The rate increase should not be an emergency at this point it should have been resolved sooner.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis noted that the situation has been on the table for a long time, since last fall. She said she requested two documents that she did not receive, one was the privatization report on if water is privatized what would happen, what would the rates be, what could a company offer as a contract, in terms of being where we are now, or could they save money. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said she requested the information and never received it. She said she would like to see what the Malachi Group has to say about the request since they are handling the bonds. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said the Malachi Group should review the Natchez Water Works budget and bond commitment and see if there is any form of restructuring that can be done to alleviate or help hold up the problem until the city can anticipate a good year for business and water rates could sustain themselves. She said she is still asking for a report for the Board of Aldermen to look into getting private companies to see what they could do for the City of Natchez with the Natchez Water Works. Maybe there is nothing a private company can do but the city will not know until a proposal is submitted for review. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said she did not receive any answers other than what is being proposed, the increase of rates. She said she did know if a private company has been look at in regard to what is available, and provided information.

Mayor West requested comments from Attorney Sanders in regard to the increase of water rates, and whether the Board of Aldermen would have the authority to roll back water rates at any time.

Attorney Sanders said the Board has the authority to roll back water rates at any time.

Alderman West commented on the question asked by the Mayor and said that his understanding was, once rates are increased they will never roll back. Alderman West asked what guarantee is there for the public to know that the Board will review the situation and roll back the water rates. He said there has never been a tax that was applied to the community and taken back or reduced over the past seventeen years.

Mayor West said since the Board has to authorize the water rate increase it has the authority to roll back water rate increases. He said part of the dilemma is there is not enough information to make all board members feel as comfortable as they would like to feel. Mayor West said it will take time to acquire additional information. He said if the board would choose to move forward with the rate increase it would have the ability to roll back the increase if in fact the information acquired would justify that.

Alderman West asked if Mayor West was recommending the approval of the rate increase.

Mayor West said everyone has a dilemma regarding the matter, because no one is in favor of increasing fees on the community because there are many who cannot afford any increase. He said at the same time you must be responsible and practical in doing what is in the best interest of the total community. Mayor West said this has been discussed for a year or more and there is nothing to dispute what has been presented but there is time needed to see if the factorial information that was provided would not support maintaining a rate increase or having additional increases over the five year plan. It will take some time to acquire the information. He said the Board had requested information. Mayor West said if the board decides to move forward it would be in a position to acquire the information one way or the other.

Mayor West said he did not want to risk losing the Bond Rating and he recognized that there is a large amount of activity going on in the community. He said while the Water Works is busy, the fact is you have to spend money to make money and sometimes it is not done as practically as it should be done. Mayor West said the city should not be placed in a position where we can't help facilitate economic development in the community. He said knowingly do that and cause adverse impact on the things we are trying to do.

Alderman West questioned the amount of money the rate increase would provide in one year.

Mr. Gardner said the first year would be the biggest increase, it would be approximately \$700,000. He said after five years the system would be in full compliance. The Health Department will be forgiving once the rate increase is implemented. Mr. Gardner said the Bond Issue requirements is the most important and the Water Works will be reviewed when another Bond issue is requested. The audit report will show a citation. Mr. Gardner asked that the Board take action on the request. He said he would be glad to furnish

any information that will support the rate increase. He noted that the numbers are simple, if the water population has gone down 300/400 meters since 1994 the increase is required. Less water is being sold, therefore it should be clear to see that you can not make end meet on 1994 dollars. Mr. Gardner said it is not fair for other utilities to increase and the Water Works will continue to suffer.

Mr. Gardner said the rate increase will compensate for the loss of industry, and the decrease of 300/400 water meters. He said everything has been done to get back into compliance without the rate increase in the past years. He said he knew when he reviewed the finances originally that the increase was necessary. Mr. Gardner said he is convinced that the rate increase is inevitable.

Mayor West asked Mr. Gardner if he would be willing to cooperate if the Board decided to contract with an independent person to complete an analysis of what has happened based on factual information that was presented over the past years.

Mr. Gardner said he would be willing to provide the necessary information. He said he has confidence in the numbers.

Alderman West asked if the \$6.00 increase could be put off any longer.

Mr. Gardner said the longer you put the situation off the worst it will get.

Mayor West requested additional comments.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said she would like to request proposals from a private firm. She said the request was made of Mr. Gardner several years ago and by now the information would have been submitted. Alderwoman Arceneaux Mathis said she would like to have someone look for a private firm. She said it would not be the responsibility of Mr. Gardner to look for a firm to privatize him from his job. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said if the city wanted to know if the rate increase is the right thing to do it should have been completed six months ago. She said she would like to see what a private firm would recommend and the Malachi Group should get involved since it will involve bond issues. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said when a request is made it is to allow her to make a decision and the information should be provided in a timely manner. She said until the information is provided for review she will vote against the rate increase.

Mayor West asked if there are examples of other cities the size of Natchez who have their water privatized.

Mr. Gardner said there are some although he did not have a list.

Alderman West said there is a list available.

Mr. Gardner said the information can be gathered. He said the information provided during the term of Mayor Brown was not feasible at the time. Mr. Gardner said he can assure the board the

information is not feasible because of the finances at the current time. He said it can be reviewed and the only thing that will be done is spending additional time.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said it was not the job of the current Water Works Superintendent to provide the information for the privatization of the Water Works. She said the Board of Aldermen should ask for the information. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis suggested that Mississippi Municipal League be involved in the matter and assist in the way to handle the situation.

Mayor West called for a vote on the motion.

### **Roll Call Vote**

<b>Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Alderman Gray</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Alderman Pollard</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Alderman West</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Alderman Massey</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Alderman Middleton</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Due to the three-three vote Mayor West voted yes to break the tie.**

Mayor West noted that he will entertain discussion to rollback the rate increase once information is acquired to justify or not to justify the rate increase.

## **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT, Chief Mullins**

Chief Mullins said following an internal investigation it was determined that employee # 300583 violated the personnel policy, Section 10.2.16, Conduct unbecoming to a City Employee. Chief Mullins recommended that the employee receive a ten (10) day suspension without pay.

**A motion was made by Alderman West and seconded by Alderman Pollard to authorize the ten (10) day suspension without pay for employee #300583 for violation of the Personnel Policy. The motion carried unanimously.**

Chief Mullins said he attended a meeting sponsored by the State Department of Education regarding the future evacuation of coastal residents who do not have transportation. He said the plan is to use school buses from central and south Mississippi to bus coast residents to Jackson and Meridian. Chief Mullins said the residents will not be bused to Natchez because it is too close to the coast. He said during a hurricane if information is provided it will be regarding the transportation of residents to the Jackson Coliseum and Meridian. He said no buses will be directed to Natchez.

### **GRANTS COORDINATOR, Brett Brinigar**

Ms. Brinegar noted that there is approximately \$7,000 in an account allocated for the Forks of the Road project from donations. She said this is money that can not be applied to the current boundary study.

Ms. Brinegar said Mr. Boxley approached Mayor West about spending the money on the Forks of the Road Site to beautify and add a temporary kiosk. She said she reviewed the preliminary proposal and an itemized budget will be submitted by Mr. Boxley to be shared with the board.

Ms. Brinegar said the first item is to have the Master Gardeners go out and beautify the site. She said the budget will determine the next step in the process. Ms. Brinegar requested a resolution to spend the funds on the beautification project as requested.

Mayor West requested comments.

**A motion was made by Alderman West and seconded by Alderman Gray to adopt a resolution to authorize the use of funds for the Beautification of the Forks of the Road site. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, David Gardner**

Mr. Gardner said in regard to the Trails Project, he reported the TCSP Grant in the amount of \$270,750.00 to pay for the landscape, engineers, architectural professional services. He said it was recommended that the following individuals are appointed to the Trails Selection Committee to receive the proposals:

John Holyoak, Mimi Miller, Kathleen Jenkins, Brett Brinegar,  
John Larson and Sandy Middleton

Mr. Gardner said the proposals will be received on June 11, 2007 by the Selection Committee. He said a recommendation will be made to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. He requested authorization of the appointments to the committee.

Alderman West asked if the committee represents the community.

Mr. Gardner said these are volunteer individuals who have been active and have attended every Trails meeting. He said he would like to keep the volunteers active in the project. Mr. Gardner said the committee is made up of volunteers.

**A motion was made by Alderman Massey and seconded by Alderman Pollard to authorize the appointment of John Holyoak, Mimi Miller, Kathleen Jenkins, Brett Brinegar, John Larson, and Sandy Middleton to the Trails Project Selection Committee. The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Gardner said the Water Works is currently on a tight deadline to deliver the force main at the Hobo Forks Road for the prison. He said they are in the process of applying for grants to assist with the project. In order to meet the deadline it is necessary to start the process of selecting the engineers for the project and submit the advertisement. Mr. Gardner said the committee received three proposals and the

overall high score was issued to Jordan, Kaiser, Sessions / Williford Gearhart & Knight. Mr. Gardner said the two firms teamed up and submitted the proposal that received the highest score. He requested approval of the joint team of Jordan Kaiser Sessions / Williford Gearhart & Knight as the engineers and authorize the negotiation of a contract.

**A motion was made by Alderman Massey and seconded by Alderman Pollard to accept the Engineering Firm of Jordan Kaiser Sessions/Williford Gearhart Knight and authorize negotiation of the contract with the recommendation being presented at the next scheduled meeting.**

Mayor West requested comments.

Alderman Gray asked who was part of the selection committee.

Mr. Gardner said the selection committee included Tony Moon, David Atkins, Donnie Holloway, and Brett Brinigar.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said once the contract is negotiated will the money come from the 4.5 million CDBG grant, the \$500,000 match, or the Adams County Water Works fund.

Mr. Gardner said funds will be provided from all sources. He said the packet submitted to the State had several options. He said the DRA has a \$500,000 in kind Engineering Service to be provided by the City Engineer as part of the incentive to attract the project. There is \$175,000 of in kind Engineering Service and \$50,000 case match. Mr. Gardner said the CDBG application submitted will pay for the engineers. He said he will provide some engineering service which is part of the DRA, and the CDBG will pay the bulk of the fees.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked if the \$50,000 will be split between everyone.

Mr. Gardner said if DAR is provided it will be a part of the match, and if it is not provided the \$50,000 must be split between Natchez Water and Adams County Water. The match will be reduced if DAR funds are provided.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked Mr. Gardner to keep the Board informed of which funding is provided.

Alderman Gray questioned the other firms who submitted proposals.

Mr. Gardner said the other firms included Allen Holser, Jackson, Ms and Hartman Engineering, Baton Rough, La.

Alderman Gray asked why two firms were selected over the other firms.

Mr. Gardner said Jordan Kaiser Sessions and Williford GK teamed up and submitted one

proposal.

Mayor West requested a vote on the motion.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Gardner requested authorization to enter into an agreement with Smart Data Strategies for the development of the GIS Web site. Mr. Gardner said the agreement will be contingent upon receiving the executed Memorandum of Understanding for the GIS Web site with funding provided by MDOT.

**A motion was made by Alderman West and seconded by Alderman Massey to authorize the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Smart Data Strategies for the development of the GIS Web site. The motion carried unanimously.**

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis requested information regarding Michael Baker Engineering Firm and if they were considered for the proposal.

Mr. Gardner said Michael Baker Engineering is a private company with a nationwide contract to provide GIS services. He said it is a large contract which is the primary focus. Mr. Gardner said when the advertisement was submitted for the RFP, it was done statewide and the Baker firm did not submit a proposal.

#### **NATCHEZ FIRE DEPARTMENT, Chief Johnson**

Chief Johnson noted that the Fire Chiefs/Fire Fighters Conference will be held in Natchez on June 6-9, 2007 at the Convention Center. He said the group will provide exhibits and demonstrations for the public. Chief Johnson invited everyone to stop by and visit. He said the event will have a good economic impact on the downtown community.

#### **CITY OFFICIALS' REPORTS**

##### **ALDERWOMAN ARCENEAUX-MATHIS**

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said she received a call from Ms. Thelma Hawkins requesting information about a development at 78 Marin Avenue. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis requested information from Mr. Story regarding the matter.

Mr. Story said he received a call from Ms. Hawkins about property at 78 Marin Avenue. He said the property is currently zoned R-2 (Two Family Residential) and under the new code it will remain R-2. Mr. Story said Ms. Hawkins indicated that she heard there was going to be a business at the location. He said all proposals for development are reviewed through the Planning Department.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said she wanted Mr. Hawkins to talk to Mr. Story to assure her

that there would not be any development in the area. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said she told Ms. Hawkins that no fool would be running for reelection trying to put her out of her house. She said there would be other calls from residents in the area.

Mr. Story said no proposal was submitted to the Planning Department.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said there was a request for a speed bump to be installed on North Rankin Street. She asked Mr. Smith to provide information to the board on the status of speed bumps.

Alderwoman-Arceneaux Mathis thanked the Mayor West and the Board of Aldermen for the Resolution done on behalf of the Natchez High School Choirs. She said she was thanking them from the Choirs and herself specifically. Alderwoman-Arceneaux Mathis said the program presented to the choirs was tremendous and they feel that Natchez appreciates them. She said the choirs are good ambassadors for the City of Natchez.

#### **ALDERMAN GRAY**

Alderman Gray said he met with the West Stiers Lane Neighborhood Organization and some interesting information was presented. He said the information was mainly regarding illegal dumping, illegal dumping, illegal dumping. Alderman Gray said there are elderly residents in the area who are afraid to report individuals who are dumping because they think there will be some form of retaliation. He said he asked everyone in the neighborhood to watch and report the tag number of any dumping in the neighborhood. The group discussed the burned houses in the area. Alderman Gray said he asked Mr. Dawes to have contractors sign a form indicating where they would dump debris from demolition.

Mr. Dawes said information is on the application indicating where the material from demolition will be dumped.

Alderman Gray asked if a time limit can be placed on a demolition project. He said there are contractors working on several demolition projects at one time and none are being completed and cleaned up.

Mr. Dawes said the demolition permit is issued for six months.

Mayor West asked if the six month period is determined by the department or law.

Mr. Dawes said he would review the information and see if it is part of the building codes.

Mayor West asked that Mr. Dawes research the time on demolition permits and report to the board.

Alderman West asked if the time can be adjusted to a shorter time frame. He asked that the information be presented at the next scheduled work session.

Mayor West said there could be an adjustment, but he would like to know if the time limit is in the codes or issued by the Inspection Department. He requested recommendations from the Department as it relates to the problems of demolition.

Alderman Gray asked that Mr. Freeman research the possibility of Watkins Street being allowed parking on one side. Alderman Gray said a petition was submitted from the residents regarding the safety issues of cars being parked on both sides of the street. He said Mr. Freeman determined that there should be no parking on the left side of Watkins Street and signs will be installed pending authorization of the board.

**A motion was made by Alderman Gray to authorize the Traffic Department to install parking signs on Watkins Street to discontinue parking along the left side of the street. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### ATTACHMENT

Alderman Gray said although school is out for the summer he would like Chief Mullins to implement education of the ordinance to the officers regarding the regulation of children being in school and off the streets during school hours.

Alderman Gray said a friend of the City of Natchez sent him information regarding grass violations. He said during the work session he would like to discuss the information. Alderman Gray said the information states that the property owner shall receive one abatement notification per year. He said he would like the City Attorney to research the possibility of notifying individuals once per year.

Alderman Gray said he received a call regarding limbs hanging over a ladies house from the neighbors yard. He asked if there is anything the city can do to assist.

Attorney Sanders said that this is a matter between the land owners. The individual with the complaint can have the limbs trimmed from her property. He suggested that the property owners discuss the matter.

Alderman Gray said there was a similar situation on Jackson Street where a tree fell and demolished a house and the situation was deemed an act of God and the City of Natchez was not responsible.

Mayor West said when there is a situation between two private land owners, they have to resolve the problem as opposed to the city.

Alderman Gray encouraged the Mayor and Board of Aldermen to attend the Fire Conference on June 6 - 9, 2007.

Alderman Gray said there are several vacancies on the various boards and commissions. He asked Mayor West if there is a special way the board will deal with the vacancies. Alderman Gray said if there will be interviews held he would like to notify individuals who did not submit a resume.

Mayor West said the work session is scheduled for June 4, 2007 and before that date a determination can be made as to interview for the vacancies. He asked that each board member review the list of vacancies before the work session and provide feedback on how to handle the matter. Mayor West said there may be positions that may require an interview and other positions that would not.

Alderman Gray said he would like to meet with Mrs. Jones, Community Development regarding a list of the neighborhood organizations that are not meeting and hopefully they can be encouraged to meet to bring concerns back to the board.

### **ALDERMAN POLLARD**

Alderman Pollard said the Youth in Government Day was a success. He said twenty-two (22) students were selected to participate in the program and shadow the Mayor, Board of Alderman and Department Heads for the day. Alderman Pollard said there was a lot of after hour work the children put into the program. He said Mrs. Darlene Jones did an excellent job with the group and the children enjoyed working with her. Alderman Pollard thanked Mrs. Jones for a job well done. He said the Council Chamber was filled with Officials and Department Heads who enjoyed the program. Alderman Pollard said the group was not shy about criticizing the Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

Alderman Pollard said the Chamber After Hours Reception teamed up with the National Tourism Council. He said the local group provided a great reception for the awards night that included the Chamber After Hours. Alderman Pollard asked Mr. Tipton to relay to the group that they did an excellent job on the event.

### **ALDERMAN WEST**

**No Report**

### **ALDERMAN MASSEY**

Alderman Massey said in the past all the board meeting were centered around the Public Works Department and what they were not getting done. Alderman Massey said he would like to publicly recognize Mr. Eric Smith for a job well done. Alderman Massey said Mr. Smith has responded to every complaint, or request in a timely matter. He said there has been no request gone unanswered.

Alderman Massey said he would like to inform the public of things that the board has learned recently. He said the new hotel adjacent to the Isle of Capri is a Hampton Inn, owned by Dr. Borum, Eldorado Arkansas. Alderman Massey said the Hampton will be opened October 1, 2007. Alderman

Massey said the hotel on Canal Street is the Country Inn and Suites/Convention Center Hotel which will be opened February 1, 2008. He said this is a \$13 million dollar project. The materials purchased on both hotels were purchased locally. Alderman Massey said this is very encouraging.

Alderman Massey said the Emerald Star Casino purchased the old Ramada Inn and it is being renovated in the amount of \$20 million. He said at the bottom of the hill under the Ramada Inn there will be a Best Western Inn at the foot of the bridge. Alderman Massey said the Lane Company project is moving forward. He said the condo project is currently on hold due to litigation but they are looking forward to proceeding in the near future.

Alderman Massey said there are many good things happening in Natchez, Mississippi. He said there is an enormous amount of traffic in town. The traffic count is what will make the city move and grow. There are a lot of positive things going on in the city. Alderman Massey said the city is looking at approximately 300 jobs in the area.

Alderman Massey welcomed Mayor West back to the office full time.

## **ALDERMAN MIDDLETON**

### **No Report**

## **CITY CLERK'S REPORT, DONNIE HOLLOWAY**

Mr. Holloway requested approval of a resolution for the purchase of equipment for the Recreation Department in the amount of \$157,272.10. He said this is for three vehicles for the golf course. Mr. Holloway said approval was issued during budget revisions.

Alderman Gray asked if the money is in the budget.

Mr. Holloway said the money is in the Recreation budget. He said Concordia Bank was the low bidder with the best interest rate.

Mayor West requested comments.

**A motion was made by Alderman Middleton and seconded by Alderman Pollard to approve the resolution for the purchase of equipment in the amount of \$157,272.10 for the Recreation Department. The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Holloway requested approval of a resolution for the lease purchase agreement for six (6) vehicles for the Natchez Police Department, 5- cruisers, 1- unmarked vehicle in the amount of \$116,299.00 with Concordia Bank.

Mayor West requested comments.

Alderman Gray requested clarification on how the bank will be paid.

Mr. Holloway said there will be a monthly note with Concordia Bank.

**A motion was made by Alderman Pollard and seconded by Alderman Massey to approve the resolution for the lease purchase agreement for six (6) vehicles for the Natchez Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Holloway requested approval of a resolution for the lease purchase agreement with BanCorp South Equipment Finance in the amount of \$127,000 for the street sweeper.

Mayor West requested comments.

**A motion was made by Alderman Pollard and seconded by Alderman West to approve the resolution for the lease purchase agreement with BanCorp South Finance in the amount of \$127,000 for the street sweeper. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT, EVERETT SANDERS**

Attorney Sanders requested adoption of the Joint Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the Inter Local Agreement - Metro Narcotic Unit.

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis and seconded by Alderman West to authorize the execution of the Inter-Local Agreement- Metro Narcotic Unit. The motion carried unanimously.**

Attorney Sanders requested approval of the contract between the City of Natchez and US Network for the development of Web site for the City of Natchez.

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis and seconded by Alderman Gray for the approval of the contract between the City of Natchez and US Network for the development of the Web site for the City of Natchez. The motion carried unanimously.**

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked if the funds will be provided from the Planning Grant.

Mayor West said the Web site development will be provided from the \$100,000 Planning Grant from the Federal Government. He said there will not be a cost to the City of Natchez. He said there will be maintenance fees for the site.

#### **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor West requested adoption of the resolution commending the Natchez High School Choirs and Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis.

**A motion was made by Alderman West and seconded by Alderman Gray for the adoption of the resolution commending the Natchez High School Choirs and Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis for a job well done. The motion carried unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**None**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Alderman Massey and seconded by Alderman Middleton to adjourn the Regular Meeting of May 22, 2007. The motion carried unanimously.**

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**PHILLIP C. WEST,  
MAYOR**

**ATTEST:**

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**DONNIE HOLLOWAY, CITY CLERK**