

REGULAR MEETING
April 28, 2009

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, April 28, 2009. Mayor Jake Middleton presided at the meeting, which was opened with prayer by Thomas Chatman.

MAYOR & BOARD PRESENT	ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT	CITY OFFICIALS & DEPARTMENT HEADS
John ‘Jake’ Middleton Mayor		Donnie Holloway, City Clerk Coretta L. Logan, Deputy Clerk Darlene Jones, Community Development Sabrena Bartley, Senior Center Paul Dawes, Building Official Patricia Gibson, Personnel Director Connie Taunton, Tourism Director David Gardner, Engineering Mike Mullins, Police Chief Oliver Stewart, Fire Chief Brett Brinegar, Grants Coordinator Natchez Democrat
Joyce Arceneaux-Mathis Alderwoman, Ward 1		
J. “Ricky” Gray, Jr. Alderman, Ward 2		
Bob Pollard Alderman, Ward 3		
Ernest ‘Tony’ Fields Alderman, Ward 4		
Mark Fortenbery Alderman, Ward 5		
Daniel Dillard Alderman, Ward 6		

MINUTES APPROVED

A motion was made by Alderman Pollard to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 14, 2009 and approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS WELCOMED

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

Walter Tipton, Natchez Convention Center

Mr. Tipton stated that for the month of April they are having one of the busiest months since the Convention Center was constructed. He recognized Gail Healey and stated that he wanted to acknowledge her for bringing P. Allen Smith to Natchez.

Mr. Tipton requested that the Mayor and Board issue a Proclamation recognizing P. Allen Smith.

Mayor Middleton read the proclamation welcoming P. Allen Smith to Natchez in celebration of the 3rd annual Symphony of Gardens Event.

Buckner Avenue, Wall Street, & Lewis Drive Residents

Alderswoman Arceneaux-Mathis read a statement regarding the North Natchez Drainage of 2009 before introducing the residents.

Residents James Knowles of 10 Buckner Avenue, Beatrice Young of 7 Buckner Avenue, Alice Smoot of 29 Elm Street, Ethel Dixon of 19 Buckner Avenue, Gene Battieste of 709 & 711 Wall Street, and Audrey Jenkins of 27 Buckner Avenue each stood before the Mayor and Board and voiced their complaints about the flooding and mosquito problems. The residents said that the children cannot go outside and play for several days after it has rained. They indicated that the water is porch level high and they are tired of the drainage issues.

Mayor Middleton stated that they took five projects to Washington with them. He added that the North Natchez Drainage Project was their number 1 project that they brought forth to our Congressman and two Senators. He added that he spoke with one of our State Representatives last week and he is working along with Greg Harper to see what he can do as our Congressman.

Mayor Middleton stated that they are working as hard as they can to get this project done. He added that he rode in the area the other day with Alderman Gray. He stated that the next time a good rain comes he will be down there.

Mayor Middleton stated that he was very concerned about the area and recommend that the residents write to the Senators and Congressmen. He added that it is good to hear from the individuals that are on the front line fighting the battles. He added that they are doing everything they possibly can as a board. He added that every opportunity he gets, he speaks on their behalf.

Mr. James Walker of the Mississippi State Department of Health stated that Natchez received funding last year for mosquito abatement and is up for funding again this year. He indicated that this would be a good method that the residents could use until the drainage issues are solved. He added that this is a request through Mississippi Department of Environmental Health.

Alderman Fortenbery stated that the Public Works Department has mosquito tablets that the residents could come by to pick up. He added that the residents could call and the workers would come and put them out for the residents.

Alderman Fields made a motion to allow Mrs. Flourine Fuller Evans to speak. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Flourine Fuller Evans of 24 Buckner Avenue stated that the one case of West Nile Virus death in Adams County was her son. She added that the stagnant water is an issue and they have to wait a few days before the sun dries it up. She stated that West Nile is a disease that lingers on and they need some relief as soon as possible.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion visit or invite Colonel Michael C. Wehr, Corps of Engineers, District Commander and Brigadier General Walsh-Vicksburg District United States Corps of Engineers to discuss the additional funds needed to complete the 592 North Natchez Drainage Project. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

She added that when she made the statement, she did not know that other neighborhoods were not included.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to allow the Corp of Engineers a year from today and if we do not have any information that the Corp of Engineers is going to give the city the additional 3.5 million dollars for the project, the board will allow a bond issue to complete the project. Seconded by Alderman Gray.

Alderman Fortenbery and Alderman Pollard stated that they would like more information on the bond issue before making the motion.

Mayor Middleton stated that the board should get some financials from the City Clerk and find out what it would cost the city. He added that there might be some other parts of the city that may need to be included before the board makes the motion today.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that it has been nine years and the project needs to be completed.

Alderman Gray stated that these are real people with real problems. He added that he does not have a problem with the motion.

Alderman Gray stated that it is the City's responsibility to help provide the residents with a better quality of life and not depend on the Federal Government to fix the problems.

Alderman Fortenbery stated that we should see what our options are and come back.

Alderman Gray made a motion to table the North Natchez Drainage issue until the next meeting. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried with Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis opposing.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

GRANTS COORDINATOR, Brett Brinegar

Ms. Brinegar stated that she has 3 resolutions for the board. The first resolution will allow the city to apply for the grant. The second resolution is the Match Guarantee that the city will provide inkind and cash match which is no different from the way that we normally do it. The third resolution certifies that the city is ADA compliant with federal regulations.

Alderman Gray made a motion to accept the first resolution which will allow the city to apply for the grant. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Gray made a motion to accept the second resolution which is the Match Guarantee that the city will provide inkind and cash match. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Gray made a motion to accept the third resolution that certifies that the city is ADA compliant with federal regulations. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

ENGINEERING, David Gardner

Mr. Gardner requested that the Board authorize the Mayor to request MDOT to activate the following project pending approval by the Federal Highway Administration to place the project in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP):

Milling and overlaying of Pearl Street from State Street to Jefferson Street (0.24 mi.) (FA 6089), Commerce Street from State Street to Jefferson Street (0.24 mi.) (FA 6090), Rankin Street from Orleans Street to Jefferson Street (0.38 mi.) (FA 6092), Washington Street from M.L.K., Jr. Street to Broadway Street (0.49 mi.) (FA 6085), Canal Street from Jefferson Street to Madison Street (0.20 mi.) (FA 6096), State Street from Broadway Street to M.L.K., Jr. Street (0.48 mi.) (FA 6058 & 6072), and Melrose Avenue from Ratcliff Place to Roselawn Drive (0.10 mi.) (FA 6070).

Mr. Gardner stated that the Board acknowledges that the estimated cost of this project is \$661,250.00 and that \$ 662,595.00 of the funds for this project will come from

the money that the City of Natchez anticipates that they will receive from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009 (ARRA).

Mr. Gardner stated that the Board is aware that if the actual cost of the project exceeds the Engineer's estimate of \$ 661,250.00 that the City will have three (3) options:

- (1) Reject all bids and not award the project.
- (2) Award the project and pay 100% of the amount that exceeds \$ 662,595.00.
- (3) Award the project and utilize the City of Natchez's available Surface Transportation Funds. If the City chooses to use available Surface Transportation Funds then the City anticipates it will receive 80% of the estimated remaining cost of the project from its available Surface Transportation Funds and 20% will be paid by the City.

Mr. Gardner stated that the Board is also requesting to receive additional ARRA funds for this project should they become available. He added that the funds are from Federal Aid to Urban Streets which is funded through The American Recoveries Reinvestment Act.

Alderman Pollard made a motion to authorize the language stated above to be placed in the minutes. Seconded by Alderman Fortenbery. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gardner stated that he has a request from the Beachwood Developers for the acceptance of the streets. He added that he has a certification from the Engineer that the streets were built according to city standards. He stated that there is an ordinance that was passed on August 27, 1968 that allows the board of Alderman to accept streets and subdivisions. He added that all items have been complied with from the developer and recommended that the Board of Alderman make a motion to accept the streets and allow the streets to be conveyed to the city upon one year of maintenance by the developer and if everything is acceptable in the one year's time then the streets will belong to the city.

Alderman Fortenbery made a motion to accept the streets and allow the streets to be conveyed to the city upon one year of maintenance by the developer and if everything is acceptable in the one year's time then the streets will belong to the city. Seconded by Alderman Pollard. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gardner stated that he would like to have a meeting with the board so that he can discuss the CBDG Project and its scope, the limits of the project, and what goes into the project.

Mayor Middleton stated that Mr. Gardner will need to send a memo to each Alderman.

Mr. Gardner stated that the 592 Project is a very important project to him. He added that the funding has been very difficult to complete a project of this scale on inconsistent funding. He stated that the project has overrun its' time. He said that he is committed in making this happen.

CITY OFFICIALS' REPORT

ALDERMAN GRAY - WARD 2

Alderman Gray stated that he was confused when the press stated that the we never completely funded the project. He added that he felt personally attacked by The Natchez Democrat on some of the issues. He stated that the elected City Officials are elected and have a job to do. He stated that the Board of Aldermen hire and fire subject to the Mayor's veto while the Mayor oversees day to day operations of municipal government and makes recommendations to the board. He added that he will give the Natchez Democrat a copy of that because evidently they do not know anything about city government. He added that he does not appreciate the Natchez Democrat trying to single him out. He added that Mrs. Julie Finley Cooper made a comment about being a bad role model but he has never see her at the schools' mentoring programs.

Alderman Gray stated that city government is suppose to work for the people and not against the people. He added that he feels like special people get special favors and until we try to make this government work for everybody, we will continue to have problems.

Alderman Gray stated that Mrs. Julie Finley Cooper came out with an article talking about the young eyes see and the young ears hear. He added that the young kids also read the Natchez Democrat and they do more harm to the young kids than anybody because they read The Natchez Democrat.

ALDERMAN POLLARD - WARD 3

Alderman Pollard read a proclamation for Travel and Tourism Week.

ALDERMAN FIELDS - WARD 4

Alderman Fields announced that he would be at The Village Inn on Minor Street on Saturday from 1:00 to 2:00. He added that he will be there to answer any questions or concerns and entertain any suggestions that the residents may have.

Alderman Fields invited everyone to the Relay for Life at the Vidalia Riverfront on Friday May 1st at 6:30 p.m. He added that cancer really affects us in this area. He added that it is big part of all of our lives and cancer has also affected his life. He stated that whatever you can do to help out whether it is joining a team or donating. He added that Mississippi has a wonderful hospital that is second to none which is the Blair E Batson Children's Hospital in Jackson. So, we need to support them as well.

Alderman Fields stated that the city experienced a high number of water breaks. He added that they are having a tough time getting asphalt but they have gotten a lot of the holes patched and asked that the residents be patient.

Alderman Fields asked the residents to not steal water.

Alderman Fields congratulated Natchez Waster Works for having the second best water in the state.

Alderman Fields stated that the residents need to be mindful about the Swine Flu and practice good hand hygiene and be aware of where you are traveling as well.

Alderman Field congratulated Natchez Manor for their grand opening. He added that it is a beautiful establishment in the heart of our city.

Alderman Fields asked the residents to please come when they have Town Hall meetings. He added that the only way that they can be effective is to listen to the residents.

Alderman Fields announced that Cable One will be increasing the cable rates effective June 2009. He added that customers can call Mr. McKool for more information.

ALDERMAN FORTENBERY - WARD 5

Alderman Fortenbery stated that Public Works is working on the piles at Duncan Park. He added that the drainage on Liberty Road is about 40% complete and it is going really well.

ALDERMAN DILLARD - WARD 6

Alderman Dillard stated that the Joe Fortunato celebrity golf tournament will be this weekend. He added that this will be a very successful event.

Alderman Dillard stated that the new pavilion should be coming into play soon. He added that it is a very handsome structure.

Alderman Dillard stated that the tennis courts have been resurfaced. He thanked Alderman Fortenbery for the sweeper truck becoming more visible. He added that he would like to get use to hearing it.

Alderman Dillard stated that he is working on some proposals that he hopes can be considered.

ALDERWOMAN ARCENEAUX-MATHIS - WARD 1

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to recognize citizens of Lewis Drive who were inadvertently left off of the agenda. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that Susie B. West apartments are having problems with drugs and gangs and they want the neighborhood to be declared as a nuisance.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to spread the Finley Contract across the minutes allowing the Mayor to sign and the City Clerk to witness. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to spread the resolution to convey said property on St. Catherine Street to Citizens Choice Credit Union on condition that all site plans and other necessary documents are approved by the certifying commissions. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to have a proclamation for Mrs. Geneva Booker - was requested for her 100th birthday; she died earlier today, I want to present this proclamation for the funeral. Information for this proclamation may be obtained from her family, the Natchez Public Schools and Zion Chapel AME Church, Rev. Birdon Mitchell, Sr. Pastor. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that she would like to Invite Buckner Avenue and Wall Street to the Woodlawn Neighborhood Watch meeting. She added that you can contact Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Darlene Jones for dates and times.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT, DONNIE HOLLOWAY

NONE

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT, EVERETT SANDERS

NONE

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Middleton read a resolution recognizing National Library Week from April 12th to April 18th 2009.

NEW BUSINESS

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion for a resolution to convey the Intermodal Center to the National Park Service after the City Attorney has looked

at the contract and allow the mayor to sign off on it to be attested by the City Clerk. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to recognize and allow NAACP President Mr. Alfred Hunter and the Executive Committee of the NAACP to speak before the board. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hunter read a letter of concern to the board.

Alderman Gray stated that 5 & 7 Claiborne Street are unsafe and something needs to be done.

Mr. Dawes stated that he would take care of it.

Mayor Middleton stated that the board has been working together and will continue to work together. He added that he did not realize the trip to Washington was a big issue but in the past African Americans have gone to Washington as well. He stated that he apologized if that may have offended individuals, however it was not intended. He stated that we all should be proactive instead of reactive and try to work together.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Alderman Fields, seconded by Alderman Fortenbery to Adjourn the Regular meeting of May 12, 2009. The motion carried unanimously.

**JAKE MIDDLETON
MAYOR**

ATTEST:

**DONNIE HOLLOWAY
CITY CLERK**

FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 28, 2009

It was moved by Alderman Pollard and seconded by Alderman Fields that the Mayor and Board make a determination if there was a need to go into executive session. The vote was unanimous.

It was moved by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis, second by Alderman Fields that the Mayor and Board go into executive to discuss personnel and contracts. The vote was unanimous.

No action was taken in Executive Session.

It was moved by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis, second by Alderman Pollard that the Mayor and Board come out of executive session. The vote was unanimous.