

REGULAR MEETING
September 22, 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, September 22, 2009. Mayor Jake Middleton presided at the meeting, which was opened with prayer by Dr. Doug Broom.

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 Connie Taunton, Tourism Director Mike Mullins, Police Chief Oliver Stewart, Fire Chief Natchez Democrat
Joyce Arceneaux-Mathis Alderman, 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 Fortenbery to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 8, 2009. The motion was seconded by Alderman Pollard. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Pollard made a motion to go out of order for a Public Hearing with Mr. Paul Dawes on Property Maintenance Issues. Seconded by Alderman Fortenbery. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dawes submitted a list of property maintenance issues.

Alderman Gray asked Mr. Dawes to check on the properties at 3 Claiborne Street, 5 Claiborne Street, and 5 Lincoln Street.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked for the status of 12 Irving Lane and 11 Winston Hill.

Mr. Dawes stated that the YouthBuild Group will demolish the property for 12 Irving Lane. He said that he is waiting on a response for the demolition of 11 Winston Hill since the first request was denied because the cost of the demolition by a contractor exceeded the fair market value of the property. He added that the second request which was submitted was that the demolition would be done by YouthBuild.

Mayor Middleton invited any property owner of the listed properties to speak before the board.

Ms. Deloris Scott stated that she was here on behalf of 22 Claiborne Street. She stated that the property was not in her possession at the time; but when her father died in 2000, she demolished one of the two houses on the property. She added that the remaining house is in livable condition, and now that it is in her possession, she can begin restoring the home.

Alderman Gray stated that he has received several complaints on the property by other residents in the area.

Mr. Dawes stated the property is in terrible condition and it needs to be demolished.

Mr. Lee Screws, spoke on behalf of 1162 Martin Luther King and 15 Brenham Avenue. He stated that he would have the properties boarded up by October 15, 2009.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion that the board go back into regular session. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion the board accept the Inspection Departments recommendation as on the list of properties as follows.

**19 Brenham Avenue
3 Henderson Street
119 Horseshoe Lane
937 North Union Street
120 Homochitto Street
22 Claiborne Street
834 Martin Luther King**

Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Fields made a motion the board allows Mr. Screws until October 15th, 2009 to get 1162 Martin Luther King and 15 Brenham Avenue boarded up. Seconded by Alderman Fortenbery. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS WELCOMED

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

NONE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Attorney Sanders read an order upholding the decision of the Preservation Commission allowing Fat Mama's Tamales be allowed to add a wooden trellis over its patios, but to the extent that the decision is conditioned on the installation of installing parking bollards, it is overruled

Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to overrule the decision of the Planning Commission requiring installation of parking bollards of Fat Mama's Tamales . Seconded by Alderman Pollard. The motion carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

PLANNING DEPARTMENT, John Lewis

Mr. Lewis stated that an error was made at the counter of the Planning Department for 608 Jefferson Street. He added that the property was zoned as B-2 when it should have been zoned as R-1, wherein a guest house is allowed by special exception. Mr. Lewis stated that since it was an error by the staff, he is requesting that the board allow a temporary Certificate of Occupancy.

Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to allow a temporary Certificate of Occupancy for 608 Jefferson Street for a guest house. Seconded by Alderman Dillard. The motion carried unanimously.

GRANTS COORDINATOR – Brett Brinegar

Mrs. Brinegar stated that she and Mr. Gardner have worked hard to get an African American component included in phase 1 of the Trails Project and also to cover pretty much all of Phase 2. She added that it is a no match grant.

Ms. Brinegar stated that she attended the State auditor's conference on stimulus reporting. She added that she placed color copies in each Alderman's box. She also stated that it is going to be very difficult and we need to watch the paper work very carefully.

Ms. Brinegar stated that the mayor should designate a team to do the stimulus reporting. She further stated that whenever the State Auditor does another seminar, she strongly recommends that the board attend.

ENGINEERING, David Gardner

Mr. Gardner stated that he wanted to give the board an update on the projects that he is working on. He added that the 3 projects that were under a federal deadline, the Trails Project, Union Street Overlay Project, and the Arra Overlay Project, have met the deadline. He added that now they are waiting for the federal review to take place.

Mr. Gardner stated that the North Natchez Drainage Project is still working on right of way. He added that hopefully it should be completed in October.

Mr. Gardner stated that they are working on finding additional funds for Phase Two of the Trails Project which will run along St. Catherine, loop around the Forks of the Road, and will eventually tie into the Natchez Trace.

Mr. Gardner stated that it is an enormous amount of paperwork that has to be completed now in the stimulus projects. He added that it is important that you keep your paper trail well documented and always assume that you will be audited.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked when will the Union Street Project begin.

Mr. Gardner stated that they are waiting on the Federal Highway Administration to approve the project. He added that once it is approved, they will send an approval letter to MDOT, and then MDOT will request for the City to advertise for the project. He also added that there should be no problem getting the project approved.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that she also went to one of the stimulus meetings. She added that in the meeting they discussed transparency issues and whatever we are saying, we must do. Everything has to be done by the guidelines that are submitted.

Alderman Fortenbery asked Mr. Gardner about the NRCS project on Kennedy Drive.

Mr. Gardner stated that they are in the design phase of that project. He added that the design should be completed within the next couple of weeks.

Alderman Gray asked for an update on the EWP Projects.

Mr. Gardner stated the properties are approved and they have been surveyed. He added that they are currently being designed and they are waiting on the green light from the funding source because the funding has not been cleared yet.

CITY OFFICIALS' REPORT

ALDERWOMAN ARCENEAUX-MATHIS - WARD 1

Aldерwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion that the City of Natchez enter into a Interlocal Agreement with Adams County in terms of continuing maintenance for streets submitted by the county for resurfacing in the city to include Bob Lee Williams, Beaumont, East Woodlawn, and Garden Street. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that she did one lobbying session over the last week with the people that live in Tupelo. She added that she thinks that we will get some positive returns from any access that they have to Senator Wicker and Senator Cochran. She also stated that she will follow up with a letter thanking them for allowing the meeting.

ALDERMAN GRAY, Ward 2

Alderman Gray stated that he would like to thank Natchez Water Works for working numerous hours on Bishop Street to alleviate a problem.

Alderman Gray asked Darlene Jones if she started up a neighborhood watch meeting with the Holiday Apartment residents.

Ms. Jones stated that she has called and left messages for the manager, Sharon at Holiday Apartments, but she has not returned the call.

Alderman Gray asked for an update on the Woodlawn and West Steirs meeting. Mrs. Darlene Jones stated that at the Woodlawn meeting, the residents requested from Commander White that they increase the patrol in the area. She added that Mrs. Carolyn Smith will open a business on the corner of Woodlawn and MLK.

Mrs. Darlene Jones stated that at the West Steirs meeting, the residents discussed putting together a plan than can address the problems that they are having in their area. She added that she would get with Ms. Brinegar to put together some Self Help projects.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked Mrs. Jones for an update on the Lewis Drive meeting.

Mrs. Jones stated that there were a couple of deaths in their neighborhood and they cancelled the meeting.

Alderman Gray stated that he has been getting numerous calls about the traffic light in front of the Central Alternative School. He added that he would like to know why there is a light placed in front of the hospital but there is no light in front of the school.

Alderman Fortenbery stated that he has asked the same question before. He added that it has something to do with legality issues and MDOT.

Alderman Gray stated that the City Attorney should check into the matter.

Alderman Gray stated that he would like permission from the board to allow him and Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to travel to Hattiesburg to attend their Board of Directors meeting – Mississippi Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (MBC-LEO) October 1st and 2nd.

Alderman Fields made a motion that the board allow Alderman Gray and Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to travel to Hattiesburg to attend their Board of Directors meeting – Mississippi Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (MBC-Leo) October 1st and 2nd. He added that they will be using one of the City's vehicles to travel. Seconded by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Gray made a motion to allow Ms. Deborah Davis to introduce herself to the board. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Deborah Davis stated that she is the new Chapter Manager for the Adams County Red Cross. She added that she would like to thank the City of Natchez for its support and donations.

Alderman Gray made a motion to allow Ms. Iris Reagan to speak before the board regarding prepaid legal services. Seconded by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Reagan stated that she is an Independent Insurance agent with Prepaid Legal Services. She added that she is presently in Natchez trying to do an enrollment. She also added that the company is in all 50 states and the company is based out of Oklahoma. Ms. Reagan stated that with prepaid legal services, you are able to have justice at an affordable cost.

Mayor Middleton stated that he may try to set up a meeting one evening and have the employees and department heads to attend the meeting so that she can catch everyone at one time.

Alderman Gray stated that he received a complaint on the Police Department. He added that he will get with Chief Mullins to discuss the matter.

Alderman Gray stated that his sympathy goes out to the two individuals that died in Holiday Apartments. He added that he would also like a moment of silence at the end of the board meeting for the late Judge Kennie Middleton.

ALDERMAN POLLARD – WARD 3

No Report.

ALDERMAN FIELDS – WARD 4

Alderman Field stated that he was glad to see a letter in his box from the Inspection Department to Stanford Management Group (Brumfield Apartments). He added that he wants Mr. Dawes to hold them to the October 1st deadline because the inside of the complex is in terrible condition.

Alderman Fields stated that Reverend Birdon Mitchell of Zion Chapel AME went to the church on Quitman Street and cut the grass even though Zion Chapel AME is not responsible for the property. He added that there are two bids on the property and he hopes that is sold quickly.

Alderman Fields stated that he has asked the City Engineering to get a plan together on what it would cost to take care of the problem on Lumber Street. He added that it is in bad shape and there needs to be a rush on the job.

Alderman Fields stated that he would like to thank Ms. Jessie Conrad for starting the Lumber Street/St. Catherine Street neighborhood watch which was at the Police Department. He added that it was a very good turn out. He also thanked Commander White for everything that he discussed as well as Lieutenant McGehee's presentation on the H1N1 (Swine Flu).

Alderman Fields stated to Mr. Gardner that the trench at the Jack Waite Park should be looked at.

Alderman Fields stated to Mr. Tedder and Coach Whitley that he wanted to also acknowledge the workers, grass cutters, and entire Recreation Department for keeping up the well manicured Jack Waite Park.

ALDERMAN FORTENBERY – WARD 5

Alderman Fortenbery stated that he would also like to thank Coach Whitley because his crew does a great job for softball season. He added that he also appreciates what he has done as well what the Recreation Department does for the kids.

ALDERMAN DILLARD – WARD 6

Alderman Dillard made a motion to advertise for grass cutting service bids on the six neighborhood city parks, Duncan Park, and the softball & baseball fields as defined in the advertisements. Seconded by Alderman Pollard. The motion carried unanimously. The motion carried unanimously.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT, DONNIE HOLLOWAY

Mr. Holloway asked the board to approve the resolution to fix the advalorem taxes for the year beginning October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010 in the amount of 42.732 mills.

Alderman Gray made a motion to approve the resolution to fix the advalorem taxes for the year beginning October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010 in the amount of 42.732 mills. Seconded by Alderman Dillard. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Holloway stated that this is the same millage rate as last year.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT, Everett Sanders

Attorney Sanders stated that he has a resolution authorizing the mayor to sign an Interlocal Agreement with the Board of Supervisors of Adams County. He added that it is the 13th Amended Interlocal Agreement between the City of Natchez and Adams County for fire protection.

Alderman Pollard made a motion to allow the mayor to sign an Interlocal Agreement with the Board of Supervisors of Adams County. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Attorney Sanders stated that the salaries of the elected officials must be set by an ordinance. He read a proposed ordinance to reflect the previous action of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen changing salaries.

An ordinance to amend the code of ordinances of the City of Natchez to provide for compensation by annual salary for the Mayor, Board of Aldermen, City Clerk and Police Justice, (Municipal Judge) of the City of Natchez.

Alderman Fortenbery made a motion to approve the ordinance to amend the code of ordinances of the city of Natchez to provide for compensation by annual salary for the Mayor, Board of Aldermen, City Clerk and Police Justice, (Municipal Judge) of the City of Natchez. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

Attorney Sanders stated that someone from the oil industry came with a proposal to engage in oil exploration on some property that is owned by the City. Attorney Sanders stated that he is requesting that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen allow him, Alderman Fortenbery, and Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to negotiate with them to come up with a proposed arrangement to present to the board.

Alderman Fields made a motion to allow the City Attorney, Alderman Fortenbery, and Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to negotiate with them to come up with a proposed arrangement to present to the board.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Middleton stated that the first Mayor's Youth Council will be Monday, September 28, 2009 at 5:30pm at the Council Chambers.

NEW BUSINESS

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a request that Mayor Middleton meet with President Watts of the Board of Supervisors and Attorney Walter Brown to set up a lobbying meeting in Jackson with the Governor and our legislative Caucus and also in Washington D.C. with the Congressional delegation and Senators Cochran and Wicker prior to the October 31st deadline for appropriations by the Federal government.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Alderman Fields, seconded by Alderman Fortenbery to Adjourn the Regular Meeting of September 22, 2009. The motion carried unanimously.

The motion carried unanimously. The motion carried unanimously. The motion carried.

**JAKE MIDDLETON
MAYOR**

ATTEST:

**DONNIE HOLLOWAY
CITY CLERK**