

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**April 13, 2010**

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, April 13, 2010. Mayor Jake Middleton presided at the meeting, which was opened with prayer by Rev. Dennis Flach.

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

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**MINUTES APPROVED**

A motion was made by Alderman Fortenbery to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 9, 2010. The motion was seconded by Alderman Dillard. The motion carried unanimously.

**AWARD BIDS- ANNUAL GENERAL SUPPLIES**

Mr. Gardner recommended that all low bidders that are outlined in the red font be approved for the purchase of general supplies for next year.

**Alderman Pollard made a motion to accept the low bidders for the purchase of next year’s general supplies. Seconded by Alderman Fortenbery. The motion carried unanimously.**

**VISITORS WELCOMED**

Mayor Middleton welcomed visitors to the meeting.

## **RUTH NICHOLS**

Dr. Nichols stated that they had two training sessions in Customer Service at the Convention and Visitors Bureau during the month of February. She stated that during the first week, there were 74 people registered and 65 that attended. She stated that during the second week there were 89 people registered and 71 attended. She added that it has been a great start for the Southern Hospitality Academy.

## **KEITH SMITH**

Mayor Middleton recognized Mr. Keith Smith, the newest member of the Planning Commission.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Alderman Fields asked if the announcement has been publicized regarding debris removal.

Mr. Gardner stated that he has composed a public announcement to be issued in the Natchez Democrat. He added that the title of the announcement will be called Debris Removal within the City limits of Natchez. He added that it will run in the newspaper Wednesday and also next week.

## **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

### **ENGINEERING, David Gardner**

Mr. Gardner stated that they are ready to advertise on the North Natchez Drainage Project Phase 2A. He added that the advertisement will run on April 14<sup>th</sup> and April 21<sup>st</sup> and there will be a mandatory pre bid conference with all the bidders on May 11th. He further stated that the bids will be received by the City Clerk on Tuesday, May 25<sup>th</sup> by 4:00pm.

**Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to allow advertisement on the North Natchez Drainage Project Phase 2A. Seconded by Alderman Fields.**

Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis asked if the project would stop pass the old hospital.

Mr. Gardner stated that it will go up to where it turns to go up the open ditch.

Alderman Dillard asked if all the engineering work was already in place.

Mr. Gardner stated that all Engineering work is complete, with the exception of Phase 2B. He added that as of now they do not have a right of way on Phase 2B.

### **The motion carried.**

Mr. Gardner stated that he needed to make a recommendation to the board, based on the RFP Grading sheets (Allen Laird, SWMPDD), for an Architect/Engineering Firm to provide professional services in design, construction engineering, inspection, testing, for the roof repair on various Municipal Buildings.

**Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to give the Mayor authority to enter into the contract with the architecture firm to begin the process of working with Allen Laird and the SWMPDD. Seconded by Alderman Fields.**

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked what buildings they will be working on.

Mr. Laird stated that the buildings are the Senior Citizens, NAPAC building, Police, and Fire Station #2.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Gardner stated that they are ready to ask permission to advertise for bids on the **NRCS Projects, Oak Hill, N. Bluebird, MLK, and North Street** pending final approval and the Project Agreement being received from NRCS.

He added that he also needed the board to appoint him as Liaison Officer for NRCS projects as well as allowing the Mayor to sign any and all documents associated with the implementation of the project.

**Alderman Fortenbery made a motion to allow permission to advertise for bids on the NRCS Projects, Oak Hill, N. Bluebird, MLK, and North Street pending final approval and the Project Agreement being received from NRCS, to appoint Mr. Gardner as Liaison Officer for NRCS project and allow the Mayor to sign any and all documents associated with the implementation of the project. Seconded by Alderman Gray.**

Alderman Dillard asked about the 15% match.

Mr. Gardner stated that they have negotiated with the County, and the County had agreed to pay a cash match up to 15%. He added that it is a City/County mutual partnership.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Gardner stated that he would like the board to allow him to initiate the Transit Facility on Woods Avenue Project and to allow the mayor to sign the paperwork on behalf of the project. He added that it has to have a project number.

**Alderman Fields made a motion to allow him allow him to initiate the Transit Facility on Woods Avenue Project and to allow the mayor to sign the paperwork on behalf of the project. Seconded by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis.**

Alderman Dillard asked if the contributions were going to be reimbursed to the city.

Mr. Gardner stated that there will be no reimbursement. He added that they plan on using part of the value of the property as in kind match if there is a match required. He further added that the budget is being modified to make sure that they have enough money for Real Estate, design work, and so forth.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked if the budget is not extended, will the \$300,000 be deleted or will it come back to the board.

Mr. Gardner stated that he feels like they can work inside that budget. He stated there are many alternatives that they can take without having to come back to the board.

**The motion carried.**

Mr. Gardner stated that in regards to the Phase II North Natchez Drainage, they have not received the final draft of the Amendment to PCA at this time; however they anticipate receiving it within the next few weeks. He added that once the Amendment to the PCA is in place, they can get authorization from the USACE to start acquiring the necessary easements for this final Phase of the project.

Mr. Gardner stated that The Engineering Department will be working closely with Allen Laird with SWMPDD to submit the necessary Grant Application by the end of May. He added that they will also be working with Alderman Gray to get a detailed scope of work for the Daisy Street project.

Mr. Laird stated that he has a resolution to pass that authorizes the Mayor to sign all documents. He added that it is a standard resolution.

**RESOLUTION**

**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
CITY OF NATCHEZ**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT WITH THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI UNDER THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1974, AS AMENDED THROUGH THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1981, PUBLIC LAW 97-35**

**WHEREAS**, the State of Mississippi, under the community development amendments of 1981, Public Law 97-35, has accepted the responsibility of administering the State's Fiscal Year 2010 allocations of Community Development Block Grant funds; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Mississippi will grant such funds to eligible cities and counties on a competitive basis; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Natchez desired to obtain Fiscal Year 2010 funds for its betterment, and for attainment of the National Policy Objectives as described in the Housing and Development Act of 1974, as amended; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City of Natchez, Mississippi as follows:

1. That, Jake Middleton, as Mayor of the City of Natchez, is authorized to execute and file an application for the Community Development Block Grant Funds; and
2. That, Jake Middleton, as Mayor of the City of Natchez, is authorized to furnish on behalf of the City, such additional information as the State of Mississippi may require in connection with such application; and
3. That should any such grant funds be awarded, Jake Middleton, as Mayor of the City of Natchez, is hereby authorized to execute grant agreements with the State of Mississippi on behalf of the City of Natchez; and
4. That the City of Natchez engages the services of the Southwest Mississippi

Planning and Development District to assist in the preparation of the City's application for Fiscal Year 2010 Community Development Block Grants; and

5. That should grant funds be awarded as a result of these applications, the City of Natchez will utilize the professional services of the Southwest Mississippi Planning and Development District for the administration of such funding

**ADOPTED**, by the City of Natchez, this the 13th day April, 2010.

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Jake Middleton, Mayor  
City of Natchez

**ATTEST:**

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City Clerk

**Alderman Gray made a motion to pass the resolution and to allow the Mayor to sign all necessary documents. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Laird stated that he needed authorization from the board to hold a public hearing.

**Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to authorize the holding of public hearing. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.**

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked Mr. Laird about doing a door to door.

Mr. Laird stated that he is still considering it and there is a possibility. He added that he would need a good bit of help to go door to door.

Alderman Gray stated that if needed he will go door to door with the help of others.

Mr. Gardner stated that they have finished the ARRA Overlay project and will have the final inspection in a few days. The Union Street Project is underway and the Downtown Trails Project should start any day now. He added that the effective date of the notice to proceed was April 9<sup>th</sup> for the Trails Project.

Mr. Gardner stated that the Trash Dump Grant Application has been submitted, and is waiting to hear the results.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that funds have such a political impact. She added that the road signs should reflect President Barack Obama is the president under which these funds were made available.

**Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion that the City of Natchez requests that president's name to be placed on the ARRA road signs and if denied of such, the company shall provide an explanation as to why. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **INSPECTION DEPARTMENT, Paul Dawes**

Mr. Dawes submitted the financial report for the month of March.

Alderman Dillard stated that he would like to have copies of the financial reports to compare to the previous reports from an economic stand point.

Alderman Dillard asked about the status of the abandoned vehicles on 903 Westwood.

Mr. Dawes stated that he and Judge Blough met with the property owner and gave him a timeframe to remove the vehicles.

#### **SENIORS' CENTER, Sabrena Bartley**

Mrs. Bartley stated that she received some calls and she would like to give the board a few facts about the Seniors' Center.

The Natchez Seniors' Center was organized in 1974. The mission was and continues to be to enhance the lives of older persons in Natchez and Adams County Mississippi. The Natchez Transit Center officially began operating in 1981. On January 4, 2000 Sabrena Bartley began as head of the department. Natchez Transit now has a total of 30 vehicles. The department currently has 22 employees.

Mrs. Bartley stated that she would like to thank everyone for their assistance particularly Mr. David Gardner, Mr. Tony Moon, Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis, Attorney Sanders, and Mayor Middleton.

Mrs. Bartley recognized Jacari Washington and stated that he is a vital asset to the organization.

### **CITY OFFICIALS' REPORT**

#### **ARCENEAUX-MATHIS – WARD 1**

**Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion that the board formally invite Mrs. Betty Oliver, Director of USDA in the state of Mississippi and Mrs. Jackie Williams, Acting Interim Director of HUD in the state of Mississippi to visit Natchez on the last week on April. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried.**

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that they met with Director Oliver in Jackson and she was very instrumental in providing the names of people to visit in Washington.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that a power point presentation will be put together on what they learned when they went to the National League of Cities. The president had every secretary of departments present to give information on where they could go for different matters.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that it was discussed that the president has funds available for libraries across the country.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that Dr. Edney saw the program on television and called her. He stated that he would be willing bring the Alcorn Jazz Festival to Natchez if he receives a written request from the board. She added that the written request will need to get to him as soon as possible so that he can put it in his budget.

## **ALDERMAN GRAY, Ward 2**

Alderman Gray stated that he received a call about a house on 2 Purnell Street. He added that the house is a danger to the community. He added that the Code Enforcer needs to take action on the property immediately. He further stated that across the street there is also water leakage that is causing the sidewalk to cave in.

Mayor Middleton requested that flag ribbon be placed around the property to prohibit parking there.

Alderman Gray requested Mr. Freeman to make sure that the Do Not Enter sign is in the best possible location, because people are still driving up there.

Alderman Fields stated that it is the residents that are not obeying the law.

Alderman Gray stated that a warning letter should be sent to the residents to notify them about the Do Not Enter sign.

Alderman Gray stated that he would like the citizens of the community to know if you have a complaint about the Police Department it needs to be in writing. He added that if you have a complaint about the judicial system, then write to the Mississippi Judicial Performance Commission at P.O. Box 22527, Jackson, MS 39225.

Alderman Gray read part of the Natchez Code 2-85 on Salary Increase. He added that if it is not in your budget and the board did not amend your budget, there's no money in there for a salary increase.

Alderman Gray stated that if the public defender is not defending the individuals then the public defender should pass them on to someone who can defend them to the best of their ability.

Attorney Sanders stated that if the Public Defender was hired by the city and he or she is not doing the job in representing an individual, they should bring their complaint to the board.

Alderman stated that his sympathy goes out to the Mayberry, Callon, Marsaw, Davis, Fleming, Tolliver, Thompson, Johnson, and Graves families. He added that he would like to end the meeting with a prayer for Mrs. Graves who is still in the hospital in Georgia.

### **ALDERMAN POLLARD – WARD 3**

Alderman Pollard stated that he was involved with a group of convention promoters, which was a group of about 90 people. He added that the group is responsible for bringing conventions to Natchez. He further stated that the City rolled out the Red carpet at the Visitors' Center and had a Taste of Natchez Event, which was a very well received function.

Alderman Pollard stated that he would like to thank the Natchez Convention Center and all the people involved for bringing the group to town.

### **ALDERMAN FIELDS – WARD 4**

Alderman Fields thanked the Mayor and Board of Alderman for the opportunity to attend the National League of Cities. He stated they received a wealth of good information to help our community. He further added that he would like to thank Senators Wicker and Cochran, as well as Congressman Harper, and their staff.

Alderman Fields stated that since the board is a member of the National League of Cities we can offer residents a free prescription discount card with no cost to the city. He asked Mayor Middleton to get the information and complete the form to be submitted.

Alderman Field stated that City Engineer, David Gardner has worked up a wonderful plan for Anne Holders Lane for improvements. He added that he cannot wait to pursue the plan.

Alderman Fields stated that the city has received a Congressional Earmark of \$607,623.00 for the Phase II of the Trails Project dealing with St. Catherine Street and Forks of The Road. This will include sidewalk repair, ADA Ramps, Heritage Exhibits, Landscaping, and Lighting.

Alderman Fields indicated that the project will tie into the existing downtown trails and go out St. Catherine Street to the Forks of the Road Site on Liberty Road and will include, but not necessarily be limited to sidewalks, landscaping, curb cuts, lighting, and information kiosk (panels) benches and curb repair. The total available in Federal Funds is \$607,623 with \$151,905.75 in required matching funds that will be provided by the City of Natchez. This will give us a total estimated project cost of \$759,528.75.

Alderman Fields stated that is a good opportunity.

**Alderman Fields made a motion to authorize the Mayor to request MDOT to activate the following project: City Project No. 041-10 St. Catherine Street - Forks of the Road Trails Project. Seconded by Alderman Dillard.**

Alderman Gray stated that the board has not received a financial report nor had a finance meeting to determine where we are. He added that things need to come in on the front end and not the back end, knowing that you will need a match.

Mr. Gray stated that these are two completely different projects. He added that the projects come from two separate pots of money.

Alderman Gray stated that the board's responsibility is to protect the tax payers' money.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that it is the process that presents the dilemma. She added that hopefully this will be the last time that we have to back track on a project.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**Alderman Fields made a motion to allow Mr. Darryl White to speak before the board on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rhythm Night Club Fire. Seconded by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Mr. White stated that on Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> the Natchez Bluff Blues festival will have its patronage party, Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> the Natchez Business and Civic League will hold ceremonies on the bluff overlooking the river at 5:30. On Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> there will be a community celebration at the actual site of the Rhythm Club which is 1 St. Catherine Street starting at 1:00pm.**

**Mr. White stated that Mississippi Public Television will be into town coming I to doing a documentary on the Rhythm and Night Club Fire.**

**Alderman Fields thanked the Fire Department, Police Department, Sherriff Department, Alderman Gray, and the residents for the support regarding the tragic fire on East Oak Street.**

#### **ALDERMAN FORTENBERY – WARD 5**

Alderman Fortenbery stated that now it is grass cutting time again and he would like to remind the citizens to be cautious of blowing leaves and grass clippings out into the streets. He added that blowing your leaves and grass clippings in the street is not good for the city and the city would appreciate it if residents would pick up their leaves to prevent stopping up the drainages.

Alderman Fortenbery asked that the business owners be considerate of others and have the sidewalks accessible for people. He added that there are more and more people that are traveling in wheelchairs.

#### **ALDERMAN DILLARD – WARD 6**

Alderman Dillard stated that in his trip to Washington he learned a tremendous amount of information as well as resources available to the community.

Alderman Dillard stated that all the ball parks are up and the grass is mowed. He added that the Recreation and the Public Works Department are working together successfully.

Alderman Dillard stated that they have been reviewing the software proposals from companies. He added that the City Clerk is prepared to make a recommendation. He added that it will be a transition but we are moving forward.

**Alderman Dillard made motion to surplus the property at the Intersection of Ratcliff and Park Place Legal Description: Parcel 8 Woodlawn Park Addition PB.1PG.28. Seconded by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis. The motion carried.**

**Alderman Dillard made a motion to authorize the City Clerk to prepare an advertisement to be advertised publicly in the newspaper pending the scrutiny of the City Attorney. Seconded by Alderman Fortenbery. The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Holloway stated that he will get with the City Attorney to go through the proper protocol.

Alderman Dillard asked if there are any plans available for Water Street.

Mr. Gardner stated that he has a drawing of what Weatherford McDade did early on.

Alderman Dillard asked Mr. Gardner to find out if in fact that is Water Street.

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

Mr. Holloway asked the board to approve docket #3790 – 4045 and docket #4530 – 4836

**Alderman Pollard made a motion to approve docket #0900 – 1156. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried with Alderman Gray opposing vendor # 356157 and 355714.**

Mr. Holloway asked if the board wanted to continue the sales tax holiday.

The entire board stated that they would like to continue the sales tax holiday.

Mr. Holloway asked everyone to remember Mrs. Francis Trosclair in our prayers.

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

NONE

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

Mayor Middleton read a proclamation declaring April 11<sup>th</sup> – April 17<sup>th</sup> National Library Week.

Mayor Middleton stated that tomorrow afternoon at 4:00 pm there will be the first interview for the City Planner. He added that it is important the Aldermen are present.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mayor Middleton stated that Attorney Sanders will be getting with Attorney Brown to work together on the agreement discussed earlier in the Finance meeting.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked Mr. Gardner about Ward 1 sewage and the big cuts in the street.

Mr. Gardner stated that there are many utility issues that are being addressed on several streets.

Alderswoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that she wanted to know what we were going to do with Mr. Boudreaux with the Symphony of Music.

Mayor Middleton stated that he has indicated to Mr. Boudreaux that financially the City is not able to move forward with the event.

**Alderswoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion that Attorney Sanders research information from Gillon and Company Auditors for the City of Natchez, City Clerk Donnie Holloway, and Tax Collector Peter Burns to complete findings from the 2001 audit on taxes collected by the Tax Collector for the City of Natchez. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.**

Alderman Gray thanked everyone for calls and concerns regarding the fake snake.

Mr. Holloway stated that he would like the board to approve entering into a contract with Springbook Software Company and to allow the City Attorney to look over the information to move forward. He added that he feels like this is the best fit.

**Alderman Dillard made a motion to approve entering into a contract with Springbook Software Company and to allow the City Attorney to look over the information to move forward as well as allowing additional funds for the accounting transitioning. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Alderswoman Arceneaux-Mathis seconded by Alderman Fields to adjourn the meeting of April 13, 2010. The motion carried unanimously.**

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**JAKE MIDDLETON  
MAYOR**

**ATTEST:**

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**DONNIE HOLLOWAY  
CITY CLERK**



