

REGULAR MEETING
May 10, 2011

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 10, 2011. Mayor Jake Middleton presided at the meeting, which was opened with prayer by Pastor Kari McCaleb.

MAYOR & BOARD PRESENT	ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT	CITY OFFICIALS & DEPARTMENT HEADS
John ‘Jake’ Middleton Mayor		Donnie Holloway, City Clerk Coretta Logan, Deputy Clerk Diane Holland, Deputy City Clerk Everett Sanders, City Attorney Sabrena Bartley, Senior Center Oliver Stewart, Fire Chief Salena Edwards, Recreation 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 Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular and Finance Meetings of April 26, 2011 and adopt the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Fields made a motion to go out of regular order to conduct a public hearing. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Nix said that this public hearing is to adjudicate lots as nuisances pursuant to the Mississippi Code of 1972. This hearing regards 13 lots that remain noncompliant. We are continuing the enforcement process for all of the lots on our repeat offenders list. 165 Fletcher Street; 17 Garden Street; 14 and 16 Irving Street; 307 Johnson Street; 735 and 737 Maple Street; 20 October Street; 316 Orleans Street; 113 and 115 Parker Street; 633 East Steirs Lane; 1 W. Woodlawn Street.

Mr. Nix stated in the attached resolutions, the staff inspected these properties and found code violations. The staff re-inspected these properties prior to preparing the attached resolutions, and found that the code violations were not corrected at the time of that inspection. A second re-inspection of the lots that

are recommended by this memorandum for adjudication as nuisance properties is scheduled to be conducted on Monday May 9th.

Mayor Middleton asked if there was anyone that wanted to speak in regard to the mentioned properties.

Alderman Fortenbery made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to declare all of the properties listed at the locations in the Staff Memorandum as properties harboring nuisance conditions that violate the Mississippi Code of 1972, and to adopt the Resolutions recommended by the staff. Seconded by Alderman Fields. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS WELCOMED

Thompson Head Start Students

Mayor Middleton invited the students of Thompson Head Start to come up and say the pledge of allegiance with the board.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Bob Nix – Planning

Mr. Nix stated that his department has sufficient funds in the budget for travel and he is requesting to attend the two training sessions in Chicago in June. He added that both sessions are two day conferences.

Alderman Dillard made a motion to allow Mr. Nix to travel to the training sessions in Chicago. Seconded by Alderman Fortenbery. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked Mr. Nix to send the coded enforcers to check on 927 North Union to make sure that the property is not opened where people can get inside. She added to also check on the property that is directly across the street from 927 North Union.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis discussed the concerns about the assistant planner collaborating with Commander White in the local Neighborhood Watch Programs since there is no longer a Community Development person.

Sabrina Bartley – Natchez Seniors Center

Mrs. Bartley stated that the Natchez Seniors Center has been having activities to highlight the Ode to America. She added that they also launched their walk for life program. She further added that Pilgrim Baptist Church will have third Thursdays opened to all seniors in the community.

Mrs. Bartley stated that two new trolleys and a 44-passenger bus have been paid for by the MDOT, and added to the city's inventory. A ribbon cutting for the new vehicles will be 11 a.m. on May 23 at the Natchez Visitor Reception Center. Free trolley and bus rides will take people to sites all over town the weekend of May 28.

Mrs. Bartley recognized Gerald Garrett, a vehicle operator for the Natchez Transit Department, for his outstanding performance in a statewide competition among safest vehicle operators. Garrett placed second in the state and received a trophy and a cash prize.

David Gardner – Engineering

David Gardner stated that he would like to make a request that the board appoint Med Freeman as the liaison between the City of Natchez and FEMA and MEMA.

Alderman Fields made a motion to appoint Meg Freeman as the liaison between the City of Natchez and FEMA and MEMA. Seconded Alderman Fortenbery. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gardner stated that the Colonel is scheduled to be in Natchez tomorrow at 10:00am. He added that the meeting will be inside the conference room.

Mr. Gardner stated that within the next few weeks an ADA Coordinator will have to be appointed.

Alderman Gray asked the status of the demolishing of the AB Motor Company building.

Mr. Gardner stated that the demolition is being advertised. He added that they have already advertised for the abatement of the asbestos and that will be starting this week, then after the abatement will be the demolition of the building.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked the status of the 592 project.

Mr. Gardner stated that he received a letter from the Corps of Engineers that their 592 funding is intact and secure.

Oliver Stewart – Fire Department

Chief Stewart stated that an individual offered to make a calendar for the Fire Department and distribute it amongst the local business throughout Natchez. He added that the Fire Department will receive a percentage of the profit from the calendars. He further added that the funds would be used to purchase safety materials to distribute to children.

Mayor Middleton stated that this board needed to know what was going on.

Alderman Pollard stated that he has spoke with Chief Stewart about the agreement that was made with the company and he objected to using the out of town company. He added that he disagrees with this and ask that a local company be used instead.

Chief Stewart stated that there were no local companies that approached him about doing a calendar.

CITY OFFICIALS' REPORT

ALDERMAN FORTENBERY – WARD 5

Alderman Fortenbery stated that the Public Works department has been busy for the past week and upcoming weeks concentrating on preparing sandbags for the Mississippi River. He added that his concerns go out to the families of Vidalia. He further added that we need to remember safety comes first and hopefully we all can get through this tough time.

ALDERMAN DILLARD – WARD 6

Alderman Dillard stated that on this day two years ago, this mayor and this city Attorney received from the developer a written notice of their election to exercise their option on Roth Hill Road site and that notice spells out that on June 1st, 2009 the lease would begin on that property. He added that this mayor and city attorney did not bring the information to this board. It is not in the minutes, not in the records, it is not on the videotapes. It was not brought to this board. He added that in addition to that the fact that this administration has not been as candid and forthright with these most critical developments is a problem that we have to take into consideration.

Alderman Dillard stated that the laws tells us that before any such lease, deed or conveyance is executed, the governing authorities of the municipality shall publish at least one each week for three consecutive weeks, in a public newspaper.

Alderman Dillard Stated that this discussion is not about gaming and not about the developer, it is about the way this administration handled these developments concerning this developer in this particular piece of property. He added that he would like the mayor and the city attorney to scrutinize the terms of the second amendment that was approved by this board.

Alderman Dillard stated that he would like to know what day did the 3 month period commenced. He added that he assumes on the day that the second amendment passed on the board on the last board meeting. The next question is if the board can get some proof or evidence from the city Clerk if the monies have been transferred to the city.

Alderman Dillard stated that he will be keeping a watchful eye over it and he expects the administration to step up to the plate and do the same.

ALDERWOMAN ARCENEAUX-MATHIS – WARD 1

Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis made a motion to allow travel to Biloxi for the Annual Summer MML Conference beginning in June 26th through June 30th. Seconded by Alderman Gray. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that she toured the new bus and trolley with Mrs. Bartley. She added that she also drove the ward and Marblestone.

Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that she attended the Adams County Emergency Management on May 6th and the meeting was with Patty Barlow and Susan Goodman from the Department of Human Services. She added that they have a dual roll and they have to stay open 24 hours.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that she would like to see Mr. Allen Ingram attend the board meetings so that the City and the Natchez Housing Authority can develop a more formal arrangement in terms of Public Housing.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis stated that Tony Shepherd will wire \$ 50,000 to the City. She asked the City Clerk if the monies have been received.

Mr. Holloway stated that the monies were received on April 28th and it is in the Public Properties account.

Alderman Dillard stated that the amendment was not approved by the board until May 3rd 2011.

ALDERMAN GRAY – WARD 2

Alderman Gray read the Police report for the month. He added that the Police Department is hiring probationary police officers and the closing date is May 16th along with the Fire Department advertising for probationary Firefighter and the closing date is May 20, 2011.

Alderman Gray asked about the numbers for the redistricting process for the City.

Mr. Nix stated that the numbers will come from the Census Bureau between June and August of this year. He added that they will publish them online as they become available.

Alderman Gray stated that he would like to congratulate the Ealey family for the marker that was placed on the bluff. He added that it was a very nice ceremony.

Alderman Gray stated that there was a dedication in Ward Two for the renaming of the street in honor of Stanford Buddy Raines. He added that he would like to thank the Habitat family for the work that they have done in the Smith Lane area.

Alderman Gray stated that he attended the Get on the Bus with the Chamber of Commerce and it was a success. He added that he also attended the Alcorn State University graduation.

Alderman Gray stated that his condolences goes out to the Green, Lewis, Anderson, Calhoun, Davis, Singleton, Fleming, Jackson, Woods, Etheridge, Johnson, Ray, and Dawson families.

ALDERMAN POLLARD – WARD 3

Alderman Pollard stated that the cost of running the Fire Department has increased above what it has normally cost the city to make the runs. He added that they will be asking the county for more money just to cover the costs of providing fire protection to the county. He further added that last month in April, out of 26 calls 38% went into the county.

ALDERMAN FIELDS – WARD 4

Alderman Fields stated that our priorities are in the right place right now in securing the port and Silver Street and turning our attention to Vidalia residents.

Alderman Fields stated that in the next work session the board needs to make a decision about speed humps.

Alderman Fields stated that the Get on the Bus trip was a good trip. He added that he was glad to see the board members come together.

Alderman Fields stated that he would like to wish all students well on the MCT2 testing. He added that the testing will last from Tuesday through Thursday.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT, DONNIE HOLLOWAY

Mr. Holloway asked the board to approve docket #5420 through #5725 and docket # 4949 through #5414.

Alderman Fortenbery made a motion to approve docket #5420 through #5725 and docket # 4949 through #5414. Seconded by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis. Alderman Pollard indicated that he will not be attending the MML and asked to be removed from the claims docket. The motion carried with Alderman Gray voting against vendor #356118 and Alderman Dillard opposing.

Alderman Dillard discussed his concerns regarding the budget reports particularly the Capital Improvements Fund. He added that the reports continue to be conflicting. He further pointed out Year to date discrepancies for March, April, and May.

Alderman Dillard stated that the North Union Street FAU fund shows an account number of 607, it showed an original approved budget of \$1,000, Year to date as reported in May as a \$248,486 expense.

Mr. Holloway stated that the account is finished and the budget has not been revised yet. He added that this is the way the accounting is set up.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT, Everett Sanders

Attorney Sanders stated that during the entire time he has represented the board in connection with the Roth Hill he has been very candid and reported the information that was available. He added that there are certain things contained within the documents that are self executing or time markers. He said the long and short of it is that we are now in a situation, where pursuant to the agreement, that we have modified, Natchez Enterprise has three months, and if the developer needs up additional time all they have to do is put up an additional \$50,000; it is self executing.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Middleton stated that a lot of meetings have been going on the last couple of weeks. He added that he talks with Mr. Gardner daily and he has spoken to the mayors in Louisiana, MEMA, and FEMA. He further added that the city is doing a great job in preparation for the flood. He further added that this shows our regionalism between Natchez and Concordia Parish.

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Dillard discussed the unacceptable appearance of the medians and byways coming into and out of Natchez. He added that the weeds are overgrowing the landscape.

Mayor Middleton stated that Mr. White of MDOT indicated that they are only giving the city enough funds for three cuttings per year. He added that they are also considering a spraying program

Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis indicated that the Planning Department should notify the mobile home/trailer companies about our city codes and where trailers are prohibited in the city.

Alderman Gray made a motion to approve the personnel report for March 31, 2011. Seconded by Alderman Arceneaux-Mathis. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Alderman Fields, seconded by Alderman Fortenbery to Adjourn the Regular Meeting of May 10, 2011. The motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

**JAKE MIDDLETON
MAYOR**

**DONNIE HOLLOWAY
CITY CLERK**