

## REGULAR MEETING

April 8, 2014

The Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Natchez, Mississippi, was held in the City Council Chambers at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 8, 2014. Mayor Larry L. "Butch" Brown presided at the meeting which was opened with prayer by Reverend Clifton Marvel

<u>Mayor &amp; Board Present</u>	<u>Elected Officials Absent</u>	<u>City Officials &amp; Department</u>
Larry L. "Butch" Brown Mayor		Donnie Holloway, City Clerk Hyde Carby, City Attorney Temple Hendricks, Board Sec
Joyce Arceneaux-Mathis Alderwoman, Ward 1		Justin Dollar Curtis Norton James Johnston
James "Ricky" Gray, Jr. Alderman, Ward 2		Chief Stewart Chief White Sabrena Bartley
Sarah Carter Smith Alderwoman, Ward 3		Creda Stewart Ed Bowser
Ernest "Tony" Fields Alderman, Ward 4		
Mark Fortenbery Alderman, Ward 5		
Daniel Dillard Alderman, Ward 6		

**MINUTES APPROVED**

With a quorum present, a motion was made by Alderman Fortenbery to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Finance and Regular Meetings of February 25, 2014, and adopt upon legal review. The motion was seconded by Alderman Dillard and carried unanimously.

**BUSINESS OF THE MONTH**

The Business of the Month was awarded to Some of This and Some of That which is located at 58 E. Franklin Street.

**VISITORS WELCOME**

Warren Reuther, Walter Tipton, Britney Smith, Angela Weathersby and Valerie Quinn of New Orleans Hotel Consultants were in attendance. Mr. Reuther provided an update on the Convention Center and a way to pay for the expansion of the Convention Center. He predicted that three or four additional hotels would be built following the expansion. Mr. Tipton reported on the conventions that could not be booked as not enough space is available at the convention center. It was clarified to Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis that the expansion would cost \$4-5M with 19,000 square feet to be added.

Mayor Brown advised that he'd met with Mr. Reuther and Mr. Tipton and the time to discuss the expansion would be when the city is getting closer to the restructuring of its debt. Mr. Tipton said if the city decides to expand, they would need to go to the legislature to increase the incremental taxes on hotels and restaurants. Mayor Brown clarified that the city can't do a refund but can do a restructured fund where all indebtedness will be paid off.

Alderwoman Carter Smith expressed her concern that \$12M was financed 12 years ago. Mr. Tipton said those issues aren't being discussed today as they wish to discuss when the restructuring occurs. Mr. Tipton said we own \$9.8M. Mr. Holloway reported that the city has only been paying mostly interest for the last 12 years the way the bonds were structured. Mr. Tipton advised that the bonds need to be restructured to a more normal payment where part of the payment goes towards principal.

Mayor Brown said a restructured plan can be done whereby all the past debt would be paid off and a new arrangement would cover this package and generate enough income to cover the entire debt in a shorter period of time than required on the current debt.

Reverend Clifton Marvel appeared on behalf of the NAACP and presented a letter stating that the lack of a public swimming program places the youth at risk. He asked that the money from Natchez LLC be used for a pool or that the Natchez Senior Citizens' Center pool be open on the weekends. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis said that the county had asked the city to be "all in"—the city had agreed to that. The ball is now in the county's court. Alderwoman Carter Smith said that the county is looking at some bonds being freed up and she challenged the county to provide more help than the current \$50,000.00. Alderman Gray suggested that a similar letter be sent to the BOS. Mayor Brown said two positives—the school board announced that they'd work to provide all the assets affected by recreation but can't provide money. Secondly, Mr. Lazarus made a proposal that millage be dedicated to recreation—the city already has millage dedicated to recreation.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

### DEPARTMENT HEADS

*Creda Stewart, Interim Tourism Department Director*

Mrs. Stewart said she will be reorganizing and refocusing the CVB. Mayor Brown advised that Berkley Young was in Natchez and an aggressive plan is in place to choose the selection committee for the new director. They hope to have someone on board by early to mid-July.

Mayor Brown advised that Jody Rutter has been hired as the city building inspector.

*James Johnston, Planning Department*

Mr. Johnston appeared to ask for permission to apply for funds to construct a satellite senior citizens' center at North Natchez Park. According to Dept. of Human Services, AARP and other senior advocacy organizations, our national population is aging, with 20% of the population to be 60 and over by 2030. Right now, 12% of the national population is 60 and older. Persons age 60 and older are living longer. According to the 2010 Census, 22.3% of the city population is already 60 and older, and this age group is expected to increase. To assist our senior population to live as independently as possible, a wide range of social service, health and wellness programs and senior activities will be required. A satellite facility will provide these programs and services, congregate meals, interaction, and adult daycare, etc., as is needed.

The construction of a satellite senior citizen center at North Natchez Park aims to accomplish the goal of assisting our senior population living independently and to receive the wide variety of programs and services. The facility, to be operated by Mrs. Bartley and her staff, will offer both existing and new programs. In addition, health and wellness activities and social service programs will be offered by a variety of agencies including but not limited to ASU School of Nursing, Co-Lin (Natchez campus), AJFC Community Action Agency, Jefferson Comprehensive Health Center, AMR, Natchez-Adams Council on Aging, Natchez Transit, RSVP, local hospitals, etc.

The estimated construction budget, including in-kind services and soft costs, totals just over \$930,000.00. The city is being asked to commit to \$350,000.00 in cash, which will not be needed until FY 2015 (if funded), and to provide in-kind services including civil engineering, project administration, dirt work, grading and drainage, site utility work, refurbishing the pavilion, etc. The total cash and in-kind being pledged by the city totals \$477,180.00; the city will be requesting \$451,950.00 from MDA for this project.

Those resolutions sought:

- Resolution authorizing and approving the filing of a CDBG Public Facilities grant application for the construction of a satellite senior citizen center
- Resolution pledging \$350,000 in cash and \$127,180.00 in in-kind services
- Resolution authorizing the mayor to sign any and all documents necessary to submit the 2014 CDBG PF application
- Permission to schedule and conduct the mandatory Public Hearing

A motion was made by Alderman Gray, with a second by Alderman Fields, to adopt a resolution to authorize and approve the filing of a CDBG Public Facilities grant application for the construction of a satellite senior citizen center, a resolution to pledge \$350,000.00 in cash and \$127,180.00 in in-kind services, a resolution to authorize the mayor to sign any and all documents necessary to submit the 2014 CDBG PF application and permission to schedule and conduct the mandatory Public Hearing. During discussion, it was clarified that this vote was for a commitment, not just an application submittal. Alderman Fortenbery said that today was the first that he'd hear of this. He'd like for the motion to be rescinded and for a motion granted to only hold the public hearing.

An amendment to the motion was made by Alderwoman Carter Smith for the approval of the public hearing to construct a new senior citizen center in North Natchez Park. A second was made by Alderman Fortenbery. Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked that Mr. Johnston give the board a copy of the package. Alderwoman Carter Smith said that she'd like to see if other sources, such as David Kelly, be pursued.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnston sought permission to work with the Natchez Police Department to prepare and submit a Bulletproof Vest Program (BVP) application to purchase ten (10) vests for the NPD at an estimated cost of \$700.00 each or \$7,000.00. Local match is \$3,500.00 or 50% of project cost. Mr. Johnston clarified that each vest is registered in a national database.

A motion was made by Alderman Dillard, with a second by Alderman Fortenbery, to allow Mr. Johnston to prepare and submit a 2014 Bulletproof Vest Program application. The motion carried unanimously.

*Sabrina Bartley, Natchez Transit and Senior Citizens' Center*

Mrs. Bartley gave her monthly report, this one focusing on the Senior Citizens' Center. The program began in 1984, has received numerous awards, and 48,000 meals were delivered in 2013 under one program.

*Chief Danny White, Police Department*

Chief White gave his monthly report for March and a second report which showed that crime is down- these are the same numbers that were provided to the FBI. Also, response times are low.

*David Gardner, Engineering Department*

A motion was made by Alderwoman Carter Smith, with a second by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis, to grant permission for Mr. Gardner to re-advertise the Bridge of Sighs, pending concurrence from MDOT. During discussion, it was advised that \$100,000.00 would be coming from Scenic Byways, \$100,000.00 from Wildlife and Fisheries, \$300,000.00 from the funds that the Magnolia Bluffs Casino had pledged for the completion of the trails project, a little out of capital improvements, some Library and Museum grant, etc. Money was tight so they broke out the lighting portion.

The motion carried unanimously.

- St. Catherine Street Trails Project: Working on plan and specification revisions so city could submit the PS & E assembly to MDOT. Engineering was also working on a draft CE&I Contract with Volkert to perform the inspection services on the project.

-Toll Plaza Colonnades Rehabilitation: SSR had submitted the preliminary PS&E Assembly to MDOT for their review. SSR was also working on putting together a draft CE&I Contract for inspection services.

-N. Natchez Drainage Phase II-C: The contractor was finishing up.

-N. Natchez Drainage Phase II-D: WGK was making good progress on the design of the final Phase of the 592 Project.

-Micro Surfacing Select City Streets: T.L. Wallace was scheduled to start the Micro Surfacing Project this past week; however they'd run into difficulty in getting the aggregate stone. They should have some within 4 to 6 weeks.

-Colonnade-SSR had sent the PS & E assembly to MDOT.

-EWP: a new event had occurred so Alabama Street had been added. George F. West sinkhole was added on the last event.

Alderman Fields asked that the city look for funding sources to install restrooms at Jack Waite Park. Mayor Brown advised that James Johnston and David Gardner would discuss. Alderman Fortenbery asked that they also look at a way to construct restrooms at Duncan Park.

*Justin Dollar, Public Works*

Mayor Brown commended PW on their handling of the bad weather that Natchez had been having. Mr. Dollar advised that PW had been cutting grass but as the number of inmates had been cut in half, they're not able to weed eat a site immediately after mowing. Alderman Dillard said that the properties that the city owned below the bluff needed cutting—Mr. Dollar responded that this area was not within the scope of his department's work. PW had cut the area during fireworks if needed.

*Chief Oliver Stewart, Fire Department*

Chief Stewart reported that 54% of the calls were inside the city and 46% were outside.

*Curtis Norton, Traffic Department*

Mr. Norton reported that his department had been busy hanging banners. Anita Smith, Code Enforcement officer, confirmed that the fine is \$251.00 for littering with dog waste falling under this category. He and Ed Bowser had researched surveillance cameras online—the cost was \$7,000.00. Mr. Norton had purchased two for \$100.00 each— for roadside littering; he's still researching cameras. Mayor Brown said that he'd talk to Mr. Dollar about dispensers for plastic pick up bags and their locations.

*Ed Bowser, IT Director*

The cameras that he and Mr. Norton had looked at were very expensive. There was another camera which was similar but the company wanted to do the monitoring.

Regarding the proposed city cell phone policy, it is very boilerplate. If the BOA wanted something stronger or different wording, they should let him know.

Alderman Fortenbery said, just as abuse of cell phones, land line long distance bills have run \$400.00-\$500.00 per month at Recreation—the same number was called. He said that the person, whether abusing land line or cell phone, should be written up and fired after three times. He asked Mr. Bowser to include land line abuse in the phone policy. Alderman Dillard asked if the city had a phone policy—Mr. Bowser said he would look.

Alderman Fields asked why the city was being charged for long distance and commented that abuse could be tracked as the number that was called from Recreation can be tracked.

Alderman Carter Smith suggested entering a code for long distance calling to track the caller. The audit has produced savings. She asked Mr. Bowser about personal use of cell phones on the proposed policy—Mr. Bowser commented that the city doesn't want to pay you to work 8 hours a day but you're on your cell phone. Alderman Carter Smith commented that managers need to monitor cell phone usage of employees and employees need to be written up that are abusing cell phone use during the work day.

Mr. Bowser said there are various carriers in the same building and he's working to consolidate that.

Alderman Fortenbery advised that he'd given the last phone bills for Recreation to the City Attorney and he had asked Ed Bowser to meet with Greg Brooking to see if a mistake on the bill. Mr. Bowser said a new cspire plan has been put into place. Mayor Brown said the city will no longer have a long distance surcharge and be able to monitor calling.

Alderman Fortenbery said each department head has a cell phone so the department head should be looking at why their employees are making long distance calls.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis advised that she'd talked to Reverend Searcy of New Hope, about possible employment of the people that worked for the Lions Club (Signature Works). She asked Mr. Johnston to search for other programs that might be available for employment of these people.

She'd received a call from the manager of Dominoes' Pizza and Chief White had talked to the owner regarding non delivery to residents in north Natchez. Chief White said that he couldn't find any crimes that back up Dominoes' policy.

She asked Anita Smith to proceed with 820 North Rankin prosecution. Mrs. Smith said that the owner didn't show up for court yesterday and had a bench warrant issued for his arrest. Mrs. Smith advised that the demolition has to be bid out—that takes two or three weeks. Mayor Brown asked Mrs. Smith to talk to Jody Rutter, Building Inspector, to have this property taken care of.

Alderman Gray:

- told department heads to evaluate their employees on paper as you need a paper trail
- Mr. Johnston said that you can't apply for EWPs as city currently has one open. The city can reapply in October
- would like a list from Anita Smith of abandoned properties that need to be torn down and begin the process
- asked Anita Smith and Chief White to set up a Neighborhood Watch group for East Oak Street
- the basketball program ended at Martin gym
- expressed his condolences to the family of Reverend John Scott and the Harris family

Alderwoman Carter Smith discussed the search for the new director of the CVB. A search committee will be put together as soon as possible, a job description will be put together and short list will come before the BOA.

Alderman Fields asked for the city to pursue purchasing the property next to the Theodore West Park. He asked Hyde Carby to meet with James Johnston to get some concrete numbers so Alderman Fields could make a presentation the BOA. There were drainage issues on Pernell Hill and East Franklin that needs city attention.

Alderman Fortenbery advised that the city was overspending for maintenance of TM Jennings and Dixie Youth fields. He suggested that the city get TM Jennings and Dixie Youth to meet to discuss consolidating their playing fields. TM Jennings and the girls' softball aren't on city owned property but the city maintains. He reported that Alderman Fields had handed him a bid for \$1,950.00 for a portable building for TM Jennings, a school district owned property—Mr. Fortenbery asked if legal.

**A motion was made by Alderman Fortenbery, with a second by Alderman Gray, for the city to purchase a portable building in the amount of \$1,950.00 for TM Jennings League.** During discussion, Alderman Gray reminded the BOA that in the past the city had adopted additional fields as the city didn't have enough fields for the children to play (a field by Burger King, TM Jennings, softball north Natchez and another field) Mr. Holloway said when the Trace was brought in, the NPS had purchased property at Liberty Park so that had taken away the 16, 17 and 18 year olds' field. A church had a baseball field so the city installed lights and fencing and had a 5 year lease with the church. The league doesn't exist anymore and the church wouldn't renew the contract. The city doesn't have a lease or an agreement on TM Jennings.

Alderman Fortenbery asked Alderman Gray if there are currently enough fields—Alderman Gray said that Mr. Fortenbery would need to provide that information. Alderman Fortenbery said too late in the season to do anything this year but to address this for next season. Alderman Fortenbery commented that most leagues buy their own buildings—Dixie, girls' softball and tennis have bought their own buildings. He felt that the city is opening up a can of worms by purchasing the building. Alderman Gray replied that the city gives away so much of the taxpayers' money to various organizations, he didn't see what the problem was as doing this for the kids.

Alderman Fortenbery asked if the \$1,950.00 covered the delivery, set up, etc. Alderman Fields replied this only commits the city to purchasing the building.

Mr. Carby said that the city would be making an illegal donation if the city purchased and donated to a private entity. He advised that the city could buy it, enter into an inter-local with the school district and, perhaps, they could house it as on their property. The city would need an AG's opinion.

Mayor Brown asked if it wouldn't be more practical to make the request for the portable building to the school board as the city was maintaining the field. Alderman Fields said in the spirit of this request, the building wasn't for the school district but for the league.

Mr. Carby said his concern was if the city provided for general use it couldn't be provided for free. Mayor Brown commented, as the BOS said that they're maintaining TM Jennings, perhaps they should consider purchasing the building.

Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis asked if you leased back to the league for \$1.00 per year, would that make the building legal. Mr. Carby said no—you could do a match to a non-profit, perhaps.

**A motion was made by Alderman Fortenbery to rescind his previous motion. A second was made by Alderwoman Carter Smith. All voted aye with Alderman Dillard voting nay.**

**A motion was made by Alderman Fields for the city to purchase a portable building for TM Jennings for \$1,950.00. A second was made by Alderman Gray.**

**A friendly amendment to motion was made by Alderwoman Carter Smith for the City Attorney to determine that the city, prior to actually buying the building, could legally purchase a portable building for TM Jennings. A second was made by Alderman Fortenbery and carried unanimously.**

Alderman Dillard said that the roof at the old pro shop was deteriorated and unsafe. Alderman Fortenbery said he thought that money had already been set aside to repair the roof/bid had been received—the minutes are to be checked. Mayor Brown, Justin Dollar and Joey Rutter will look at the roof.

Alderman Dillard said there was a problem with the roof and gutters at the auditorium—asked the Fire Department to clean out the gutters and downspouts. The gutters had previously been cleaned on the Canal Street side but needed to be done on the Wall Street side. The city was able to salvage one a/c unit but the other unit needed attention.

Anita Smith reported that 1718 Wheeler had been cleared and she will check into Laurel Avenue (a garage was unsafe) per Alderman Dillard's request.

Mayor Brown asked Chief Stewart to have the Fire Department clean the gutters and downspouts at the auditorium and responded to Alderman Dillard that the a/c system was being addressed.

#### CITY CLERK

**A motion was made by Alderman Fortenbery, with second by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis, to approve docket #2704-2987 and #2127-2987. During discussion, Alderman Dillard asked on docket 407-2987 under Regional Transit, Fund 337, \$ 10,662.00, it appears that they'd been paid out of the Regional Transit Facility, not the depot fund—Mr. Holloway said entry was incorrect and would be corrected. Alderman Gray said on 3/31/14 of the BOA's claim docket, two checks were written to Keith Schepers. Mr. Holloway said that he would check to see if correct.**

**The motion carried with Alderman Dillard voting nay.**

#### CITY ATTORNEY

None

#### MAYOR'S REPORT

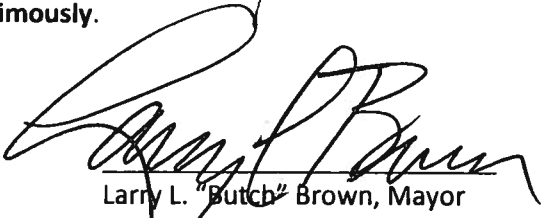
Mayor Brown asked to adjourn the meeting in memory of Mr. Kenneth Jordan. Mayor Brown and James Johnston would be meeting with the Army Corp tomorrow. The city was in active discussions concerning the gas pipeline abandonment.

#### NEW BUSINESS

None

#### ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Alderman Dillard and seconded by Alderwoman Arceneaux-Mathis to adjourn the meeting of April 8, 2014. The motion carried unanimously.



Larry L. "Butch" Brown, Mayor

ATTEST:



Donnie Holloway, City Clerk

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