

# City Council Minutes

## Tuesday, August 23, 2022

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### Call to Order

Mayor Chase called the meeting to order at 6:17 PM. Kirstin Garrison called the roll.

### Attendees

Council members Clarissa Pace, Michael James, Al Peer, Mark Tiner, Mike Wigley, and Claudia Hartness were present. Cedric Leonard was absent.

### Approval of Minutes

Mark Tiner moved to approve the June minutes, Clarissa Pace seconded, an yay nay vote was called for, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

### Reports and Presentations

#### a. Police—Jason Akers

Chief Jason Akers handed out a packet of statics that track the past 36-months statics for the Monticello Police Department. These statics are helping the department to better use their resources. Over the past three years, the miles driven have gone down and the department's calls for service have taken a dip, meaning that fewer people are having problems. They've recorded the lowest month with a domestic incident, with there only being one domestic incident in the month of July. Citizens requests happen when a citizen asks for help with a car problem, needing a direction or they're lost. The amount of felony and misdemeanor arrests run parallel with one another and usually after those arrests happen, they usually have a drop in crime. For accidents, they have noticed a drop, with their highest recorded month being in October of 2019 and their lowest being in January 2021. The department's 'Reports Taken' has remained pretty consistent but does not mean that a report was taken when a crime was committed. The police department has provided Options Incorporated with about 60 days of food for people leaving the shelter, which helps people transitioning to life outside the shelter. They have received notification that they have been awarded a grant for around \$3,000, which will go towards getting officers cold weather jackets that will accommodate their holsters and will help keep them to remain uniform in appearance. They've received a smalltown-rural grant for body worn cameras that will replace the ones currently being used. In total the police department has received close to \$250,000 in grant in the past 3 years. Mike Wigley asked if the numbers of officers were constant through the 36-month report and whether or not it would affect the numbers or calls – No. The level of calls and accidents wouldn't go down because of the number of officers on duty. There has been no significant amount of time where they were down that many officers. Craig McRae asked about the police presence at the Monticello School District – It has been hectic this week due to it being the first week of school. There are multiple officers helping with traffic to help it run smoothly. There is one school resource officer there throughout the school day, with the school paying for their position. The school would love for there to be another school resource officer.

#### b. Public Works—Charlie Hammock

This past month, they performed smoke testing on the west side of town over four days. They found the houses that were torn or burnt down, got them marked and made plans to get them fixed. Ditches have been dug and cleaned out. There were 26 leaks. Mayor Chase asked if smoke testing was finished – no. They only have to smoke test at Becky Williams' house because it's too deep in the woods. Smoke testing

is part of the CAO with ADEQ. Al Peer asked for an update on Davis Street and Binns Circle – the engineers have been there to take pictures and look at it. The water leak on Binns Circle was called in and has been fixed to his knowledge.

- c. Water Operator—Wayne Morphis  
Everything is good and tests came back and are in compliance.
- d. Senior Citizen Center—Cindy Villarreal  
The center is serving 73 home delivery meals per day, with 1,592 meals for the month. They have served a total of 2,876 overall for the month. Each day they're getting phone calls asking for home delivery and they plan on serving to as many seniors as they can. Mark Tiner asked if they have seen an increase in food costs in the last 60 days – yes, because the food cost has gone up. Sometimes costs are lower depending on what they serve. One week will be lower than the previous week. Mark Tiner commended them on the good work on keeping costs down while still turning a profit.
- e. Fire—Eric Chisom  
Last month the fire department went on 18 calls. They billed \$1,050 for outside the city limit calls and have received \$900. July permits for the Fire Marshal office, had 43 permits issued for a total amount of \$5,094.06, with a yearly total of 274 permits at \$36,977.22. They get around 40 permits a month on average. They hired one fire fighter in January that is in training, with another 2 positions having been filled who will start on August 29<sup>th</sup>. They still have 5 volunteer positions open. It will be another 2 months before the brick is laid and the overhead door will be installed next Tuesday.
- f. Planning Commission—Dan Boice  
Two items. The request for proposals for the armory will go out for advertising soon. They should have a recommendation for the council in the next couple of months. They are continuing to work on a draft for a 25-year plan for the city which will look at infrastructure, transportation, culture and recreation, housing and the city's fiscal health.
- g. City Inspector—Brian Rodgers  
Absent
- h. MEDC—Nita McDaniel  
There are 4 active prospects that she is continuing to work with. They have 3 additional retail businesses that are considering sites in Monticello, with a consultant coming down to speak next month. The Scogin Drive bid has been pushed to November but the good news is that the connection for the by-pass that ends on Highway 278 will go to bid this month, that has been divided into two segments with a 20 mile stretch of highway. The Old Historic Post Office is almost finished being painted, but there are leaks in the roof. A new roof was put on in 2010 or 2011. She has reached out to the company who put the roof on and will keep the council updated. An invoice has been submitted to the UCA Foundation for the \$1,000 mini grant for the youth shooting sports program that came out of the community development institute projects. She'll be attending the Arkansas Economic Developers and Chamber of Commerce Conference and hopes to bring back a lot of good information from it. The MEDC has co-sponsored the State of the State Breakfast where the Secretary of Commerce, Mike Preston, will be delivering the State of State Address. In this weeks Arkansas Business, they used a picture from the walk audit in Monticello, which is bringing attention to Monticello and all of the work that the MEDC and the Planning Commission has done for the city.

i. Parks Commission—Taylor James/Gerald Shepherd

Mayor Chase pointed out that the photos that were shown on the screen showed the progress of Lake Monticello that Bennie Ryburn took. Taylor James handed out a informational packet providing for an update on the Lake Trail project. The cement for disc golf has been poured and they have made significant progress on the disc golf. There has also be significant progress on the Lake Trail project. There was a new record for registration for the youth baseball league. Gerald updated council on the lights at McCloy park. They have all been installed and the project is completed. The old poles need to be removed. They are working on the basketball courts at Jordan Park. They will be working on getting the soccer and baseball fields ready for the leagues. Mark Tiner asked if they had any idea of how many children signed up for soccer – no, they haven't talked to the board. Our Festival is coming up this weekend and they will be assisting in any way possible to make sure they have what they need.

## Unfinished Business

### New Business

A. Permission to bid for second HVAC unit at City Hall

Mayor Chase expressed that this until is for the water department area and that they will not have heat if this they don't receive permission. Clarissa Pace motioned to approve, Al Peer seconded, Kirstin Garrison called roll, and the motion was passed.

B. Permission to bid for HVAC at Senior Citizen's Center

Mark Tiner motioned to approve, Al Peer seconded, Kirstin Garrison called roll, and the motion was passed.

C. Resolution to appoint new City Clerk

Mayor Chase stated that Dr. Jess Hylton has resigned and moved out of state, leaving a vacancy for City Clerk. She asked that they appoint Kirstin Garrison for the position to fill the vacancy until December 31, 2022. Claudia Hartness moved to approve the motion, Craig McRae seconded, Kirstin Garrison called roll, and the motion passed unanimously. Mark Tiner asked what the procedure was to appoint a city clerk in January – City Attorney Whit Barton pointed out that the statute that they're working under and that he put in the resolution that when a vacancy in office occurs, it for the remainder of the term. In January they will again declare a vacancy in office and he has been in contact with the Municipal League and whether they need to hold a special election but stated that with the expenses of a special election, would that be the route they wanted to take. They would revisit it again in January. It was pointed out by Mayor Chase that they didn't read the resolution before passing and asked if it needed to be read to make it legal – it's a resolution and not an ordinance and since it was unanimously passed, it wasn't necessary.

Mayor Chase asked to amend the agenda to add two items, one for the fire department and one for the sludge removal. Mark Tiner motioned to approve, Mike Wigley seconded, Kirstin Garrison called roll, and the motion passed unanimously.

D. Discussion of Denali and Sludge Removal\

Mayor Chase asked if they would like to stick with Denali and amend the prior agreement with them to remove the 10.5 million gallons of sludge as opposed to the original amount of 9.63 million gallons of sludge at increased cost of \$665,800.00 as opposed to the original bid of \$443,800.00. By approving the

increased amount, the council will be stating that by rebidding for this project, it would not be practical given the circumstances. Mark Tiner moved to approve the motion, Claudia Hartness seconded, Kirstin Garrison called roll, and the motion passed with Clarissa Pace in opposition.

1. Resolution to Committing to Purchase New Pumper Truck for Fire Department

The new pumper truck would be ready in 16 months but the contract for the commitment to purchase needed to be decided up before the current estimate expires on September 16, 2022. The price that was given for the new pumper truck was \$420,914.00. Mark Tiner moved to approve the motion, Clarissa Pace seconded, Kirstin Garrison called roll, and the motion passed unanimously. Mike Wigley asked if they would have to approve it now to pay for the balance all at once now – no, it will be decided when they discuss the budget for 2023. It was discussed in the Finance Committee Meeting that it was preferred that instead of paying a monthly payment for the new pumper truck, that it would be wise to just pay the balance in full as it will better serve the city.

Mayor Chase read a statement. "I have been made aware that a mayoral candidate is calling employees and asking leading questions. It has been reported that questions such as 'How do you get along with...?' and 'I heard we owe a vendor a lot of money'. Some of the questions are reasonable about city business, some are not. I am offering a standing invitation to all mayoral candidates to come to City Council Meetings and ask the questions in a public setting so everyone may hear their questions and hear the answers. If these questions and concerns are so important or worrisome to the candidates, then the candidate needs to make sure that everyone is aware of the issues. I am happy and absolutely willing to answer any business questions any candidates may have about city business at any time.

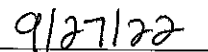
I responded directly to this candidate and I was called 'hone' and 'sweetheart'. These terms of endearment were used to insult, condescend and to demean, not because this candidate cares for me personally. For the record, I have only been called that by family members and my husband.

My concern is for our city no matter who wins this election. I will help any candidate make Monticello an even better place to live, work, and play. Please pay attention to who you elect, you will be choosing a future for your children and grandchildren."

## Adjournment

Craig McRae moved to adjourn the meeting, Mike Wigley seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

  
City Clerk

  
Date of Approval