

City Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

Call to Order

Mayor Akers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., City Clerk Taryn Wigley called the roll.

Attendees

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

Minutes

Mike Wigley moved to accept the minutes, Craig McRae seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and the January minutes passed.

Old Business

a. Resolution Establishing Continuation of Government Function in Emergency Situations

Craig McRae introduced the resolution and moved to suspend the rules and read by title only, Al Peer seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and City Attorney Whit Barton read. Craig McRae moved to accept the resolution, Mike Wigley seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and the resolution passed unanimously.

b. Ordinance Raising City of Monticello Bid Limit

Craig McRae introduced the resolution and moved to suspend the rules and read by title only, Claudia Hartness seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and City Attorney Whit Barton read. Mike Wigley moved to read the ordinance for the third time next month with an emergency clause, Al Peer seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and the ordinance will be read for the third time next month.

c. Follow Up Discussion Regarding Dog Shelter

Mayor Akers introduced the discussion, stating that they would pick up from last months' conversation. He asked the council if any of them had any ideas for a solution on this matter. Clarissa Pace answered that while the city is trying to think of a solution, she believes that 2nd Chance should also be looking for solutions, and that it is their responsibility to do so. Mayor Akers reminded the council that they are in violation of state law with the current relationship with 2nd Chance. Clarissa Pace



asked if the City is able to take care of the dogs that are in the City care. Chief Garcia answered that they are currently taking care of the dogs, and will continue to take care of them. Kathy Engelkes addressed the council, and stated that 2nd Chance discussed moving into the current shelter in 2015 with the then mayor. She stated that they tried to get a contract, but were told that they did not need one since they were doing a service that the City would have to do otherwise. Michael James believes that the only viable option that they have right now, is to use the "old shelter". It does not have to be a permanent solution, but it is the only option available. City Attorney Whit Barton added that if 2nd Chance were to use the old shelter, they would still need a statement of qualifications to be in compliance. Mayor Akers suggested a committee to formulate a statement of qualifications. He suggested Michael James, Clarissa Pace, Chief Garcia, and possibly a local veterinarian to head the committee and report back when they have a solution. Michael James moved to start the committee, Clarissa Pace seconded. Mayor Akers added that the old shelter will have climate control if the dogs occupy the building. Michael James ended the conversation with the idea that the committee will address the council when they have a statement of qualifications and receive input and suggestions before anything is made permanent.

New Business

a. Resolution Regarding Lemons Engineering

Craig McRae introduced the resolution and moved to suspend the rules and read by title only for both resolutions, Al Peer seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and City Attorney Whit Barton read. Whit Barton explained that Mr. Lemons would have 30 days to put the projects out to bid, or have legal remedy. Craig McRae moved to accept the resolutions, Claudia Hartness seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and the resolutions passed.

b. Resolution Authorizing Purchase of Vehicle by MPD

Michael James introduced the resolution and moved to suspend the rules and read by title only, Craig McRae seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and City Attorney Whit Barton read. Cedric Leonard pointed out a typo that needed to be corrected. Michael James moved to accept the resolution with the correction, Craig McRae seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and the resolution passed unanimously.

c. Resolution Authorizing Bid Acceptance for Roof and Gutter Repairs

Craig McRae introduced the resolution and moved to suspend the rules and read by title only, Al Peer seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and City Attorney Whit Barton read. Mike Wigley questioned if the City was familiar with NWC and if we've had any previous relations with this company. Mayor Akers answered that he was not familiar with the company. Mike Wigley urged the council to consider using Arkansas Strong, since we have a strong relationship with that company and we

are familiar with their work. Craig McRae mentioned that the lowest combined bid with the next resolution would be Arkansas Roofing. Whit Barton questioned if they are all conforming bids, and that the council may want to do some research on the reputations of these companies before making a decision. Mike Wigley moved to postpone accepting the bids, Michael James seconded. A yay/nay vote was called, the aye's had it and both resolutions were postponed until next month.

d. Resolution Authorizing Bid Acceptance for Roof Replacements

e. Resolution Declaring 410 E College St. a Nuisance

Craig McRae introduced the resolution and moved to suspend the rules and read by title only, Claudia Hartness seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and City Attorney Whit Barton read. Reverend Jones informed the council that the church had been abandoned and the building was now his church's responsibility. They determined that the church was not salvageable, and they are looking at options on how to clean up the property. Mike Wigley moved to accept the resolution, Claudia Hartness seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and the resolution passed.

Mayor Akers asked to amend the resolution to add the State of the City Address. Michael James moved to amend the agenda, Claudia Hartness seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and the agenda was amended.

State of the City Address

Mayor Akers started the State of the City with a presentation totalling all of the money received by grants and donations, adding up to over 1.8 million dollars. Public safety was enhanced by adding a new fire truck and a new burn house for training. Miles of roadway was striped and speed humps were added in neighborhoods that requested them. Violent crimes dropped by 10%. Water quality improved by adding and replacing old equipment, and for the first time in 8 years, the City is in compliance with ADEQ. Drainage projects were finished, including Oakland Cemetery, Western Pines and Spring Branch subdivisions, Conley and Jackson street, and N. Cooper to Gabbert St. Two city wide clean up events were held, along with assisting local organizations with their own city clean ups. The City saved 2.5 million dollars through innovation and grant utilization, totalling 8.1 million dollars in saving over 2 years time.

Mayor Akers informed the council that the city is fiscally sound with just over 16 million in CD's and cash on hand. He added that the city employees are constantly working to make Monticello safe, by having weekly strategy and information sharing meetings. The 10 year drainage plan was completed in 2 years, and while there is still much to be done, Mayor Akers is confident that the City will continue to improve and solve problems. Weyerhaeuser secured a contract with MEDC and will create over 200 jobs for local citizens, and highway 425 N will be repaved this year, as well as a section of Gabbert St, Bolling, Shelton, and Speer St. Mayor

Akers encouraged citizens to be involved and give input to continue improving the City of Monticello.

Public Comment Section

Kathy Engelkes asked if a contract would be necessary if 2nd Chance were to find a place that is not city property. City Attorney Whit Barton answered that it would depend on if the city was providing anything to the organization. If they were not, 2nd Chance would just have to work with local law enforcement when they rescue a dog.

Another citizen spoke up and stated that he currently has 30 dogs and puppies at his house. He believes the city shelter would be overrun if it weren't for 2nd Chance and the citizens that foster.

Meeting Adjourned

Cedric Leonard moved to adjourn the meeting, Clarissa Pace seconded. A yay/nay vote was called. The aye's had it and the meeting was adjourned.

Leap Wigley

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be a stylized 'L' or 'J' followed by a flourish.