

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
FORREST CITY CITY COUNCIL  
FORREST CITY, ARKANSAS  
April 16, 2019**

The City Council of Forrest City, Arkansas met in regular session on April 16, 2019. Mayor Williams called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Alderman Fields offered prayer after which the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Alderman Oswalt. The following answered roll call: Mayor Williams, Clerk Cochran, and Attorney Wright and City Council members: Metcalf, Fields, Capps, Oswalt, Evansingston, Reeves, and Poteat. Alderman Williams was Absent.

Alderman Capps made the motion to approve the April 2, 2019 regular meeting minutes. The motion was second by Alderman Reeves. Roll Call: All Ayes.

**REPORT OF COMMITTEES**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**To Abolish or Rescind the Ordinance Permitting Alderman Evansingston to Hold Employment**

Mayor Williams told council there is some information put in the package from the Arkansas Municipal League referring to this issue; there is already an ordinance that has been approved and passed. Alderman Evansingston read the information that was presented to Mayor Williams from the Arkansas Municipal League Attorneys. The information presented contained several case laws which Alderman Evansingston felt did not pertain to his situation as a councilman and public works director. He stated the information presented involved a mayor being a bookkeeper, mayor and council member taking over water and sewer and electrical utilities and a mayor getting paid for being a municipal judge as well as to be a laborer for the water and light departments. He stated to each of those cases there were little to no checks and balances. Each case presented the mayors supervised themselves and had direct interest in profits as well as power to set and administer budgets for utilities and contracts they were involved with. He stated as a department head, he does not sub-supervise he is not in the position to influence profits for jobs and or contracts as in those case laws he reviewed. He stated as a department head, he follows a chain of command, he answers directly to the mayor.

Alderman Evansingston then stated he did not see any example of case laws presented to directly address his circumstances as councilmen and a department head all information received involved the mayor. What he did see is a case laws that serve as a blanket that cover elected and municipal officials and in his opinion the code being used to validate ordinance #1928 is not right for the matter at hand nor is it right for present times; ordinance #1928 should be abolished.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Ordinance to Adopt 2012 Fire Prevention Code**

Attorney Wright stated when you are repealing an ordinance the number is needed. Attorney Wright read **An Ordinance Adopting the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code, 2012 Edition; Repealing ordinance No 1838; And Adopting an Emergency Clause** sponsored by Alderman Fields.

Alderman Fields made a motion to suspend the rules and read the ordinance for the second reading by title only. The motion was second by Alderman Oswalt.

Attorney Wright the ordinance for the second reading by title only. Alderman Capps made a motion to suspend the rules and read the ordinance for the third reading. The motion was second by Alderman Poteat.

Attorney Wright read the ordinance for the third reading. Alderman Fields made a motion to adopt the ordinance. The motion was second by Alderman Oswalt. Alderman Metcalf stated the ordinance is being read without a number; the ordinance should be complete before reading. Attorney Wright stated the Municipal League address and said it is okay to adopt a blank ordinance because a lot of the old ordinances were not consistent, but it is up to the council. Roll

## **April 16, 2019 Minutes cont.**

Call: Alderman Fields, Capps, Oswalt, Evansingston, Reeves, and Poteat All Ayes. Alderman Metcalf said Nay.

Alderman Oswalt made a motion to adopt the emergency clause. The motion was second by Alderman Capps. Roll Call: Evansingston, Reeves, Poteat, Fields, Capps, and Oswalt All Ayes. Alderman Metcalf said Nay.

### **Police and Fire Departments S.W.O.T Analysis**

Mayor Williams stated Summers and Associates spent an extensive amount of time with the fire and police departments. It was said in the beginning once the S.W.O.T analysis was done it would be a transparent process; the group is here today to make the presentation on the analysis.

Mayor Williams then presented Chief Gregory Summers. Chief Summers stated he is the principle owner of Summers & Associates, LLC which has been in business since 1994. He started off doing consultations on fire prevention, safety and investigations. Once retired as a chief, he started doing valuations on fire and police departments. He worked 35 years with the Little Rock Fire Department, the last nine years as the fire chief. When he took over as the chief, the department was a class two, Forrest City Fire Department is a three ISO agency. Before he retired, he had three goals to accomplish, first to increase the professional development within the organization. As a fire department, we sometimes get complacent and the training is done locally. His goal was to broaden the men and women perspective within the fire services and get training on the national level to determine what kind of fire department they have. Today members of the organization participate in national fire academy on a regular basis. The other two goal was to increase the ISO rating from a class two to a class one that was done in 2016. The last goal as a fire chief was to make sure the fire department was a credited organization like the other department within the city and that happened in 2017.

He stated when Mayor Williams reached out and wanted his police and fire departments evaluated, he took pleasure to come in and look at what is in place and to make recommendations on which way the departments should go.

Chief Summers Introduced Retired Assistant Police Chief Carlos Corbin of the Little Rock Police Department to go over the S.W.O.T analysis report that was previously sent to Mayor Williams and the council concerning the police department.

Chief Corbin stated the company comes in and setup a S.W.O.T analysis. They meet with the employees of each department both sworn and sevilian and go over the tool called S.W.O.T analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats). Mr. Corbin stated during the analysis, the employees were separated into small groups, so they could speak freely. He stated he did meet with the police chief and talked about the mission of the department and some of the areas that was identified by the employees.

Alderman Capps asked the meaning of employee pay scale cost compression. Chief Corbin stated when a new officer comes in, his pay is close to the officer's pay that has been employed for three or four years.

Alderman Capps questioned the department's discipline not being consistent when male and female officers were found in violation of the personnel policy. Chief Corbin stated he did not have the research, but it came up in the discussion when a female officer made a similar mistake, the discipline was different.

Alderman Capps asked how the threats were ranked. Chief Corbin stated he had eight groups of officers and civilians, each group collected all threats and ranked them individually, he then collectively put the data together and ranked each threat accordingly.

Chief Summers went over the S.W.O.T analysis report that was also previously sent to the mayor and council concerning the fire department. He stated he initially spoke with the fire chief. He then brought in the employees, captains, drivers, and firefighters, to talk about the issues as a team. He stated after a little more thought process, he separated the individuals to give them the opportunity to speak freely. He stated they did the same thing for the fire department as police department, broke down the analysis.

Alderman Reeves asked Chief Summers his opinion on the relationship between dispatch and fire department. Chief Summers stated what he gathered from the firefighters, there is not a good working relationship.

Alderman Poteat asked if there were a WiNRadio in the police or fire department. Chief Summers stated he was told they did not have one.

**April 16, 2019 Minutes cont.**

Alderman Poteat asked if the 911 call center should be combined with the county. Chief Summers stated the combined dispatch center are prevalent around the country, they can work, but he was not fun of it because of the turnout time.

Alderman Metcalf state it seems like the city has quite a few weaknesses and he know it is not possible to work on all these things at the same time. The city needs to prioritize because it could affect the city financially. Chief Summers stated he agreed with Alderman Metcalf, that is where the 5-year strategic plan comes in play. He also stated another thing that is good about a strategic plan is, if you have not met the deadline, you can go back and re-evaluate your plan and move it further down the road. Chief Summers thanked the council for giving them the opportunity to make the police and fire departments one of the best in the state.

Mayor Williams thanked Chief Summers and Chief Corbin the analysis, he then stated the city has work to do.

**GENERAL FUND BILLS**

Alderman Oswalt made a motion to approve and pay the General Fund bills in the amount of \$46,679.78. The motion was second by Alderman Evansingston. Roll Call: All Ayes.

**STREET FUND BILLS**

Alderman Metcalf made a motion to approve and pay the Street Fund in the amount of \$6,956.96. The motion was second by Alderman Oswalt. Roll Call: All Ayes

**SOLID WASTE FUND BILLS**

Alderman Evansingston made a motion to approve and pay the Solid Waste Fund bills in the amount of \$31,559.30. The motion was second by Alderman Fields. Roll Call: All Ayes.

**FORREST CITY WATER UTILITY**

Alderman Fields made a motion to approve and pay the Forrest City Water Utility bills in the amount of \$80,868.24. The motion was second by Alderman Evansingston. Roll Call: All Ayes.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS and Updates**

Mayor Williams set a budget meeting for Thursday, April 18, 2019 at 5:00p.m.

Mayor Williams announced that the city hall and aquatic center are progressing a little faster since the weather is better, looking at a completion date in June.

Mayor Williams thanked the city council for supporting the kept Forrest City beautiful campaign that will be starting next week. All council members have stepped-up to lead the clean-up in each Ward. Council Members Williams and Metcalf Ward 1 on Monday, Evansingston and Fields Ward 2 on Tuesday, Reeves and Capps Ward 3 on Wednesday, and Oswalt and Poteat Ward 4 on Thursday with the entire community clean-up and partnering with the county on Saturday morning from 8:00 to 10:00a.m. and concluding at the civic center with the community event.

Alderman Fields stated she had been approached to ask about the law on the gaming machines. Mayor William stated that is something that needs to be researched and bring back to the council.

For additional context, reference the April 16, 2019 tape.

Alderman Oswalt made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 p.m. The motion was second by Alderman Fields.

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Cedric Williams, Mayor

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Derene Cochran, City Clerk-Treasurer