Crossett City Council met in regular session September 19, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Crossett Public Library.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

Present: Mayor Scott McCormick, City Attorney James Hamilton, Clerk/Treasurer Jesse Walthall

Councilmembers: Robert Freeman, Candace Jeffress, Eddie Rowe, James Knight, C.T. Foster, Lynn Rodgers

Absent: None

Mayor McCormick called the meeting to order with prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Jeffress to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 15, 2016. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Financial reports for August 2016 were presented. Councilwoman Rodgers asked that line items be more descriptive in order for council to understand the revenue or expense. Rodgers also requested that general expense be divided into categories and explanations be attached. Mrs. Rodgers questioned revenue/expense lines on the Crossett Recreation financial statement. With no other questions or comments concerning the financials motion was made by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Rowe to approve the August 2016 statements. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mayor McCormick asked Rusty McCaughan with Rusty’s Pest Control to update council on mosquito control. Mr. McCaughan stated that traps have been placed around town and so far no mosquito breed that is a known carrier of the zika virus has been trapped. All trapped species have been what is native to the area. Heavy rains have caused the mosquito population to be excessively high. Larvacide Briquettes were put out in March of this year. These typically have a 120 day life span. Larvaciding is normally done in the spring and fall and Mr. McCaughan recommends that it be done again as soon as possible. Councilwoman Rodgers stated that there is around $12,000 left in the budget for mosquito control and asked if that would be sufficient to cover the rest of this year’s expense. Mr. McCaughan feels that is will be adequate. Council agreed to allow Rusty’s Pest Control to continue with plan.

Councilwoman Rodgers asked if the committee had met to discuss the disaster recovery plan. Mayor McCormick stated that Police Chief JW Cruce, Fire Chief Bo Higginbotham, Councilman Eddie Rowe and himself had met and will plan on further meetings.

**NEW BUSINESS**

The 2014 Audit report from Arkansas Legislative Audit Committee was presented to the council. Two findings were noted: overdraft charges and unidentified monies in the court account. These two comments will be answered before the legislative committee on October 13. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Knight to accept the audit report. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Larry Cantley, Recreation Director, addressed the council. Mr. Cantley stated that he is now responsible for the Crossett Park on Parkway Drive and the walking trail. His crew has been using the old zoo tractor and a tractor that was purchased in 2002. This equipment is in bad shape and needs to be replaced. A quote has been received from Estelle Farm Equipment for a new L-2501DT Kubota Tractor and a LA525FL loader. They will accept trade in of both pieces of equipment and $11,924 for the purchase. Motion by Councilwoman Jeffress seconded by Councilman Freeman to allow the purchase. Roll call vote. All vote yes.

Mr. Cantley also advised the council that the wooden bridge that leads to the walking trail has been repaired but will need to be replaced soon. Swings have been replaced, and an ADA approved swing added to the playground equipment at the park.

Councilwoman Rodgers asked about the ownership of the Wimberly Park on 6th Avenue. Mayor McCormick stated that this property was given to the Crossett Reunion Club. There were questions regarding the deed. Mayor McCormick stated that this is something we can look into further. Darryl Newton is the president of the Crossett Reunion Club.

A revised agreement between the city of Crossett and CARD for the lease of Crossland Zoo was presented to the council. Noted changes were the made to modify the insurance provision, tort immunity, escrow account and purchase of animals from city by CARD. Questions were asked concerning paragraph 12 of the agreement – stating that in a catastrophic event, the city will reimburse CARD for any investment they have in the infrastructure. It was noted that this reimbursement will be only from payment of what the city receives from insurance. Motion by Councilman Freeman, seconded by Councilman Foster to accept the revised lease agreement. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCormick asked Councilman Robert Freeman to serve as ex-officio member of CARD until the end of his term. Councilman Freeman agreed.

Councilwoman Rodgers expressed concern about the city property located at 307 Main. Although the building was found to be structurally sound, being left vacant will only cause more deterioration. She asked that the council what should be done with the building. Mayor McCormick has mentioned that he would like to ask voters to extend the current bond issue and secure the funds to renovate the building. He anticipated moving current mayor’s office, clerk/treasurer’s office and engineering office to that premise and selling the building at 201 Main Street. He added that the court room could be used as permanent council chambers and possibly renovating the large bay on the south end of the building to serve as court room. There would be office space available for council members if they needed it. Councilman Freeman stated that if the city asks citizen’s to extend the bond issue he feels that it should be used to upgrade sewer system in the industrial park. Councilwoman Rodgers added that she feels that even though the building is listed on the national historic register, in its current state of disrepair it is not worth saving. Rodgers added that Crossett School District is in the process of building a new facility which will house an auditorium. Therefore, the expense of upkeep and maintenance of the current city auditorium will fall solely on the city of Crossett. It may not be possible for the city to pay upkeep on both buildings. Mrs. Rodgers would like to explore the cost of demolition of the building at 307 Main. Mayor McCormick added that this would be quite expensive as asbestos testing and removal alone would be astronomical. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Knight to gather estimated cost of demolition and also to get market evaluation values of the buildings located at 201 Main and 307 Main. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Councilwoman Rodgers introduced Mrs. Glenda Gresham of the Centennial Garden Club to the council. Mrs. Rodgers stated that Mrs. Gresham has worked diligently at Centennial Park and has presented a list of needs and concerns. Mrs. Gresham explained that when the park was built, the Centennial Garden Club was active and had several members. The club has dwindled down to a handful that are willing to work on the park. Although city crew helps with mowing and basic cleaning, there is much more work that needs to be done at the park. She asked that a committee be appointed to help with the task. Suggestions were made to see if there are school groups that would consider helping with the agriculture aspect of the park. The city will address the water leaks and continue to help with maintenance as needed.

Mr. Wade Smith addressed the council on property concerns. He asked how the city determines which properties for clean up are a prioritized. Mr. Smith also inquired what he needs to do to have action taken on some of the properties he is concerned with. Mayor McCormick explained that burned houses or hazardous properties are always a priority. Mr. Smith suggested a community action group be formed to help the city with these properties. Mr. Smith added that the property belonging to Jack Reynolds on West 12th Avenue has been cleaned. He asked the city council to consider rescinding the order to demolish the property. Mayor McCormick stated that the city has halted the work on the property and Mr. Jeff Harrison, Director of Public Works, has intention of bringing this back to the council.

Mayor McCormick asked the council to approve the appointment of Laceacha Turner to the Crossett Recreation Commission. Motion by Councilman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Freeman to approve the appointment. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCormick and the council commended the Street and Sanitation Department for a remarkable job in cleaning up the area around the barn.

Councilwoman Rodgers presented a sample Personnel Handbook from Arkansas Municipal League. She asked that the city take time to look over this sample and make revisions to the Crossett handbook.

Mayor McCormick opened the floor to the audience. Ms. Natalie Reed stated that a while back the city council voted to rename a road in the Crossett Industrial Park to Beby Reed Drive. There is still no sign up on the road, and Ms. Reed asked that this be taken care of. Mayor McCormick and the council apologized and promised to make sure that this sign was erected.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

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Jesse Walthall, Clerk/Treasurer Marshall S. McCormick, Mayor