Crossett City Council met in regular session September 18, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the Crossett Library.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

Councilmember’s: Crystal Marshall, Eddie Rowe, James Knight, CT Foster, Lynn Rodgers

Absent: Councilwoman Valerie Martin

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

Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Knight to approve the minutes of the regular 08/21/2017 meeting and the special meetings of 8/31/2017 and 9/11/2017. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilwoman Marshall to approve the August 2017 financial statements. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Councilwoman Rodgers presented a report from the Crossett Street and Sanitation Action Committee. She commended the committee for working diligently to come up with a scenario in the best interest for the city.

The committee has determined that the city should continue to pick up residential garbage twice per week as in the past. The residents will be asked to put the trash on the side of the street where their house is addressed. This will keep the trucks from having to back up to pick up in some residents. This will be safer and save time for the crews. When it is not possible to place trash on addressed side, a pickup truck will be sent to accommodate. On the same day that residents are scheduled for trash pickup, leaves and limbs will also be collected. This will be on Monday’s and Thursday’s for the east side of Main, and Tuesday’s and Friday’s on the west side. Extra garbage pickup, such as appliances, furniture and other household materials, will be picked up on Wednesday. This extra pick up will require the resident to call the office and be scheduled in order for the truck to take the most efficient route. A deadline for scheduling will be set and the route will be planned. Any calls after the cutoff time will have to wait until the next Wednesday for pickup. No exceptions should be made.

Councilwoman Rodgers also explained that there is currently an ordinance which allows the city to collect a fee for the additional pickups. In 1999, a city-wide cleanup was held and a referendum was placed on the charges. The fees are still not being charged. The committee feels that it is imperative to charge for the extra pickups. They also would like for the council to consider reevaluating the charges since these were instated in 1997. Councilman Knight recommended that the rates be increased. The council determined that the fees be as follows:

1. A charge of $5.00 per load for leaves, limbs and lawn trimmings.
2. A minimum charge of $10.00 for household junk.
3. A charge of $15.00 per load if a 5-yard dump truck is required; and
4. A charge of $25.00 per load if a 12-yard dump truck is required

Councilwoman Marshall asked if fines can be assessed for intentional or gross negligence by the residence in putting debris other than leaves that causes harm to city or equipment or a safety hazard to city employees. City Attorney Hamilton stated that it could be considered a crime, but would have to have evidence that it was placed there by the resident.

Councilwoman Marshall asked that an option for exceptions be added that would instate a higher fee if the resident is willing to pay. This can be looked at later, but for now there should be no exceptions made.

Councilwoman Rodgers added that with the changes, it will be necessary for the city to purchase another leaf vacuum and a chipper. Jeff Harrison, Director of Public Works, presented a proposal from Henard Utility for a 12” chipper and a leaf vacuum. This proposal includes both pieces of equipment with the cost of the chipper at $34,073.90 and the leaf vacuum at $27,465 for a total of $61,538.90. A 4-year lease to own proposal at a rate of 2.59% would be around $1,351 per month. Other options of financing may be available, but all agree that this is a good rate. Mr. Harrison also updated the council on the mountain of debris at the street barn. Currently working 10 hours per day to haul the debris to Mr. David Marshall’s pit. Around 150 loads have been hauled off and Mr. Harrison estimated that it will take a total of 550-600 loads to clear it. The expense to the city for this will be overtime wages and fuel cost only.

Councilwoman Marshall asked if employees will be trained on proper maintenance of the new equipment. She also inquired as to current maintenance procedures. Mayor McCormick explained that each department is responsible for maintenance of its equipment. Street and sanitation department does weekly equipment reports and submits to Mayor each week.

Committee member Brandon Reed expressed concern over residents burning leaves in their yards. He suggested that an ordinance may need to be placed forbidding burning.

Councilwoman Rodgers added that additional equipment will be necessary for keeping records and billing of the extra pickups. She recommended that IPads or notebooks be put in vehicles doing the extra pickups. She asked Mr. Brandon Reed to update the council on the programs he has investigated. Mr. Reed stated that there are several programs available which will allow data entry such as address, picture and amount to be billed. These programs run from free to $20.00/month. A data plan through Verizon for the equipment will also be charged. This data will be downloaded to a desktop computer at the street and sanitation office. A file will be kept with date, picture and charge amount. The file will then be sent to city hall for the account number to be added and then forwarded to Crossett Water Commission for charges to be added to the bill. Councilwoman Rodgers asked Councilwoman Marshall if she would get with her husband, Courtney, Brandon Reed and Leslie at Arnet to discuss options for this hardware and software.

Mr. Cecil Ritter, Crossett Water Commission chairman, expressed concern about the billing scenario. He asked if anyone had spoken to CWC employees about the process and if the CWC would be required to enforce the payment of the charges. Lisa Gulledge, assistant clerk/treasurer, stated that she has spoken with Jennifer White and she said that it would be possible to be billed as with regular garbage fees. Just as with current billing situation, if the bill is not paid (which includes water, sewer and garbage) the water service will be cut off to the resident and a $50.00 reconnection fee will be charged.

Councilwoman Rodgers stated too that communication will be vital. A committee will be appointed to help communicate this. The committee will be Morie Malloy, Vershal Hogan, Crystal Marshall, Aracelli Mondragon, Rosalind Ross and Natalie Holyfield. She is asking the council to have a special meeting to consider the ordinance in order that a public meeting can be held on October 9 and this be implemented by October 15.

Motion by Councilman Knight, seconded by Councilwoman Marshall to have City Attorney Hamilton revise and amend the ordinance as mentioned and to have Councilwoman Marshall, Courtney Marshall and Brandon Reed get with Leslie at Arnet to determine the best system for billing. They will present both of these issues at a special council meeting on October 3, 2017 at 5:00 at the Crossett Economic Development Foundation. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCormick stated that he has made several attempts to reach a representative with Media 3 to no avail. The local office is now closed and there is no way for local residents to reach anyone with concerns. The council asked City Attorney Hamilton to write another letter demanding a representative attend a council meeting to address concern. City Attorney Hamilton added that there is an entity in Monticello who may be interested in providing local cable service. He will look into this as well.

Mr. Cecil Ritter, Crossett Water Commission chairman, informed the council that the 1-million gallon ground storage tank located at the water plant and the elevated tank in West Crossett are in need of painting. The estimated cost of this is as follows:

Ground Storage Tank $442,000

Elevated Tank $352,000

The towers will be painted at separate times in order to not interrupt service. Mr. Ritter added that the work should be done between now and spring while water usage is low.

Mayor McCormick reminded the council that we have been selling trash bags to the public. We are currently down to the last 2 pallets, and Mayor asked if council would be interested in purchasing more in order to continue selling them. Councilmembers asked that a price of what it would cost and what the city would sell them for be determined so that a decision can be made.

Mayor McCormick reported that his secretary, Araceli Mondragon, was able to secure rooms for the AML Winter conference in Fort Smith. He asked that each member let Ms. Mondragon know if they will be attending so that she can confirm the rooms and get each registered for the conference. With the exception of Mr. Rowe, everyone is planning to attend.

Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers seconded by Councilman Foster to have City Attorney Hamilton draw up a resolution honoring Mr. Charlie Smith for his service to the city. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed. She added that over the years he has truly been a servant and feels that he should be recognized. She added that the 10-year plan that Mr. Smith was working on is very important and feels that the city should move forward with the plan. All agree.

Mayor McCormick asked the council to consider what should be done with the building located at 305-309 Main Street. The building has been vacated, but a decision needs to be made on whether to demolish or refurbish. Councilwoman Rodgers asked Mayor McCormick to get in touch with Cherub Alford about a Brownfield Grant for restoration. Concerns about the repeater and the evidence that is stored in the old jail was discussed. Mayor McCormick will speak to Mike Webb and get insight on options.

Councilwoman Marshall informed the council that she will be attending a AML workshop on planning and budgets. There is another workshop planned on personnel scheduled for October 26.

Councilwoman Marshall updated the council on the disc golf course. The course should be completed within the next few weeks. An event is being planned for the grand opening.

Mayor McCormick stated that Crossett High School FFA is using the barn and petting zoo area of the zoo. He is working on getting an agreement with the school concerning the usage. Mayor McCormick added that the bear is now homed in Springfield, MO.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

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