Crossett City Council met in regular session May 16, 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 Councilman Knight to approve the minutes of the

regular meeting of April 18 and the special meetings of April 28 and May 9, 2016. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Financial reports for April, 2016 were presented. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Freeman to approve the financial statements. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCormick introduced Justin Reed, CREST representative and member of Crossett Recreation Commission, to give an update on the pool. Mr. Reed stated that in speaking with representatives from Georgia-Pacific they wanted assurance that the city of Crossett intends to operate the pool if they spend money on repairs. He added that the estimates that were received were more than was expected by GP representatives and it would require that some funds be raised locally. Mr. Reed indicated that he has received commitments from local businesses that will help with the repair cost, but needs a show of intent from the council that the pool will be opened in 2017 if the repairs are made. Motion by Councilwoman Jeffress, seconded by Councilwoman Rodgers to give a show of intent to include the operations of the Crossett Swimming Pool in the budget for 2017, provided the necessary repairs are made through donations. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed. Mr. Reed added that as a newly appointed member of Crossett Recreation Commission, he would like to review the budget for the city pool.

Councilwoman Rodgers reminded the council that at the regular meeting of December 21, 2015 a motion passed to have Clerk/Treasurer’s office include a benefit statement with each employee’s 2015 W-2. This statement was to include retirement, insurance and vacation pay and any other benefit paid for each employee. A spreadsheet was to be presented to the council with the same information. She has since found out that this was not done according to the motion. A letter was presented to each employee listing the benefits that were paid, but no dollar amount was applied on an individual basis. Assistant Clerk/Treasurer Lisa Gulledge explained because of deadline for issuing W-2’s and after speaking to Mayor McCormick, Clerk/Treasurer Jesse Walthall and Mr. Clark Terrell as well as several department heads and a couple of council members, it was decided that this letter could offend some city employees. The form letter that was presented to each employee seemed like a more appropriate way to handle the situation. Mrs. Gulledge agreed that this was not what the motion stated and the statements will be issued as soon as possible.

Councilwoman Rodgers asked for an update on the Police Department relocation. Police Chief JW Cruce stated that the concrete was poured for the tower and the equipment should be moved by the end of this month. Intentions are to have the department working from the new location by the end of this month or the first part of June.

Councilwoman Rodgers asked if any progress has been made on moving the Skatepark. Mayor McCormick stated that the City of Monticello is no longer interested in purchasing the equipment. He has not been able to reach Mr. Barker to see if CARD still wants the equipment. Mrs. Rodgers asked that a deadline of 30 days be set for the equipment be moved.

Councilwoman Rodgers asked that the council hold an open discussion concerning once per week garbage pickup. She feels that if the street and sanitation crew picked up garbage once per week they would have more time to do other things that would help keep our city beautiful. Mrs. Rodgers asked that the council be informed as to how they are currently scheduling things. Mayor McCormick asked Mrs. Rodgers if she would be willing to meet with Director of Public Works Jeff Harrison, S&S Superintendent JW Robinson and himself to discuss the daily operations of the department. She agreed and a meeting will be set up.

Mr. Howard Beatty stated that the Crossett Beautification Committee is working on a clean-up day. The day is set for June 11, 2016. Mr. Beatty asked that the city of Crossett help advertise and publicize this event on the city website and Facebook page. Mayor McCormick stated that the city will furnish trash bags, dumpsters, equipment and man-power as well.

Rusty McCaughan, Rusty’s Pest Control, was present to update the council on mosquito control. Mr. McCaughan stated that he has set several traps around the city and has collected several mosquitoes. None of the insects collected so far have been the aegypti mosquitoes known to carry the ZIKA virus. He added that the city alleys are grown up and are breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Cleaning alleys would go a long way in controlling mosquito population.

Councilman Robert Freeman presented a letter asking the council to consider implementing a 2% A&P tax for the city of Crossett. Mr. Freeman stated that Crossett Recreation Commission takes a significant amount from city’s general fund. This tax would allow the recreation commission to operate without having to drain the general fund budget. City Attorney James Hamilton added that if the council is interested in pursuing this, he will get with a representative to come deliver a detailed presentation on the procedure to follow. Councilwoman Jeffress stated that although this doesn’t have to be taken to a public vote, she feels that public hearings will be important for the citizens of Crossett. Motion by Councilman Freeman, seconded by Councilman Foster to proceed. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mr. John Mount addressed the council with complaint on the Crossett Water Commission. He stated that someone had run over his water meter. After a battle to get the water commission to replace the meter, it was installed above the ground. When he requested that the water operators put the meter into the ground as before, they stated they could not. He did the work himself and is wondering why the Crossett Water Commission doesn’t listen to the citizens. Crossett Water Commission chairman, Cecil Ritter, stated that this matter has never been brought to a commission meeting. The Crossett Water Commission meets once per month and he would welcome Mr. Mount to attend. Councilman Knight added that he was asked by Mr. Mount to look at the meter box before and after he had corrected the issue. Mr. Knight reaffirmed that the meter box was too high above the ground and has been lowered now and looks much better.

Mr. Mount suggested that the city council consider making Crossett a wet town. This would bring in much needed revenue for the city. Mayor explained that this would have to be a county decision or the state would have pass laws that would allow each city to make the decision.

Mr. Raymond Frazier, 804 West 12th Avenue, complained about the property across the street from his home. It is the remains of the old burned out Price Elementary School on the north side of the ditch. Mr. Frazier stated that the structure is dilapidated and dangerous. He and his neighbor, Mr. Laron Simpson, continue to mow and weed eat around the structure but something needs to be done with the building. Mayor McCormick asked Director of Public Works Jeff Harrison if he had any idea what it would cost to tear that building down. Mr. Harrison stated that he has $20,000 in his budget for demolishing houses. The last property cost $300/load to haul off and he figures this will be close to 25 loads, so probably around $7,500. This property belongs to Jack Reynolds and multiple letters have been sent. The city can clean the property, and put a lien on the property to recover the cost, but most times the lien is never paid and the city will inherit the property. Mr. Harrison suggested that the council examine the ordinance and find ways to set higher fines for property the city cleans. Councilman Freeman added that this is something that the council needs to addressed sooner rather than later. Mayor McCormick stated that until we get an ordinance in place, the council should give permission for Mr. Harrison to exceed his budget as needed. All agree.

Councilwoman Jeffress asked if the city could ask the citizens to help clean the alleys in conjunction with the June 11 Crossett Clean-Up.

 With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

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