Crossett City Council met in regular session June 15, 2015 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,

Councilmembers: Robert Freeman, Candace Jeffress, Eddie Rowe, James Knight,

C.T. Foster, Lynn Rodgers

Absent: Clerk/Treasurer Jesse Walthall

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 May 18, 2015. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCormick asked council to consider financial statements. Councilwoman Rodgers voiced concerns over the financials. Mrs. Rodgers recommended that the council consider hiring a certified public accountant to review the financials and make suggestions to help the council to have a better understanding of the state of the city. She asked that the council consider keeping this accountant on retainer to come to meetings at least quarterly for advisement. All council members agree with this suggestion. Mayor McCormick stated that if this is the council’s pleasure, he would like to follow the bid process. City Attorney Hamilton added that this doesn’t have to be bid out since it is a professional service, but it would be advantageous to at least call local accountants for pricing. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilwoman Jeffress to seek pricing for the service from local accounting firms and have someone hired within the next 30 days for the position. Also, that in the pricing quotes, the firm be made aware that they may be kept on retainer and will be required to report to the council at least quarterly. Ms. Rodgers also recommended that the accounting firm have previous experience with municipal governments. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Motion by Councilwoman Jeffress, seconded by Councilman Foster to accept the May 2015 financial statements. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed.

Mayor McCormick stated that all council members have received a letter from the Crossett Municipal Airport commission. Some of the commissioners were present for questions from the council. Mr. Warren Gouner, Mr. Herb Hutchison and Dr. Alan Wilson were present to entertain questions. Councilwoman Jeffress asked if the hanger had been cleared for future renters. As of yet, the hanger is not ready but city crews are planning on aiding in the process. Councilwoman Rodgers asked if anyone, other than Director Rusty Atchison, knew the daily operations of the airport. Currently there is no one that knows the operation, but the commission stated they will be pro-active in making sure that someone learns the basic procedures. With no other questions for the commission, Mayor McCormick commended them on the job they have done at the airport.

Crossett Fire Chief Leroy Higginbotham presented a proposal from the Ashley County Quorum Court for operation of the County Ambulance Service. Chief Higginbotham stated that he is not comfortable with the proposal as it has no secured source of revenue at this time. Councilwoman Rodgers stated that although she agrees that an ambulance service is needed for the county, she feels that the residents of the city of Crossett should be the council’s primary concern. She added that there is no model within the state to base this operation on. Councilwoman Jeffress asked if the residents of the city of Hamburg would consider adding an ambulance service. She feels that their residents could then collect a sales tax and cover the east side of the county. Chief Higginbotham added that no decision has to be made at this time. The county is waiting on a report from MEM’s Ambulance Service showing the feasibility of such. Concerns from Councilman Rowe and Councilman Knight were discussed. Councilwoman Jeffress asked that this be discussed further at next month’s regular meeting and invite Mr. Gilmore from ACMC to discuss the waiver which was mentioned at the AC Quorum Court meeting. All agree. Mayor will invite Mr. Gilmore.

Mayor McCormick asked the council to consider a nepotism policy for the city of Crossett. Mayor suggested that department heads not be allowed to hire family to work in the same department. He added that this shouldn’t affect current employees, but would like to prevent problems in the future. Councilwoman Rodgers added that a No Fraternization policy be incorporated as well, since this causes issues within departments. Mayor McCormick added that if this is something that is already happening, it will need to be accepted with no consequences. City Attorney Hamilton added that a resolution would need to be drawn and passed to amend the current handbook. Sample policies will be given to the council for consideration.

Mayor McCormick presented a proposed ordinance adopting a fee of $10.00 for each fingerprint check conducted by the Crossett Police Department. Motion by Councilman Freeman, seconded by Councilwoman Jeffress to have City Attorney read the proposed ordinance. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read the ordinance in its entirety. Motion by Councilwoman Jeffress, seconded by Councilwoman Rodgers to suspend the 3-day reading rule and read the proposal for the second reading by title only. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read by title only. Motion by Councilwoman Rodgers, seconded by Councilman Knight to further suspend the rule and read the proposed ordinance for the 3rd and final reading by title only. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Hamilton read by title only. Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Rodgers to adopt the proposed ordinance. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and Ordinance 2015-4 is adopted.

Mayor McCormick opened the floor for comments from the council or audience. Mr. John Mount expressed concerns about the local cable company. He stated that he is still hearing complaints from his neighbors and that the service has not improved. Mayor McCormick stated that he will continue to talk to the representatives.

 With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

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