Crossett city council met in special session July 15, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. in the lobby of the Crossett Administration Building to discuss financial statement.

Present: Mayor Marshall McCormick, Clerk/Treasurer Jesse Walthall

 Council Members: Freeman, Rodgers, Rowe, Knight, Foster

 and Rodgers,

Absent: City Attorney Hamilton and Councilwoman Jeffress

Mayor McCormick called the meeting to order with prayer by Councilwoman Rodgers. He announced that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the June 2015 financial statement. Mayor introduced Certified Public Accountant Clark Terrell to the council. The city has contracted to work with Mr. Terrell through November 30, 2015. Mr. Terrell recommended streamlining the monthly report into a clearer format. He will be working with the Clerk/Treasurer’s office to consolidate statements into a format suitable for monthly review.

Discussions on revenue shortfalls and areas which could be cut were heard. Councilman Freeman suggested that first cuts should be made to areas which do not produce revenue. Councilman Knight added that each department should be looked at to find ways to cut expenses.

Councilwoman Rodgers expressed concern over the county-wide ambulance proposal. She stated that the city is currently in financial hardships and she is skeptical of taking on another risky obligation.

Assistant Fire Chief Todd Freeman addressed the council concerning the request. He stated that the county is currently asking for the city to show enough interest to proceed with a study. The city would be under no further obligation until the study is complete and funding is secure. The Ashley County Quorum Court is hoping to secure funding by a sales tax or fees which would generate approximately $700,000.00. Out of the money generated, the city would receive one-half of the amount to continue to operate the ambulance service as is. The remaining balance would be set-up in a fund for county ambulance operations which would be handled through the ACQC. The expenses incurred by the Crossett Ambulance Service would be billed to the county and reimbursed through those funds.

Mayor McCormick stated that his major concern is that the citizens of the city of Crossett would be paying additional taxes for services they are already receiving. Councilman Freeman added that he has a problem with asking city residents to pay for county service. This will be discussed further at the regular council meeting.

Ideas were shared of ways the city can cut expenses. Councilwoman Rodgers added that the city is salary heavy, and feels that a hiring freeze may be in order. Councilman Freeman stated that he would like to revisit the Economic Development Foundation Contract. He feels that this may not be legal and would like to see the council appropriate the funds. Mayor McCormick asked that Council Members Lynn Rodgers, Robert Freeman and Eddie Rowe look into the city financial statements each month.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned.

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