

# MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS

Conway, Arkansas  
Tuesday, 6:00 pm  
January 14, 2025

On this date the City Council of the City of Conway, Arkansas met in regular session. The following members being a quorum were present and acting: Councilman Hawkins, Councilman Grimes, Councilman Spurgers, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Ledbetter, Councilman Hawks, Councilman Jones, and Councilwoman Isby. Also, present and acting: Mayor Bart Castleberry, City Clerk Denise Hurd, and City Attorney Charles Finkenbinder.

**Call to Order: Mayor Bart Castleberry**

**Roll Call: Denise Hurd, City Clerk**

**Minutes: December 10, 2024**

Councilwoman Isby made a motion to approve the minutes of the City Council meeting on December 10, 2024, as submitted. Councilwoman Mehl seconded the motion. The motion carried 8-0.

## **A. Public Hearings:**

### **1. Public hearing to discuss the issuance of electric revenue improvement bonds for the new operation center campus for Conway Corporation.**

Mayor Castleberry opened the public hearing. Brett Carroll of Conway Corporation addressed the Council and introduced Aaron Brown, CFO. Mr. Brown told the Council that they are issuing an additional 6 million dollars in revenue improvement bonds to complete the construction of the new operations campus on South German Lane, which will provide additional needed space for Conway Corporation's operations. Councilman Grimes confirmed that there was no rate increase associated with this issuance of bonds. There was no one else present to speak in favor or against the matter. Mayor Castleberry declared the public hearing closed.

### **2. Public hearing to discuss the issuance of water revenue improvement bonds for the Roger Q. Mills Water Treatment Plant and related improvements.**

Mayor Castleberry opened the public hearing. Aaron Brown told the Council that inflationary pressures pushed costs up higher than originally estimated, so an additional bond is being issued to complete the expansion of their water treatment plant, that will add 8 million gallons a day of treatment capacity bringing the total to 32 million gallons a day, to help support the growth and demand of the City of Conway. There was no one present to speak for or against the matter. Mayor Castleberry declared the public hearing closed.

## **Report of Standing Committees:**

### **B. Economic Development Committee (Conway Area Chamber of Commerce, Conway Development Corporation, Conway Downtown Partnership, & Conway Corporation)**

#### **1. Consideration to approve waiving all three readings for the ordinances on the January 14, 2025, City Council agenda.**

Mayor Castleberry presented Item B1 to the Council. Councilwoman Mehl made a motion to approve waiving all three readings and Councilwoman Isby seconded it. A vote was called and the motion carried 8-0.

#### **2. Ordinance authorizing the issuance and sale of electric revenue improvement bonds for Conway Corporation.**

##### **O-25-01**

Mayor Castleberry presented Item B2 to the Council. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to adopt the Ordinance and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilman Ledbetter, Councilman Spurgers, Councilman Hawkins, Councilwoman Isby, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Grimes, Councilman Hawks, and Councilman Jones. The Ordinance passed 8-0.

**C. Community Development Committee (Airport, Community Development, Code Enforcement, Permits & Inspections, Transportation, & Planning & Development)**

- 1. Resolution to approve the organizational rules and procedures for the City of Conway in FY2025.**

**R-25-01**

Councilman Hawkins presented Item C1 to the Council. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to adopt the Resolution and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. A vote was called and the motion carried 8-0.

- 2. Consideration to approve the nomination of Scotty Bell to Conway Corporation Board of Directors.**

Councilman Hawkins presented Item C2 to the Council and moved to accept the nomination. The motion to accept was seconded by Councilman Jones. A vote was called and the motion carried 8-0.

- 3. Consideration to approve the nomination of Jennifer Welter to Conway Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.**

Councilman Hawkins presented Item C3 to the Council and moved to accept the nomination. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Mehl. A vote was called and the motion carried 8-0.

- 4. Ordinance to appropriate funding for capital improvement projects at the Conway Regional Airport.**

**O-25-02**

Councilman Hawkins presented Item C4 to the Council. Airport Director, Jake Briley told the Council that the FAA has agreed to fund the projects for the next three years. He added that the City's responsibility would be for \$36,000 which is available in the Airport fund. He said that it amounted to 5 million dollars of federal funding over the next three years. He told them that the projects were a 500-foot runway extension, and taxiway extension with the entire length of the taxiway to be reworked. There was discussion among the Council as to the benefits of the improvements. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to adopt the Ordinance and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilman Ledbetter, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Grimes, Councilman Spurgers, Councilman Jones, Councilwoman Isby, Councilman Hawks and Councilman Hawkins. The Ordinance passed 8-0.

- 5. Ordinance to set the 2025 building permit fees schedule for the Permits & Inspections Department.**

**O-25-03**

Councilman Hawkins presented Item C5 to the Council. Cecil Corning, Director of Permits and Inspections told the Council that the small increase in building permit fees proposed was \$3.80 per 80,000 square feet on commercial building permits, and \$3.40 increase on residential. He said there were several very small increases, and the building re-inspection fee remains the same. He added that the increases were due to cost of building products which fluctuates every year. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to adopt the Ordinance with the emergency clause and Councilman Hawkins seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilwoman Isby, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Jones, Councilman Hawks, Councilman Spurgers, Councilman Hawkins, Councilman Grimes and Councilman Ledbetter. The Ordinance and the emergency clause passed 8-0.

- 6. Ordinance to appropriate funds for the Linn Settlement for the Transportation Department.**

**O-25-04**

Councilman Hawkins presented Item C6 to the Council. Kurt Jones told the Council that this Ordinance is the appropriation of the settlement that Council approved previously, related to the condemnation lawsuit on the property that was acquired for the 6<sup>th</sup> street overpass. Charles Finkenbinder, City Attorney confirmed that this settlement waives any future claims against the City as discussed in pervious City Council meetings. Councilman Jones made a motion to adopt the Ordinance and Councilman Ledbetter seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilman Hawks, Councilman Ledbetter, Councilman Hawkins, Councilwoman Isby,

Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Spurgers, Councilman Jones, and Councilman Grimes. The Ordinance passed 8-0.

**7. Ordinance to rezone property located at 931 Faulkner Street from O-3 to C-1.**

**O-25-05**

Councilman Hawkins presented Item C7 to the Council. Anne Tucker reminded the Council that this rezoning was presented to Council in 2023, and was tabled, and now the applicant, Mr. Salter, has asked to bring it back before Council. She said that in 2023 there was a public meeting in which three neighbors spoke in opposition to the rezoning. Since that time Mr. Salter has visited with the neighbors and has come up with a more favorable plan. She said that his intention is to rehab the building that is currently on the property to make 5 units and build an additional structure with a courtyard to house nine additional units. Ms. Tucker stated that there is no mechanism in place when a project is tabled, to notify the public that an item is coming back for approval, so unless the neighbors saw the agenda they would not know. She clarified that Mr. Salter has not changed his request for rezoning, he has just changed his intent. She added that if Mr. Salter decides after rezoning not to build, then the property would remain at C-1 for any future development as allowed by that zoning. Brent Salter addressed the Council stating that he felt that he had satisfied the neighbors that were in opposition to the initial rezoning. He said that he was keeping his request to rezone to C-1 based on the guidance received from the Planning Department. There was discussion about the existing zonings of the surrounding properties, and whether the neighbors were aware of the issue being revisited. Councilman Hawkins made a motion to adopt the Ordinance to rezone the property and Councilman Hawks seconded it. There was more discussion among the Council as to ways to notify the public about matters that were returning after being tabled, as several Councilmembers were concerned that the neighbors in this case were not aware that the matter had come back to the Council. Mr. Finkenbinder suggested that in the future, matters that are tabled be brought back at the next scheduled Council meeting. Councilwoman Mehl suggested tabling the matter again until the public could be notified. Mr. Salter stated that he would prefer not to delay and asked for a vote. He asked for the motion and second to stand. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Hawks, Councilman Grimes, Councilman Ledbetter, Councilman Spurgers, and Councilman Hawkins. Councilman Jones and Councilwoman Isby voted "No". The Ordinance passed 6-2.

**D. Public Service Committee (Physical Plant, Parks & Recreation, & Sanitation)**

**1. Ordinance to create a natural landscaping habitat permit administered by the Public Works Department.**

**O-25-06**

Mayor Castleberry presented Item D1 to the Council. Spencer Clawson, Director of Public Works addressed the Council stating that the purpose of the permit was to create some regulation for natural landscaping in the City and set up some guidelines for such landscaping. Councilwoman Mehl added that while most of what is already being done in the City is working well, there was a desire to create a standard so as not to disturb neighbors. Mr. Clawson stated that the permit would allow citizens to grow the types of plants they desire within established offsets, and percentages of lot coverage, and the certificate, or permit, would let neighbors know that the natural landscaping is within guidelines. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to adopt the Ordinance with the emergency clause and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilman Hawks, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Hawkins, Councilman Spurgers, Councilwoman Isby, Councilman Ledbetter, Councilman Jones, and Councilman Grimes. The Ordinance with the emergency clause passed 8-0.

**2. Ordinance to update the rates for the rental of the Conway Expo Center.**

**O-25-07**

Mayor Castleberry presented Item D2 to the Council. Andrew Thames, Parks Director told the Council that the current rates being charged were set in 2010. He added that a small increase is necessary due to higher costs for utilities, wages, etc. He said that this increase affects only the Expo Center and Pavilion and not the Event Center. There was discussion among the Council about the usage of the spaces, and the amounts of the increase in fees. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to adopt the Ordinance with the emergency clause and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The Clerk called the roll

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS

with the following voting "Aye": Councilman Hawkins, Councilman Ledbetter, Councilman Jones, Councilwoman Isby, Councilman Hawks, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Spurgers, Councilman Grimes. The Ordinance with the emergency clause passed 8-0.

**E. Public Safety Committee (District Court, Department of Information Systems & Technology, Animal Welfare, CEOC (Communication Emergency Operations Center) Police, Fire, & Office of the City Attorney)**

**1. Consideration to dispose of seized assets for the Conway Police Department.**

Mayor Castleberry presented Item E1 to the Council. Chief Harris asked the Council to approve the removal of a 2010 Nissan Maxima and a 2011 Hyundai Sonata from inventory that would be sold at auction. Councilman Hawkins motioned to approve the consideration and Councilwoman Isby seconded it. The motion carried 8-0.

**2. Ordinance appropriating asset forfeiture funds for the rental of the training facility range for the Conway Police Department.**

**O-25-08**

Mayor Castleberry presented Item E2 to the Council. Chief Harris told the Council that they had a contract with S7 Shooting Range for the use of their facility for a certain number of allotted days. He said that due to their increased costs, the rental rate has increased for the City, and he asked for approval to use forfeiture funds to offset the increase. Councilman Hawkins motioned to adopt the Ordinance and Councilwoman Isby seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilman Spurgers, Councilman Grimes, Councilman Jones, Councilman Hawkins, Councilman Hawks, Councilwoman Isby, Councilman Ledbetter and Councilwoman Mehl. The Ordinance passed 8-0.

**3. Ordinance to waive the competitive bid process and purchase LPR equipment for the Conway Police Department.**

**O-25-09**

Mayor Castleberry presented Item E3 to the Council. Councilman Ledbetter made a motion to adopt the Ordinance and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilman Hawkins, Councilman Ledbetter, Councilman Jones, Councilman Grimes, Councilman Spurgers, Councilman Hawks, Councilwoman Isby, and Councilwoman Mehl. The Ordinance passed 8-0.

**4. Ordinance authorizing personnel changes and appropriating funds within the District Court.**

This item was removed from the agenda.

**Adjournment-----**

**PASSED this 14<sup>th</sup> day of January 2024**

**APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, Bart Castleberry**

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**City Clerk, Denise Hurd**