
MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS

**Conway, Arkansas
Tuesday, 6:00 pm
December 12, 2023**

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, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Cummins, Councilman Ledbetter, Councilwoman Webb, Councilman Jones, and Councilwoman Isby. Also, present and acting: Mayor Bart Castleberry, City Clerk Michael Garrett, and City Attorney Charles Finkenbinder. Councilman Grimes was absent.

Call to Order: Mayor Bart Castleberry

Roll Call: Michael Garrett, City Clerk

Minutes: November 28th, 2023, City Council Meeting

Councilwoman Isby made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The motion carried 7-0.

Report of Standing Committees:

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

1. Resolution to approve the intent regarding the issuance of bonds for the purpose of assisting in the financing of the expansion and renovation of an existing industrial facility in the City.

R-23-70

Mayor Castleberry presented Item A1 to the Council. Corey Park, of the Conway Chamber of Commerce addressed the Council stating that this is a preliminary step in a project that will allow the Chamber to continue the process of assisting this facility. He told them that in the near future they would receive information regarding specifics about the company, and what the job creation statistics would be. He added that anonymity is important at this point because of the competitive nature of the project. Councilman Hawkins asked if there was a time frame, and Mr. Park answered that it was possible the company would be operational by next July, but obviously there are many factors that would affect that. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to adopt the Resolution and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. A vote was called, and the Resolution passed 7-0.

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

1. Consideration to approve waiving all three readings for the ordinances on the December 12, 2023 City Council agenda.

Councilwoman Isby made a motion to waive the three readings and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The motion carried 7-0.

2. This item was removed from the agenda.

3. Consideration to approve the annual nominations for boards and commissions.

Councilman Hawkins presented Item B3 to the Council. He read the names of the nominations to the Council:

Airport Advisory Committee

- Jassen C. Travis Term expires December 31, 2027

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board

- Kimbie Akins Term expires December 31, 2026

Diversity Advisory Council

- Jacqueline Gault Term expires December 31, 2025
- Jalon Hughes Term expires December 31, 2027
- Candie Corona Term expires December 31, 2027

Historic District Commission

- Marianne Smith Black Term expires December 31, 2024
- Corey Park Term expires December 31, 2026
- Joshua Hamilton Term expires December 31, 2026
- Nathaniel Johnson Jr. Term expires December 31, 2026

Oak Grove Cemetery

- Kathy McDaniels Term expires December 2028
- Brandi Keith Term expires December 2028

Planning Commission

- Mallory Jay Winbourne Term expires December 2025
- Jeffrey Brooks Davis Term expires December 2028
- Teneicia Roundtree Term expires December 2028

Robinson Cemetery Board

- Patrick Block Term expires December 2028

Councilwoman Isby made a motion to approve the nominations and Councilwoman Webb seconded it. A vote was called and the motion to approve carried 7-0.

4. Resolution to amend a resolution regarding boards and commissions.

R-23-71

Councilman Hawkins presented Item B4 to the Council. Felicia Rogers explained to the Council that Terry Coddington, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board Coordinator, is asking to reduce the number of board members from 11 to 7 members to make meetings more manageable and assist in regularly reaching a quorum. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to adopt the Resolution and Councilwoman Webb seconded it. A vote was called, and the motion carried 7-0.

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

1. Consideration to remove inventory and dispose of from the inventory for the Department of Sanitation.

Mayor Castleberry presented item C1 to the Council. Joe Hopper addressed the Council saying that he had three pieces of equipment that are not being used and needed to be removed from inventory. He said the items would be auctioned. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to approve the removal of the items and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. A vote was called, and the motion carried 7-0.

2. Resolution to approve the purchase of a front load refuse truck for the Department of Sanitation.

R-23-72

Mayor Castleberry presented Item C2 to the Council. Joe Hopper told the Council that this was a budget purchase this year through Sourcewell and asked for approval to accept the lowest bid of \$358,538.49 for the vehicle. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to adopt the Resolution and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. A vote was called, and the Resolution passed 7-0.

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS

3. Ordinance appropriating funds and approving the purchase of a rear load refuse truck for the Department of Sanitation.

O-23-102

Mayor Castleberry presented Item C3 to the Council. Joe Hopper told the Council that this is a fund balance allocation and that the 2020-2021 budget had included the purchase of some vehicles that were never purchased, which put the department behind on its replacement schedule. He said that for this purchase he did obtain quotes and asked for approval for the lowest quote of \$247,728.72. He added that there would be some additional funds from the 2023 capital funds that will also go toward the purchase. 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": Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Jones, Councilwoman Webb, Councilman Ledbetter, Councilman Cummins, Councilman Hawkins, and Councilwoman Isby. The Ordinance with the emergency clause passed 7-0.

D. 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. Ordinance appropriating reimbursement funds for the Conway Police Department.

O-23-103

Mayor Castleberry presented Item D1 to the Council. Chief Tapley told the Council that the department has funds from restitution, insurance proceeds, and extra duty and asked that those funds be appropriated. Councilman Hawkins moved to adopt the Ordinance and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilwoman Webb, Councilwoman Mehl, Councilman Hawkins, Councilman Cummins, Councilwoman Isby, Councilman Ledbetter, and Councilman Jones. The Ordinance passed 7-0.

E. Finance

1. Ordinance approving the FY2024 City of Conway Budget.

O-23-104

Mayor Castleberry presented Item E1 to the Council. He stated that as in past years, the City would begin the year with a spending freeze for the first three months of the year. Tyler Winningham presented the FY2024 Budget to the Council saying that all funds are at least at the break-even point budget positions with a few funds showing budget surpluses. He said the budget includes a 3% cost of living adjustment for all full-time employees. He added that there are 555 full-time positions in the budget with a few new positions added, including 5 new police officer positions, and staffing for the Community Center and various other positions at the Parks & Recreation, Transportation and Sanitation departments. He added that there was no increase in health insurance premiums this year, with only a slight increase for dental insurance. He said that on the revenue side, there is a 3% increase in sales tax, and some slight increases in other taxes. He said that the City has completed the contributions to the Reserve account, which brings it back to the 2 million dollar mark. He said that in 2023 the City paid off the debit associated with the energy savings project. He pointed out some other large increases in the budget such as body cams for the Police Department. He told them that the Physical Plant has been officially renamed the Department of Public Works, which will still include the Physical Plant staff as well as Code Enforcement. He said there were increases budgeted for the new soccer complex, but they did not have a revenue projection for the complex yet. He said the Parks A&P fund shows a large surplus intentionally as only the debt service requirements and the operating reimbursements to the General Fund with everything else being maintained for the Community Center and the pool once it is online. Councilwoman Isby made a motion to adopt the Budget Ordinance with the emergency clause, and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The Clerk called the roll with the following voting "Aye": Councilman Hawkins, Councilman Ledbetter, Councilman Jones, Councilwoman Isby, Councilwoman Webb, Councilwoman Mehl, and Councilman Cummins. The Ordinance with the emergency clause passed 7-0.

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS

F. New Business

1. Consideration to cancel the December 26th, 2023 City Council meeting.

Mayor Castleberry asked the Council to consider canceling the December 26th Council meeting. Councilman Hawkins made a motion to cancel the December 26th, 2023 meeting and Councilwoman Mehl seconded it. The motion to cancel passed 7-0.

Mayor Castleberry acknowledge Police Chief Tapley's upcoming retirement and commended him for his service to the City of Conway. He also introduced the interim Chief, Chris Harris.

Councilman Cummins told the Council about a new study on the health of Conway that would be conducted in the upcoming year.

Mayor Castleberry read a Proclamation proclaiming Wednesday, December 13th, 2023, Mark Ledbetter Day in the City of Conway, for his service to the City.

Adjournment-----

PASSED this 12th day of December, 2023

APPROVED:

Mayor Bart Castleberry

City Clerk Michael O. Garrett