

Searcy City Council – Special Session
December 28, 2015 3:00 p.m.
Minutes

Mayor David Morris called to order a Special Session of the Searcy City Council. Searcy City Attorney Buck Gibson gave the Invocation, with the Pledge of Allegiance following, led by Alderman Don Raney. City Clerk Jerry Morris called the roll with the following Aldermen answering “present”: Mary Ann Arnett, J R Howard, Steve Sterling, Dale English, Don Raney, and Mike Chalenburg. Also present was City Attorney Buck Gibson. Aldermen Logan Cothorn and Dale Brewer were not present.

Item (3) was for the discussion of response times for emergency services vehicles and personnel to the Northfield subdivision area due to construction of the North Main Street replacement bridge over Deener Creek and consideration for the appropriation of funds to address the situation. Mayor Morris explained that the purpose of the meeting was to address issues that have arisen due to water events (flooding) that have affected the Northfield subdivision area. These issues are due to the bridge closure on North Main Street for the construction of a new replacement bridge to the south of the area and flooding that caused temporary closure of Main Street to the north of the area. Mayor Morris further explained that the decision was made, upon the advice of the engineers involved, to not construct a temporary bridge for use during the period of construction of the replacement bridge. This decision was made out of concerns for the added cost of establishing a temporary bridge at a high enough elevation to carry the amount of water that may flow through Deener Creek at a given time. Mayor Morris further explained that the abnormally high amount of rain that had been received in the area over the previous weekend had caused a temporary closure of Main Street to the north of the area thereby restricting access to the area. Mayor noted that at no time during this rain event was the area completely inaccessible to certain emergency vehicles, in that larger emergency vehicles would have been able to reach the area. The road was closed out of safety concerns for smaller vehicles trying to cross the flooded area. Searcy Fire Chief Bill Baldrige was asked to speak to this issue and to relay any contingency plans that have been formulated regarding the concerns. Chief Baldrige explained that he has developed a plan to address the situation. He noted that Searcy Fire Department Battalion Chief Ryland Lauen owns a large metal building in the area and has offered the use of it to the City of Searcy. Chief Baldrige explained that in the event that another rain episode such as occurred is forecast a Fire truck unit could be placed at the building for rapid response to the area, as well as a Police unit. Northstar EMS has also agreed to supply an ambulance unit in such an event. He also noted that White County Emergency Services has also offered the use of one of their FEMA mobile trailers as needed. He further explained that his plan could also include a second part for consideration. This second part concerns the response time to this area regardless of any flooding issues. He noted that due to the closure of the Main Street Bridge for construction, emergency response vehicles have to enter the area via Bypass Road. This increases the response time to the area. This second part was to establish a temporary satellite fire (emergency) station at this building for the duration of construction of the replacement Main Street Bridge. This plan would incur some costs to the city that would have to be considered.

December 28, 2015

Special Session

He explained that there is no electricity or sanitary services to this building and that this would have to be installed in order to establish this temporary station, as well as the additional personnel that would be needed. City Attorney Buck Gibson noted that it would be advisable, mainly to protect Mr. Lauen, to enter into an agreement for the use of this building. He noted that although it is inherent that the City of Searcy has the power to protect the peace, health, safety, and welfare of its citizens in the event of an emergency, it would be advisable to enter into an agreement for the use of the property. Alderman Raney noted that the first part of the contingency plan should be implemented immediately in the event of possible flooding and asked that the city administration collect information regarding the logistics and the costs of establishing a temporary emergency station and to bring it to the Council at the January 2016 regular meeting.

Item (4) on the agenda was a budget adjustment ordinance to:

Section 1. The budget for the City of Searcy, Arkansas is amended in the following manner:

- a. Appropriate \$10,000.00 from the General Fund unappropriated reserves to the Mayor's Department 'DISCRETIONARY FUNDS' expenditure account (#01 5-010-05-04) for necessary expenditures or purchases for emergency response in the Northfield Subdivision area.

Section 2. The Mayor and City Clerk are authorized to expend the following sum:

- a. \$10,000.00 for expenditures or purchases for emergency response in the Northfield Subdivision area if necessary.

A motion was made by Mr. Raney, seconded by Mr. Howard, to suspend the rules and allow reading of the ordinance by title only. Motion carried with the following voting "yes": Arnett, Howard, Sterling, English, Raney, and Chalenburg. Mr. Gibson read the ordinance by title only. A motion was then made by Mr. Sterling, seconded by Mr. Howard, to adopt the ordinance. The ordinance passed with the following voting "yes": Howard, Sterling, English, Raney, Chalenburg, and Arnett. Mr. Gibson then read the emergency clause of the ordinance. Motion was made by Mr. Chalenburg, seconded by Mr. Sterling, to adopt the emergency clause, with the following voting "yes": Sterling, English, Raney, Chalenburg, Arnett, and Howard. **Ordinance 2015-35**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Minutes Approved: January 12, 2016

/s/ David Morris
MAYOR

City Council Meeting
December 28, 2015
Special Session

3

ATTEST:

/s/ Jerry Morris
CITY CLERK

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