WARD CITY COUNCIL
February 13, 2017
MINUTES
6:30 P.M.

Call to Order

Mayor Brooke called the meeting to order. Reverend Mike Sipe led the council in prayer. Representative Tim Lemons led the council in the Pledge to the American Flag.

Roll Call

Mayor Brooke asked for council roll call. Bill Moon-present, Jim Wier-present, Jeff Shaver-present, Gary Matheny-present, Ron Bissett-present, Don Howard-present, Mayor Art Brooke-present, and City Clerk John Barclay-present. A quorum was present.

Minutes

Mayor Brooke asked for a motion to accept the January 9, 2017 regularly scheduled meeting minutes. Ron Bissett motioned; Don Howard seconded. On voice vote all approved.

Department Reports

Mayor Brooke asked for a motion to approve the January 9, 2017 department reports. Don Howard motioned; Jim Wier seconded. On voice vote all approved.
Chief Staley was asked to address the council in regards to personal protective safety equipment for the firefighters/first responders. In 2016 the council gave permission to the fire department to apply for a GIF fund grant through CAPDD. The department was granted $10,000.00 for the protective equipment, however 5 (five) more sets are needed for the firefighters to be adequately protected. The fire department has the funds to cover this purchase but the amount is over its spending power. Therefore, Chief Staley is asking the council’s permission to spend the $13,795.00 to purchase and thereby meet the regulation requirements. This equipment according to Federal Regulations has only a 5 (five) year life span. Mayor Brooke is asking for a motion to permit the fire department to spend the amount needed to purchase the required equipment. Your handout will show you what the funds will purchase. Jim Wier motioned; Ron Bissett seconded. On voice vote all approved.
The mayor then asked Chief Benton to come forward and address the council. Chief Benton, over the past 5 (five) years, has managed to save enough money to purchase 2 (two) new vehicles for the police department. He has a little over $58,000.00 with which to proceed, with the council’s permission. He informed the council that the oldest vehicle he has in his fleet is a 2004 and the newest is a 2008. The prosecuting attorney’s office did purchase the department a 2015 but other than that the fleet is getting old and several vehicles are nearing 200,000 miles and they are beginning to need repairs on a regular basis. Both vehicles will be purchased thru Fleet where no extended warranty is offered. The mayor asked for a motion to allow the chief to proceed with the purchase of the vehicles. Don Howard motioned; Jim Wier seconded. On voice vote all approved.

Commission Reports

Mayor Brooke asked Chairperson Gary Meadows of the Planning Commission to come forward. Mr. Meadows informed the council that there was no business to conduct and that the next meeting will be February 27, 2017 at 7:00 P.M.
Mayor's Report

Mayor Brooke informed the council and all residents present that the State of the City report is completed and will be posted on the city’s website in the few days. The city has accomplished quite a few achievements throughout the year and will continue to serve our residents to the best of our ability.

The mayor asked Deborah Staley to talk about the alternatives to replace the paper packets each council member receives. E-mail or a tablet are 2 (two) of the methods which have been suggested. Because of the sensitive items to be discussed it was suggested to table this until next month. Mayor Brooke asked for a motion to table the alternatives. Ron Bissett motioned; Jeff Shaver seconded. On voice vote all approved.

The mayor asked Mr. Lemons of Lemon’s Engineering to come forward and give the council an update on the current projects being worked for the city. He told the council that the plans for the Intersection Project were returned to the Highway Department on January 2, 2017 and to date his office has received no response, so the Hwy. Dept. will be contacted on the 14th of Feb for an update. As far as the Treatment Plan goes the city’s part of the civil plans have been revised getting ready to rebid. His office has met with the electrical engineer to try to find some other cost saving features and the meeting was successful. His office is hoping to have the revised plans ready as early as this coming week so his office can advertise it as soon as they give him the direction from USDA and the project can move forward.

Mayor Brooke asked the council to set a date for the annual city wide cleanup. He recommended April 29, 2017 at the Old Co-op building at 404 East Scott or Highway 367. The mayor asked for a motion to approve April 29, 2017. Bill Moon motioned; Gary Matheny seconded. On voice vote all approved.

The mayor asked Mr. Charles Gastineau to come forward and give a Power Point presentation on (Mass Notification Systems Sirens and Other Options) not the least of these is the Code Red system which falls under the MNSS. During the presentation Charles asked Mr. Dustin Johnson to offer feedback on the availability of other systems to aid in making a decision as to which way the city and its residents could best be served. Mr. Gastineau also informed the council and residents present of a Genealogy Workshop being offered by the Lonoke County Library System on February 23, 2017. The workshop will be held from 2 to 3 P.M. in the Civic Room in City Hall and attendance is FREE.

Old Business

New Business

Mayor Brooke informed the council that 3 (three) city residents had asked to be placed on the agenda and asked to speak to the mayor and council on several items which they feel are unacceptable and would ask that they be heard and if in some way these points can be addressed and be more closely scrutinized by the council for possible changes. Those asking for time were Robin Hefner, Dustin Johnson, and Chastity Scott. Each resident was asked to limit his/her presentation to 3 (three) minutes. Mr. Johnson addressed the council earlier therefore the mayor asked Robin Hefner to come forward and address the council. Mrs. Hefner conceded her time to Mrs. Chastity Scott who for all intent and purposes became the spokesperson for the group. A copy of the areas presented, which are Ward Water System, Animal Control, Code Enforcement, Status of the then Ward Probation Officer, and the Social Media are attached to the minutes. We thank each speaker for his/her input and if possible each area will be addressed with any possible changes to be made. Once again we thank them for their interest.

Councilperson Ron Bissett asked that an Executive Session be called. There was no action taken.

Announcements

Next council meeting March 13, 2017 at 6:30 P.M.
Planning Commission meeting February 27, 2017 at 7:00 P.M.
Seniors meet every Thursday at noon
LWPWA meeting March 7, 2017 at noon
Chamber of Commerce meeting March 7, 2017 On February 21, 2017 a workshop will be offered by Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center entitled “How to Write a Business Plan”. The workshop will be presented at the Chamber of Commerce building from 6 to 9 P.M. A $35.00 fee will be required.

Adjournment

Mayor Brooke asked for a motion to adjourn. Jeff Shaver motioned; Ron Bissett seconded. On voice vote all approved.

APPROVED DATE: March 13, 2017

[Signature]
MAYOR

ATTEST:
[Signature]
CLERK

CITY SEAL
Thank you Mayor Brooke, for allowing Dustin Johnson to service our tornado sirens.

Water System: The current rates approved by the council are not acceptable for the general public interests. Many of Ward citizens are low and fixed incomes. Never the less, averaging monthly water bills that are double ones electric bill or similar is more than an outrage. While we understand there is a need to meet legal regulations and we all want to comply as well as have safe drinking water the burden placed on the consumer is too much. We ask the council and mayor to look at the city’s finances again and find a way to relieve its citizens of these heavy rates. Seek more funding in any manner possible, no matter how much paperwork is involved to do so. The people cannot face the current billing rates month after month, year after year. To say the least we do not want to pay for a system to accommodate citizens that do not exist and will not if they grow to know the cost of living in this small town.

Citizens have come together and found a solution for non working tornado sirens and feel our city failed us by not doing their homework in that area. The same goes for our water system. So we ask you do your homework and find ways to remove the hardship this water system is placing on current citizens NOW.

Animal Control: Many citizens complain about the number of stray animals roaming around. The animal shelter is underfunded and if possible we request the city make a goal to meet each year in adding to the shelter or increase the
funding to meet the needs of the total stray count it processes annually. I think being known for a well-maintained facility could be an asset to the city.

Code enforcement: The old ball park needs to be maintained or the owner fined accordingly. Also homes and businesses right on the main road that are poorly maintained also be sited as they are an eye sore. The parking lots of Dollar General and the Building that houses subway are so poorly maintained that the city loses money when its citizens would rather drive to Austin for their quick shopping instead of the one in their own city that is closer. Damaged wheels are not worth it!

Mark Brooke: we want an statement official statement from the city concerning the accused probation officer. Transparency is mandatory. Lack of confidence exists when family of an elected official works for the city. There is no exception to the fact that the Mayor is the ultimate boss and therefore his family should not work for the city.

Social Media: How much time is allowed for the city employees to engage in investigating local social media groups? Is there a system in place to document how much time they spend investigating these groups conversations and if not there needs to be one. Furthermore, our tax monies would be better spent on them investigating if our water bills are correct every month as there are clear discrepancies in billing.
Mass Notification Systems
Sirens and Other Options
Presented to the Ward City Council
February 13, 2017

History of Outdoor Warning Sirens

• Initially designed to warn of air raid in WWII
  • Installed in the 1940s
• Later adopted to warn of nuclear attack and of destructive weather patterns... i.e. tornadoes
  • Very effective in the 40s and 50s
• Local Fire Department also used them to alert volunteers
Warning Sirens in Ward

- Siren #1 at Fire Station #1 is an actual WWII siren. It must be manually activated at the station.
Warning Sirens in Ward

- Siren #2 is located on Peyton Street down from Fire Station #2. It was installed in 1999
Warning Sirens in Ward

- Siren #3 is located at the WasteWater Vacuum Plant off Wilson Loop. It was installed in 1999
Warning Sirens in Ward

- Sirens #2 & #3 must be set off via radio transmission from certain Ward Fire Department Vehicles or the Police Department (Dispatch)
Warning Sirens in Ward

- Damaged through the years by lighting strikes or just general decay
  - Estimated $12k to repair Sirens #2 & #3 to working order

- November 2016, the City Council turned down a request to repair the sirens.

Warning Sirens – Pro/Con

- Pro
  - Used to notify people outside

- Con
  - NOT designed to notify people who are inside
Warning Sirens – Pro/Con

• Pro
  • Can be activated by local authorities

• Con
  • A human MUST activate them

Warning Sirens – Pro/Con

• Con
  • Siren footprint is only 1-2 miles

  • Heavy Rain, wind affect who can hear the sirens...even outside
Warning Sirens – Pro/Con

**Pro**
- For those OUTSIDE and without any other means of warning, a Weather Siren can be a life saver

**Con**
- You must be within 1-2 miles of the siren to hear it....normally

5 Reasons to Abandon Warning Sirens

1. You Can’t Hear Them
   - Never intended to warn people indoors
   - Can’t be heard in most newer homes
   - Designed to get people outside....to move inside
   - Weather affects whether you can hear them or not
5 Reason to Abandon Warning Sirens

2. They’re Unreliable
   - All require some form of human action whether automated or not
   - 1940s technology used in today’s digital world

5 Reason to Abandon Warning Sirens

3. Weather Radios
   - Anyone can have their own personal Weather Warning Device
   - Inexpensive and easy to operate
   - Desktop and Portable Units
   - Can be programmed to your particular area
   - They will wake you up!
5 Reason to Abandon Warning Sirens

4. False Sense of Security
   • A thought that it’s “not bad” until the sirens go off
   • Some do not seek shelter until they hear the sirens despite repeated warnings through other means

2011 Joplin, MO EF-5 Tornado
   • 161 Deaths, Over 1,000 Injuries
   • NWS Assessment Team Findings
     • Most residents DID NOT head the warning regardless as to how they obtained the warning.
2011 Joplin, MO EF-5 Tornado

- The majority of those surveyed cited the frequency of siren soundings as the reason why they did not immediately seek shelter.
- The “perceived” frequency of siren activation led the majority of those surveyed to become desensitized or complacent to this method of warning.

2012 Woodward, OK

- During the day, 3 supercell thunderstorms moved over the city.
- Lighting struck THE tower that operated the sirens
- Most the sirens did not work when a EF3 Tornado roared through after midnight
5 Reason to Abandon Warning Sirens

5. Social Media
   • 2015 Pew Research Survey show that 68% of Adults now have smartphones
   • Ward Median Age – 28.5 years
   • UP from 35% four years ago
   • Every major local news station has free apps
   • Most every cell phone since 2012 has a built-in Emergency Alert System
Possible Solutions

1. Fix the Current Sirens
   • $12k to fix existing sirens
   • Mr. Johnson is looking into other avenues to fix or replace the current sirens

Possible Solutions

2. Replace All Existing Sirens with New Ones
   • Estimate Costs
     • 2013 - $25k ea (Amarillo TX)
     • 2016 - $35k ea (Castle Rock, CO)
Possible Solutions

2. Replace All Existing Sirens with New Ones
   • Estimate Costs
     • 2017 – $25k ea Ward AR
     • 4 Sirens = $100,000

Possible Solutions

3. City Initiate a 2-Pronged Approach to Personal Preparedness
   1. NOAA Weather Radio
      • Encourage citizens to buy NOAA Weather Radios
      • Inexpensive and readily available
      • Can be easily programed to only alert for local watches/warnings
      • Come in desktop and portable versions
      • Alerts for all types of weather situations NOT just tornadoes
Possible Solutions

2. Mobile Alerts
   - City continue to promote CodeRED for Weather Alerts
     - Service is paid for by the County ($12k annually)
     - Weather alerts are automatically initialed by the NWS
   - City promotes the availability of other cell phone apps for Weather Alerts
     - Local TV/Radio Stations
     - NOAA
     - FEMA

Possible Solutions

4. City Initiate a 2-Pronged Expanded Approach to Personal Preparedness
   1. NOAA Weather Radio
   2. City promote CodeRED (OR Another Mass Notification System) for Weather Alerts with EXPANDED Notifications that CONSUMERS can Opt in to.
      - Additional Cost to the City
Possible Solutions

• Expanded Notification Include
  • Emergency:
  • Important:
    • Road Outages, Railroad Blockage, Etc
  • Community:
    • Special Events, Parks & Rec News,
      City News, Etc

Possible Solutions

• Expanded Notification Program
  • Requires the city to develop procedures as to
    who can initiate a notification and when
  • Complicated because we do not have a 24-hour
    dispatch
Pros/Cons to Mass Notification System

• Pro
  • Allows consumers to manage what information they want to receive

• Con
  • Requires the consumer to OPT IN to receive notifications
Pros/Cons to Mass Notification System

- **Pro**
  - Can receive notification via
    - Text
    - Voice (cell phone or land line)
    - Email
    - Social Media
    - Notification are fully customizable

Summary

- **Sirens**
  - Old School Technology in Terms of Delivery
  - Designed for Outdoor Notification Only
  - Manually (even Automated) Operated
Summary

- NOAA Radio
  - Desktop
  - Portable (DC and Battery Operated)
  - Set to Your Particular Area

Summary

- Mass Notification Program
  - Can Reach All Subscribers Indoor and Out Immediately
  - With Exception of NWS Notifications, requires Human intervention
  - NO Cost to Consumers
    - Data charges may apply
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