



**Rescheduled Regular Meeting of the
Board of Directors**
City of Texarkana, Arkansas
216 Walnut Street
Minutes - Tuesday, January 19, 2021 - 6:00 PM

Mayor Allen Brown called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance given by Ward 1 Director Terry Roberts.

PRESENT: Mayor Allen Brown, Ward 1 Director Terry Roberts, Ward 2 Director Laney Harris, Ward 3 Director Steven Hollibush, Ward 4 Director Ulysses Brewer, Ward 5 Director Barbara S. Miner, and Ward 6 Director Jeff Hart.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Dr. Kenny Haskin, City Attorney George Matteson and Deputy City Clerk Jenny Narens.

ABSENT: City Clerk Heather Soyars

Ward 4 Director Ulysses Brewer arrived at 6:01 PM.

CONSENT

Director Brewer made the motion to adopt the Consent Agenda, Seconded by Director Miner. The motion was carried, and the following items were approved:

1. Approval of the minutes of the regular rescheduled meeting January 4, 2021. (CCD)
2. Resolution No. 2021-5 for the purchase of one (1) 2021 Chevrolet Tahoe for use as a staff vehicle. (TAFD)
3. Resolution No. 2021-6 authorized the Depository Board to execute the 2021 depository agreement with Commercial National Bank. (FIN)

REGULAR

4. Resolution No. 2021-7 selected an operator and awarded the lease agreement for the operation of Iron Mountain Center. (PWD) Public Works Director Tyler Richards

LaToyia Hawkins Williams gave a brief background on what she wanted to see accomplished if she were awarded the lease agreement for the Iron Mountain Center. She said she envisioned a comprehensive community center that would offer service outreach and programs to all individuals. Ms. Williams said they would offer senior days, tutoring, after

school care, and summer programs. She said they would also have job training services and internships available. Ms. Williams said her great, great grandparents were one of the first individuals to acquire property in this community and her family still lived in the community.

Director Roberts asked if there would be background checks on the volunteers.

LaToyia Hawkins Williams said yes, background checks would be done to ensure the safety of the children.

Mayor Brown asked if Ms. Williams had a not-for-profit entity or would she have to obtain one.

LaToyia Hawkins Williams said she was in the process of obtaining the not-for-profit designation and it should take around three to four weeks.

Mayor Brown asked Ms. Williams if she had workers compensation insurance, insurance on the building, and any experience with grant writing.

LaToyia Hawkins Williams said she has been a grant writer for over ten years and had occurred over \$500,050.00 in the last four years.

Director Hart asked Ms. Williams if she had any operating capital to get it started.

LaToyia Hawkins Williams said yes, they had plenty of money to get it started.

Tracy Jones with Know Your Worth Ministry gave a background on his ministry and how they could be a partner with the City. He said the ministry was like an umbrella that worked with churches and businesses to promote and create community events. Mr. Jones said they would offer after school programs, work programs, tutoring and summer programs. He said he would not be the person teaching the programs, he would find the right people to do that. Mr. Jones said if the Know Your Worth Ministry received the lease agreement; Ms. Williams was more than welcome to come and participate with helping the community.

Mayor Brown said the Know Your Worth Ministry had \$12,000.00 to give to the center right away.

Tracy Jones said yes.

Mayor Brown asked about the insurance on the building and the workers compensation insurance.

Tracy Jones said the ministry was looking into this because most of the people that would help would be volunteers not staff.

Director Roberts asked if background checks would be done with everyone involved in the center.

Tracy Jones said yes.

Mayor Brown asked if the resolution could be adopted with a stipulation if Ms. Williams did not receive the not-for-profit designation.

City Attorney George Matteson said the resolution could have a certain time frame that Ms. Williams had to receive the not-for-profit designation.

Motion to adopt the resolution with LaToyia Hawkins Williams being the operator made by Director Harris, Seconded by Director Brewer.

Voting Yea: Mayor Brown, Director Roberts, Director Harris, Director Brewer, Director Miner.

Voting Nay: Assistant Mayor Hollibush and Director Hart.

The motion carried 5-2 the Mayor declared the resolution adopted.

5. FAILED - Ordinance to amend Chapter 26, Article II, Sections 26-28 and 26-29 of the *City of Texarkana, Arkansas Code of Ordinances* to provide for revisions to water and sewer rates. (TWU) Executive Director JD Phillips and TWU Finance Director Jim Cornelius

TWU Finance Director Jim Cornelius and TWU Executive Director came before the board and gave a brief presentation regarding the 10% increase to the water and sewer rates.

Director Roberts asked what caused the drop in the rate increase from 17.75% to 10%.

TWU Finance Director Jim Cornelius said the 17.75% increase would have solved the cash reserve problem on a permanent basis and would have put the cash reserve at sixty days.

Director Roberts asked who got a car allowance.

TWU Executive Director JD Phillips said he got a car allowance, along with the managers and the IT Department.

Director Roberts said he could not support a rate increase due to the fact the Arkansas-side was going to have rate increases from Centerpoint, Swepeco and Windstream.

Director Hart said the 10% increase would give TWU thirty-seven days in the cash reserve, but what happened once TWU received the rate study back. He said would TWU ask for another rate increase. Director Hart asked why this problem did not come up when the cash reserve was at fifty days and not wait until it was at sixteen days.

TWU Executive Director JD Phillips said last year when Mayor Brown looked at the budget, he said it was dropping. He said then COVID-19 hit and TWU Finance Director Jim Cornelius said in July we must do something, and they took the problem to City Manager Dr. Kenny Haskin.

Mayor Brown said the Arkansas-side would not be able to sustain the Texarkana Water Utilities without a rate increase. He said he did support the rate increase. The City had transferred money into the Texarkana Water Utilities, TWU had cut staff and they are refinancing bonds.

Director Hart asked once the rate study came back would there be another rate increase this year.

Mayor Brown said there would not be another rate increase this year.

Director Brewer asked if they would do more internal audits to cut costs where they could.

TWU Finance Director Jim Cornelius said yes once the system is back, they could.

Director Miner said the proposed bill would be \$68.66 for both water and sewer.

TWU Finance Director Jim Cornelius said yes.

Assistant Mayor Hollibush asked if they had looked into different ways to become more efficient and reorganized.

TWU Executive Director JD Phillips said they were hiring a new operations manager because the other one retired.

Motion to place the ordinance on its first reading in abbreviated form made by Director Hart, Seconded by Director Brewer.

Voting Yea: Mayor Brown, Director Roberts, Director Harris, Assistant Mayor Hollibush, Director Brewer, Director Miner, Director Hart.

The motion carried 7-0. The ordinance was read the first time in abbreviated form.

Motion to suspend the rules and place the ordinance on its second reading in abbreviated form made by Assistant Mayor Hollibush, Seconded by Director Hart.

Voting Yea: Mayor Brown, Director Roberts, Director Harris, Assistant Mayor Hollibush, Director Brewer, Director Miner, Director Hart.

The motion carried 7-0. The ordinance was read the second time in abbreviated form.

Motion to suspend the rules and place the ordinance on its third and final reading in abbreviated form made by Director Miner, Seconded by Director Hart.

Voting Yea: Mayor Brown, Director Roberts, Director Harris, Assistant Mayor Hollibush, Director Brewer, Director Miner, Director Hart.

The motion carried 7-0. The ordinance was read the third and final time in abbreviated form.

Motion to adopt the ordinance made by Director Hart, Seconded by Director Miner.

Voting Yea: Mayor Brown, Director Miner, Director Hart.

Voting Nay: Director Roberts, Director Harris, Assistant Mayor Hollibush, Director Brewer.

The Mayor declared the motion failed with a 3-4 vote.

6. TABLED - Resolution to approve the Texarkana Water Utilities (TWU) FY 2020-2021 Budget. (TWU) Executive Director JD Phillips and TWU Finance Director Jim Cornelius

Motion made to table was made by Director Roberts, Seconded by Director Hart.

Voting Yea: Mayor Brown, Director Roberts, Director Harris, Assistant Mayor Hollibush, Director Brewer, Director Miner, Director Hart.

The motion carried 7-0. The Mayor declared the resolution tabled.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

Director Harris asked why the City did not ask the public what they wanted done about the swimming pool before they put concrete over it to make it a basketball court. He also asked when Preston Street, Pine Hurst, and Hickory Street were going to have the asphalt put back on the street. Director Harris said there had been some of the street cut out and he had been asked to bring this issue to the Board.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board of Directors entered into Executive Session at 7:17 PM.

The meeting reconvened at 7:46 PM.

No action was taken by the Board.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, February 1, 2021

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn made by Director Roberts, Seconded by Director Hart.

Voting Yea: Mayor Brown, Director Roberts, Director Harris, Assistant Mayor Hollibush, Director Brewer, Director Miner, Director Hart.

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.

APPROVAL of the minutes on this 1st day of February 2021.



Heather Soyars, City Clerk



Allen L. Brown, Mayor