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**CITY OF NEWPORT
REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 5, 2023**

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The City Council of the City of Newport, Arkansas met in regular session Tuesday, September 5, 2023 in the chambers of the Municipal Courtroom.

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Mayor Ratliffe called the meeting to order. City Clerk/Treasurer Hembrey called the roll. Council members present were Michael Allen, Carol Falwell, Kathy Green, Donnie Ivie, Regina Lake, Andy May and Julie Moss. Council Member Leroy Mansko was absent. City Attorney John Pettie was present.

Following the invocation by Andy May, those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion by Lake and second by Moss to approve the minutes of the August 7, 2023 Meeting carried (6/0) with “yes” votes by Allen, Falwell, Green, Lake, May and Moss. Ivie abstained due to being absent on August 7, 2023.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Mayor Ratliffe had the following reports:

- A copy of the 2022 Sewer Department Audit Report was given to each Council Member. The report stated “In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the modified cash basis financial position of the City of Newport, Arkansas Sewer Department as of December 31, 2022 and 2021, and the respective changes in modified cash basis financial position and modified cash basis cash flows for the years then ended, in accordance with the modified cash basis of accounting as described in Note 1(B) to the financial statements.” No action was required by the Council.
- An electronic copy of the July 2023 Financial Statements for the General Fund, Street Fund, 911 Fund, Sewer Fund, Administration of Justice Fund, Grant Fund, Intoximeter Fund, District Court Cost Fund, Court Automation Fund, Drug Control Fund, Advertising & Promotion Fund, Fed Aid Grant Fund, Judge/Clerk Retirement Fund, NEDC Fund and Newport Airport was sent to each Council Member with their council package. Mayor Ratliffe asked that if any Council Member had any questions to please direct their questions to City Clerk/Treasurer Hembrey.
- Sales Taxes received in August was City Sales Tax \$180,350, County Sales Tax was \$129,995 and NEDC Sales Tax was \$90,175.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

**RESOLUTION: ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH C & S CONSTRUCTION, LLC
DBA M & A JONES CONSTRUCTION FOR PARK IMPROVEMENTS FOR HINES
AND NORMANDY PARKS**

Mayor Ratliffe stated that the improvements to Hines and Normandy Parks would cost \$62,567.37. The Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism Grant is for \$35,401.00. The City will need an additional \$12,317.37 above what was budgeted for 2023 to complete the project. After discussion, City Attorney read the Resolution in its entirety. A motion by Allen and second by Ivie to authorize the Mayor to enter into a contract with M

51 & A Jones Construction and authorize an additional \$12,317.37 from General Funds carried
52 (7/0) with “yes” votes by Allen, Green, Ivie, Moss, Lake, Falwell and May.

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54 **NEW BUSINESS:**

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56 **ORDINANCE: REZONING 301-305 SECOND STREET AND 107-117 LAUREL**
57 **STREET FROM C-1 TO C-3**

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59 Mayor Ratliffe recognized Attorney Edward Boyce. Mr. Boyce gave an informative
60 overview of the petition to rezone 301-305 Second Street and 107-117 Laurel Street. After
61 discussion, City Attorney Pettie read the Ordinance in its entirety. A motion by May and
62 second by Allen to suspend the rules in their entirety and forego the 2nd and 3rd readings
63 carried (7/0) with “yes” votes by Moss, May, Allen, Green, Ivie, Falwell and Lake.

64

65 A motion by Allen and second by Falwell to accept the Ordinance rezoning 301-305 Second
66 Street and 107-117 Laurel Street from C-1 to C-3 carried (6-0-1) with “yes” votes by Green,
67 Allen, Falwell, Ivie, Lake, Moss with May abstaining.

68

69 A motion by Lake and second by Moss to approve the emergency clause carried (6-0-1) with
70 “yes” votes by Allen, Green, Ivie, Moss, Lake, Falwell with May abstaining.

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72 **CHERRY JOHNSON TO ADDRESS COUNCIL ABOUT CITY ORDINANCES**

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74 Mayor Ratliffe recognized Cherry Johnson. Ms. Johnson requested that the Newport
75 Ordinances for unsightly and unsanitary conditions on real property be reviewed for more
76 stringent penalties.

77

78 **KEVIN LEE TO ADDRESS COUNCIL ABOUT MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**
79 **BRIDGE**

80

81 Mr. Lee was not present at the Meeting to address the Council.

82

83 **RESOLUTION: AD VALOREM TAX**

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85 Mayor Ratliffe stated that the annual notification to the Jackson County Clerk’s Office for
86 the taxes of 2023 to be paid in 2024 in accordance with Statute 26-73-202 was due. The
87 taxes will remain the same Five (5) Mills for General Fund and One (1) Mill for Firemen’s
88 Pension Fund. City Attorney Pettie read the Ad Valorem Tax Resolution in its entirety. A
89 motion by Allen and second by Moss to approve the Ad Valorem Tax Resolution carried
90 (7/0) with “yes” votes by Falwell, Ivie, Moss, Allen, May, Green and Lake.

91

92 **RESOLUTION: U.S.D.A. GRANT FOR TWO NEW POLICE VEHICLES AND**
93 **EQUIPMENT**

94

95 Mayor Ratliffe stated the City of Newport had received a \$50,000 grant from the U.S.D.A.
96 for the purpose of providing a portion of the cost of purchasing and outfitting two police
97 vehicles. City Attorney Pettie read the Resolution authorizing the acceptance of the
98 U.S.D.A. Grant in the amount of \$50,000 in its entirety. A motion by Lake and second by
99 Green to approve the Resolution accepting the \$50,000 U.S.D.A. Grant carried (7/0) with
100 “yes” votes by Ivie, Moss, Allen, Falwell, Green, Lake and May.

101 **ORDINANCE: AUTHORIZING CONTRACT WITH DRT BIOSOLIDS, INC. AND**
102 **WAIVING COMPETITIVE BIDDING**

103

104 Mayor Ratliffe stated DRT Biosolids had agreed to clean the sludge from the sewer
105 pond/lagoon for the same price they charged in 2018. City Attorney read the Ordinance in its
106 entirety. After discussion, a motion by Allen and second by Moss to suspend the rules in
107 their entirety and forego the 2nd and 3rd readings carried (7/0) with “yes” votes by Lake,
108 Falwell, Green, Ivie, May, Allen and Moss.

109

110 A motion by Moss and second by Lake to accept the Ordinance carried (7/0) with “yes” votes
111 by Falwell, Green, Lake, Moss, Allen, Ivie and May.

112

113 A motion by Allen and second by May to approve the emergency clause carried (7/0) with
114 “yes” votes by May, Moss, Green, Allen, Lake, Falwell and Ivie.

115

116 With no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned.

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118 PASSED AND APPROVED THE 2ND DAY OF OCTOBER, 2023

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120

121

MAYOR

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ATTEST:

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CITY CLERK