

October 26, 2020  
Six o'clock P.M.  
North Little Rock City Hall Council Chambers  
300 Main Street  
North Little Rock, Arkansas

The regular meeting of the North Little Rock City Council scheduled for Monday, October 26, 2020, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Honorable Mayor Joe A. Smith.

The roll having been called and the following Council Members answered to their names: DEBI ROSS, BETH WHITE, MAURICE TAYLOR, LINDA ROBINSON, STEVE BAXTER, RON HARRIS, JANE GINN and CHARLIE HIGHT (8/0). Chief Deputy City Clerk/Treasurer Katelyn Thomas, and City Attorney Amy Fields were also present.

*Note: the majority of Council Members participated in the meeting electronically. Mayor Smith, Chief Deputy City Clerk Thomas, City Attorney Fields, and Council Members Ross, White and Ginn were present in the council chambers.*

The prayer was led by Council Member Taylor.

On the motion of Council Member Baxter and seconded by Council Member Robinson, and by consent of all members present, the minutes from the North Little Rock City Council meeting scheduled for Monday, October 12, 2020, were approved, accepted and filed as prepared by the City Clerk (8/0).

On the blanket motion of Council Member Baxter and seconded by Council Member Ross, and by consent of all members present, communications #1, 2, 3, and 4 were accepted and filed (8/0).

1. Ember Strange, Finance Director – September Financial Report/Update.
2. Margaret Powell, Director of Governmental Affairs – Census Update.
3. Charlotte Thomas, Mayor's Office memorandum re: *Restaurant Mixed Drink Maximum – Change of Manager* for Longhorn Steakhouse, 3911 McCain Boulevard, by Keyandra Thurman.
4. Charlotte Thomas, Mayor's Office memorandum re: *Restaurant Mixed Drink Minimum – New application* for Mariscos La Corita, 3828 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, by Marcos Torres.

Mayor Smith invited Finance Director Strange to come forward and provide the monthly Financial Update. Mrs. Strange provided a brief overview. October Sales Tax collections were down approximately \$149,000.00 (4.7%) from the previous year. Other taxes are in line with budget. Franchise fees are below the previous year. Department Expenditures through September should be at 75%. All departments should be in line by the end of the year. A FEMA Flood update was also provided. The Finance Department is working with the State of Arkansas on a Corona Virus Relief Fund Grant (CARES Act funding). The city has received \$2,393,000.00. This was a reimbursement

grant which required details of eligible expenses. The Street Fund is in line with the budget. The Parks Fund is at 63% which is below the 75% threshold. The IT fund is slightly over, but there were no concerns. As of September (2020) \$4.2 million has been spent from the 2019 Capital Improvement Fund (\$10 million bond for Justice Center). Council Member Ross asked about Pandemic funds and if there were any pending applications. Mrs. Strange said there was one to enhance tele-working capabilities in the amount of \$75,000.00. Mayor Smith commended Mrs. Strange and her staff for their efforts. Council Member Hight asked if there were any outstanding FEMA requests. Mrs. Strange referenced dredging for the Hydro Plant, management costs and a Parks Project. The majority of funds have been received. Mayor Smith commended Mr. Leonard Montgomery, Director of Emergency Services and the Finance Department for their efforts on the reimbursements. Mayor Smith said a Budget Hearing will be held November 9, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. The Budget will be sent to Council Members Monday (November 2, 2020). Mayor Smith said the second part of the CARES Act Funding may not come in before the end of the year. This funding may not cover venues like (Simmons) Arena or the Convention Center in Little Rock. Both of these are struggling. He will ask the city (council) for some funding to assist the county for the Arena. He will provide information on sales tax returns for the arena which includes \$18 million in state sales tax and \$4 to 5 million in city sales tax since 1999. None of these facilities have had any revenue since the beginning of the pandemic.

**PRESENTATIONS**

*See above.*

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*None.*

**CONSENT AGENDA**

*None filed.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

R-20-152 (RESOLUTION NO. 9940 – MAYOR SMITH)

A RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN CITY-OWNED ITEMS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT AS SURPLUS; PROVIDING FOR AUCTION THEREOF; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read.

On the motion of Council Member Hight and seconded by Council Member Taylor, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was unanimously adopted (8/0).

Mayor Smith convened a public hearing regarding the following condemnations: R-20-153 – 4929 Atkins Street, R-20-154 – 108 Marvin Street, and R-20-155 – 304 North Palm Street. There being no one present wishing to be heard, the public hearing was adjourned.

R-20-153 (RESOLUTION NO. 9941 – MAYOR SMITH)

A RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN BUILDINGS, HOUSES AND OTHER STRUCTURES LOCATED AT 4929 ATKINS STREET IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK TO CONSTITUTE A PUBLIC NUISANCE AND CONDEMNING SAID STRUCTURES; PROVIDING A PERIOD OF TIME FOR PROPERTY OWNER TO ABATE SAID NUISANCE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Taylor and seconded by Council Member White, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was unanimously adopted (8/0). (*owner: Carlos A. Neal*)

R-20-154 (RESOLUTION NO. 9942 – MAYOR SMITH)

A RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN BUILDINGS, HOUSES AND OTHER STRUCTURES LOCATED AT 108 MARVIN STREET IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK TO CONSTITUTE A PUBLIC NUISANCE; PROVIDING A PERIOD OF TIME FOR PROPERTY OWNERS TO ABATE SAID NUISANCE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Taylor and seconded by Council Member Ross, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was unanimously adopted (8/0). (*owners: Charles N. and Billie S. Hogan*)

R-20-155 (RESOLUTION NO. 9943 – MAYOR SMITH)

A RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN BUILDINGS, HOUSES AND OTHER STRUCTURES LOCATED AT 304 NORTH PALM STREET IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK TO CONSTITUTE A PUBLIC NUISANCE AND CONDEMNING SAID STRUCTURES; PROVIDING A PERIOD OF TIME FOR PROPERTY OWNER TO ABATE SAID NUISANCE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Ross and seconded by Council Member Taylor, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was unanimously adopted (8/0). (*owner: William Brockman*)

R-20-156 (RESOLUTION NO. 9944 – MAYOR SMITH)

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND CERTIFYING AMOUNTS OF LIENS TO BE FILED WITH THE PULASKI COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR AGAINST CERTAIN REAL PROPERTIES IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS AS A RESULT OF GRASS CUTTING EXPENSES AND ABATEMENT OF OTHER NUISANCES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Taylor and seconded by Council Member Ross. Mayor Smith convened a public hearing. There being no one present wishing to be heard, the public hearing was adjourned. On the previous motion, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was unanimously adopted (8/0).

O-20-95 (ORDINANCE NO. 9296 – MAYOR SMITH)

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A REVISED ENERGY RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR THE NORTH LITTLE ROCK ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT; REPEALING ORDINANCE NOS. 8771,

8786, 8815, 8944 AND 9181; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Taylor, and by consent of all members present, the readings were suspended (8/0). Council Member Ross asked for an explanation. City Attorney Fields then reviewed content of the ordinance which included revisions to the Hedge Policy, etc. On the motion of Council Member Ross and seconded by Council Member Taylor, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was unanimously adopted (8/0). Emergency clause unanimously adopted (8/0).

O-20-96 (ORDINANCE NO. 9297 – COUNCIL MEMBER WHITE)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 1.2.4 AND 4.1.3 OF THE NORTH LITTLE ROCK MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 9, PARKING REGULATIONS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member White and seconded by Council Member Ross, and by consent of all members present, the readings were suspended (8/0). Council Member White said this corrects some unintended consequences in the previous ordinance. On the motion of Council Taylor and seconded by Council Member Ross, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was unanimously adopted (8/0). Emergency clause unanimously adopted (8/0).

O-20-97

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE MASTER STREET PLAN (ORDINANCE NO. 8601) TO CONSTRUCT A BIKE LANE ADJACENT TO RIVER ROAD; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was called and held by the sponsor, Council Member Robinson.

O-20-98 (ORDINANCE NO. 9298 – COUNCIL MEMBERS ROSS AND TAYLOR)

AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A WAIVER OF SIDEWALK RESTRICTIONS OF SECTION 9.11 OF THE SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED ON VAN STREET IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Taylor and seconded by Council Member Robinson, and by consent of all members present, the readings were suspended (8/0). On the motion of Council Member Taylor and seconded by Council Member Ross, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was unanimously adopted (8/0). Emergency clause unanimously adopted (8/0). (*applicant: Thomas Engineering Company*)

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Smith asked Mrs. Thomas to read public comments that were provided before the meeting by email. Mr. James Worrell asked the city to bring back Saturdays with closed off streets and added this was fun for the community. B. J. Newsome asked that Main Street be opened on Saturdays, or wait until 4:00 p.m. to close it. Ms. Newsome and her elderly mother shop at Nana's and said Saturday is the only day they are able to do so. Bonnie and Kelley Waters (Fayetteville, Arkansas) asked why Main Street was closed on Saturdays and who sets up the tables, chair and tents along with who pays

for the setup. They said the pandemic has hurt businesses, but closing Main Street does as well. An email from Nanas Organix (Amanda Wilson) advised Main Street is closed on Saturdays. Their business has dropped from \$400 to \$500 to \$40. Complaints have been made. The business has survived COVID and downtown politics. She will close and relocate at the end of the year unless there are changes. The tents in the street during the day benefit no one. Mr. Howard Wilson said his wife (Amanda) owns Nana's Organix grocery store. Saturday is the biggest shopping day of the week for all retail. Closing the street has decimated grocery sales and overall business. Leaving the tents up during the day (when they are not used) was not the intent of the City Council when this plan was allowed. Mr. Wilson asked that the city reopen Main Street. This will not affect the bars evening and nighttime business and will not change the public coming out for outdoor dining. All non-bar businesses are losing business because of this (street closure). Mr. Jimmy Ard encouraged people to look at the candidates (for the upcoming General Election) closely and vote. Candidates need to be someone who will not embarrass the city and keep decency in the Mayor's office. He recommended voting for Debi Ross who has proven that she is more than capable and qualified to handle the Mayor's job. This year's election is very important for all positions and holders of elected offices. Council Member Robinson said Mayor Smith has done a wonderful job. His administration will end December 31. She asked the council to consider taking the Chief of Staff position and use those funds to pay for two additional Code Enforcement Officers (and benefits). Council Member Taylor referenced comments about the street closing (Main Street) and asked what could be done to provide some relief to business owners. Mayor Smith said the businesses should use the opportunity the outdoor dining has created to work the crowd and attract new customers. The weather will be changing soon which could result in ending the closure. Council Member Hight reminded everyone to vote. He also encouraged the North Little Rock Charging Wildcats to beat Bryant Friday night at Wildcat Stadium. Council Member Ross said the lines at Laman to vote are the longest in the morning. Voters who wait until later in the day are waiting around 30 minutes. Mayor Smith reminded voters you can vote at other early voting locations in the county.

There being no further business to come before the Council, and on the motion of Council Member Ross and seconded by Council Member White, and by consent of all members present, the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m. (8/0), until the next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Monday, November 9, 2020, at six o'clock p.m. in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 300 Main Street, North Little Rock, Arkansas.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR JOE A. SMITH

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
DIANE WHITBEY, CITY CLERK