

October 11, 2021
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 11, 2021, was called to order at 5:59 p.m. by the Honorable Mayor Terry C. Hartwick.

Due to the rise in COVID-19 cases and Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson reinstating a state-wide public health emergency, council members had the option of attending the council meeting in person or participate virtually. The Council Chambers were open to the public and social distancing and the use of masks were requested for those attending the meeting in person.

The roll having been called and the following Council Members answered to their names: DEBI ROSS, MAURICE TAYLOR, LINDA ROBINSON, STEVE BAXTER, RON HARRIS, JANE GINN, and CHARLIE HIGHT (7/0). Council Member NATHAN HAMILTON was absent. *Note: Council Members Ross, Taylor, Ginn and Hight were present in the Council Chambers.* City Clerk/Treasurer Diane Whitbey and City Attorney Amy Fields were also present.

The prayer and pledge of allegiance were led by Council Member Ginn.

On the motion of Council Member Ross and seconded by Council Member Hight, and by consent of all members present, the minutes from the North Little Rock City Council meeting scheduled for Monday, September 27, 2021, were approved, accepted and filed as prepared by the City Clerk, Diane Whitbey (7/0).

On the motion of Council Member Hight and seconded by Council Member Robinson, and by consent of all members present, communication #1 was accepted and filed (7/0).

1. Anita Paul, Mayor's Office memorandum re: retail beer off premises permit – replacement/new owner for Crystal Food Mart, 6116 Crystal Hill Road, by Khalid Jat.

PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Hartwick invited Code Enforcement Director Felicia McHenry to the podium. He then read and presented a proclamation declaring September 15 thru October 15 as National Code Enforcement Month. Mrs. McHenry said there are enforcement officers in several departments in the city, including Code Enforcement, Planning, Fire Marshal, Sanitation and City Clerk.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

On the motion of Council Member Hight, and seconded by Council Member Ginn, and by consent of all members present, the following consent items were adopted: R-21-150, R-21-151, and R-21-152 (7/0).

R-21-150 (RESOLUTION NO. 10124 – MAYOR HARTWICK)

A RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN CITY-OWNED ITEMS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT AS SURPLUS; PROVIDING FOR AUCTION THEREOF; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was adopted (7/0).

R-21-151 (RESOLUTION NO. 10125 – MAYOR HARTWICK)

A RESOLUTION APPROVING ACCEPTANCE BY THE NORTH LITTLE ROCK AIRPORT COMMISSION OF A GRANT FROM THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AERONAUTICS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO RUNWAY 17-35; AMENDING THE FY2021 BUDGET (RESOLUTION NO. 9963); AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was adopted (7/0).

R-21-152 (RESOLUTION NO. 10126 – MAYOR HARTWICK)

A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE 2021 BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL EXPENSES IN CERTAIN DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was adopted (7/0). (*\$175,000.00 – General Fund*)

NEW BUSINESS

R-21-153 (RESOLUTION NO. 10127 – MAYOR HARTWICK)

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. Mayor Hartwick convened a public hearing. There being no one present wishing to be heard, the public hearing was adjourned. On the motion of Council Member Taylor and seconded by Council Member Ross, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was adopted (7/0).

O-21-90 (ORDINANCE NO. 9401 – MAYOR HARTWICK)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2021 QUOTA ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. 9323) FOR CERTAIN DEPARTMENTS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; 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 readings were suspended (7/0). A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Taylor and seconded by Council Member Ginn. Council Member Ross said the council recently added two (2) Park Rangers to the 2021 Quota Ordinance. A few months later, another person was hired as a temporary Park Ranger. She asked why three (3) weren't added initially. Council Member Ross advised the salary and benefits for this position is \$65,000.00 which doesn't

include a vehicle or other equipment. Parks and Recreation Director Steve Shields advised a Trail Supervisor would be a new position for the city. The city has 35 parks going from Clinton Library to the Big Dam Bridge (and in other areas). Council Member Hight recently learned North Little Rock was the only city in the state that did not have a Trail Coordinator. North Little Rock has trails, green spaces, and pathways. The current temporary employee has experience with trails. Parks and Recreation has created a position that would serve as Trail Coordinator/Park Ranger. Council Member Robinson said there is no guarantee that the person in the Emergency Hire position will be the one hired. The position will have to be advertised and the temporary employee will have to apply for the job. Council Member Ross asked if other cities pay their Trail Coordinators \$65,000.00 a year or if they use volunteers. Mayor Hartwick referred to Mr. Shields's previous comment. The City of North Little Rock has community parks which include the area downtown, Camp Robinson towards the Airport and other areas. Mr. Shields said Park Rangers cover areas throughout the city from 9:00 a.m. until 10:30 p.m. Most days, there are two (2) Rangers on duty. However, this varies if an employee is on leave. Mayor Hartwick said the Trail Coordinator would be able to assist as a Park Ranger. He said the park at Stone Links includes Disc Golf, Cricket, Basketball and more. Human Resources Director Betty Anderson said her department set the salary by conducting a job audit among other cities. During the audit, they learned that the majority of Trail Coordinators are also Park Rangers. Council Member Harris said this employee would be able to assist with the new Pump Track. Council Member Baxter said the speed has already been reduced in the area of the Pump Track, other areas are expanding. It will be important for someone to know the trail system to help alleviate any issues that might arise from increased traffic in the area. Council Member Ross asked about scheduling work hours among the Park Rangers. Mr. Shields said the area of coverage will expand, but the hours referenced earlier would remain. This does not mean someone will be on a trail at all times. Council Member Hight said there are parts of the trail (system) where people are not comfortable being by themselves. The addition of the Park Rangers adds some security/safety. The Levy Trail is extending as well. Council Member Ross asked if Park Rangers can write citations. Mayor Hartwick said they can. City Attorney Fields concurred. Council Member Taylor said the Quota Ordinance can be amended to remove positions. On the previous motion, and by consent of all members present, with the exception of Council Member Ross who passed, the ordinance was adopted (6/1). Emergency clause adopted (7/0). (*Code Enforcement, Fit 2 Live, Information Technology – IT, Parks and Recreation, Police*)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council Member Hight asked Ms. Anderson about a recent Job Fair the city hosted. Ms. Anderson advised the city is in the process of hiring several applicants from the event. All of the Parks Department Maintenance positions will be filled. There is competition with other companies like Amazon.

Mayor Hartwick announced the following upcoming events:

September 29 – October 3: Pulaski County Fair, North Little Rock Riverfront Park

October 15: Unsheltered Outreach Fair, 11 am – 3 pm, North Little Rock Riverfront Park

November 9: Christmas Tree Lighting, 6 pm at The Plaza
November 20: Northern Lights & Holiday Market, time: to be determined, at The Plaza
December 5: 2021 Christmas Parade
December 9: Justice Building Open House, 2 pm.

Mayor Hartwick said the Electric Department lost several Linemen who went to work for a private contractor. He is looking into the possibility of a (Electric) Commission. Mr. Scott Springer, North Little Rock Electric Department Manager said the department lost the equivalent of a full crew. Mr. Springer said private contractors and other utilities contact North Little Rock Electric Employees weekly. The department is down to three (3) crews to cover the whole system. North Little Rock has the largest (city-owned) system in the state of Arkansas. Council Member Ross said the contractors are hiring employees from other agencies, too, including Entergy. Mayor Hartwick said it is hard for the city to compete and options need to be considered. Council Member Hight said a lot of companies across the United States are having to come up with increased salaries and benefits to be competitive. Council Member Harris said North Little Rock Electric Department is a great place to work. We (the city) needs to make sure it is adequately funded.

There being no further business to come before the Council, and on the motion of Council Member Ross and seconded by Council Member Hight, and by consent of all members present, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m. (7/0), until the next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Monday, October 25, 2021, 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 TERRY C. HARTWICK

ATTEST: _____
DIANE WHITBEY, CITY CLERK