

Monday, November 25, 2024
Five o'clock p.m. (Public Budget Meeting)
North Little Rock City Hall Council Chamber
300 Main Street
North Little Rock, Arkansas

Mayor Hartwick convened a public meeting at 5:00 p.m. prior to the City Council meeting scheduled this date. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed 2025 Budget for the City of North Little Rock. All Council Members were present.

Council Member Robinson asked representatives from several organizations to come forward to advise how the funds were used. North Little Rock Police Officer Shay Cobbs, Unsheltered Liaison advised she was able to provide drug, alcohol, and veteran services for unsheltered individuals. Eight (8) people were provided housing by the (North Little Rock) housing authority. Individuals provided assistance through third party organizations were not tracked. Public warming and cooling centers were open throughout the year as needed for the public. Meals have been provided by Potluck for the warming center, Food Rescue on Broadway, and to assist with food for families. Unsheltered Fairs provided Workforce services, mobile showers, and other advocates for the unsheltered were invited to connect individuals with resources to get them off the street. Bus passes have also been provided. Council Member Hamilton asked about the \$50,000.00 reduction in funding. Chief Financial Officer Ember Strange said The Van did not request funding for 2025. Ms. Bailey Faulkner, Executive Director of Ozark Mission Project advised funds were used to provide assistance to residents in all four (city) wards. Projects included: building 14 wheel chair ramps, 17 porches, 28 minor home repairs, 7 exterior paint jobs, and 4 roofs. A total of 71 projects were completed in 2024. Council Member Ross asked the average cost of a roof. Ms. Faulkner said it is based on the size and need and ranged between \$12,000.00 and \$18,000.00. Council Member Ross asked about the grant application which included 12% employee raises. Ms. Faulkner said that was incorrect and did not know the average raise percentage. Co-Executive Director and Director of Development of Argenta Contemporary Theater (ACT) Mrs. Alyson Courtney advised ACT created partnerships with local businesses in Argenta, such as The Joint, where events are hosted monthly. The number of season pass holders for ACT have been tripled. Public and private events are held monthly. Free workshops were hosted in public schools. They also hold auditions, rehearsals, shows, classes and camps. Council Member Hamilton asked how the amount for each non-profit was determined. Ms. Strange referenced page 7A of the budget which provided a breakdown of requested funding prior to COVID 19. In 2023, the City of North Little Rock received additional ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds which were distributed to the non-profits therefore increasing their amounts for the year. Ms. Strange said she and Chief of Staff Mike Davis meet with Department Heads to review budget requests which were then presented to Mayor Hartwick to adjust as needed to balance the budget. Council Member Ross asked about the vacant Argenta Downtown Council (ADC) Ambassador position. The amount requested was the same as the

previous year with no one in the position. Mr. Chris Kent, ADC Executive Director came forward and advised funds were shifted to add an additional person to the daytime crew which work on landscaping and cleanup in the Argenta area of Main Street. (There are four (4) full-time and two (2) people who work part-time). Council Member Ross asked if he would add a person to the vacant Ambassador position. Mr. Kent said they need to consider the downtown needs and the city's Ambassador position. Council Member Ross asked about proposed raises of 6% (ADC) employees next year (2025). Mr. Kent said that was correct. Council Member Robison asked if Mid-City was part of their territory now. Mr. Kent said it was. Crews work up to 20th Street providing landscaping and clean up. Council Member Taylor said there were two (2) Ambassador positions. He asked why ADC did not replace one of them since the request is for the same amount of funding. Council Member Harris asked if the Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub was now under the (Laman) Library. Mayor Hartwick said the Library is in the process of acquiring The Hub and taking over operation. Council Member Harris asked if this would save the city \$125,000.00. Ms. Strange said the Library is not being provided funding for The Hub in 2025. Council Member Ross said the city does not have a Director for the Fit 2 Live Department. The Human Resources (HR) Department has taken over the responsibilities. HR could hire a part-time person to fulfil the duties and remove the \$146,000.00 set aside for the program. Mayor Hartwick said he did not plan to fill the position. Council Member Hight asked about the annual appropriation for the food pantry in North Little Rock. Ms. Strange referred to pages 7 and 7A of the proposed budget and advised the amount for 2025 would be \$15,000.00. Council Member Hight asked how much the City gave them the previous year. Ms. Strange said it was \$45,000.00. Ms. Strange referenced COVID 19 and ARPA funding. Council Member Ross asked about the difference in numbers under Miscellaneous Revenue Income. Ms. Strange said the City used \$1 million as Carry Forward Funds to balance the budget last year (2023). This proposed budget is balanced without Carry Forward Funds. If the city provides on raises, revenue should offset the expense. Ms. Strange said the 911 revenue had been budgeted under miscellaneous, however under the annual audit it is placed under Intergovernmental Revenue as revenue the City receives from another government agency. In 2019 the State of Arkansas passed a law to decrease the number of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) across the state. Pulaski County is limiting the number of PSAPS to three (3). North Little Rock submitted a plan two (2) years ago to consolidate their PSAP with Sherwood and Maumelle which would take effect January 2025. A new line item on page 3, PSAP 911 Shared Revenue was created for funds North Little Rock will receive from Maumelle for running the services of their PSAP. Maumelle employees will join the City of North Little Rock as employees. Mayor Hartwick said City Attorney Fields, was working on a contract between the City and Maumelle. Council Member Ross referenced page 3, \$856,000.00. Ms. Strange said that is the 2019 Bond for the Justice Center. Revenue from television, energy, telephone and Summit (utilities) are pledged for the debt. The amount is shown as an offset to revenue. The debit payment is a contrast. Council Member Ross asked about the reduction in Auction Sales. Ms. Strange advised Amy Smith (Purchasing) will oversee auctions. Council Member Harris asked Ms. Strange to provide an overview of the city's financial state. Ms. Strange referenced page 1.

Estimated revenue is expected to increase from \$86.2 million to \$89 million. This is an anticipated increase of \$3,782,000.00 or about 4.4%. Sales Tax revenue was up following COVID 19 and is beginning to taper off. Ms. Strange estimated Sales Tax to be approximately \$64,936,000.00 for the upcoming year. Property and Franchise taxes are also up. Currently, revenue will exceed expenses. Council Member Harris referenced quarterly reports and projections. Ms. Strange said this is a conservative budget. The Council adopted a General Fund Balance Reserve Policy several years ago which requires keeping 25% of the prior year budgeted expenditures in reserve. She referenced Page 1 under the 2024 column where the original budget was \$86,213,000.00 – 25% of that amount will stay in reserves. Ms. Strange said the city did not have to use reserve funds following the 2023 tornado. The city does anticipate FEMA reimbursements. Council Member Ross asked the total amount in reserves. Ms. Strange said it is approximately \$40 million. 25% is about \$21 million. Expenditure of those funds require council approval. This leaves about \$19 million in unrestricted funds. Council Member Ross said the city wants to be competitive. She said \$32,000.00 needs to be added to the Legal Department (under salaries) in order to keep those (attorney) positions competitive. Council Member Ross requested adding an Enforcement Officer to the Planning Department to enforce conditions placed on property through Special and Conditional Uses. Ms. Strange estimated the cost of be about \$65,800.00 for salary and benefits for an additional position. Council Member Ross suggested using the Fit 2 Live funds for the new Planning Enforcement position. Council Member Taylor asked Mr. Kent about the area they provide landscaping / clean up to. Council Member Taylor said some of the ADC funding comes from a Business Improvement District. He then asked if the area was expanded when the additional portion of Main Street was added. Mr. Kent said it would be great if it could be. He said it is a challenge to ask someone to volunteer to join a tax. Some of the properties are owned by the city. Council Member Taylor said if 51% of the business owner's volunteer, then everyone else should be in it. Mr. Kent said they have tried to find ways to bring the other properties in. Without them, the city ends up paying the funds. Council Member Taylor asked why the district was expanded if those business owners are not contributing to it. Mr. Kent said the city wanted services in those areas and referenced Mid-City. Council Member Hamilton said there are a large number of large business/property owners downtown that do not contribute to the Tax Improvement District. He supports expansion to include more property/business owners. Council Member Robinson asked Ms. Strange if the city has received any FEMA funds. Ms. Strange said they are waiting on funds from a roads (Burns Park) project in the amount of about \$4.5 million. This amount was originally denied but has been appealed. Notice has been given that the city won the appeal. That project is back in the review phase. Council Member Ross asked Mr. Kent if he had received \$70,500.00 from January through July. Mr. Kent said that was correct. He said the Business District contributes around \$180,000.00 per year. Council Member Ross asked if 44% of the ADC budget was from the city. Mr. Kent said it was. Funding is also received through sponsorships and events. Council Member Ross asked if they would receive a Main Street Grant. Mr. Kent said they would receive a \$30,000.00 grant. Mr. Raul Fernandez, Executive Director Seis Fuentes Community Outreach said they have been able to provide free English classes to 1,000 students,

increase Food Pantry production by 100%, serve close to 3,000 meals to residents in North Little Rock, along with 500 Thanksgiving meals. The organization continues to grow. Council Member Robinson asked if they still provided identification cards. Mr. Fernandez said anyone without an ID card can go to Seis Fuentes and provide some form of identification to verify that they person lives within the city. With the ID they can get utilities in their name, property banking and ID for local law enforcement. They have issued over 1,000 ID cards during the past couple of years. Council Member Hamilton asked Ms. Strange how much the (2023) tornado cost the city (to date). Ms. Strange estimated \$40 million. Council Member Hamilton asked how much the city will receive in reimbursements. Ms. Strange anticipated the city being down about \$8 million. Additional discussion included revenue versus expenditures. Council Member Hamilton encouraged non-profits with reduced funding to reach out to him. Council Member Harris said he has researched what other Mayor's across the state are being paid and asked that Mayor Hartwick's salary be increased by 4%. Council Member Ross pointed that 66% of the budget funds Fire, Police and Emergency Services which leaves about \$30 million for the rest of the city functions which include the remaining (non-uniformed) employees, free sanitation/debris pickup, etc. Council Member Robinson said the city does appreciate non-profits and what they do in and for the city. Mayor Hartwick said legislation for the 2025 budget will be presented at the next council meeting. Mayor Hartwick then adjourned the public meeting.

Monday, November 25, 2024
Six o'clock p.m.
North Little Rock City Hall Council Chamber
300 Main Street
North Little Rock, Arkansas

The regular meeting of the North Little Rock City Council scheduled for Monday, November 25, 2024, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Honorable Mayor Terry C. Hartwick.

Council members had the option to attend the council meeting in person or participate virtually. The Council Chambers were open to the public.

The roll was called and the following Council Members answered to their names: DEBI ROSS, MAURICE TAYLOR, LINDA ROBINSON, STEVE BAXTER, RON HARRIS, VINCE INSALACO, III and CHARLIE HIGHT (7/0). Council Member NATHAN HAMILTON left prior to the meeting being convened. City Clerk Diane Whitbey, Chief Deputy City Clerk/Treasurer Katelyn Thomas, Deputy City Clerk/Treasurer Talor Shinn, Deputy City Clerk/Enforcement Officer Jim Scott, and City Attorney Amy Fields were also present.

The prayer and pledge of allegiance were led by IT Director John Barber.

On the motion of Council Member Hight and seconded by Council Member Ross, and by consent of all members present, the minutes from the North Little Rock City Council meeting held on Monday, November 12, 2024, were approved, accepted, and filed as prepared by Chief Deputy City Clerk Katelyn Thomas (7/0).

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

1. Ember Strange, Chairman Energy Risk Management Committee, email re: PCA Rate December 2024 (0.0065 kWh positive).

PRESENTATIONS

None.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARING

See O-24-88

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

O-24-68

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE NORTH LITTLE ROCK MUNICIPAL CODE
CHAPTER 2, ANIMAL CONTROL; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER**

PURPOSES, was called and withdrawn by the sponsor, Council Member Insalaco, III.
(Chickens)

O-24-77

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE TWO (ILLEGAL PARKING) OF THE NORTH LITTLE ROCK MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 9, PARKING REGULATIONS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was called and withdrawn by the sponsor, Council Member Hight.

CONSENT AGENDA

None.

NEW BUSINESS

R-24-248

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY CLERK TO EXECUTE A SIGN LOCATION LEASE TO LEASE CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 54 RIVERFRONT DRIVE IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, TO LAMAR ADVERTISING; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was called and held by the sponsor, Council Member Taylor.

R-24-249 (RESOLUTION NO. 10963 – 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 Ross and seconded by Council Member Taylor, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was adopted (7/0).

O-24-81 (ORDINANCE NO. 9715 – MAYOR HARTWICK)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 6 (FLOODS – A FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION PROGRAM) OF THE NORTH LITTLE ROCK MUNICIPAL CODE; 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 (7/0). A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Taylor and seconded by Council Member Baxter. Council Member Ross asked for an explanation of the legislation. She understood there to be a change of height requirements. Mayor Hartwick stated it was being raised from one foot to two foot. City Attorney Amy Fields said the change came from the City Engineer and was based on a new requirement for FHA (Federal Housing Administration) loans. On the previous motion, and the roll having been

called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was adopted (7/0).
Emergency clause adopted (7/0).

O-24-82 (ORDINANCE NO. 9716 – MAYOR HARTWICK)

AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING THE ANNEXATION OF CERTAIN TERRITORY TO THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS; APPROVING THE SCHEDULE OF SERVICES TO BE EXTENDED TO SAID AREA; ASSIGNING SAID TERRITORY TO WARD 3; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On

the motion of Council Member Harris and seconded by Council Member Taylor, and by consent of all members present, the readings were suspended (7/0). Council Member Baxter asked if Judge Barry Hyde underlined the last paragraph of Exhibit “A”. Ms. Fields said yes. She stated when the property that Amazon resides on was annexed into the City, the verbiage was not included which caused an amendment later on. On the motion of Council Member Baxter and seconded by Council Member Harris, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was adopted (7/0). Emergency clause adopted (7/0). *(Cypress Trail LLC Property)*

O-24-83 (ORDINANCE NO. 9717 – COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR)

AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A SPECIAL USE TO ALLOW A COMMUNICATION TOWER IN A C3 ZONE FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 5500 CHIQUITO ROAD 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 (7/0). Mr. Patton Hahn, with Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell, and Berkowitz was present to answer any questions. Council Member Ross said cell towers are required to have a blinking light at the top, however there had been a problem with a previous tower in the where a neighbor (who lived on hill above the tower) had issues with the light shining into their home at night. She asked if this tower would affect any neighbors. Mr. Hahn said he did not believe so. Cell towers under 200 feet are not lit. The city Planning Commission added the specific condition. The lights on the tower will comply with FAA standards and regulations. Council Member Ross said if the light bothers neighbors they would need to go back before the Board of Adjustment. She asked if the property would be maintained by someone local. Mr. Hahn did not know the identity of the local contractor. He assumed the company would hire someone local since the (tower) company was based out of Florida. Council Member Ross asked Mr. Hahn for the information on who would maintain the property. A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Taylor and seconded by Council Member Robinson. On the previous motion, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was adopted (7/0). Emergency clause adopted (7/0). *(applicant: Baker, Donelson, Bearmen, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC)*

O-24-84 (ORDINANCE NO. 9718 – COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR)

AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A SPECIAL USE TO ALLOW AUTO DETAILING IN A C5 ZONE FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 815 EAST BROADWAY 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 (7/0). Council Member Taylor advised Mr. Kevin Watkins (the applicant), the City Council had the authority to revoke the privilege/business license if the requirements of the Conditional Use are not followed. He asked if it was mandated for the applicant to have a dumpster on the property. Mayor Hartwick said it was. Council Member Taylor asked the applicant to comply with the Ordinance to help clean up Broadway. A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Taylor and seconded by Council Member Baxter. On the previous motion, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was adopted (7/0). Emergency clause adopted (7/0). *(applicant: Kevin Watkins)*

O-24-85 (ORDINANCE NO. 9719 – COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR)

AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A SPECIAL USE TO ALLOW MAJOR AUTO BODY REPAIRS AND AUTO SALES IN A C3 ZONE FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4701 EAST BROADWAY 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 (7/0). A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Robinson and seconded by Council Member Hight. Council Member Baxter stated he had dealt with similar legislation in his Ward and wanted to verify both Council Members were on board with the legislation. Council Members Taylor and Robinson confirmed their approval. Council Member Taylor advised the location was previously an auto body shop. Council Member Ross asked if the applicant could be advised on the following regulations: 28 cars max, no cars outside, and no inoperable cars on the property. Planning Director Shawn Spencer said the applicant was not present but was aware of the regulations. Council Member Baxter questioned the regulation of no vehicles being stored outside as an auto body shop. Council Member Taylor said there was a large building with a yard at the back of the property. On the previous motion, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was adopted (7/0). Emergency clause adopted (7/0). *(applicant: Fredrick Moore – Moore and Sturgis Auto Sales and Body)*

O-24-86

AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A SPECIAL USE TO ALLOW A COMMUNICATION TOWER IN A C3 ZONE FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 5500 CHIQUITO ROAD IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was withdrawn by the sponsor, Council Member Taylor. *(applicant: Lamar Advantage Holiday Company LLC)*

O-24-87 (ORDINANCE NO. 9720 – COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR)
AN ORDINANCE WAIVING SECTION 7.2.2 OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. 9263) FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 8701 KIM DRIVE IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, TO WAIVE LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Harris and seconded by Council Member Taylor, and by consent of all members present, the readings were suspended (7/0). Council Member Ross asked the applicant, Alex LaLonde, if there were trees on the western side of property illustration. Mr. LaLonde confirmed that was correct. Council Member Ross asked if the waiver was along the backside where the residents were. Mr. LaLonde said yes. Mr. Spencer advised the applicant owns the property up to the concrete area. On the motion of Council Member Baxter and seconded by Council Member Taylor and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was adopted (7/0). Emergency clause adopted (7/0). (*applicant: Natural Trails Storage LLC*)

O-24-88 (ORDINANCE NO. 9721 – COUNCIL MEMBER ROSS)
AN ORDINANCE WAIVING SECTION 9.11 OF THE SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. 7946) FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 307 WEST 20TH STREET IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, TO WAIVE SIDEWALK REQUIREMENTS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; 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 readings were suspended (7/0). Ms. Leah Holloway said she was in support of the legislation as the applicant. Council Member Ross said the legislation would replot two smaller lots and there is no sidewalk. There is only a small portion in front of the home. Ms. Holloway said she was trying to replot the property to put a single family home there. A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Ross and seconded by Council Member Baxter. On the previous motion, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was adopted (7/0). Emergency clause adopted (7/0). (*applicant: Derrick and Leah Holloway*)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Hartwick wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Council Member Baxter asked about the last time there had been a price increase for grass cutting liens. Ms. Fields said she had spoken to Felecia McHenry at Code Enforcement about implementing an increase. Mr. Ward Reese, Code Enforcement, said the current fee is \$185 per cut. It has been approximately four (4) years since the last fee increase. Council Member Baxter said he thought former Council Member Bruce Foutch raised the amount last (more than four years ago). The cutting fee does not include filing fees at the County (Pulaski County Clerk). Council Member Taylor said in Bellwood, Illinois, fees are attached to the water bill and if it wasn't paid the water is shut off. Ms. Fields said that the City would need authorization from State law.

There being no further business to come before the Council, and on the motion of Council Member Baxter and seconded by Council Member Harris, and by consent of all members present, the meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m. (7/0), until the next regularly scheduled meeting scheduled for Monday, December 9, 2024, 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