

**City of Natchez  
Minutes  
Mayor and Board of Aldermen  
Regular Board Meeting**

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**Tuesday, March 22, 2022**                      **6:00 PM**                      **Council Chambers/Via Facebook**

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Board Secretary, Denise Bell

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer: Richard Burke
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call by City Clerk:

Present:                      Mayor Dan Gibson  
                                 Alderwoman Hall (via telephone)  
                                 Alderman Frazier  
                                 Alderwoman Smith  
                                 Alderwoman Irving  
                                 Alderman Davis  
                                 Alderman Dillard

Also Present:                Attorney, Bryan Callaway  
                                 Chief Deputy Clerk: Denise Bell  
                                 Deputy Clerk: Rebekah Turner

Absent:                        City Clerk, Megan McKenzie

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**Welcome Visitors**

- Presentation by Catherin McPhate of Natchez Children's Services/Pinwheels on the Bluff to observe Child Abuse Awareness Month for April.

***Alderwoman Hall joined meeting via telephone at 6:05 p.m.***

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Smith, seconded by Alderwoman Irving to approve the display of 340 pinwheels on the Bluff between the Gazebo and Silver Street in honor of Child Abuse Awareness Month.**

Alderwoman Hall: Aye  
Alderman Frazier: Aye  
Alderwoman Smith: Aye  
Alderwoman Irving: Aye  
Alderman Davis: Aye  
Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously**

**Other City Business**

- **Presentation Honoring Mrs. Thelma Newsome for her 15 years of service on the NASD Board.**

**Unfinished Business**

- Mrs. McCuller discussion of flower baskets for the City of Natchez.
  - Self-watering planters to keep down on the amount of time being used on watering the plants.
  - Previous baskets are iron and are hard to keep them looking nice.

- Fiberglass and are guaranteed for two (2) years.
- The price with delivery is \$7,425.
- Can raise half the money and will pay for it, but it will deplete the monies for the flowers.
- Baskets are needed for the Summer.
- The baskets fill themselves when it rains and will hold on to it for a week.

**Mayor:** I talked with Public Works Director Justin Dollar and we both agreed to take monies from our budgets, going half on the match at about \$1,856.

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Smith, seconded by Alderman Dillard to approve matching the cost of flower baskets for \$3,712, for the City of Natchez.**

**Alderman Frazier:** How many baskets

**Mrs. McCuller:** 70

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously**

#### **Tony Moon, Natchez Water Works**

- Natchez Water Works Update

Minimum bill customers haven't had a rate increase in at least fifteen (15) years. The other customers haven't received a rate increase in about eleven (11). It's past time to ask for an increase and we cannot push it back anymore. We are working to compare rate options. We are preparing a package and have been doing studies on how to do and what basis to cover with comparisons to other cities.

**Mayor:** Recognizes Attorney Thomas Waldin, for his support for National Night Out and all the support for the City of Natchez.

#### **Department Director's Reports**

James Johnston

##### **Policies & Procedures for Procurement Using Federal Grant Awards**

##### **State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds**

##### **2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**

Staff, with the assistance of Brian C. Smith, consulting attorney w/Watkins & Eager, developed the provided 'policies & procedures as a requirement for utilizing the awarded State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) for small purchase procurements, procurement of professional services, goods & services, contracts for public construction, etc. This policy incorporates required federal and state procurement requirements, the recently approved micro-purchase and small purchase procedures for professional services, and a written code of conduct.

*Staff is requesting a motion to approve the presented Policies & Procedures for Procurement Using Federal Grant Awards.*

**A motion was made by Alderman Dillard, seconded by Alderman Davis to approve the presented Policies & Procedures for Procurement Using Federal Grant Awards.**

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously**

**Advertisement for General Contractors**

**Raising of Silver Street**

*Staff, along with w/ Volkert Engineering, the City's consulting engineering firm, is requesting a motion to advertise and receive bids from general contractors for the Raising of Silver Street in conjunction with the construction of the American Cruise Line ramp*

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Hall, seconded by Alderman Dillard**

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously**

**Natchez Drainage Initiative**

*Staff is requesting a motion to solicit proposals for engineering services to assess, prioritize and determine the feasibility of multiple drainage sites as identified by the mayor & board of aldermen, noting the sites will then be used to develop a comprehensive drainage study that can be used by the City to present to state and/or federal agencies for funding assistance to eliminate and/or mitigate the identified drainage problems.*

**A motion was made by Alderman Frazier, seconded by Alderwoman Irving.**

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously**

**Reroofing of Natchez City Hall**

**2020 Community Heritage Preservation Grant**

**MS Dept. of Archives & History**

*Staff is requesting a motion to contact MDAH staff requesting permission to determine if the balance of funds remaining from this project may be utilized to repair & paint the damaged/discolored ceilings, paint upstairs & downstairs corridor, and paint doors and door casings, stairwell & banister, foyer, etc. In addition, the City will also seek permission to replace the flooring in the first-floor corridor and replace/repair subflooring as necessary.*

*Estimated cost totals \$88,000.00*

**A motion was made by Alderman Davis, seconded by Alderwoman Hall**

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously**

Sanora Cole, Parks and Recreation Direction

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Hall, seconded by Alderwoman Smith to approve the rental contract for Pavilion Rentals.**

**Alderwoman Irving:** There shouldn't be any money to come to a Public Park. The Board along with the Recreation Department agreed to do a 2-million-dollar bond. If there is a plan to charge soon for pavilion rentals, that is something that the public needs to know, we would need a Public Hearing. I think it needs to be a five (5) year, seven (7) year plan.



**Mayor:** Just to be clearer, the rental fee is ten (10) dollars if you want additional bar-b-que grills or if you want to use the inflatables. These park sites are in high demand, and by us having a rental contract will help us to be more organized. It is a matter to be sure that you have that pavilion for your rental.

**Alderwoman Smith:** I want to applaud us on the steps to taking care of our Parks. I think people will appreciate this.

**Alderman Dillard:** I see this more as an organizational, and a scheduling process; making it beneficial and available to all citizens.

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously**

- Update on parks and playground/programming

**Mayor:** I want to applaud the work that has been done by our Department and the Board for making the funds to be available, allowing for salary, equipment, operations, and maintenance. I know there are some in the community that is saddened by the removal of the playground equipment. Most of the equipment posed a danger to our children. We are making sure to look at all six (6) of the parks. We sat aside 500k for the parks. We are in the process of getting bids for playground upgrades. We ask everyone to be patient with us.

**Alderwoman Smith:** We put a lot of equipment in our parks since I've been on the Board. We need to know about equipment problems before it gets worse. Can we put "Pardon our Progress: signs instead of "Sorry We're Closed" signs?

**Alderman Frazier:** Some of the equipment at North Natchez park has only been over there for only about ten (10) years, but they were not properly maintained. On my side of town, the kids don't have anywhere else to go, if we close the parks my kids will not have anywhere to play basketball. During the summertime, the kids sit at the pavilion and some of the girls practice dance. I don't think we should close the park down.

**Alderwoman Smith:** Where there are already closed signs, replace them with signs that say "Pardon our progress".

**Mayor:** There are no signs saying that we are closed at those parks, only at the park at Madison.

**Alderwoman Irving:** Will everything that you just spoke of, come out of the bond

**Mayor:** Some might have to come from the ARP funds.

- Alderwoman Hall, Baseball field upgrades.

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Hall, seconded by Alderwoman Smith to accept the agreement to hire a consultant company, Elite Baseball, for baseball field upgrades, to include turf, re-seating and proper planting of grass in the outfield, repair fencing, replace signage and bleachers and get the fields where they need to be.**

**Alderman Dillard:** I see where they have per hour fees, but I don't know how many hours they will accumulate. How many employees are they hiring? At the very least, I need to know what the services will include. I would like to get some more information and get the Attorney to review it also.

**Attorney:** There are two (2) changes that need to be changed and I am not sure about the rates.

**Alderman Dillard:** I think a little more review would make this a possible consideration. I don't know what the open end of it is.

**A motion was made by Alderman Dillard, seconded by Alderman Davis to table the previous motion to hire a consultant for baseball field upgrades until questions are answered concerning articles in paragraph 6.**

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously**

#### **City Officials' Report**

Alderwoman Hall

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Hall, seconded by Alderwoman Smith to increase fines to 1k for littering in the city parks and for person or persons will be banned from all city parks.**

**Mayor:** It does seem like a lot, but anyone who litters in a park where people are taking their children does not need to be allowed in the parks. We are doing all we can to make our parks nice. It is good enough for other cities and it is good enough for Natchez.

**Alderman Dillard:** Didn't we pass an ordinance on littering.

**Mayor:** This is specific to parks

**Alderman Frazier:** We already have an ordinance for littering, why do we need one for parks. We are just stacking ordinances on top of ordinances. We don't need this.

**Alderwoman Irving:** The parks are being checked every day, why are we going to increase and impose differently. We have a sign that says no littering.

**Mayor:** We need to set an example, what better way for our children to learn. Our parks are a privilege. Many cities do not have parks. This set a priority saying that we believe in our children and a safe environment for our children.

**Alderman:** to Attorney, is it legal?

**Attorney:** I don't think it is illegal for this Board to pass an ordinance. I think it should be in the code rather than being in the form of a motion.

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Hall, seconded by Alderwoman Smith to amend the previous motion to allow the attorney to draft the ordinance for consideration at the next meeting, to set the fine at 1k for littering at city parks, and to also ban anyone caught littering from all city parks.**

**Alderman Dillard:** Who is authorized to enforce this? Is this going to be a burden on the Police Department? You can make laws, but you must be able to enforce them. Enforcement is responsible.

**Mayor:** The police have to see them do it.

**Alderman Dillard:** Have we collected any money for littering?

**Chief Daughtry:** It is an issue, officers are active, but most of the time when we get those calls, the garbage is already dumped. We have not caught any but have issued citations for trash being thrown from windows.

**Mayor:** An ordinance is a deterrence, yes, it's a law but it's a deterrence as well as a sign for no littering. We just placed signs along the Bluff in certain areas, and I have gotten a great response, that say the signs are working. I want to see the signs at the parks and will be in favor of increasing the fine all over the City.

Alderman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Nay

Alderman Smith: Aye

Alderman Irving: Nay

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote passed by majority: 4:2**

#### **Alderman Frazier**

- Attended the NLC Conference in Washington DC.
- Talked to soon-to-be Congressman Benny Thompson, about concerns for Natchez.
- Also spoke with Greg Harper: Bridge lightening and Forks of the Road

#### **Alderman Smith**

- Recognize Chief to give an update on Officer Davis on a house fire that was a total loss.

**Chief Daughtry:** They are in good spirit but are still in shock. They lost everything; he only has the clothes on his back. He has a toddler, and we are about to start rallying for them.

- We are wasting an hour after work between 5-to-6 waiting on the meetings. I want to make a motion to start meetings at 5 p.m.

**Mayor:** Mr. Callaway will you look into that.

#### **Alderman Irving**

- Elaborates on NLC meeting
- Read letter from NAACP: There will be a meeting on March 28, 2022, at 11 a.m. I'm asking that you put that date in your calendars to attend.

#### **Alderman Davis**

- Received e-mail from tourist concerning professional needs and growth in the City of Natchez, wanting to re-locate to Natchez

#### **Alderman Dillard**

- We need to get the young people to invest in careers in the City of Natchez.
- Some of our population is getting older and we are not investing in the things the younger generation would invest in.
- We're looking for people that are looking for careers.

- We need to use our platform (Shift South) to help look for professionals that are willing to relocate to Natchez.

Mayor: We want to express our sympathy to Alderwoman Irving for the loss of your sister, you are in our thoughts and prayers.

City Clerk's Report

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Smith, seconded by Alderman Davis to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 Claims Docket**

**Alderwoman Smith:** I would like to get an update from the Armstrong Library.

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye (abstained from voting on the Fire Department's Budget)

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Smith, seconded by Alderman Davis to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 Mini Docket, pending clarification on the Mayor's travel reimbursement.**

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye (abstained from voting on the Fire Department's Budget)

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Hall, seconded by Alderman Davis to retroactively approve the following inter-fund transfers:**

- On March 18, 2022, from 001 General Fund 2 to 135 Visitors Center Fund in the amount of \$1,500.00 to cover the docket expenses – recurring invoices for chairs & carpet at the convention center have been changed and will now be paid from the General Fund.

**Alderwoman Hall:** this is the last monies that will come from the Visitor's Center fund and will now come from the General Fund.

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously.**

**Mayor's Report**

- Dilapidated Properties

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Hall, seconded by Alderwoman Smith to use the monies received from the sale of Old General Hospital to demolish properties in the City of Natchez.**



- I want each Alderman to provide a list of 5 properties you would like to be demolished by Friday
- We want to see if we can proceed with adjudication at our next meeting. This will allow us to make a big impact on the City of Natchez.

**Alderman Dillard:** We need to follow up with property owners to recover funds that are being used to demolish the delapidated house.

- We are looking for a retired Attorney that will work with the City in the efforts to help with delapidated properties and the property owners, by placing liens to recovery monies.

**Alderman Frazier:** Is there any way that we can publish the names of the property owners in the newspaper? What about state-owned properties?

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously.**

- Eola Hotel Update: Still going forward, investors are still interested in the progression of the project. Increase in construction cost and the challenge of getting material.
- Discussion of Juneteenth 2022: Meet with Jeramy Houston and Brian McKnight. Miss Lou Heritage tour is planning events on the Bluff. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday morning there will be events.

***Alderman Frazier recused himself.***

**A motion was made by Alderwoman Irving, seconded by Alderwoman Hall to fund the donation of \$1,500 to Southern Food Fusion hosted by Jarita Frazier-King.**

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously.**

***Alderman Frazier returned***

**Alderman Dillard:** I ask that we start adding the sponsorships and appropriations to the budget.

- Home for Heroes: Ask the City Attorney to see how NAPAC used the City building for a museum. They have set aside monies for the operation of the museum
- Mudbug Festival Update: May 13 & 14 on the Natchez Bluff.

**Miscellaneous Updates**

- Thanks to Storm Team Natchez for their work during the storm.
- Tomorrow at 10 a.m. there will be an event held at Natchez Rail along with Natchez Inc.'s help at Duncan Park. Celebrating the completion of a 14-million-dollar project.
- Schedule City Planner Interviews.
- Appreciate Alderman Frazier and Alderwoman Irving representing Natchez.



**A motion was made by Alderman Davis, seconded by Alderwoman Smith to adjourn Regular Board Meeting, March 22, 2022.**

Alderwoman Hall: Aye

Alderman Frazier: Aye

Alderwoman Smith: Aye

Alderwoman Irving: Aye

Alderman Davis: Aye

Alderman Dillard: Aye

**The vote carried unanimously.**



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DAN M. GIBSON, MAYOR

ATTEST:



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MEGAN MCKENZIE, CITY CLERK

