

City of Mansfield
MINUTES OF *REGULAR* PUBLIC MEETING
August 22, 2022

The Board of Aldermen met in *regular* session on **August 22nd**, in Mansfield City Hall located at 705 Polk Street. Mayor Thomas Jones, Jr. called this meeting to order at **4:30 p.m.**, after which an Invocation was offered by **Alderswoman Victoria W. Jackson**. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by **Alderman Antonio G. Washington**. Following the pledge, the roll call was suspended. However the following officials were recorded as in attendance at this regular meeting of the City Council. **Present:** Hon. Thomas Jones, Jr., -**Mayor**, Mary J. Green –District **A**, Christopher S. Thomas –District **B**, Victoria W. Jackson –District **C**, Antonio G. Washington –District **D** and Rita J. Myles –District **E**. **Absent:** None. **City Hall Personnel, Dept. Heads, & Other City Personnel Present:** Gwendolyn Jones (Deputy Clerk), Tommie Crawford (Public Relations Officer), Annette Blue (Police Chief), Billy Locke (Asst. Police Chief), Bryan Ross (Fire Chief), Michael Gonzales (Asst. Fire Chief), Christopher Samuels (Fire Dept.) Gwenda Taylor (Fire Dept.), Thomas Vines, Jr. (Water Treatment Plant Manager) Ronnie Morris (Code Enforcement Officer), and William Bradford, Jr. (City Attorney). **Others Present:** 6 guests. **Press Present:** None.

It was MOTIONED by **CHRISTOPHER S. THOMAS** and SECONDED by **RITA J. MYLES** to approve the minutes of the **August 8, 2022 *regular*** City Council meeting and dispense with the reading. Motion Passed Unanimously.

The City Clerk next opened the floor to hear public comments from those in attendance, to any item outlined on the meeting agenda. When no comments were voiced from any of the attendees at this meeting, the **Public Comments Period** was then subsequently closed.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

Item A: It was MOTIONED by **RITA J. MYLES** and SECONDED by **MARY J. GREEN** to approve the disengagement of **Foley & Judell, L.L.P** as special counsel for the provision of legal services with regard to the potential establishment of a Municipal Fiber Broadband Network buildout. However, Alderswoman Myles' motion failed to receive a majority vote. Alternatively, Alderman **Christopher S. Thomas** motioned that this issue be tabled and **Antonio G. Washington** seconded the motion until certain matters regarding this engagement could be clarified. The Clerk further offered that the City would be invoiced for any work that **Foley & Judell** had already performed. Additionally, Alderswoman **Victoria W. Jackson** concurred with **Thomas** and **Washington** and likewise voted to table this issue and further deliberate it at a future meeting. With a majority vote to table this matter, the majority ruled.

Item B: It was MOTIONED by **MARY J. GREEN** and SECONDED by **RITA J. MYLES** to approve the disengagement of **Argent Advisors, Inc.** as municipal advisor in their provision of professional services with respect to the issuance of municipal bonds for the potential establishment of a Municipal Fiber Broadband Network buildout. However, Alderswoman

Green's motion failed to receive a majority vote. Alternately, Aldermen **Antonio G. Washington** and **Christopher S. Thomas** and Alderwoman **Victoria W. Jackson** voted to table this matter as they reminded the Mayor and other council members that Lucius McGehee of *Argent Advisors* had previously requested additional financial data from *LA Connected* and *Lit Communities* as a supplement to the financial information already provided, but to-date had not received it. This additional data was needed so that Mr. McGehee could further analyze the proposed financial model previously furnished before offering any advice/guidance to the Mayor and City Council on how best to fund this endeavor. The Clerk stated that the City would not be billed for any work already performed by *Argent Advisors*. There fee was contingent only upon the municipal bond issuance. With a majority vote to table this matter, the majority ruled.

Item C: Similar to agenda Items A and B above, it was MOTIONED by **CHRISTOPHER S. THOMAS** and SECONDED by **MARY J. GREEN** to table the employment of *Butler Snow, L.L.P.* as replacement special counsel and *RSI Group, L.L.C.* as a municipal advisor for the potential establishment of a Municipal Fiber Broadband Network until such time as clarity had been provided regarding a consideration to disengage the services of *Foley & Judell, L.L.P* and *Argent Advisors, Inc.* Motion Passed Unanimously.

Item D.: **Ordinance No. 6 of 2022** was introduced drafted to create the Mayor's Outreach Fund, providing for the acceptance of donations, setting forth guidelines for distribution, and requiring a monthly activity report for delivery to the City Council. It should be noted that citizens and private entities regularly offer to assist with philanthropic efforts throughout the community in the form of donations to the City for limited purposes. Subject to an authorizing Resolution by the City Council, the Mayor shall have the power to expend and utilize the funds for the purchase of goods and services in support of non-religious philanthropic efforts hosted, or facilitated by bona fide non-religious tax-exempt organizations. The monthly activity report should itemize any received donation amount, the date of the donation, the donor, the purpose of the donation, and any distribution of funds, including the purpose and amount, from the account from the prior month. No part of the Mayor's Outreach Fund may be used for the purpose of paying salaries, personnel costs, or other payroll related expenses. Further, it should also be mentioned that the city attorney created the framework for the Ordinance. It was MOTIONED by **MARY J. GREEN** and SECONDED by **RITA J. MYLES** to authorize advertisement of the title of the **Ordinance** in the September 8th edition of *The Enterprise & Interstate Progress*, and set a public hearing on same for the Aldermen's September 12th regular meeting. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Item E: **Ordinance No. 7 of 2022** was introduced drafted to amend the Code of Ordinances of the City of Mansfield to increase Water Rates; amending Article III, Division 1 of Section 21-53 of Chapter 21. It was brought to the attention of the City Council that presently expenditures in Water exceed total collected Revenue. One way to reverse this trend is to propose and approve a water rate increase. The last rate increase was in July 2015, and was a \$6.00 increase to the first 2,000 gallons of water used by ALL customers, both inside and outside the city limits. This

Ordinance proposes to again increase base rate by \$6.00 for all customers. It also carves out a separate rate for commercial customers. To-date, commercial customers pay the same rates as residential customers. The Mayor further stated that going forward, we will make efforts to review our rates annually, so that any increase proposed is not so jarring. He had also contacted several water systems in various parishes and found that our rates are much lower than those he reached out to. It was MOTIONED by **CHRISTOPHER S. THOMAS** and SECONDED by **RITA J. MYLES** to authorize the advertisement of the title of the **Ordinance** in the September 8th edition of *The Enterprise & Interstate Progress*, and set a public hearing on same for the Aldermen's September 12th regular meeting. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Item F. **Ordinance No. 8 of 2022** was introduced drafted to amend the city's Annual Financial Budget for fiscal year 2022 in accordance with the Louisiana Local Government Budget Act. This **Ordinance** proposes to amend amounts budgeted for revenues and expenditures in the city's major governmental and proprietary funds which includes the Corporation General Fund, the Water Fund, the Sewer Fund, and the Water Sales Tax Fund. It was MOTIONED by **MARY J. GREEN** and SECONDED by **ANTONIO G. WASHINGTON** to authorize advertisement of the title of the **Ordinance** in the September 8th edition of *The Enterprise & Interstate Progress*, and set a public hearing on same for the Aldermen's September 12th regular meeting. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Item G: Ahead of the Mayor's comments, city attorney William Bradford introduced **Michael J. Busada** of *Butler Snow, L.L.P.* potentially being considered as new special counsel for the provision of services for the establishment of a municipal fiber broadband network system. Mr. **Busada** works out of *Butler Snow's* Shreveport, LA office. He intimated that if his firm is engaged, they vow to use all the funding resources available to our municipality. Mayor Jones stated that moving forward, we will make a concerted effort to get the council meeting agenda packages out by Wednesday ahead on the 2nd and 4th Monday meetings. Also, he reported that a used fire truck (a 2013 model) has been located and being considered for purchase to replace the engine lost by an act of nature a few years ago. Also, he stated that our 2nd tranche of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds should be received soon. A portion of those funds will be used to, like last year, again offer COVID-19 premium pay to all of our full-time employees, on a prorated basis. The intent is to process this special pay and put it in the hands of our employees by early October 2022.

Item H: No other new business discussed.

With no further business to discuss, this meeting was declared adjourned at **5:10 p.m.** by MOTION from **CHRISTOPHER S. THOMAS** and was SECONDED by **VICTORIA W. JACKSON**. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Thomas Jones, Jr., Mayor
Marvin R. Jackson, Clerk