

**City of Mansfield**  
**MINUTES OF *REGULAR* PUBLIC MEETING**  
**July 11, 2022**

The Board of Aldermen met in *regular* session on **July 11th**, 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 **Alderman Christopher S. Thomas**. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by **Alderwoman Rita J. Myles**. 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), Melony McCarty (Accountant), Tommie Crawford (Public Relations Officer), Quiana Jones (Cashier), Annette Blue (Police Chief), Billy Locke (Asst. Police Chief), Bryan Ross (Fire Chief), Kadarius Youngblood (Fire Dept.), Zayvier Jones (Fire Dept.), Christopher Samuels (Fire Dept.), Joshua Ryals (Public Works Director), Thomas Vines (Water Plant Manager), and John Evans (City Attorney). **Others Present:** 13 guests. **Press Present:** None.

It was MOTIONED by **CHRISTOPHER S. THOMAS** and SECONDED by **RITA J. MYLES** to approve the minutes of the **June 27, 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:**

Item A: On the matter of a consideration to reimburse petitioner **Darren McDaniel** of a fee charged to him for delivery of a mobile home for residential use to **1203 Old Jefferson Highway**, but later returned to the mover's lot due to the petitioner's non-adherence to the city's zoning process; it was MOTIONED by **CHRISTOPHER S. THOMAS** and SECONDED by **ANTONIO G. WASHINGTON** to permanently remove this issue from this and any future agenda. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Item B: A discussion ensued regarding the acceptance of a Community Assessment & Feasibility Study drafted in April 2022 and presented to the Board of Aldermen in connection with a proposed Municipal-Owned Fiber Broadband Network buildout. It was the Mayor's request to the city council to accept the Feasibility Study as drafted and presented. He (the Mayor) stated that acceptance of the Study did not mean approving the financial model included in the Study or that the city was ready to proceed with bond issuance to fund the fiber network's construction. Simply stated, he did not want acceptance of the Study to be perceived as obligating funds for the fiber broadband network buildout. At this point, the city's municipal advisor (hired as a requirement of the LA Fair Competition Act) Lucius McGehee with **Argent Advisors, Inc.** stood to report that he had requested additional financial data from **Louisiana**

*Connected, LLC* and their consultants with *Lit Communities* to further supplement the Financial Model provided, but had not gotten any response to his request to-date. He sent his request for additional data to the consultants on June 10, 2022. The financial data to-date has the City responsible for debt service if a municipal bond is issued. If the projected revenue is insufficient to satisfy the debt service stated, the City would be responsible to repay the bond out of its own budget. In addition, the city's attorney (John Evans) rose to comment that he did not see the urgency of accepting the Feasibility Study since the fee charged for performing the study had been fully satisfied by the City. He recommended that the City allow time for the municipal advisor to gather the data needed/requested in order that he might suggest how to best proceed with this project. Following the discussion and the aforementioned comments, it was MOTIONED by **CHRISTOPHER S. THOMAS** and SECONDED by **ANTONIO G. WASHINGTON** to table this matter for further discussion at a later date until such time as data contained in the Feasibility Study could be better clarified. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Item C: No other old business discussed.

#### **New Business:**

Item A: In their agenda packages, the Mayor and Aldermen were provided an Appraisal Report on two land tracts being considered for exchange. A 5-acre parcel was donated to the City by Mr. Riemer Calhoun in 2009. However at this time, Mr. Calhoun has requested that the City consider exchanging this tract for another tract of equal or greater value. Mr. Calhoun is developing a residential subdivision where the 5-acre tract is situated and should the City retain it, this tract is directly in the path of his construction activities. While the Mayor and Council appeared amenable to the change, they did ask however, if the tract being offered for exchange is located within the city limits or outside of them. The 5-acre tract is situated directly behind our Mansfield Walmart SuperCenter Store (North of Hwy. 509). However, the 4.70 acre-tract being offered is believed to be outside the City's corporate limits (South of Hwy.84). It was mentioned that all the Aldermen had recently accompanied Mr. Calhoun on a site visit of the 4.70-acre tract. Until a determination can be made on this matter, it was MOTIONED by **MARY J. GREEN** and SECONDED by **ANTONIO G. WASHINGTON** to table proceeding with the land exchange. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Item B: In accordance with LA R.S. 33:405, at the first regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen elected at a regular municipal election, the Board shall select one of the aldermen to be mayor pro tempore, who shall preside at all meetings in the absence of the mayor. He or she shall have the same power, and perform all duties of the mayor in his absence or due to a disability, except the veto power of the mayor. Alderwoman **Rita Myles** nominated Alderwoman **Mary Green** to serve as mayor pro tempore. Her nomination garnered two votes of the city's five-member board --one vote by Alderwoman **Myles** and the second vote from nominee Alderwoman

**Green.** Next, Alderman **Washington** nominated Alderman **Christopher Thomas** to serve as mayor pro tempore in the mayor's absence. The three remaining council members –Alderman **Washington**, Alderwoman **Jackson**, and Alderman **Thomas** all cast their vote in favor of Alderman **Christopher Thomas** serving as mayor pro tempore in the mayor's absence or disability. After recording the votes cast, it was MOTIONED by **CHRISTOPHER S. THOMAS** and SECONDED by **ANTONIO G. WASHINGTON** to close the nominations. In a 3 to 2 vote in favor of Alderman **Thomas**, the votes recorded resulted in Alderman **Thomas** being appointed to serve as mayor pro tempore and preside at all meetings in the absence or disability of the mayor.

Item C: A discussion ensued regarding the mayor's proposed appointment of Mr. **Ronnie Morris, Sr.** to serve in the capacity of the city's new Code Enforcement Officer on a full-time basis. Certain council members voiced that they were amenable to possibly hiring Mr. **Morris** on a part-time basis, but were not in favor of full-time employment unless the budget provided for it. The mayor stated that he believed he was within authority to hire Mr. **Morris** in a full-time capacity without confirmation by the board. Alderman **Washington** commented that because uncertainty existed with regard to the mayor's authority to hire Mr. **Morris** full-time and with whether or not the budget provided for full-time compensation, he favored tabling the matter until answers to these questions could be received. To that end, it was MOTIONED by **CHRISTOPHER S. THOMAS** and SECONDED by **ANTONIO G. WASHINGTON** to table this matter until such time as further research could be performed to satisfy the questions posed. All council members were in favor of this motion, with the exception of Alderwoman **Green** who cast a Nay vote.

Item D: A Statement of Revenues & Expenditures was presented for the period 01/01/22 through 06/30/22 for the Corporation General Fund, the Waterworks Fund, and the Sewer Fund. The clerk explained that the data provided was done so as a "for your information" type measure. The Statement provides the Mayor and Council with an easy-to-understand snapshot of revenues and expenditures in relation to the city's annual financial budget. He further explained that at this point, revenues collected and expenditures disbursed should be near or at 50% of budget projections. Since the report is a mid-year report, if expenditures have greatly exceeded 50%, departments should look at scaling back to remain within budget allocations. No action was required on this report.

Item E: A Summary of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) expenditures for **2021** was provided to the Mayor and Council for review. No action was necessary on this summary. In an easy-to-read format, the summary reflected an overview of how the 1<sup>st</sup> tranch of the ARPA funds (\$856,492) were spent. The 2<sup>nd</sup> tranch from the funds are expected to be received in August of this year. Further allocations will be made at that time.

Item F: An oral presentation summarizing the City's **2021 Annual Audit of Financial Statements** was delivered to the Mayor and Council by Mrs. **Jennifer Hawkins** of the independent auditing firm of **Thomas, Cunningham, Broadway & Todtenbier, CPAs**. The **2021** Audit marks this firm's 9<sup>th</sup> engagement with the City of Mansfield. It was stated that as of December 31, 2021, the assets of the City exceeded its liabilities by \$10,471,557. Also as of December 31, 2021, there was a deficit of unrestricted net position in the amount of \$2,423,099. During 2021, net position of the governmental activities increased by \$1,117,937, and the net assets of the business-type activities decreased \$753,703. The City's net position increased by \$382,234 during the year ended December 31 2021 compared to a decrease of \$41,646 in 202. This change is due primarily to an increase in grant and tax revenue in 2021. At the closed of fiscal year 2021, the City's governmental funds reported a combined ending fund balance of \$3,499,648, a decrease of \$151,468 from the prior year. Over time, increases or decreases in the City's net position are one indicator of whether its financial health is improving or deteriorating. In Mrs. **Hawkins'** general fund budgetary highlights, it was noted that the City's General Fund budget was amended to reflect American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding received in the amount of \$856,492, as well as premium pay for employees in the various city departments. The General Fund reflected an excess of revenues over expenditures in the amount of \$471,971. While this is a positive in relation to the City's financial health; it was only possible because of the ARPA funds (\$856,492) received. In contrast, because the City failed to amend the General Fund budget for additional expenditures incurred during the year; the actual expenditures exceeded the final budgeted amounts by more than the allowable 5% variance as stated in the Local Government Budget Act. This fact resulted in a compliance finding for the City. The City should ensure that the budget is amended whenever a 5% variance (+ or -) results for revenues collected and expenditures incurred. There was also one material finding in the City's internal policies and procedures controls. Findings in both areas will be addressed.

Item G: No other new business discussed.

With no further business to discuss, this meeting was declared adjourned at **5:46 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**