Crossett City Council met in regular session June 26, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Crossett Public Library.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

Present: Mayor Crystal Marshall, City Attorney David Tyler Mills

Councilmembers: Dan Pevy, Kerstin Mondragon, James Knight, CT Foster

Absent: Clerk/Treasurer Clark Terrell

Councilmembers Chris Gill, Sheila Phillips

Mayor Marshall opened the meeting with a prayer and pledge. Mayor Marshall introduced Kaitlyn Carpenter and Averie Carpenter who led the group in the prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilman Knight to approve the minutes of the May 15 financial meeting and regular meeting. Roll call vote All vote yes. Motion passed and minutes were approved.

Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilwoman Mondragon to approve the financial reports for May, 2023. Roll call vote. All vote yes. Motion passed and financial statements were approved.

Mayor Marshall introduced Trinity Foster, who was selected from several excellent candidates, to serve as Mayor’s Assistant Intern for 2023. Mayor asked Miss Foster to inform council of what she has been working on for the city.

Miss Foster explained that while she was attending Arkansas Municipal League Conference, she was able to participate in a Youth Council Planning Committee. Since returning, she has been working with Mayor Marshall and the Crossett School District to implement the program. The program will be open to qualifying students from Grades 9-12. The goals of this program will be to bridge age gap and get youth more involved in city government. She is hoping to have everything worked out and so the program can be implemented in the 2023-24 school year.

Miss Foster continued by offering gratitude for the opportunity to be part of the 89th Annual AML Conference. She added that she was able to attend several workshops including animal control and conducting of city council meetings.

Mayor Marshall updated council on the auditorium air conditioning grant. Mayor introduced Hallie McNeice, grant writer for CEDC and the city. City has been notified that a Historical Preservation Grant in the amount of $110,000 will be awarded for the project. The design is projected to start in July with bid opening in September. Projected completion date of the project is March 2024.

Mayor Marshall updated council on the EC Youth Center grant. The original bid exceeded the amount of the grant and matches, so the architect along with SEADC resubmitted the scope of the job. This low bid was still over the amount by around $20,000, but SEADC felt like there would be additional funds available for the overage. Carpenter & Sons was able to secure the bid and a pre-construction meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 27. Mayor added that the first phase of the project will be the roof in order to preserve the integrity of the building. Other projects included in this phase will be floors, outside paint and new windows.

The total of the grant is $338,900 and the city will be responsible for $31,000 match.

A zoom meeting was held with Andrea Tempio, CGI Digital, concerning city promotions. At no cost to the city, CGI will produce 5 promotional videos for city webpage. Local businesses will have an opportunity to purchase ads for the videos. This requires a 3-year agreement. If no one purchases ads, there will still be no cost to the city. Motion by Councilman Foster, seconded by Councilman Knight to allow Mayor Marshall to engage with CGI Digital for the videos.

Mayor Marshall recognized Mr. CT Foster. At the AML Conference earlier in June, Mr. Foster was elected to serve as Vice-President of District 4. He was also given Jack Rhodes Distinguished Service Award for his 25 years of service to the City of Crossett and membership in the AML.

Mayor Marshall along with CEDF director Mike Smith showed gratitude to Senator Ben Gilmore and Representative Howard Beatty for their diligent work in having the “throwback” rule repealed in the state of Arkansas. This rule is a great win for economic development not only for Crossett but for the state of Arkansas. Mr. John Wilkerson and Blake Jerry from Arkansas Municipal League General Council were present to recognize Mr. Gilmore and Mr. Beatty as well.

Mayor Marshall updated the group on the June 18 storm. Work began at 3:30 a.m. and streets were cleared as Entergy gave clearance. Several city employees worked diligently to make sure the town was safe and everything ran as smoothly as possible. County Judge Jim Hudson has declared Ashley County as a disaster area. Office of Emergency Management is taking reports of property damage around the city.

Mayor Marshall opened the floor to the council for any further discussion. Hearing none, she opened the floor to the audience. Ms. Felicia Goree expressed gratitude to the mayor and city council on an outstanding job in working for the city. Mr. Dale Martinee agreed and noted that the city is making great progress.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Clark Terrell, Clerk/Treasurer Crystal Marshall, Mayor