

City Hall
Fayette, Alabama
April 28, 2020

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Fayette met at 5:00 o'clock, p.m. on April 28, 2020, in the Council Chambers of the City Hall.

Upon roll call the following were found to be present: Mayor Ray Nelson, Councilmembers Linda McCraw, Eddy Campbell, Jason Cowart, Cedric Wilson and Jerry Nichols. Also present were City Attorney Dale Lawrence, City Clerk Dawn Clapp and Police Chief Danny Jenkins.

The opening prayer was given by Mr. Rick McCabe.

Mayor Ray Nelson announced a quorum was present and the meeting was open for the transaction of business.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilmember Wilson moved the minutes of the regular meeting and due process hearing held on April 14, 2020, be approved. Upon the motion being seconded by Councilmember Nichols, it was unanimously approved.

REPORT FROM FCHS PRINCIPAL

Dr. Jeremy Madden, principal of Fayette County High School, reported to the Council that FCHS ranked 23rd out of 376 high schools in Alabama as determined by the U.S. News and World Report. Dr. Madden thanked the Council for their support. He stated FCHS was one of the top 2,000 high schools in America. He said FCHS has a 93% graduation rate.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Mayor Nelson addressed the Council concerning the Covid-19 virus pandemic. He stated there are now 1,000,000 cases in the United States and as of today, there have been 57,000 deaths. He reported Fayette County has five confirmed cases and no deaths.

Mayor Nelson stated there will be a Covid-19 testing clinic on Tuesday, May 5th at the Fayette County Health Department from 10:00 a.m. until noon. To be tested, individuals must be 10 years old or older and meet these criteria: The patient is symptomatic with at a minimum (measured or subjective):

- Fever OR cough OR shortness of breath, AND
- Immunocompromised or have co-morbidities, or
- Age 65 years or older, or
- Healthcare worker, or
- Associated with long-term healthcare facility, or
- Symptoms are moderate, severe or worsening

EVENT PERMIT

Mayor Nelson presented to the Council a request for a permit for a Community Vacation Bible School at the Community Center on May 30, 2020. Councilmember McCraw moved the permit be granted provided the event was allowed by the governmental orders in place at the time and also provided the event complied with all public health requirements. Upon the motion being seconded by Councilmember Nichols, the same was unanimously approved.

EVENT PERMIT

Mayor Nelson presented to the Council a request for a permit for Tunes on Temple to be held on the Courthouse lawn on June 5, 2020, July 10, 2020, and August 7, 2020. Councilmember Nichols moved the permit be granted provided the event was allowed by the governmental orders in place at the time and also provided the event complied with all public health requirements. Upon the motion being seconded by Councilmember Cowart, the same was unanimously approved.

EVENT PERMIT

Mayor Nelson presented to the Council a request for a permit for the Frog Level Festival to be held on October 2-3, 2020, in the downtown area. Councilmember Nichols moved the permit be granted provided the event was allowed by the governmental orders in place at the time and also provided the

event complied with all public health requirements. Upon the motion being seconded by Councilmember Cowart, the same was unanimously approved.

AIRPORT GRANT

Ms. Natalie Hobbs of Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood, the City's airport consultant, reported there were grant funds available for the design of the rehabilitation of the apron at the airport. The design report would give options for its rehabilitation or reconstruction. The grant for the design phase is \$20,000.00 and there would be no match required from the City.

Mr. Kip Madison, the airport manager, said he hoped the City could just repair or rehabilitate the apron (the area where the planes are parked) without having to change its configuration or location.

Mr. Steve Fowler spoke to the Council about his concerns for the airport. He felt repairing or rehabilitating the apron for \$2 million with hopes of increasing the airport traffic does not justify the cost. He stated if people are not turning away from the airport because of the apron then there will be no increase of traffic if the apron is repaired. He suggested the money be used for the construction of more hangars. Mr. Fowler said his casual observation was the apron paving project could wait.

Mr. Madison said in the Airport Improvement Plan, there is space allotted for new hangars. The FAA funds can be used for the construction of hangars. Mr. Madison said he was of the opinion the apron is in poor shape.

Ms. Hobbs said if the hangars are built, then the City would not be able to access the FAA discretionary funds for repairing the apron for three years. She said if the City uses the FAA funds for revenue producing projects (fueling system, hangars, etc.) then the City cannot access discretionary funding for three years. She said some cities when considering revenue producing projects at their airport would obtain a grant from ALDOT instead of the FAA. This way a city could still seek discretionary funds from the FAA. A grant through ALDOT, would require the City to provide matching funds of 50% with the State paying the other half.

The Council did not take any action.

FUEL PRICES

Councilmember Jason Cowart spoke concerning the fuel prices in Fayette. He said one of the questions he is asked the most is why fuel prices are higher in Fayette than anywhere else. He said most of the local gas stations are now at \$1.75. He said he was in Gordo and gasoline was \$1.35 per gallon. He reported the average price per gallon in Alabama is \$1.57. He stated it was \$1.49 in Belk. Councilmember Cowart said the City does not regulate the gasoline companies or those who sell it. He was just asking for some relief for the citizens.

Councilmember Jerry Nichols said this has been a long standing problem. He said he has been asked many times why the price of gasoline is higher in Fayette than surrounding areas. He would just like to know why the prices in Fayette are set as they are.

Mr. Rick Mayers of Mid-States Petroleum spoke to the Council. His company is a distributor and does not operate the gas stations. His company leases gas stations across the State. He explained to the Council why the prices are set the way they are. He stated in 2007, he began supplying gas to a station in Fayette. He stated 6 of the 12 gas stations since 2000 have closed down. Mr. Mayers said gas is typically higher in small towns because the cost to build the station is the same as it is in a much larger city. The difference is the small town stations have less volume. He stated his company sells branded gasoline (Chevron, Texaco, Shell, etc.) which is more expensive than unbranded gasoline (Murphy). He said Murphy's wholesale price is typically 12¢ less than the branded.

There are no distributors located in Fayette. There are three distributors that bring gas into Fayette - Mid-States, A & M from Tuscaloosa and Murphy. Mr. Mayers said there were currently some good margins but 50% less volume.

Mayor Nelson asked Mr. Mayers why gas in Berry was cheaper than Fayette. Mr. Mayers said typically the unbranded sellers drive the price because the branded sellers set their prices a couple of cents higher than unbranded. He said the unbranded sellers are already able to get their gasoline at a lower rate. He said typically the branded stations do not drop below the unbranded stations.

POLICE DEPARTMENT PAY SCALE

Mayor Nelson spoke to the Council concerning the Police Department Pay Scale. He stated the pay scale was adopted in 2016 and was a ten step pay scale over a five year period. Under the scale, each police officer receives a 1.5% raise in pay every six months, if approved by the Chief.

AIR EVAC CONTRACT

Mayor Nelson presented the Air Evac municipal site membership contract to the Council for their consideration. The municipal site membership covers any individual who resides within the City and employees of the City. The cost of the municipal site membership is \$18,970.00. Councilmember Nichols moved the Council renew the City' municipal site membership contract with Air Evac. Upon the motion being seconded by Councilmember Wilson, the same was unanimously approved.

SPEED BUMPS

Mayor Nelson stated the cost of the speed bumps requested for 9th Street NW and 2nd Avenue NW is \$700.00. After a general discussion, Councilmember Nichols moved that speed bumps be placed on 9th Street NW and 2nd Avenue NW. Upon the motion being seconded by Councilmember Wilson, the same was unanimously approved.

PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Luke Porter updated the Council on the City's projects. The update was as follows:

1. 25th Street and 8th Avenue repaving project:
 - Waiting on pavement markers to be put down
2. Industrial Park Pumping Station and Sewer Line Repair Project
 - Working on punch list items
3. Paving of MLK Drive and 10th Street
 - This project should start next week and paving should begin June 1st.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Councilmember Cowart moved the City's financial statement be approved. Upon the motion being seconded by Councilmember McCraw, the same was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF PARK & RECREATION FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Councilmember Cowart moved the Park & Recreation financial statement be approved. Upon the motion being seconded by Councilmember Wilson, the same was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MUNICIPAL COURT FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Councilmember Nichols moved the Municipal Court financial statement be approved. Upon the motion being seconded by Councilmember Campbell, the same was unanimously approved.

REPORT OF CITY CLERK

City Clerk Dawn Clapp stated the City had received \$250,000.00 from the State for the paving project for Martin Luther King Drive and 10th Street.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, upon the motion to adjourn being made by Councilmember Wilson and seconded by Councilmember Nichols, it was unanimously approved.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk