



**CITY OF CENTERTON
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 12, 2021
6:00 PM**

(1) Pledge – The Pledge Allegiance was recited.

(2) Prayer – Todd Wright offered the prayer.

(3) Roll Call –

Those Present and answering Roll Call were Mayor Bill Edwards, Keith Higginbotham, Darren Warren, Misty Elam, Josie Reed, Amy Rochette and Justin Cowgur. Those present and not answering Roll Call were City Clerk Todd Wright, City Attorney Brian Rabal, Financial Director Pam Grant, HR Director Jocelyn Diaz, Planning Director Lorene Burns, Police Chief Cody Harper, Director of Public Works Rick Hudson, Assistant Fire Chief John Gavin, Chief Building Inspector Robert Coffelt and Animal Control Director Cody Wilson.

(4) Council Minutes –

Josie Reed made a motion to Approve the Minutes of the September 16, 2021 City Council Meeting, with a 2nd from Keith Higginbotham. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

Planning Commission & Water & Sewer Minutes –

Keith Higginbotham made a motion to Acknowledge Receipt of the Minutes of the September 7, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting and the August 17, 2021 CWSD Meeting, with a 2nd from Amy Rochette. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

(5) City and Court Financials –

Mayor Edwards stated that 75 % through the year we have received 84.25 % of our Budgeted Revenue. He stated that our Expenditures were at 67.64 %. He detailed some of the city financials.

Mayor Edwards asked the Council if there were any questions. There were none.

Justin Cowgur made a motion to Accept the September, 2021 City & Court Financials, with a 2nd from Keith Higginbotham. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

(6) Department Reports -

The Department Reports were in the Council Packet.

Mayor Edwards asked the Council if there were any questions. There were none.

(7) Resolutions –

- **Resolution 2021-28 - A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY CLERK TO EXECUTE ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF CENTERTON AN AGREEMENT WITH JOHANSON GROUP, FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS TO CONDUCT A JOB VALUATION, MARKET PAY AND COMPENSATION STUDY FOR THE CITY OF CENTERTON, ARKANSAS.**

Mayor Edwards addressed the Council, stating that this Resolution is to approve an Agreement with the Johanson Group, of Fayetteville, for a Salary Study. He pointed out the fact that the job market is getting very competitive, and that he wanted to make sure we are compensating our employees fairly. He said currently, most of our employees do appear to be compensated fairly, and this study would help to verify that.

Bruce Johanson made a brief presentation to the Council, stating that they had provided a Salary Study for the City of Centerton several years ago. He said there are 51 positions currently in the city, and this study will hopefully help to both find and retain employees. He said they will be looking at current Job Descriptions and will use a 15-point criterion to create an Internal Value. He said they will look at Market Competitiveness in both the Public and Private Sector. He said they will provide a detailed report back to the city, with graphs, spreadsheets and charts. He said they currently work with the four (4) large cities in Northwest Arkansas, as well as other cities in the state. He said the fee is \$300.00 per position, bringing the total to \$15,300.00. He said they will charge 20% up front, 40% after the Job Descriptions are Job rated, and the balance at completion.

Darren Warren said he saw the report from the Arkansas Municipal League, and asked if this report would be more detailed. Johanson said they would be working with the Job Descriptions provided by the Department Heads and they will provide a very detailed report back to the city.

Warren asked if Johanson would be able help the city work toward a “Step System” for pay. Johanson said they would be able to help set up that structure.

Mayor Edwards said HR Director Jocelyn Diaz has all of the Job Descriptions and she, the Mayor and Mr. Johanson will all work together.

Amy Rochette asked how often Johanson Group works with these other cities. Johanson said they will normally set up the Compensation Structure with each city, and then come back after the second or third year and pull the numbers again to make sure they are in line. Rochette asked the Mayor if he looked at other firms to provide this study. Mayor Edwards said he did not, as we have used this firm before, and they are the ones working with the other cities in Northwest Arkansas.

Misty Elam stated that our HR Director and Financial Director have both already done quite a bit of research on salaries, and asked what more we can expect from this study. Johanson said he would be able to provide a more detailed report based on their 15-point criterion. He said it will be a more intense and detailed review.

City Clerk Todd Wright pointed out that the current Job Market is probably as unique as it has ever been with demand and incentives, and Johanson would be able to bring invaluable information to us with his experience in working with the surrounding communities.

Citizen Michael Commet asked if the study would be able to identify underperforming or underqualified employees. Johansen said they will not be doing Performance Reviews. Keith Higginbotham stated that the Department Heads are the ones that should be looking at job performance.

Mayor Edwards asked the Council if there were any other questions. There were none.

Darren Warren made a motion to read the Resolution by title only, with a 2nd from Josie Reed. All Council Members voted in favor, except for Misty Elam and Amy Rochette, who voted NO, and the motion carried. Amy Rochette stated that she felt this was too much to spend on a Salary Study. Brian Rabal read the Resolution by title only. Keith Higginbotham made a motion to adopt the Resolution, with a 2nd from Amy Rochette. All Council Members voted in favor, except for Misty Elam and Amy Rochette, who voted NO, and the motion carried.

(8) Capacity Fee Presentation by Centerton Utilities –

Director of Utilities Frank Holzkamper addressed the Council, stating that they have a few fees that they are going to update, as the cost of materials has gone up. He detailed the new fee structures, which will go into effect 1/01/2022. He said they are not raising Water or Sewer rates, and very few users will be affected by these fee changes. He said 99% of our Users will not be affected at all.

Holzkamper said the initial fees they are looking at, which will be affected are:

- **Tap Fees**
- **Meter/Base Fees**
- **Capacity Fees**

Justin Cowgur asked how often the new fees will be evaluated. Holzkamper said it has been 7 years since the last evaluations, but will be every couple of years moving forward. He said they have four part distributors they send out to for pricing each year. He said there is only one distributor for Meters.

Holzkamper stated that we have capacity issues with our current Water & Sewer system. He said we have \$30 million in projects over the next five (%) years to help alleviate those issues. He said they contracted with Tischler Bise for a Water & Sewer Capacity Fee Study to help show us how to fund these projects, without raising Water & Sewer rates. He said the capacity issues are being driven by the increase in development in our city. He said the study resulted in the recommendation of Capacity Fees. He detailed the proposed Capacity Fee structure. He said the Fees are regulated by State Statute, as to whether they can be charged and what can be done with them. He said there is accounting of all of the funds that are brought in, and limitations on what projects they can be used for. Holzkamper detailed some of the proposed future projects, such as larger water lines and another Water Tower.

Keith Higginbotham asked if the Water Tower on Keller Road could be used. Holzkamper said it isn't big enough to help. He said they would need to raise it 23-ft to even get it to work, because it currently sits "under water" within the system.

Holzkamper said they will be holding a Public Hearing regarding the Capacity Fees on 11/09/2021 at the Utilities Building. He said that is the night of the City Council Meeting, but it was the only night he could secure Carson Bice. He said other cities are charging Capacity Fees, and our fees are going to be on the low end in comparison.

Mayor Edwards asked if there were any other questions. There were none.

Mayor Edwards stated that he felt some of the Council Members and others would like to attend the 11/09/2021 Public Hearing, and asked if Council would consider moving the November City Council Meeting to 11/08/2021 to accommodate that. Council was in favor.

Darren Warren made a motion to move the November City Council Meeting to 11/08/2021, with a 2nd from Justin Cowgur. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

(9) Request Temporary Position for Animal Services –

Mayor Edwards addressed the Council, asking them to consider a temporary position for the Animal Services Department, while a current employee is out on maternity leave in January

2022, for 8-12 weeks. He said we would like to bring someone in temporarily at \$13.00/hour for a period of 4-6 months. He said the salary would not be an issue.

HR Director Jocelyn Diaz said the employee may be out on leave prior to January 2022.

There was discussion.

Amy Rochette made a motion to approve a Temporary Position with the Animal Services Department, for up to six (6) months at \$13.00/hr., with the possibility of a time extension, with a 2nd from Josie Reed. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

(10) Request Truck Purchase for Street Department, Building Safety and Animal Control –

Mayor Edwards addressed the Council, stating that he received an e-mail from the dealer of the Chevrolet truck we recently ordered for the Street Department, stating that they are over-allocated on production and will be unable to provide the truck for our city. He said he started looking for other available vehicles and found six (6) available trucks at Superior Auto Group. He stated that we have the immediate need to replace the previously ordered truck for the Street Department, and would also like to replace the Chevrolet at the Animal Services Department and to go ahead and order a truck for the Building Safety Department. He said the two (2) other trucks were going to be planned for in next year's budget, but he would like to purchase them now, due to availability concerns.

There was discussion about vehicle needs and uses, as well as plans for surplus of existing vehicles.

Council agreed to purchase the following vehicles:

- 2021 White Dodge Ram 1500 Tradesman Crew 4x4 @ \$28,884.00 (Animal Services Department)
- 2021 Silver Dodge Ram 1500 Tradesman Crew 4x4 @ \$29,084.00 (Building Safety Department)
- 2021 Black Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Custom Crew 4x4 @ \$33,576.00 (Street Department)

Keith Higginbotham made a motion to approve the purchase of the three (3) vehicles as presented, with a 2nd from Amy Rochette. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

(11 Discuss Educational Incentive Pay –

Mayor Edwards addressed the Council, stating that HR Director Jocelyn Diaz was asked by Council at our last meeting to look at other cities, regarding Educational Incentive Pay for employees.

HR Director Jocelyn Diaz addressed the Council, providing examples of Educational Pay from several surrounding communities. She pointed out that there are a range of benefits by pay period, monthly, and also by percentage of salary.

There was discussion.

Council thanked Diaz for her presentation and recommended asking Jorgenson to include Educational Pay in their Salary Study.

(12) Public Comments – None

(13) Other Business –

- **New City Hall Building Update –**

Mayor Edwards gave a detailed update on the progress of the New City Hall Building. He said the likelihood is that Staff will move in sometime in November, with Council and Planning Meetings likely not to be held there until after the first of the year.

(14) Announcements -

- **10/16/2021 – Coffee with the Mayor @ 9:00 am**
- **10/19/2021 – Planning Commission Meeting @ 6:00 pm**
- **10/21/2021 – Budget Work Session @ 6:00 PM**
- **11/02/2021 - Planning Commission Meeting @ 6:00 pm**
- **11/08/2021 – City Council Meeting @ 6:00 pm**
- **11/09/2021 – Public Hearing for Capacity Fees @ 6:00 PM (Utilities Bldg.)**

(15) Adjourn -

Josie Reed made a motion to Adjourn at 7:40 pm with a 2nd from Justin Cowgur. All Council members voted in favor and the motion carried.

City Council 10/12/2021

Bill Edwards, Mayor

Todd Wright, City Clerk