

**CITY OF CENTERTON
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 9, 2010**

The city council was called to order by Mayor, Bobbie Griffith. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and the prayer was offered by Tommy Laird. Those Present and answering roll call were Mayor Bobbie Griffith, Josie Reed, Keith Higginbotham, Randy Thomas, Tommy Laird, Kathy Huber and Patricia Thornhill. Kathy Huber was absent. Those present and not answering role call were Jan Dolan, Todd Wright, Howard Slinkard, Andrew Huntsinger, Bert Johnson and Lance Johnson. Brian Rabal, Robert Coffelt and Lorene Burns were absent.

- (1) **Council Minutes** - Randy Thomas made a motion to adopt the minutes from the January 12, 2009 council meeting with a 2nd from Keith Higginbotham. All members present voted in favor and the motion carried.
- (2) **Planning and Water & Sewer Minutes** - Randy Thomas made a motion to acknowledge receipt of the December 15, 2009 Planning minutes and December 2009 Water & Sewer minutes with a 2nd from Keith Higginbotham. All members present voted in favor and the motion carried.
- (3) **City and Court Financials** - Mayor Griffith stated that at the first of the year we have some expenses like Workman's Comp. and different insurance payments, as well as a fire truck payment. She said that we are still doing well with 8.3% of the year gone our revenue is at 12% and our expenses are in at 9%. Keith Higginbotham made a motion to accept the January, 2010 City and Court financials with a 2nd from Patricia Thornhill. All members voted in favor and the motion carried.
- (4) **Ordinance 2010-03 - AN ORDINANCE ADDING CHAPTER 7.40 TO BE TITLED "FALSE ALARMS" TO THE CENTERTON MUNICIPAL CODE; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.** Police Chief Lance Johnson addressed the council and explained that there have been excessive issues with false alarms from home and business alarm systems. He stated that it used to be that when you purchased a security service, you would give a name, address, list of key holders, day phone #'s, evening phone #'s, other contacts, etc. to your alarm service representative in case of an alarm. Lance stated that for both Fire and Police calls, in most cases now, there is usually no rep. information, which makes things very difficult officers, and when there are multiple "false alarms" for the same property for the same alarm code, which is usually from faulty detectors, the cost in time and money adds up. Keith Higginbotham added that you might even get an address in your mind that consistently has "false alarms" and tend to wonder about the "how many times do you cry wolf" saying, and have a less urgent response. He also reminded the council that a lot of times there are more departments than just our own a lot of

times that are on standby for those calls. Lance said he has even heard of other places where a call was issued, and if an alarm rep was not listed, they didn't even respond. Lance stated that this ordinance will come into effect after 2 false alarm calls in a 3 month period. He said that on the next false alarm they will receive a ticket. He said they will do everything in their power to notify the person that they have been there to respond each time before there is a citation. Patricia Thornhill made a motion to read the ordinance by title only with a 2nd from Tommy Laird. All members present voted in favor and the motion carried. Andrew read the ordinance by title only. Keith Higginbotham made a motion to suspend the rule requiring the reading of the ordinance 3 times with a 2nd from Josie Reed. All members voted in favor and the motion carried. Kathy Huber made a motion to adopt the ordinance with a 2nd from Tommy Laird. All members voted in favor and the motion carried. Andrew read the emergency clause. Patricia Thornhill made a motion to adopt the emergency clause with a 2nd from Randy Thomas. All members voted in favor and the motion carried.

- (5) Ordinance 2010-04 - AN ORDINANCE VACATING ALL UTILITY, DRAINAGE, AND SETBACK EASEMENTS LOCATED ON LOTS 21 AND 22, WILLOW CROSSING SUBDIVISION, CENTERTON, ARKANSAS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.** Andrew Huntsinger addressed the council and reminded them that this ordinance was to abandon the two easements of the lots that will be contained in the detention pond after the re-plat of the subdivision and that it was in the city's best interest to abandon them. Keith Higginbotham made a motion to read the ordinance by title only with a 2nd from Randy Thomas. All members voted in favor and the motion carried. Andrew read the ordinance by title only. Keith Higginbotham made a motion to suspend the rule requiring the reading of the ordinance 3 times with a 2nd from Patricia Thornhill. All members voted in favor and the motion carried. Keith Higginbotham made a motion to adopt the ordinance with a 2nd from Randy Thomas. All members voted in favor and the motion carried. Andrew read the emergency clause. Kathy Huber made a motion to adopt the emergency clause with a 2nd from Tommy Laird. All members voted in favor and the motion carried.

- (6) State Of The City Address by Mayor Bobbie Griffith** - Mayor Griffith stated that: "Once again most of us are ready to start a new year and are glad to have 2009 behind us. The year 2009 had its challenges, with tax revenue declining somewhat. We were fortunate at the end of the year to have a small surplus. We would like to commend our employees also for keeping spending to a minimum. Our total number of employees is the same as it was in 2008. In 2008 we hired D.J. Ritchey as a part time person for our Animal Control. Due to controlled spending we were able to offer her a full- time position as of January, 2009. Our Animal Control facility is well staffed and we are doing well adopting animals, as well as sending some of the larger dogs to a rescue facility in Maine. As most of you will remember, we got hit pretty hard by the 2009 ice storm. We could not have asked for a more organized clean-up. At that time our Volunteer Fire

Department, Street Department and Police Department all worked around the clock to make sure there were no trees blocking roads and to help people with trees in their yards or on top of their homes. They helped stranded motorists and tried to keep ice from our roadways. Myself and the city council would applaud all of the employees that worked diligently without sleep for several days and nights. F.E.M.A. also came to our rescue with funds to cover some of the labor needed for the cleanup and to help repair some drainage and defray the costs of some of our roads that were damaged in that storm. The Street Department has done a good job this year of making our city look well. This department has utilized court workers throughout the year and the city is pleased to have the extra help. Near the end of the year we were able to pave the driveway for the Police Department from Highway 102 all the way up to their office doors and we also overlaid Keller Road and Gamble. We are hoping to be able to renovate and maybe do something else with a few more streets in 2010 if the money is there for us. Our Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer had a fairly busy year with tall grass at residences that have been foreclosed upon and also subdivisions that were left in a state of incompleteness. Building permits were down in 2009. We are hoping for an increase in 2010 as our economy does a slow upturn. Lorene Burns has been working with David Todd of C.E.I. Engineering to get the city's flood plain revised and the Letter Of Map Revision. Hopefully this new information will be accepted by F.E.M.A. When this is accepted, it will cause some of our residents to be taken out of the flood plain and it will also put a few more in the flood plain. Lorene has held several very informative meetings for the residents here at City Hall. She is continuing to work on the Letter Of Map Revision. Our Police Department is fully staffed and keeping up with most of the crime in the city. We have two officers that graduated from Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy in June and Sergeant Anthony Martinez attended a Criminal Justice Institution Class and graduated in June as a certified Narcotics Investigator. We have a lot of good teamwork in our Police Department. Our Parks & Recreation Committee is doing a great job of looking for areas in our community that need playground equipment that will benefit those in these small neighborhoods. In September we enjoyed a groundbreaking ceremony for a Veteran's Memorial Park on the Southeast side of City Hall. A Landscape Architect by the name of Dan Cole is working to help the committee complete a park that is aesthetically pleasing and gives tribute to our Service men and women. Our A&P Commission and other department employees and the Fire Department help the first Annual Christmas Tree Lighting at Beckendale Plaza on December 5th. There was participation from all the businesses in the Plaza and several other businesses around town. There was fun for children and adults. Santa was there and was available for pictures with children. This was a huge success and we are looking forward to other activities involving A&P in the year 2010. Our Fire Department is still considered one of the best in the county. They are constantly helping those in need whether it is a medical call or a fire. Not only are they always there to help our residents, they do speak with students in our schools about fire prevention and are constantly concerned with training and upgrading within the department. Behind the scenes our administration has been

working on making sure that Highway 102 will eventually get widened from Greenhouse Road to Main Street. There are still issues that need to be worked out, but the project should go out to bid within the next few months. We are constantly trying to entice businesses to come to Centerton. Our administration tries to give support to each department in the city. I also want to mention that in November of last year we renovated this room. We had court workers that helped paint the walls, we had tile put on our floor and made our room much more pleasing to sit in. The city's resources are healthy and all of our employees are committed to serving our residents as real professionals in their fields. We are here to serve and feel that Centerton is a wonderful place to live and work. Thanks to each and every employee that has helped to make our city sound. Thank you and I believe Centerton will be blessed in the year ahead."

- (7) **Moving Structure Permit** - This is a request by the Cemer Family to move a used manufactured home to 9269 Tycoon Road. Mayor Griffith mentioned that this had gone before the Planning Commission on January 26th, 2010 and was approved. She also reminded the council that they have to approve the associated fees, which are quite high. She suggested that we change our ordinance that sets these fees in the near future. Randy Thomas made a motion to allow the moving of the structure with a 2nd from Patricia Thornhill. All members voted in favor and the motion carried. Josie Reed made a motion to accept the permits associated with the move with a 2nd from Tommy Laird. All members voted in favor and the motion carried.
- (8) **Approve Hiring of Full Time Maintenance Worker Russell Ray for the Street Department** - Mayor Griffith stated that Russell has been working part time for us since August of 2009 and is asking the council to approve putting him on full time at a pay of \$20,800 per year (\$10.00/Hr). Keith Higginbotham made a motion to approve with a 2nd from Randy Thomas. All members voted in favor and the motion carried.
- (9) **Planning Commission Resignation** - Mayor Griffith stated that there was a letter of resignation from Karen Rumancik from the Centerton Planning Commission in the council's packets and asked for a motion to accept. Randy Thomas made a motion to accept the resignation with a 2nd from Josie Reed. All members voted in favor and the motion carried.
- (10) **Personnel Committee Recommendations** - Committee Chairman Randy Thomas stated that the Committee met about a few items. The first item was in regards to Department Heads. The committee decided to make all Department Heads would be paid salary, and that would affect Lore Burns and Robert Coffelt. Also, as part of Department Head positions being salary, they would be required to attend Council meetings unpaid. Randy stated that previously the city had paid

for attendance at those meetings, but that now it would be a part of the salaried position. Randy stated that the second item that the Committee made a decision on was that no one person will hold two paid positions within the city, regardless of what department or area it is. He stated that the last item they discussed was the approval of Russell Ray to full time.

- (11) **Department Reports – Street** - Bert stated that they had put out a lot of grit and that they weren't done yet. He said that he has been looking for a roller. He said that Tycoon Road was going to pot and that we have a lot of road damage at this time. He said that there was more damage on Gamble Road as well. He said he found a roller with 360 hours on it for \$23,600.00. He said he really needs a roller. He said he has been renting one from Tony Steele for \$2000-\$3000 a year. He said that the overlays are looking good. Randy stated that if we were renting one from Tony at that rate of 2-3 thousand a year, it would take about 18 years to pay off. Patricia asked how many hours we would be renting from Tony Steele and Bert said that it depends on the project and gave some details on some projects. Keith Higginbotham said that one problem of renting is availability when we need it. Todd Wright asked if Tony Steele would continue to let us rent the roller for much longer. Patricia asked how many hours he would need to use the roller in a year. Bert said that it is hard to say, it could be 200 hours in a year or it could be six months straight. Randy said that it would be good for the city but that he was concerned with an already tight budget and without foreseeable tax increases over the next 4 or 5 years or even 7 years for us to be able to pay it off. He felt if we could rent for a couple more years, we might be in a better position. Keith Higginbotham authorized Mayor Griffith to look at the budget and see where we are at again next month. He also told Bert to keep looking this month and maybe something else might come up. He asked Jan to put it on the agenda for next month's meeting. **Administration** - Jan Dolan had nothing to report. **Police** - Chief Lance Johnson stated he and Cody were going to Little Rock to pick up Cody's new truck. He said that he would like to thank the Fire Department for letting them use the Fire truck in the interim. He said there have been a few minor accidents, a couple of trucks jackknifed, but no major injuries or fatalities. He said they were still fully staffed, with one officer going to the Academy in March and graduation in June. He said that Cody is attending a crime scene class for the second week. He stated that he and Sergeant Clark got approved to go to a National Gang Conference in St. Louis. He said everything has been paid for with the exception of gas. He said that the stats from last year are not complete yet due to some formula issues. He said that when he puts a calculator to it, we had between 4200 and 4300 contacts last year, which is about the same as the last 2 years. He said that the drug arrests were up by a handful last year, but that the domestics were down. **Parks & Rec** - Todd Wright addressed the council and stated that we had an exciting meeting this month, where we discussed some fresh, new ideas about our Veteran's Memorial Park. One of the negative ideas we discussed about the proposed location for the park is how we bring people to the rear of the building as far as promotion and as far as safety as

well. We discussed the possibility of moving the park to a different location in the city park area or incorporating small monuments throughout that lead to the rear of the building. We understand that money has been spent in the current location and some work has been done. That is also where the groundbreaking took place, so unless a much better option presents itself, which is where it will be. We just want what is best for our citizens for that park. Todd said there will be some great Eagle Scout opportunities as well. We also talked about some ideas to dress up the front of the park and to possibly doing some things with the sidewalk and the gazebo, possibly even eliminating the Gazebo and putting in something more substantial and incorporating some things about the Veteran's Park in that, which in turn, could draw some people to the back of the park. There are some ideas about some different areas in town for small parks that are being discussed and Bert has done a great job down by the lake area. I am thinking that we not get ahead of the widening of Highway 102 with any work as far as parks at the lake until we know what the State and Highway Department are going to do down there. I would hate to do some work and have it torn up; but in the same sense, if they are going to be doing some work down there, it may not be a bad time to let the State assist us in some improvements down there. **Water & Sewer** - Jeff Coffelt stated that the 2 system tie-in was complete. He said that the pumps are operational. He said there were issues in the beginning with not getting enough water from the two-ton, but that has been corrected and is working automatically now. He said that the big tower next to us should be full of water in the next 8-9 months, which will lessen the workload on our pumps. He said that the added pressure over the last few weeks has created some little leaks in the outlying areas and that has been keeping them busy. He said they will probably have those issues throughout the next year. He said they are in the process of purchasing some of the system from Highfill that are already in our corporate city limits. He said the paperwork has already been filled out and approved by the state, so all that is left is completing the contract. It will basically tie in our system on the west. It will help some customers that have been on dead end lines. Jeff said the Drive-by metering system is working fine. He said there is a dead zone from Bliss to Walker to Woods that they are working on. He said those meters are being hand read. He said that the water bills have gone up as expected and not everyone remembered. He reminded us that it will go up again in July, as well as January 1, 2011. **Fire** - Jeff said we had a pretty mild winter so far. He said that they assisted other departments on a couple of structure fires this weekend. He said they have had a lot of CO2 checks, smoke alarms and 2 busted sprinkler heads. He commended the city departments on code enforcement to help keep those numbers low. He said there are 3 fire trucks in the shop being repaired.

(12) **Announcements** - Mayor Griffith pointed out to the council that the January, 2010 Building Permits and Fire and Street transactions were in their packets. She also stated that there would be a Personnel Committee meeting on Tuesday, March 2nd, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Conference room. Mayor Griffith also recognized 2 Boy Scouts in attendance as well as their leaders watching the meeting as part of the “Citizenship in the Community” merit badge process.

There was no other business and Josie Reed made a motion to adjourn with a 2nd from Randy Thomas. All members present voted in favor and the motion carried.

Bobbie Griffith, Mayor

Todd Wright, City Clerk