

**City of Mansfield**  
**MINUTES OF *REGULAR* PUBLIC MEETING**  
**May 10, 2021**

**In-Person Council Meeting**

The Board of Aldermen met in *regular* session on **May 10th**, in Mansfield City Hall located at 705 Polk Street. Mayor John H. Mayweather, Sr. called this meeting to order at **4:30 p.m.**, after which an Invocation was offered by **Alderman Joseph Hall, Jr.** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by **Alderman Kervin D. Campbell.** Following the pledge, the clerk called the roll to record those council members in attendance. The following officials were recorded as **Present:** Hon. John H. Mayweather, Sr., -**Mayor**, Mary J. Green –District **A**, Joseph Hall, Jr. –District **D**, and Kervin D. Campbell –District **E.** **Absent:** Christopher S. Thomas –District **B** and Mitchell L. Lewis –District **C.** **City Hall Personnel, Dept. Heads, & Other City Personnel Present:** Gwendolyn Jones (Deputy Clerk), Melony McCarty (Accountant), Annette Blue (Police Chief), Billy Locke (Asst. Police Chief), Bryan Ross (Capt. -Fire Dept.), Michael Gonzales (Capt. –Fire Dept.), and Christopher Samuels (Firefighter –Fire Dept.). Others Present: Jennifer Hawkins (*Thomas, Cunningham, Broadway, Todtenbier, CPAs*), Donnette Dunbar (*Louisiana Connected*), Cedric Floyd (*Data Center, LLC*) and Rose Floyd (*Data Center, LLC*). **Press Present:** None.

It was MOTIONED by **JOSEPH HALL, JR.** and SECONDED by **KERVIN D. CAMPBELL** to approve the minutes of the **April 26, 2021 *regular*** City Council meeting and dispense with the reading. Motion Passed Unanimously.

It was MOTIONED by **KERVIN D. CAMPBELL** and SECONDED by **JOSEPH HALL, JR.** to approve payment of current outstanding bills for this period. 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 public comments were offered from any of the participants in this meeting, the **Public Comments Period** was then subsequently closed.

**Old Business:** -None.

**New Business:**

**Item A:** It was MOTIONED by **CHRISTOPHER S. THOMAS** and SECONDED by **MITCHELL L. LEWIS** to adopt a **Resolution** approving the setting of the **2021** property tax millage rates. The tax rates which will be levied on the assessment roll of DeSoto Parish for the year **2021** are **8.380 mills** for General Alimony and **8.800 mills** for General Expenses. The collection of the taxes levied shall become a permanent lien and privilege on all property subject taxation by the *City of Mansfield*. Motion Passed Unanimously.

**Item B:** It was MOTIONED by **JOSEPH HALL, JR.** and SECONDED by **KERVIN D. CAMPBELL** to approve adoption of a **Resolution** to initiate negotiation of a Public Private Partnership between *Louisiana Connected* and the *City of Mansfield* to build its own municipal

broadband network for providing reliable, affordable high-speed internet service to residents of the City. Motion Passed Unanimously.

**Item C:** It was MOTIONED by **JOSEPH HALL, JR.** and SECONDED by **KERVIN D. CAMPBELL** to approve a **Resolution** adopting a Citizen Participation Plan for the Louisiana Community Development Block Grant (LCDBG) program for the **2022/2023** program cycle. The Louisiana Division of Administration requires that certain citizen participation requirements be met. The plan describes how the *City of Mansfield* intends to involve citizens in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the local LCDBG program. Federal and State regulations give ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of the program to local elected officials, but also require that citizens be given an opportunity to serve in a key advisory role to the elected officials. Attempts will be made to reach all citizens, with particular emphasis on participation by persons of low and moderate income, residents of slum and blighted areas and of areas in which funds are proposed to be used. A copy of this plan will be made available to the public upon request. Motion Passes Unanimously.

**Item D:** It was MOTIONED by **JOSEPH HALL, JR.** and SECONDED by **KERVIN D. CAMPBELL** to approve adoption of a **Resolution** authorizing the Mayor to execute on behalf of and in the name of the *City of Mansfield*, a contract for LCDBG Administrative Services for the fiscal year 2022/2023 program cycle. To develop the LCDBG application and to provide administrative services in connection with the grant if awarded, the City has contracted with *The Coordinating and Development Corporation*. However, it should be mentioned that *The Coordinating and Development Corporation* will be paid for LCDBG administrative services only if the City's LCDBG application is selected for funding. Motion Passes Unanimously.

**Item E:** It was MOTIONED by **JOSEPH HALL, JR.** and SECONDED by **KERVIN D. CAMPBELL** to approve adoption of a **Resolution** authorizing the Mayor to request Engineer's Qualifications Statements for the 2022/2023 LCDBG program cycle, and to execute a Contract for LCDBG engineering services with the firm that scores highest in the selection process. Negotiations with the firm receiving the highest number of points shall begin immediately. Motion Passed Unanimously.

**Item F:** It was MOTIONED by **MARY J. GREEN** and SECONDED by **KERVIN D. CAMPBELL** to approve the recommendation of Police Chief Annette Blue to offer full-time employment to patrol officer **Jeffrey Lee Walker** with the Mansfield Police Department. Officer **Walker** has been employed with the Police Department since October 26, 2020. During his tenure with the Department, he has demonstrated an ability to positively interact with the public while conducting himself in a professional manner. He has also shown that he can follow the instructions given to him by his supervisors, and has performed very well in his assignment

as a patrol officer. Finally, Officer **Walker** had recently attained Police Officer Standards Training (P.O.S.T.) status by attending training classes offered by the *Caddo Parish Sheriff's Department*. Motion Passed Unanimously.

**Item G:** At this time, a presentation was offered by Mr. **Cedric Floyd** (*President/CEO*) of *Data Center of Kenner, LA* to discuss a proposal to perform reapportionment (redistricting) services of the Mansfield City Council districts. They employ five (5) team members with a combined total of over 120 combined years of performing redistricting services. Additionally, this company has forty (40) years of experience providing this type of service, having performed redistricting assistance for governmental entities all across the state of Louisiana. This is the company's 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Census. *Data Center* performed the City's reapportionment in 2012 using 2010 U.S. Census data. Mr. **Floyd** stated that in the next ninety (90) days, census data will be released. Fees for redistricting services will be provided by *Data Center, LLC*. After release of census data needed to initiate this process, the City will entertain contracting the services of this company to perform this required activity.

**Item H:** A Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the period covering January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 had been included as an attachment to the agenda for this meeting. Also included in the agenda packages for this meeting was a Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the period of January 1 2021 through April 30, 2021. This data encompassed data for the Corporation General Fund, the Waterworks Fund, and the Sewer Fund. These reports follow a simple, straightforward format. For Revenues, there were columns that depicted budgeted revenues, the amounts collected through the reports' end date, the amounts over/<under>, and the percent (%) of the budget collected. In similar fashion, for expenditures of each line item, one column reflected the budgeted appropriation, another displayed expenditures incurred through the end date of the report, still another indicated the amounts over/<under>, and finally a column which shows the percent (%) of the budget expended to-date. No council action was necessary on this report. This data was provided to the Aldermen as a matter of information.

**Item K:** At this time, a representative (Mrs. Jennifer Hawkins) from our independent auditing firm *Thomas, Cunningham, Broadway & Todtenbier, CPAs* (Natchitoches, LA) offered a summary of the City's **2020 Annual Audit of Financial Statements**. The Mayor and Aldermen had been provided a DRAFT of the audit with their agenda packages to review prior to the council meeting. Mrs. **Hawkins** began the summary by reporting that there were no findings identified during this audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. In addition, the audit disclosed no instances of non-compliance that were required to be reported under the *Government Auditing Standards*. Also, the audit disclosed no material weaknesses in internal controls. She went on to inform the Mayor and Aldermen that while the audit revealed an

increase in sales and use taxes for **2020**, other revenue streams reflected notable decreases. Specifically, the revenues reflecting a decrease for the year audited were fines and forfeitures, franchise fees, video poker revenue, and oil and gas royalty income. Still further, user charges for the city's utilities (water and sewer) reflected that the fees being assessed were inadequate to subsidize the expenditures regularly incurred. The city clerk remarked that a rate study/analysis on sewer user charges had been performed in late November 2020, and an Ordinance was adopted in early December 2020 to authorize an increase in the fees being charged. However, the user fees approved had not yet been incorporated into our customer's monthly billing statements. Similarly, while a rate increase to user charges for water services had been proposed several times in 2020, the proposed increase had failed each time. The Aldermen intimating that with high unemployment rates and a sluggish economy as a result of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, they were hesitant to also increase water rates. Nevertheless, they were informed that the Water Fund consistently reflected a monthly deficit making an increase imminent. A delay was only resulting in the Water Fund frequently reflecting a shortage. The auditor (Mrs. **Hawkins**) stated that our governing body either needs to seek ways to increase revenue streams or drastically curtail expenses. As the auditor attempted to continue summarizing the audit data provided to them, the Aldermen present were instead insistent on learning how the funds received last year from the *LA Cares Act* were spent. Their inquiries in this regard were unrelenting, suspending her customary delivery of the audit summary. The Aldermen were reminded that in their agenda packages, the city's accountant had prepared a spreadsheet which reflected the total amount (\$843,303.17) received from the *Cares Act* (received in two lots). The spreadsheet also provided a snapshot of month-to-month bank account balances in our major funds (Corporation General Fund, Waterworks Fund and the Sewer Fund). The funds from the *Act* were used to fund salaries and related benefits in the police and fire departments. Those funds were also used to underwrite the purchase of COVID prevention supplies and equipment needed to combat the negative effects of the pandemic on our human resources and infrastructure. In conclusion, the auditor remarked that if the City continues on this path of regularly reflecting a shortfall of revenues over expenditures, some funds will result in becoming a '*going concern*.' According to auditing standards, this is not a desired financial position to be in. It was decided that the prior proposed water rate increase will be revisited in the very future.

**Item L:** No other new business discussed.

**Comments from Mayor Mayweather and/or Council Members:** During this period, the Mayor and Council members offered no comments.

With no further business to discuss, this meeting was declared adjourned at **5:46 p.m.** by MOTION from **JOSEPH HALL, JR.** and was SECONDED by **MARY J. GREEN.** Motion Passed Unanimously.

**John H. Mayweather, Sr.,** *Mayor*  
**Marvin R. Jackson,** *Clerk*