

MINUTES OF COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 28, 2012

The Batesville City Council met in regular session on February 28, at 5:30 PM at the Municipal Building. Mayor Elumbaugh called the meeting to order. Mr. Johnathan Abbott gave the invocation. Upon roll call, the following council answered present; Tommy Bryant, Margaret Henley, Paige Hubbard, Davy Insell, Fred Krug, Douglas Matthews, Chris Poole, and David Shetron. Also present were the City Clerk and the City Attorney.

Councilmember Shetron moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Councilmember Henley seconded and all voted for.

Councilmember Matthews moved to approve the prepared agenda as amended. Councilmember Krug seconded and all voted for.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A) RECOGNIZE MR. DAVE McQUARRY FOR HIS FUNDRAISING FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Mayor Elumbaugh recognized Mr. Dave McQuarry for his fundraising efforts for the Special Olympics. Mr. McQuarry raised \$3,280.00 for the recent Polar Bear Plunge.

B) PRESENTATION BY DR. RANDY WILLSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF BATESVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dr. Randy Willson addressed the council regarding the direction in which the Batesville School District is headed to insure students upon graduation are ready to enter college or the workforce, which ever they choose. Dr. Willson gave a PowerPoint presentation and said their newly adopted Mission Statement is "The mission of the Batesville School District is to ensure that each student graduates with the knowledge and skills to be a successful adult and an asset to the community."

C) CONSIDER AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK.

Councilmember Bryant introduced an ordinance to amend the employee handbook. Mr. Castleberry read the ordinance in full. The ordinance will be placed on the next meeting's agenda for the second reading.

D) ENGINEER'S REPORT

City Engineer Damon Johnson addressed the council with his Engineer's Report.

E) REVIEW OF THE JANUARY 2012 FINANCIALS

The Council was given a copy of the January 2012 financial for review.

F) STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Tonight I come before you to deliver the State of the City address. Five years ago, you elected me to bring positive change to our community. Whether it has been to faithfully balance the budget, solve our infrastructure problems or tackle the issue of taking better care of our parks, I have approached the task with the utmost concern in the spending of your tax dollars. The budget is again balanced. The solutions to our water and wastewater problems are funded and have moved into the construction phase. Together we have accomplished many positive things and together we can continue meeting the challenges we face.

Commercial development in the City of Batesville last year was one of the best on record. Ongoing projects include our wastewater project, the construction of the new Woodlawn Nursing Home, improvements to Flowers Bakery, the White River Medical Center and Batesville High School expansions,

the Batesville Housing Authority project in Eagle Mountain, Lyon College's new student center and the new Access Arkansas Center. Access Arkansas has added approximately 100 jobs in our community and White River Medical Center's expansion will add approximately 270 more jobs in the near future.

With these and other projects over 100 million dollars has been invested in our community securing much-needed jobs for our community. Several companies continue planning expansions including our poultry factories, Bad Boy Mowers and LaCroix Optical. FutureFuel's purchase of the White Rogers facility and the completion of their new rail spur facilities continue to position their company for growth as a leader in their industry.

As your Mayor I am committed to building a strong, economically vibrant City, that offers our citizens an excellent quality of life in which to raise their families, allows our children to get a good education, and one that prospers in creating new job opportunities for its citizens. We all want a community that allows our children to remain in this area instead of having to move out of the area to find good jobs.

In 1896 there were those who were against electric lights and running water as the tax required would be a burden on our children's children. In the early 1900s a majority were against the railroad. In 1916 many opposed sidewalks and a modern telephone system that we just could not afford. In 1927 there were those who fought the construction of the first bridge across White River because we could not afford it. Several times in the 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's efforts to bring our sewer system up to modern standards were met with defeat. All of us remember those who fought the establishment of the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville on the grounds we did not need it and we could not afford it. As quoted by Anthony Robbins, "If you always do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten.

Today is the right time to invest in our community. Interest rates are the lowest we have seen in our lifetimes! Construction costs are lower than we have seen in decades! Other entities in our community are taking advantage of these factors and moving forward. White River Medical Center's expansion will bring new doctors with families to our community. Will our facilities be what these families want and expect from the community they choose? Expanded medical and skilled nursing facilities will also attract additional retirees to our community. Will we have the facilities these active seniors are looking for?

Our greatest investment is in rearing our children and providing for their education to become valued and productive members of our society. We invest all of our time, energy and money in our children only to guarantee that they will have to leave this area to find a good job because our city has failed to provide the amenities other communities provide that make people want to live in those cities.

Economic development and community development go hand in hand. It is not about doing one or the other; it is about doing both.

The Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) reports that the top ten site selection factors comparing sites in different states are purely economic in nature. Labor costs, highway accessibility, tax exemptions, energy availability and costs, corporate tax rate, availability of skilled labor, occupancy or construction costs, state and local incentives, availability of advanced ICT (information/computer tech) and lastly inbound/outbound shipping costs. These are the criteria for a company deciding which state to locate their business to, NOT which community within that state will provide them with a quality of place with a workforce that is happy and productive.

AEDC explains what individual cities can do to improve their chances of securing new jobs. Once a business decides to locate an industry in a particular state, the decision of where to locate within that state becomes a "quality of place" decision because any given location within a state has basically the same economic qualities. Businesses want their employees to be healthy, happy and productive. Companies look for communities that offer the amenities they and their employees need to be successful. These "quality of place" factors are a low crime rate, healthcare facilities, housing availability, housing costs, and ratings of public schools, climate, recreational opportunities, colleges and universities in the area, and cultural opportunities.

Our community currently HAS a low crime rate and excellent healthcare facilities. We have great schools, a good climate, great college and university opportunities and good cultural opportunities for a

community of our size. The one area in which we are the weakest is recreational opportunities. Though it is number seven on the list being the one in which we are the weakest makes it the most important.

Quality of place and recreational opportunities are terms that mean different things to different people. For some it means hunting and fishing. For others it means ball fields for their kids. To others it means swimming and aquatic facilities for their families. Still, yet to others, it means a place where their favorite club can have a meeting or host an event. It can be a place to participate in a community play or a place for after school activities for their kids to keep them out of trouble. And to others it means a place their business can hold a meeting.

Tonight I want to outline for you the City of Batesville's 2012 Community Development Initiative and why it is important to make our community more attractive when competing for jobs against other cities such as Heber Springs, Paragould, Cabot and Bryant.

Community Center

The community center building is the center piece of the 2012 Community Development Initiative. This multi-purpose facility will give our citizens an indoor walking track for a healthier community. It will also have two racquetball courts and an aerobic workout room to complement physical fitness.

Volleyball, basketball and other such sports played on the three basketball courts will create tournament opportunities that will bring a multitude of families to our community who will stay in our hotels, eat at our restaurants and shop with our local merchants.

This all purpose space will accommodate concerts, high school graduations, craft, antique, car, boat, and gun shows, home and garden shows and many other events. It will also serve as the focal point for family reunions, weddings, receptions and other celebrations.

The community center will have four large meeting rooms, a boardroom, and a commercial kitchen that will enable local and regional businesses to hold meetings in Batesville bringing additional dollars into our community.

Indoor Aquatics Facility

The indoor aquatic facility will be located adjacent to the community center and give our citizens an indoor pool for year round use. A heated therapy pool with wheel chair access will give our seniors new opportunities for exercise and will also be a great asset to our medical community in providing water therapy after joint replacement and injuries.

Outdoor Aquatics Facility

The goal of the outdoor aquatic facility in Fitzhugh Park is to provide summertime fun for families with children of all ages. This outdoor water facility will be a cost effective alternative for many families in our community who do not have the time or money for a Branson vacation or a trip to other destinations. Making birthday party memories for a lifetime in the new aquatic facilities will be a welcomed treat compared to our old rectangle pools. The outdoor water facility will attract people within a 50 mile radius to our community on a daily basis giving a substantial economic boost to our restaurants and other businesses.

Ball Park Improvements

The existing five ball fields will be moved to the north recreational complex where two additional fields will also be built. The soccer fields will be moved to the Hayes property across from the old pole plant on East Main Street/Highway 394.

Another part of the initiative that is crucial to our Community is the ½-cent permanent tax that will support, not only recreation, but also our public safety and street departments.

The Mayor's Office and the City Council are committed to a strong public safety department. To maintain our current ISO fire rating of 3 the fire department needs an additional pumper truck and two additional firefighters. With continued improvements, achieving a class 2 rating could result in significant reductions

in insurance rates for homeowners. Additional public safety funding could also go a long way in putting additional police on our streets.

In closing, I offer my sincere thanks to all city employees, supervisors, and council members for all of their hard work, commitment and determination in moving our great city forward. A special thanks goes to Mrs. Sue Skinner, my former secretary, for her concern and love for this city for the past 39 years. I commend our citizens for having the determined desire to build a better Batesville even in tough economic times. Can any of you imagine no bridge across the White River? What if UACCB were still only a dream of those filled with the desire to better themselves through education? As a proud, new grandfather and many others alike, we long for our children and grandchildren to build a life here and love Batesville as we do. My hope is that the future of this great city is our top priority and that we choose a bold path forward for our community that future generations will look back and say that ours was the greatest generation for the City of Batesville.

MAYOR COMMENTS

The council was informed of two fixed assets disposals; Parks Department traded a 2011 John Deere Mule, Unit #446 for a 2012 John Deere Gator, Unit #448 and Cemetery/Landscape Department junked a 2003 John Deere tractor, Unit #314.

Mayor Elumbaugh said because of several scheduling conflicts he would like to cancel both regular scheduled council meeting in March and only have one meeting on March 22nd. Councilmember Bryant so moved and Councilmember Insell seconded. All voted for.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilmember Matthews informed the council of an upcoming federal grant awarded to the Batesville Airport. The grant is to do fill work and security fencing. The bid for the project came in at \$2,442,566.00. The federal grant will pay 95% and the State will pick up the remaining 5%.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Councilmember Matthews moved that the meeting be adjourned. Councilmember Insell seconded and all voted for.

RICK ELUMBAUGH, MAYOR

DENISE M. JOHNSTON, CITY CLERK