

CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN RECESS MEETING OF DECEMBER 17, 2024 MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Be it remembered that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Ocean Springs met in a Recess Meeting at City Hall at 6:00 p.m. on December 17, 2024. Mayor Holloway presided, and Aldermen Burgess, Authement, Wade, Cox, Papania, Blackman, and Impey were present. Also present were City Attorney Robert Wilkinson, City Clerk Patty Gaston, Deputy City Clerk Vicky Hupe, Police Chief Ryan Lemaire, Fire Chief Ryan Heath, Building Official Darrell Stringfellow, Public Works Director Allan Ladnier, Human Resources & Risk Management Director Mindy McDowell, Community Development Director Carter Thompson, Grants Administrator Carolyn Martin, Parks & Recreation Director Stephen Glorioso, and Admin & Community Relations Coordinator Ravin Nettles.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Parks & Recreation Director gave the invocation and Alderman Wade led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to accept the amended agenda.

District Attorney Angel Myers McIlrath addressed the Board and the public during the meeting, responding to a recent article in The Ocean Springs Weekly Record about the use of Flock camera systems by the Ocean Springs Police Department (OSPD). She began by emphasizing the widespread use of Flock cameras, noting that they are deployed not only across Jackson County but also throughout the United States. McIlrath explained that these cameras are an essential component in modern law enforcement, playing a crucial role in crime prevention and investigation. She highlighted that Flock cameras provide real-time data that can assist police in identifying suspects, tracking vehicles involved in criminal activity, and solving cases more efficiently. McIlrath reassured the public that the systems are designed with privacy safeguards and are used with the goal of improving public safety. She further emphasized that these tools are indispensable for law enforcement to respond swiftly and effectively to incidents, ultimately making communities safer. Her statement was intended to clarify any concerns raised by the article and to reinforce the positive impact that Flock camera systems have on both crime-solving efforts and the overall safety of residents.

PROCLAMATIONS

- a. Proclamation - Commending Police Lieutenant Chris Wise for his 25 years of dedication to the Police Department upon his retirement

The Mayor thanked Police Lieutenant Wise for his twenty-five years of service and declared December 19, 2024, "Chris Wise Day" in the City of Ocean Springs.

- b. Ocean Springs Mayor's Youth Council Update - Emma Williams, President

The Mayor's Youth Council, led by President Emma Williams, shared their recent initiatives with the Board. The Council's focus for the year has been mental health awareness, partnering with the Mental Health Association of South Mississippi for a successful annual Lawn event that raised funds for the nonprofit. Additionally, the council has worked on various community service projects, including connecting with the elderly and promoting mental health positivity in local schools. Upcoming projects include a survey to assess youth issues and more outreach to the elderly community. Williams expressed her pride in the council's impact and upcoming plans, emphasizing the importance of bridging gaps and fostering a closer community.

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Burgess, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda except item 5-q pulled by Alderman Authement.

Mayor:

- a. Authorize advertisement for applications to fill the appointed School Board Member position
- b. Approve the Run/Walk Permit Application for the YMCA Winter Classic 10K Run on Saturday, January 25, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.; YMCA 10K route, the applicant will pay all costs for the event
- c. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the OS Elks Mardi Gras Parade on Saturday, February 15, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Regular Parade Route; there will be overtime costs to the City, and the applicant pays other associated event cost
- d. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for Sunset on Cancer Run on October 4, 2025, from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Registration and family events

will be held at the Fort, with the run course down the beach to the bridge, halfway up the bridge, and back; the applicant to pay all associated costs

- e. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for Lighting the Coast for Bright Minds from 3:30 - 9:00 p.m. on October 18, 2025, Front Beach; the applicant will pay all associated costs

City Clerk:

- f. Approve Minutes: Regular Meeting December 3, 2024
- g. Approve Minutes: Special Call Meeting December 4, 2024
- h. Approve Minutes: Special Call Meeting December 9, 2024

Police Department:

- i. Accept OSPD Monthly Report for November 2024
- j. Authorize Out-of-State Travel to New Orleans, LA for Professional Training – Employee #2573 and #2165

Fire Department:

- k. Authorize Out of State Travel for Professional Training-Employee #2089, January 12-24, 2025, Emmitsburg, Maryland-Fire Investigation: Essentials
- l. Accept OSFD Monthly Report for November 2024

Human Resources/Risk Management:

- m. Accept retirement of Police Lieutenant Chris Wise, effective December 19, 2024; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position and the purchase of his duty weapon for \$1.00 as authorized by Mississippi State Statute 45-9-131
- n. Authorize removal of Patrolmen Kristopher Saccurato and Daniel Osburn from probationary status to full time status effective immediately
- o. Authorize removal of Patrolman Steve McMellon from probationary status to full time status effective immediately

Planning Department:

- p. Accept the Planning Department Permit Report for November 2024

Grants Administration:

- q. Authorize Award and Execute Contract for Consultant Services for FY24 MDAH Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Program – Review and Update Historic Districts – WLA Studio / Authorize Agreement Amendment Reflecting the Additional Match of \$5,320.00

Alderman Authement asked the Grants Administrator what is the goal of this contract. She replied that this contract was the first phase of work to provide a windshield evaluation of the current Historic Districts with recommendations for potential

modifications. Funds are being requested for the second phase of work to evaluate and update the current historical guidelines that apply to the districts. A motion was made by Alderman Authement, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to authorize the award and execution of the contract for Consultant Services for the FY24 MDAH Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Program – Review and Update Historic Districts with WLA Studio, and to authorize the agreement amendment reflecting the additional match of \$5,320.00.

Project Manager:

- r. Authorize to execute the agreement with Patrick Martino for the Bienville Place Drainage Easement Project for a total of \$9,550.00

Building Department:

- s. Accept Code Enforcement Report through December 9, 2024
- t. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through December 9, 2024
- u. Accept the Building Department Permit Report for November 2024
- v. Authorize the transfer of 2007 Ford F-150 from the Building Dept to Parks & Recreation

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- a. City Clerk: Approve payment: Docket of Claims, all expenditures are appropriate and authorized by law, and spread the summary on the Minutes
 - a. 1. ADDENDUM: Addition to the Docket of Claims

A motion was made by Alderman Authement, seconded by Alderman Burgess, and unanimously carried to approve the Docket of Claims and the addition to the Docket of Claims finding that all expenditures are appropriate and authorized by law and spread the summary on the minutes.

- b. City Clerk: Authorize the adjustment of water/sewer accounts due to a finding that the customers did not receive the benefit of the utility and the excess usage was due to unforeseen circumstances

A motion was made by Alderman Authement, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to adjust the water/sewer accounts listed, with the finding that the customers did not receive the benefit of the utility and excess usage was due to unforeseen circumstances.

- c. Police: Authorize OSPD to utilize the DOD Skillbridge Program
- The Police Chief explained that the Skillbridge Program is designed to assist military

retirees during the last six months of their enlistment, helping them transition into the general workforce. He described the program as similar to an internship, where the city benefits by having the military continue to pay for the participant during those six months. Afterward, the participant gains valuable experience and would be eligible for full-time employment with the city. A motion was made by Alderman Papania, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to authorize the Ocean Springs Police Department (OSPD) to utilize the Department of Defense (DOD) Skillbridge Program.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

E. Brian Rose, William Jackson, Scott Park, Ellen Hall, Carter Thompson, Rebecca Alston, and William Betterton addressed the Mayor and the Board.

MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM

The Police Chief addressed concerns in a recent Ocean Springs Weekly Record article, clarifying that the cameras used by the Ocean Springs Police Department (OSPD) are not license plate readers. He explained that the cameras are intended for general surveillance to assist in law enforcement efforts, not for capturing license plates. The Chief also responded to the article's claim that the camera systems were hidden in the consent agenda, explaining that the Board discussed the Project NOLA camera system in an open meeting on September 23, 2020, where the installation of the cameras was openly approved. While the NOLA system is still in use on a smaller scale, the Flock system is an enhancement, building on the NOLA Project's foundation with more advanced features and capabilities. The Chief noted that the Flock system is not exclusive to Ocean Springs, as all cities in Jackson County have adopted it. He emphasized that the Flock system is part of a broader, collaborative effort to improve community safety across the region, working alongside other law enforcement resources. The Chief's comments aimed to clarify any misunderstandings and reinforce the transparency and collaborative nature of the program.

Alderman Burgess inquired about asphalt repairs, to which the Public Works Director responded that they would take place next week.

Alderman Authement provided an update from the Environmental Attorney regarding the Leica property, stating that the project is on schedule with no health hazards or concerns reported.

Alderman Papania wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Alderman Blackman reminded everyone of the Gay-Lemon Park ribbon cutting on December 18th at 10:30 AM.

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to accept the resignation of Deputy Court Clerk Elizabeth Bradley, effective December 16, 2024, and to begin the process of filling the vacant position.

Alderman Cox requested the formation of a committee to review city ordinances and ensure Municode is up to date.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Alderman Cox, seconded by Alderman Papania, and unanimously carried to go into a closed session to determine the necessity of going into an executive session.

The City Clerk returned to the meeting and announced that a motion was made by Alderman Papania, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to remain in executive session to discuss potential litigation, Public Works personnel, and other personnel issues.

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Burgess, and unanimously carried to come out of the executive session where the following action was taken:

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Cox, and unanimously carried to increase the salary of the Public Works Director one and a half steps and the Public Works Assistant Director by two steps at the beginning of the next pay period as budgeted.

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Burgess, and unanimously carried to adjourn.

The meeting ended at 7:18 p.m.

ADJOURN UNTIL 6: 00 P.M. on JANUARY 7, 2025

Mayor [Signature] 1/7/2025 Date Clerk Betty Weston 1/7/2025 Date



December 17, 2024 - Recess Meeting Minutes