

Weston City Council
Minutes

Lewis County Court House
117 Center Avenue
January 2, 2024

Present: Mayor Kim Harrison-Edwards, Councilperson Sherry Rogers, Steven White, Debbie Gump, Herb Curtis, City Manager Nate Stansberry, City Clerk Judy Piercy, City Attorney Brian Bailey, Finance Manager Joe Solberg, Chief Mike Posey, Chief Jimmy Suttle, Building/Code/Zoning Enforcement Officer Marty Lewis, Street Commissioner Mike Starett, Sanitary Board Director Dee Evans.

Call to Order/Moment of Silence: Mayor Harrison-Edwards asked for a moment of silence and called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Harrison-Edwards asked everyone to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Visitors Section (5 Minute Time Limit): No one signed up to speak.

Presentations: No presentations to be given.

Approval of Minutes: Councilwoman Gump made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Rogers to **approve** the Regular Session Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2023. **Motion carried.**

Receive and File Reports of City Boards, Commissions, and Outside Agencies: Mayor Harrison-Edwards read aloud the times and dates of the different meetings with a correction for the Lewis County EDA meeting will be on Wednesday, January 31st, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. Under the Outside Agencies the WV First Foundation will meet Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 9:30 a.m., if you cannot attend in person, you can attend through the web.

Known Vacancies to be Filled: Mayor Harrison-Edwards read aloud the vacancies for Board of Zoning Appeals with two total positions, Weston Municipal Appeals Board three positions, Weston Tree Commission with two positions, and the Historic Landmarks Commission with two positions.

Sanitary Board of Director Report: The Sanitary Board of Directors Evans passed out to the council the December Report which included the Finance Report. Sanitary Board of Director Evans informed the council that the piece of equipment from the Appalachian Equipment for \$15,885 and paid the rest of the invoices out of the General Repo Monies. Sanitary Board of Director Evans informed the council that she has the check for the Stormwater 2% tax fees for the mayor to sign so she can give it to the Finance Manager Solberg. Mayor Harrison-Edwards asked if 310 past due termination letters was an increase, Sanitary Director Evans replied that it was a decrease, and no shut offs were done because of the holiday, but will resume with termination letters this month. Councilwoman Rogers stated that was a good call from the Sanitary Board.

Department Reports

Finance - Finance Manager Solberg provided the council with Profit and Loss from July through December 2023, Consolidated Fund Balance Sheet for December 1, 2023, Bank Statements for Coal Severance, General Fund, Holding Account, K-9 Fund, Parks and Recreation, Payroll Account, Police Equipment Fund, Rainy Day Fund, Vacant Structures, ARPA Fund, and the Check Detail for December 2023. Finance Director

Solberg requested to move \$425 from the General Fund to the Vacant Structure Fund. Finance Manager Solberg explained that in the packet you will find the Vacant Structure Report that tells who paid to justify this request. Councilwoman Gump made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Rogers to **approve** \$425 from the General Fund to the Vacant Structure Fund. **Motion carried.** City Manager Stansberry asked Finance Manager Solberg to talk about the WV First Settlement Money. Finance Manager Solberg stated that the State has split the money into two categories with a small amount to every municipality in every county in the State. The second category is the money will be held, and the WV First Organization will be deciding how to divvy up the communities. With our share of the money, we can do about anything as it relates to the Opioid Crises. The WV First Organization with the money they are holding does not want to write a bunch of small checks to different organizations they would like to select one or two ideas and write a check for. Finance Manager Solberg continued to tell the council that we can spend our money on whatever we would like to pertain to the Opioid Crisis. Mayor Harrison-Edwards asked whatever the plan is to be brought in front of the council for approval, and City Manager Stansberry replied to it would. Councilwoman Rogers expressed the need to sit down with the police, fire department, and code enforcement and discuss their thoughts on what to use the money for. Councilwoman Gump would like to see education awareness in the schools with handouts, and officers present. The council congratulated Finance Manager Solberg on the birth of his son and is glad that everything is going well.

Street Department: The December Report was in the packet. Street Commissioner Starett informed the council of the following:

The Street Department did purchase truck talked about at the last Regular Session Meeting and it needs a little bit of work done to make it ready to help plow snow.

- The community gave the Street Department praise for helping at the airstrip by passing out of food. The Salvation Army thanked the Street Department for helping at Stonewall Jackson Lake with Christmas.
- Councilwoman Rogers stated she was glad to see the Street Department out helping in the community.

Police Department: The December Report was not in the council's packet. Chief Posey informed the council of the following:

- Sergeant Minney is back on duty
 - Patrolman Adamczyk last day was December 31, 2023
- Councilwoman Gump asked Chief Posey about people parking on the wrong side of the road and Chief Posey stated we have ticketed some and will continue to watch for parking the wrong way.

Fire Department Report: The December Report was not in the council's packet. Chief Suttle informed the council of the following:

- It was the slowest December month in five years.
 - Calls were up 200 this year from last year.
- Councilwoman Rogers asked if most of the calls were medical and Chief Suttle broke the total down for the council, it was 710 fire and 566 medicals.

Building/Code/Zoning Report: The December Report was in the packet. Building/Code/Zoning Enforcement Officer informed the council of the following:

- Building Permits increased, which increased the revenue side.
- City Manager Stansberry informed the council that the City of Weston was not selected for the REAP Grant this year, the DEP will be spreading the monies to other communities. City Manager Stansberry stated that Building/Code/Zoning Enforcement Officer Lewis talked with the representatives, and they will let him know when the funding will be available again.

Feline Control Report was in the packet and Building/Code/Zoning Officer Lewis informed the council of the following:

- Feline Control stands at 57% of their budget. Councilwoman Gump stated she thought there was a possibility of Federal Funding available for felines and should apply. City Manager Stansberry will be looking into a grant for spade and neutering.

City Attorney Report: The City Attorney Bailey informed the council of the following:

- We will need to schedule a Codification meeting this month and he will be sending out an email to see what date would be better. City Manager Stansberry stated the week of the twenty second would be better for him.

City Clerk: The City Clerk Report was in the packet.

City Manager Report: The City Manager Report was in the packet. The City Manager also provided the council with a report via email with information and background on items being discussed in the Regular Session Meeting. Stansberry informed the council of the following:

- Happy New Year to all.
- Updated the excel sheet and sent it to the council.
- Utilities leaving trenches open and permits difficult and ongoing and no one is asking for the requirements we are asking for. When digging up the streets they put some gravel in the area and do not put it back to the original. Councilwoman Rogers expressed that they are tearing up our roads that just paved and leaving them. Councilwoman Gump asked Dave Gump from the DOH what the time limit was for putting the road back together. Mr. Gump stated it was six months for the DOH.
- PEIA is increasing and we will need to see if the employees are interested in going to a different plan that would save the employee money and the city.
- Working on mapping for the Sludge Project.
- Laura Anderson, the AmeriCorp Program Director is hard at work trying to get a after school program. Laura is trying to get the Skating Rink at Holt Property up and running, weather permittable, and her postings on our website are a success over 200 shares.
- Budget season will be starting in February, Finance Manager Solberg, and City Manager Stansberry will bring to the council in March.
- Planning Commission will be meeting on January 10, 2024 to continue working on the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Riverfront Project Grant agreement will be discussed later in the meeting for the council's approval.
- City Manager Stansberry and Chief Suttle will work on the Emergency Planning.
- Working on building walls to create office space inside the Municipal Building.
- Downtown cameras, brackets are needed to hook to the tower, may have to use the spot where the Christmas lights are connected.
- The city has not received any word back from the letter sent to the DOH.

Councilwoman Gump made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Rogers to approve all Department Reports and the Check Detail for December. **Motion carried.**

Old Business

Ordinance 2023-22 to Amend the September 5, 2006 Feline Control Ordinance by Adding in Registration Process and Registration Fee (Second Reading) (Action Requested): Councilwoman Rogers made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Gump to approve to have the second reading of Ordinance 2023-22 to Amend the September 5, 2006 Feline Control Ordinance by Adding in Registration Process and Registration Fee.

City Clerk Judy Piercy read Ordinance 2023-22 to Amend the September 5, 2006 Feline Control Ordinance by Adding in Registration Process and Registration Fee second reading by title only.

Councilwoman Rogers made a motion second by Councilman Curtis to **approve** the second reading by title only of the Ordinance 2023-22 to Amend the September 5, 2006 Feline Control Ordinance by Adding in Registration Process and Registration fee. **(Roll call of votes, Councilwoman Rogers yes, Councilman White yes, Councilwoman Gump yes, Councilman Curtis yes). Motion carried.** The first reading of the Ordinance 2023-22 to Amend the September 5, 2006 Feline Control Ordinance by Adding in Registration Process and Registration Fee was read on December 4, 2023. The approval of the second reading enacts Ordinance 2023-22 to Amend the September 5, 2006 Feline Control Ordinance by Adding in Registration Process and Registration Fee as of January 2, 2024.

Police Pay Scale: City Manager Stansberry stated that a pay raise for the police will be difficult in this budget, but if approval from the council we can find a way to make the increase. Mayor Harrison-Edwards asked for the number of officers we have, and City Manager Stansberry stated five and it becomes difficult when one officer needs to call off. City Manager Stansberry informed the council that our Chief of Police works hard, and he does not make as much as his officers. Mayor Harrison-Edwards asked the city manager to do a projected pay scale and we can discuss it at a special session meeting. Councilwoman Rogers asked if the money we received from the Opioid Settlement can be used for equipment and that would leave money in the budget for pay increase.

New Business

Grant Agreement for Riverfront Project: City Manager Stansberry explained the Phase I narrative for acceptance and \$850,000 approved. Mayor Harrison-Edwards hiring of an engineer was excluded in our ear marks for the money. Mayor Harrison-Edwards stated that HUD provided the grant that was approved in May 2023, this is one of their requirements. Councilwoman Rogers made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Gump to **approve** the Grant Agreement for Riverfront Project. **(Roll call of votes, Councilwoman Rogers yes, Councilwoman Gump yes, Councilman Curtis yes). Motion carried.**

Discussion of Upcoming Budget, Municipal Fees, First Due Fire, and Excess Levy: City Manager Stansberry explained to the council that he did the same analysis as last year. All the money is going into the General Fund, and we pay everything through that account when money allows. City Manager Stansberry would like to use three categories, capital outlay, commodity, and contractual service, which he explained what each included. City Manager Stansberry suggested that the fee needs to go directly to the service that is being provided, this way we can show the citizens what their money is being spent on, for example, street paving, police equipment. Councilwoman Rogers thought the constituents would grasp the cost by showing them instead on various categories. City Manager Stansberry asked the council what they would feel comfortable with increasing the Municipal Fees because they have not been increased since 2009. Councilman Curtis thought the fees needed increased, but thought we needed to be moving quicker than what we are on annexation. City Manager Stansberry informed that annexation is going to be a challenge, people will need to be willing to come into the city.

Excess Levy: City Manager Stansberry asked the council to decide how they would like to run the city, and explained another option would be an Excess Levy, we will need to get primary or general election if we do not get it on in the next month or month and a half we cannot until 2026. Councilwoman Rogers informed that we got the local pool by the levy but that was when the oil and gas business were booming doing well

financially. Councilwoman Rogers further commented that it is hard to get a levy passed, and she would hate to see the time and money wasted. Councilwoman Gump informed that the same group of people would not pass the school levy. City Manager Stansberry thought this would give the citizens a chance to let us know what they want. Mayor Harrison-Edwards stated the budget will be getting tighter and we do not know what we are going to come up with increasing the Municipal Fee. Mayor Harrison-Edwards stated are we going to be able to take care of the deficit the city will be experiencing in the next year or two, for that reason if council agrees, City Manager Stansberry should pursue what it would look like for the citizens.

Land Reuse Agency Discussion and Ordinance (First Reading): City Attorney Bailey provided in the packet for the council Ordinance 2024-01 Ordinance Creating the Weston Land Reuse Agency. City Attorney Bailey stated this is a potential ordinance creating the agency and who could be on the board. State Law has few limits but a person from the public must be on the board. The agency can be profound or as limit as you would want, and if property is given to the city, or someone wants to purchase property from the city they will have the ability to do restrict the deeds to set up for the city for development. Mayor Harrison-Edwards stated that it has come up in development opportunities and City Manager Stansberry agreed and that the situations that have come up that the city cannot provide property, but the Weston Land Reuse Agency could. Councilman Curtis asked what the pros and cons of the agency having would be. City Manager Stansberry stated the agency could sell the property to whomever whenever the city would have to place it up for bids with no guarantee who the highest bidder would be and what they would do with it. Building/Code/Zoning Officer Lewis stated that it would provide tax savings, a five-year term and development and the agency can get the property at the Tax Lien Sale. Finance Manager Solberg the agency can do forgivable funding through WV Housing Fund where the city cannot. Street Commissioner Starett asked if the agency could say who can and cannot have a piece of property and put whatever they would like on the property. Street Commissioner Starett thought that was dictatorship if they tell you what you can have and cannot. City Attorney Bailey read the State Code rules and confirmed that the rules would be established for the agency. Mayor Harrison-Edwards commented that this eliminates the bad players, and they would need a developable plan in a certain timeline. Councilwoman Gump asked if the transfer of property what the timeline for the land would be. City Manager Stansberry stated what timeline the council wants to give the agency. Councilwoman Gump made a motion seconded by Councilman Curtis to **table** the Land Reuse Agency Ordinance 2024-01 and place the item in the Special Session Agenda. **Motion carried.**

Annexation Public Meeting Discussion: City Manager Stansberry sent to the council via email a letter discussing having property owners to come in and talk about volunteering to annex into the city which information will be provided on fees and taxes. City Manager Stansberry will be having the meeting at the Peterson Central School on January 18, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. the council and department head should be there to help answer any questions. City Manager Stansberry scheduled a Special Session meeting for Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the public annexation meeting.

Memorandum of Understanding with Jane Lew for Sharing Of Code Enforcement Officer: City Attorney Bailey informed the council that the State Code allows two cities to work together. The City of Jane Lew would like to have Building/Code/Zoning Enforcement Officer Marty Lewis help them with a piece of property, which will not interfere with his job for the city. Councilwoman Gump stated that we have enough in our own town to be done and Councilwoman Rogers agreed. Mayor Harrison-Edwards stated she had spoken with the Mayor of Jane Lew, and it was just one particular property. Councilwoman Rogers stated that the Building/Code/Zoning Enforcement Officer can help with Jane Lew on his days off or take vacation.

Reports of City Council

Mayor Kim Harrison-Edwards passed out her report and informed the council of the following:

- Guardians of the Westfork will meet Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.
- Will be attending the Municipal League Winter Conference on February 11th through February 13th, 2024.
- Has received correspondence about what good work the departments are doing, and it is because of two things, you know your job and the second is you know how to do it.

Ward I Councilwoman Sherry Rogers thanked everyone for all the work that was being done and appreciated everyone.

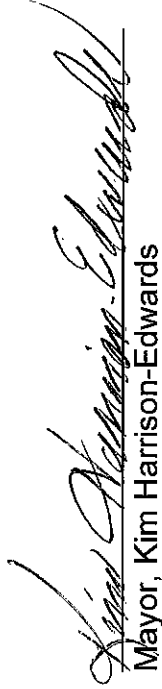
Ward III Councilwoman Debbie Gump thanked the staff and wished everyone a Happy New Year and we are moving forward.

Ward IV – Councilman Herb Curtis wished everyone a Happy New Year.

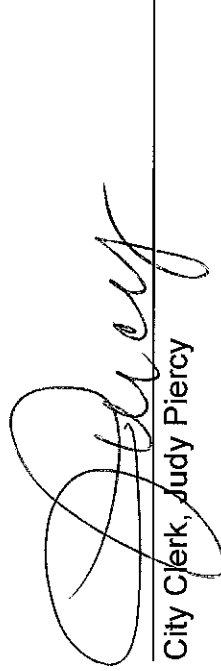
Adjournment

Councilman Curtis made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Gump to **adjourn** at 7:58 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Attest:



Mayor, Kim Harrison-Edwards



City Clerk, Judy Piercy

City Council Work Session
Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
City Municipal Building
Minutes

Present

Mayor Kim Harrison-Edwards, Councilpersons Sherry Rogers, Steven White, Debbie Gump, Herb Curtis, City Manager Nate Stansberry, City Clerk Judy Piercy, Finance Manager Joe Solberg, Chief Jimmy Suttle, Building/Code/Zoning Enforcement Officer Marty Lewis, Street Commissioner Mike Starett.

Call to Order

Mayor Harrison-Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Harrison-Edwards asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Annexation Discussion

Mayor Harrison-Edwards asked City Manager Stansberry to inform the council of the good news. City Manager Stansberry informed the council that they spoke with a representative from Walmart about annexation, explaining what we wanted to do with the city. Mayor Harrison stated they were to get back with us within a week. Councilman Curtis stated that when discussing annexation with Walmart we should have our City Attorney present. City Manager Stansberry provided the council with a letter that was sent out to twenty or thirty residents along with a map showing the proposed annexed areas. City Manager Stansberry shared a few phone calls that were received from the residents on annexation.

Councilwoman Rogers felt that we needed to hire a marketer to let everyone know what we have to offer and what we can offer. Councilwoman Rogers went on to say that the city never toots its own horn, we have accomplished a lot in the city.

City Manager Stansberry brought the power point he will be presenting at the meeting on Thursday, January 18th, 2024 at Peterson School and informed the council if they wanted changes made or addition to please let him know. City Manager Stansberry went through each slide discussing the possibilities and took feedback.

Discussion was had on raising the Municipal Fire Fees going by a flat rate or square footage rate. The agreement between the council was flat rate for the residential municipal fee and square footage for the commercial side. Discussion of the First Due First which will be based on the Municipal Fees and State Code states a reasonable fee. Councilman Curtis asked when the Municipal Fee was raised last, and City Manager Stansberry stated in 2009. Chief Suttle shared what several other municipalities were charging and felt that square footage for commercial sites would be the best.

Street Commissioner Starett commented that in the public he was hearing that the city was not collecting all the Municipal Fees, why would we increase the fees for the citizens that do pay.

City Manager Stansberry and Finance Manager Solberg will be working on the Municipal Fee Ordinance with City Attorney Bailey. Councilwoman Gump would like to show to the public exactly what the \$100 fee does cover and show that it is not covering the entire cost of the service.

Public Comment

City Manager Stansberry thanked Dave Gump for doing such a good job on the Building/Zoning Appeals Committee with the Vanec case. Mr. Gump stated that he thought it was fair for all parties involved.

City Manager Update

City Manager Stansberry informed the council of the following:

- The legislature is back in session, and they have Special Economic Development Funds, and he would like to apply for the Riverfront Park Project. City Manager Stansberry would like to create a mini business park on the water plant property. In the small business park approximately eight structures for \$10,000. City Manager Stansberry met with Chamber of Commerce Chris Bailey, and EDA Director Ray Smith. Mayor Harrison-Edwards informed the structure would be \$10,000 and another \$10,000 to \$15,000 to do a study. Councilman Curtis stated that he was not against the idea, but we have to many things going on that we need to take care. City Manager Stansberry respected his answer and asked if the Chamber of Commerce and EDA could continue looking into the process. Councilman Curtis stated if the city is not involved.
- Went over the Animal Control Budget and stated that we are over the budget and gave the cost of travel and having the felines spade or neutered. City Manager Stansberry expressed that the program was a success, and the feline cats are being taken care of. The council agreed with the support of the program.
- City Manager Stansberry informed the council that the sales tax was down from last year.

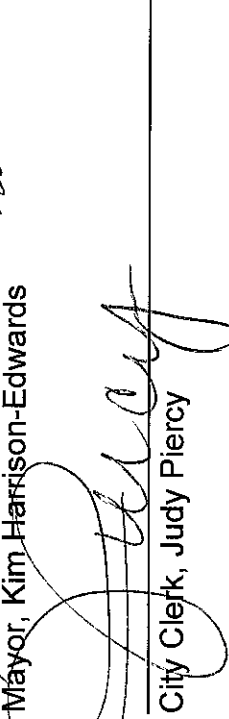
Adjournment

Councilwoman Gump made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Rogers to **adjourn** at 7:42 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Attest:



Mayor, Kim Harrison-Edwards



City Clerk, Judy Piercy