

CITY OF NEWPORT
REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
MAY 5, 2025

The City Council of the City of Newport, Arkansas met in regular session May 5, 2025 in the chambers of the Municipal Courtroom.

Mayor Ratliffe called the meeting to order. City Clerk/Treasurer Hembrey called the roll. Council members present were Michael Allen, Allen Edwards, Carol Falwell, Wendell Green, Regina Lake, Leroy Mansko, and Julie Moss. City Attorney Pettie was present. Council Member Andy May was absent.

Following the invocation by Carol Falwell, those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion by Allen and second by Moss to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2025 Meeting carried (6/0) with “yes” votes by Allen, Falwell, Green, Lake, Mansko, and Moss. Edwards abstained due to being absent at the April 7, 2025 Council Meeting.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Mayor Ratliffe had the following reports:

- An electronic copy of the March 2025 Financial Statements for the General Fund, Street Fund, 911 Fund, Sewer Fund, Administration of Justice Fund, Grant Fund, Intoximeter Fund, District Court Cost Fund, Court Automation Fund, Drug Control Fund, Advertising & Promotion Fund, Fed Aid Grant Fund, Judge/Clerk Retirement Fund, NEDC Fund and Newport Airport was sent to each Council Member with their council package. Mayor Ratliffe asked that if any Council Member had any questions to please direct their questions to City Clerk/Treasurer Hembrey.
- City Sales Tax received in April was \$158,720, County Sales Tax was \$104,660 and NEDC Sales Tax was \$79,360.
- Mayor Ratliffe stated Newport School had appointed the following members for a Softball Partnership Committee for possible upgrade to the George Kell Park Softball Field:

1. Superintendent Bradley
2. Member Foshee
3. Member Sampson
4. Member George

Mayor Ratliffe requested the following be appointed for the City of Newport Softball Partnership Committee:

1. Parks Director –Johnny Long
2. Council Member- Michael Allen
3. Council Member – Allen Edwards
4. Mayor-Derrick Ratliffe

A motion by Falwell and second by Lake to establish a Softball Partnership Committee with the Newport School District for the possible upgrade to George Kell Park Softball Field with the above requested members carried (7/0) with “yes” votes by Moss, Falwell, Edwards, Green, Allen, Lake and Mansko.

51 **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

52
53 **CITIZENS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL ABOUT PROPOSED ENTERTAINMENT**
54 **DISTRICT ORDINANCE**
55

- 56 • **Joyce Jones**
57 • **Dennis Haigwood**
58 • **Pastor Bill Chambers**
59 • **Doctor Brother Greg Dills**
60 • **Doctor Ronald Gore**
61

62 Mayor Ratliffe stated five citizens of Newport requested to be heard concerning the proposed
63 entertainment district. Mayor Ratliffe recognized Ms. Joyce Jones. Ms. Jones gave detailed
64 reasons she was against the entertainment district. Mayor Ratliffe recognized Mr. Dennis
65 Haigwood. Mr. Haigwood gave detailed reasons he was against the entertainment district.
66 Mayor Ratliffe recognized Pastor Bill Chambers. Pastor Chambers gave detailed reasons he
67 was against the entertainment district. Mayor Ratliffe recognized Dr. Brother Greg Dills.
68 Dr. Dills gave detailed reasons he was against the entertainment district. Mayor Ratliffe
69 recognized Dr. Ronald Gore. Dr. Gore gave detailed reasons he was against the
70 entertainment district. Mayor Ratliffe recognized Newport Economic Development
71 Commission Executive Director Jon Chadwell. Mr. Chadwell gave an informative detailed
72 account of an entertainment district with the benefits it would entail.
73

74 **ORDINANCE: ESTABLISHING A PERMANENT ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT**
75 **IN DOWNTOWN NEWPORT (SECOND READING)**
76

77 City Attorney Pettie read the second reading of the Ordinance establishing a permanent
78 entertainment district in downtown Newport in its entirety.
79

80 **ORDINANCE: AMEND FEES AND CHARGES MADE BY NEWPORT**
81 **MUNICIPAL WATER COMPANY (SECOND READING)**
82

83 City Attorney read the second reading of the Ordinance amending fees and charges made by
84 the Newport Municipal Water Company in its entirety.
85

86 **ORDINANCE: FIXING NEW WATER RATES (SECOND READING)**
87

88 City Attorney read the second reading of the Ordinance fixing new water rates in its entirety.
89 Council Member Allen asked about the difference in the current rates and proposed new
90 rates. Miller-Newell Engineer Wayne Menley stated the minimum charge was raised by
91 \$2.00 and the excess usage by 3%.
92

93 **NEW BUSINESS:**
94

95 **APPOINTMENTS TO NEWPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

- 96 • Dr. Johnny Moore (Term Exp. 5/6/30)
97 • Benjy Harris (Term Exp. 5/6/30)
98 • Hiroyuki "Hiro" Kado (Term Exp 5/6/30) (Replaces Tomio Okada)
99

Mayor Ratliffe stated the Newport Economic Development Commission (NEDC) had requested the above names be appointed to the NEDC with a term expiring 5/6/30. After discussion, a motion by Falwell and second by Allen to reappoint Dr. Johnny Moore to the NEDC Commission with a term expiring 5/6/2030 carried (7/0) with “yes” votes by Green, Moss, Allen, Mansko, Edwards, Falwell and Lake.

A motion by Moss and second by Falwell to reappoint Benjy Harris to the NEDC Commission with a term expiring 5/6/2030 carried (7/0) with “yes” votes by Mansko, Falwell, Green, Edwards, Lake, Allen and Moss.

A motion by Falwell and second by Moss to appoint Hiroyuki “Hiro” Kado to the NEDC Commission with a term expiring 5/6/2030 carried (7/0) with “yes” votes by Lake, Moss, Mansko, Green, Edwards, Falwell and Allen.

REAPPOINT SHANE GRADY TO NEWPORT HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR TERM EXPIRING 5/1/2029

A motion by Lake and second by Falwell to reappoint Shane Grady to the Newport Housing Authority for a term expiring 5/1/2029 carried (7/0) with “yes” votes by Green, Edwards, Falwell, Lake, Allen, Mansko and Moss.

RATE STUDY FOR WASTEWATER SYSTEM PREPARED BY MILLER-NEWELL ENGINEERS

Mayor Ratliffe recognized Wayne Menley, Miller-Newell Engineer. Mr. Menley presented a rate study for the Newport Wastewater System. Mr. Menley stated the study was performed to comply with all the requirements listed in ACT 605 of 2021, and ACT 545 of 2023. After reviewing the study, Mr. Menley stated a rate increase is needed to cover all costs for the wastewater system.

With no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned.

PASSED AND APPROVED THE 2ND DAY OF JUNE, 2025

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK