



**CITY OF CENTERTON
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024
6:00 PM**

- (1) **Pledge** – The Pledge Allegiance was recited.

- (2) **Prayer** – Keith Higginbotham offered the prayer.

- (3) **Roll Call** - Those Present and answering Roll Call were Mayor Bill Edwards, Darren Warren, Josie Reed, Keith Higginbotham, and Amy Rochette. Justin Cowgur and Misty Elam were absent. Those present and not answering Roll Call were City Clerk Todd Wright, City Attorney Brian Rabal, HR Director Jocelyn Diaz, City Engineer Alan Craighead, Planning Director Lorene Burns, Fire Chief Matt Thompson, Police Chief Cody Harper, Chief Building Inspector Robert Coffelt and Director of Public Works Anthony Martinez.

- (4) **Council Minutes** –

Keith Higginbotham made a motion to Approve the Minutes of the February 13, 2024 City Council Meeting, with a 2nd from Amy Rochette. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

CWSD, Planning Commission Board of Zoning Adjustments and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes –

Keith Higginbotham made a motion to Acknowledge Receipt of the Minutes of the January 23, 2024 CWSD Meeting, February 6, 2024 and February 20, 2024 Planning Commission Meetings and February 4, 2024 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting, with a 2nd from Josie Reed. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

- (5) **City and Court Financials** -

City Council 3/12/2024

Mayor Bill Edwards addressed the Council, detailing the Financial Reports for February 2024, as provided in the Council packets. Revenue was at 16% and Expenses were at 18%.

The February 2024 Financial Report and Court Report were contained in the Council packets.

Mayor Edwards asked the Council if there were any questions. There were none.

Josie Reed made a motion to accept the February, 2024 City & Court Financials, with a 2nd from Keith Higginbotham. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

(6) Department Reports -

The Department Reports were in the Council Packets.

Mayor Edwards asked the Council if there were any questions. There were none.

(7) Public Comments – None

(8) State of the City – Mayor Bill Edwards

State of the City Address—2024

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Centerton City Council, and fellow citizens: As your Mayor I am honored to report to you the state of the city and its future needs. I am grateful for the opportunity that the citizens have given me to serve the citizens of the City of Centerton over the past 14 years as your mayor.

First of all, I am happy to announce that the City of Centerton is financially sound, and thru fiscal conservation, your staff and City Council, who are good stewards of the taxpayer's money, has balanced its budget over the past 14 years. The 2023 financial statement has been presented, and as you have seen, we are in a good financial condition.

Centerton continues to grow, and we are continuing to see new citizens every year. Our current estimated population is 24,543, which is up from 23,100 in 2023. That is a 6.65 percent increase from last year, according to worldpopulationreview.com, and we have grown 35.08 percent since the 2020 censuses of 17,792. Centerton has also grown in size to 13.6 square miles and is ranked the 20th largest city in the state.

As the community grows, we are seeing more commercial projects coming to the community. Currently under construction is a new Harps store which will be approximately 40,000 square feet. Other projects are Centerton Animal Hospital, a new Muse Burger restaurant, and a new Chipotle just to name a few.

I would also like to report on a couple grant project we are working on. Currently we are working to construct sidewalks along Gamble Road to Bliss Street from Seba Road and then Bliss Street to D Street. We have acquired the last right of way for this project and this should go out for bid soon. We are also working on Phase 2 of the McKissic Trail, which will eventually connect to the Bentonville Trail System.

We are finishing up comments from ARDOT and this should also go out for bid soon. We also plan on applying for the next round of TAP and Carbon Reduction Grants for a sidewalk project to connect several existing sidewalks together, and also received a grant to add a 10-foot sidewalk on Highway 102, which is currently to go out for bid this year. The city is also working with ARDOT on the expansion of Highway 102, West Centerton Blvd, from Main Street to Highway 279 south. The project was set to go out for bid in September 2023, however the plan showed a roundabout near Sun Meadow Drive, which would cause 5 local businesses to be displaced. That round about was removed from the project. The project will include 5 lanes and sidewalk on both sides of the roadway. The sidewalk on the south side of the road will be a 10-foot side path, for which the city received a \$625,000 grant to fund. This will offer additional sidewalks in our community.

The city is also working with ARDOT to widen Main Street, which is State Highway 102B, to see if they will widen the road, repair it and add sidewalks on both sides. The city would then possibly take over the road. We are also working with ARDOT on Highway 279 south, which is Vaughn Road, to get this project added to the next round of road improvements listing. I have also been in touch with Northwest Arkansas Planning Commission about getting some of these projects programed into the next round of improvements.

The Public Works Department has been very busy in 2023, and a lot of road improvements have been made, to include patching, overlays and striping in different areas of the city. Many drainage boxes were repaired last year which will help with drainage in the community. The city has received a grant for \$300,000 to pave Tycoon, Motley and Dorsey Lee Roads and Public Works has been preparing the road by fixing issues prior to the paving. This will help save the taxpayers additional funding by doing the work in-house. A trail was completed near Grimsley Junior High and flashing lights were also added to slow traffic down during peak times at the school.

Parks and Recreation has also been busy in 2023, by installing a Pump Track, and getting final designs to install a BMX Park. Also, a new playground and dog park was added to Riverwood Park. The department has also been utilizing a recently purchased wood chipper, taking care of removing dead trees in the community. Public Works staff has also been working together with the Fire and Police Departments to clean up and open dams at the Centerton Lake. The department has also budgeted for new equipment to continue to make improvements at the lake.

Our Planning Department has been very busy with several active projects at one time. At any given time there are 12-15 different subdivisions, and several commercial projects in some phase of development. The department has also been working on updating our codes, and is in the middle of reviewing the Land Use and Master Street Plans, which should be reviewed every 5 years, but due to our growth this is being reviewed earlier. The city has a Community Rating System (CRS), which is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#). Over 1,500 communities participate nationwide, and I am proud to announce, due to the hard work of our staff, we received a CRS rating of 7, which will help homeowners on flood insurance rates. SmartGov also came online and is assisting in the review process of planning projects, where developers can see the progress of their submittal. Business licenses have also been added, to help automate the process.

Centerton has seen a huge impact on building in our city, with a total of 11,979 inspections in 2023, totaling of almost \$1 million dollars in building permit fees for the year. We have seen a steady increase in 2023, with many commercial projects coming to the city, providing many more services and

restaurants for our community. For 2023 we had 1305 new Permits. Most permits now are done online, along with scheduling, which streamlines the process.

The Code Enforcement division has been extremely busy with a large number of grass and other complaints in 2023. Since implemented, the officer has been very proactive in identifying violators, which has kept the number of complaints down for the year.

The city gave away over 500 trees in October 2023 and received the over 500 trees thanks to a grant from the Wal Mart Family Foundation, which has really enhanced the appearance of the community, with another group of trees planning to be given away during Arbor Day 2024.

The Centerton Police Department recorded 22,171 total calls for service, which is an increase from 2022. The residents recently passed a bond issue to increase the size of the police building, which should start construction this year.

The Centerton Fire Department responded to 1760 calls for service in 2023, attended 11,000 hours of training and is currently staffed with full-time and part-time firefighters. Training continues on a continuous basis, with our department hosting training on a regular basis. The ambulance service is going well. We were able to send an ambulance and crew to Florida to help FEMA in 2023 with a disaster response. Fire Station #2 remodel is complete and houses a full-time ambulance crew. The department is in the process of hiring 6 new firefighters to staff and provide full time coverage on the north side of our city and fire area.

The Centerton Water and Sewer Department is currently increasing the size of the Commission to 5 members. They are working on adding a new water tower at Fire Station #3, which is on the west side of the city.

Centerton Animal Control has completed the first phase of the remodel project and has hired an Animal Services Manager in addition to an Adoption Specialist, and has 2 Animal Control officers and 2 Kennel Techs. The shelter uses Facebook to post dogs picked up and there is a great response from the community, not only reuniting pets but also adopting them from the shelter. Also, the shelter is featured once a month on KNWA pet of the month and on KFSM Channel 5.

The voters recently approved a bond to build a Community Center in the community and the process will begin for the design of the building. We are excited for this project and are shooting for an opening time of spring 2026.

Lastly, I appreciate the opportunity to work with each of you, and for the citizens of our community over the past 14 years. No administration is complete without the support of the Centerton City Council and a loyal staff of great employees. Our city has many hard-working employees, from the Department heads to the troops that carry out the daily activities and duties to help keep our city running smooth and efficiently. Thanks for a Job Well Done!!!

(9) Ordinances –

Keith Higginbotham made a motion to Read Ordinances 2024-06, 2024-09, 2024-10 and 2024-11 by Title only, with a 2nd from Amy Rochette. There was a roll call. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

Josie Reed made a motion to Suspend the Rule Requiring the Reading on three (3) Separate Occasions for Ordinances 2024-06, 2024-09, 2024-10 and 2024-11, with a 2nd from Keith Higginbotham. There was a roll call. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

- **Ordinance 2024-06 - AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING THE FINAL PLAT OF THE MAPLE ESTATES PHASE III SUBDIVISION, CREATING RESIDENTIAL LOTS 120-175, IN THE CITY OF CENTERTON, S29-T20-R31, BENTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS.**

Mayor Edwards addressed the Council, stating that this Ordinance is to accept the Final Plat of the Maple Estates Subdivision Phase III, on Wolverine Drive and Cutberth Lane. He said it was recommended for Council approval at the PC meeting on 2/20/24. He listed the Bond amounts and stated that they have been collected. He said they have also dedicated ROW on the east side of Wolverine Drive. A copy of the Final Plat was provided for Council.

Mayor Edwards asked the Council if there were any other questions. There were none.

City Attorney Brian Rabal read the Ordinance by title only. Keith Higginbotham made a motion to adopt the Ordinance, with a 2nd from Josie Reed. There was a roll call. All Council Members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

- **Ordinance 2024-09 - AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE CERTAIN LANDS WITHIN THE CENTERTON CITY LIMITS, BELONGING TO THE LARRY MARTIN CROUSE REVOCABLE TRUST AND THE CROUSE FAMILY REVOCABLE TRUST – LARRY MARTIN CROUSE TRUSTEE, FROM AGRICULTURAL (A-1) TO LOW DENSITY SINGLE FAMILY (R-1).**

Mayor Edwards addressed the Council, stating that this Ordinance is to rezone land off of W. Centerton Blvd. from (A-1) to (R-1). He said this was the result of a Tract Split and was recommended for Council approval at the PC meeting on 2/20/24. A map was provided for Council.

Council Member Amy Rochette asked for clarification on the request for (A-1) zoning in this area. City Engineer Alan Craighead stated that this rezone puts the property in Code compliance with the Lot Line Adjustment.

Mayor Edwards asked the Council if there were any other questions. There were none.

City Attorney Brian Rabal read the Ordinance by title only. Keith Higginbotham made a motion to adopt the Ordinance, with a 2nd from Darren Warren. There was a roll call. All Council Members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

- **Ordinance 2024-10 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET FOR THE OPERATION OF THE CITY OF CENTERTON, ARKANSAS FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2023; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PUPOSES.**

Mayor Edwards addressed the Council, stating that this Ordinance is to amend and balance the 2023 City Budget. He said the budgets for each account are also included. A copy of the amended 2023 Budget was provided for Council.

Mayor Edwards asked the Council if there were any questions. There were none.

City Attorney Brian Rabal read the Ordinance by title only. Josie Reed made a motion to adopt the Ordinance, with a 2nd from Keith Higginbotham. There was a roll call. All Council Members voted in favor, and the motion carried. City Attorney Brian Rabal read the Emergency Clause. Keith Higginbotham made a motion to adopt the Emergency Clause, with a 2nd from Josie Reed. There was a roll call. All Council Members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

- **Ordinance 2024-11 - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY CLERK, AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITY OF CENTERTON, ARKANSAS, TO ACCEPT THE WARRANTY DEED FOR PROPERTY LOCATED IN A PART OF THE SE/4 OF THE NW/4 OF S29-T20N-R31W, BENTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS BY CAN-ARK DIAMOND REALTY-CENTERTON, LLC.**

Mayor Edwards addressed the Council, stating that this Ordinance is to accept a Warranty Deed for property on the west side of Wolverine Drive. A copy of the Warranty Deed was provided for Council.

Mayor Edwards asked the Council if there were any questions. There were none.

City Attorney Brian Rabal read the Ordinance by title only. Amy Rochette made a motion to adopt the Ordinance, with a 2nd from Josie Reed. There was a roll call. All Council Members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

(10) Request Title Changes for Centerton Animal Control and Centerton Public Works -

Mayor Edwards addressed the Council, stating that this is a request is to change some job titles by Police Chief Cody Harper and Director of Public Works Anthony Martinez. He said the HR Department has been involved.

Mayor Edwards stated that Chief Harper requested the change from Centerton Animal Control to Centerton Animal Services. He also wanted to change the Animal Shelter Manager position to Animal Services Manager and the Animal Shelter Clerk position to Adoption Specialist. He said the job descriptions will not change.

Mayor Edwards stated that Director Martinez requested to change the Street Maintenance Technician position to Street Technician and the Parks Maintenance Technician position to Parks Technician. He said the job descriptions will not change.

Mayor Edwards asked if there were any questions from Council. There were none.

Josie Reed made a motion to accept the Position Changes as presented, with a 2nd from Keith Higginbotham. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

(11) Accept Resignation of Council Member Misty Elam and Declare a Vacancy for Ward 1 Position 1 -

Mayor Edwards addressed the Council, stating that he received a letter of resignation from Council Member Misty Elam, effective immediately. He stated that she has sold her home and relocated out of state. He stated that Council will need to accept Elam's resignation and declare a vacancy for the position. He stated that the Council can appoint someone to fill the position, per State Law, with our census population below 20,000 residents. He stated that the Term of the Position expires 12/31/2024. He stated that the position should be appointed by the next regular City Council meeting, provided that there is a quorum. He stated that he will post an application for the open position and Council will be allowed to review the applications as they are received, and will be allowed to interview the candidates at the next regular City Council Meeting, prior to making a decision. He stated that the appointed person will be sworn in at the end of that Council Meeting. He stated that the application deadline will be 4/01/2024.

Mayor Edwards recognized Misty Elam for her service to the City of Centerton.

City Attorney Brian Rabal stated that he would review the process prior to the Council Meeting.

Mayor Edwards asked if there were any questions from Council. There were none.

Amy Rochette made a motion to accept the Resignation of Misty Elam as a Council Member and Declare a Vacancy for City Council Position Ward 1 Position 1, with a 2nd from Darren Warren. All Council Members voted in favor and the motion carried.

(12) Other Business –

- **Bentonville West High School Bleachers Proposal Discussion** – City Engineer Alan Craighead detailed a proposal he received today, by Bentonville West High School, for added bleachers for the Student Band at the football stadium. He stated that the proposed location of the bleachers would place three (3) support pillars in the edge of the Stormwater Detention Pond. He said our Code does not allow for any permanent structures in the pond. A diagram was provided for Council. After brief discussion, Council recommended looking at other options before formally bringing something to the city.

(13) Announcements -

- **3/16/2024 – Coffee w/ the Mayor @ 9:00 AM**
- **3/19/2024 – Planning Commission Meeting @ 6:00 PM**
- **4/02/2024 – Planning Commission Meeting @ 6:00 PM**
- **4/09/2024 – City Council Meeting @ 6:00 PM**
- **4/16/2024 – Planning Commission Meeting @ 6:00 PM**

(14) Adjourn -

Keith Higginbotham made a motion to Adjourn at 6:53 PM with a 2nd from Josie Reed. All Council members voted in favor and the motion carried.

Bill Edwards, Mayor

Todd Wright, City Clerk