

COUNCIL MEETING

February 28, 2022

Paragould City Council met in regular session on Monday, February 28, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Room of City Hall with Mayor Agee presiding.

Invocation was led by Michael Meredith of Center Hill Church of Christ.

The meeting was called to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Those present were Neal Adams, Randy Aden, Brad Baine, Jeremy Biggs, Lindsey Boggs, Aaron Camp, Mark Rowland, and Susan Williams.

City Attorney Robert Thompson and City Clerk Andrea Williams were present.

Councilmember Williams moved minutes from previous council meeting of February 14, 2022, be approved as transcribed; seconded by Councilmember Boggs. All in favor.

REPORTS FROM BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES:

Public Service	- None
Finance	- Councilmember Rowland stated the committee met at 5:30 this evening and have item number three on tonight's agenda.
Parks and Recreation	- None
Police	- None
Public Health and Ordinances	- Councilmember Biggs stated the committee met at 5:15 this evening and have item number one on tonight's agenda. Councilmember Biggs also stated the committee discussed an ordinance to regulate usage of the Eight Mile Trail system and will bring the ordinance to the council next month.
Fire	- None
Sanitation	- None

Street/Cemetery - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEM #1

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 10 OF THE CITY OF PARAGOULD, ARKANSAS; TO AMEND THE FUEL GAS CODE AND THE PLUMBING CODE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE REHABILITATION OF CONDEMNED BUILDINGS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Motion made that the ordinance be offered by Councilmember Rowland; seconded by Councilmember Adams.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes.

Director of Planning and Development, Kevin Lang, was present to address the council. Chief Lang stated the 2018 Gas and Plumbing Code has been adopted by the state and therefore, should be adopted by the city as the code being used. He stated the biggest change in the code was the clarification of who could perform plumbing work on rental properties. The code now allows the owner of the property to perform work on their rental property.

Chief Lang also stated that this ordinance will give procedures and guidelines if someone wants purchases a property that has been condemned and wants to rehabilitate it.

Motion made to place the ordinance on the first reading by Councilmember Rowland; seconded by Councilmember Baine.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes.

Motion made to suspend the rules and place the ordinance on the second reading by Councilmember Williams; seconded by Councilmember Camp.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes.

Motion to suspend the rules and place the ordinance on the third and final reading made by Councilmember Rowland; seconded by Councilmember Boggs.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes.

Motion that the ordinance be adopted made by Councilmember Biggs; seconded by Councilmember Adams.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes. Motion carried eight to zero. Ordinance adopted. (Ordinance No. 2022-06)

ITEM #2

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PARAGOULD, ARKANSAS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES – PROPERTY LOCATED AT 711 KENNEDY STREET – APPLICATION OF PHILLIPS DEMENT PROPERTIES, LLC

Motion made to amend the agenda and add item number two an ordinance to amend the zoning ordinance of the city of Paragould, Arkansas and for other purposes made by Councilmember Camp; seconded by Councilmember Biggs. All in favor.

Motion made that the ordinance be offered by Councilmember Rowland; seconded by Councilmember Adams.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes.

Rick Dement was present and told the council that he is wanting to build a quadplex on this property and was unaware that it was zoned R-1 until he came to purchase a building permit. He stated that the surrounding properties are all R-2. This matter was presented to the planning commission on February 10, 2022. Five members were present and all five voted in favor of this rezone. No one appeared in opposition.

Motion made to place the ordinance on the first reading by Councilmember Biggs; seconded by Councilmember Baine.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes.

Motion made to suspend the rules and place the ordinance on the second reading by Councilmember Adams; seconded by Councilmember Williams.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes.

Motion made to suspend the rules and place the ordinance on the third and final reading by Councilmember Williams; seconded by Councilmember Aden.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes.

Motion made that the ordinance be adopted by Councilmember Camp; seconded by Councilmember Adams.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes. Motion carried eight to zero. Ordinance adopted. (Ordinance No. 2022-07)

ITEM #3

APPOINTMENT OF TERESA BRANCH TO PARAGOULD LIGHT WATER AND CABLE TELEVISION SELECTION COMMITTEE

Mayor Agee stated that the television selection committee was short a member and he is requesting to appoint Teresa Branch to that position.

Motion made to approve the appointment of Teresa Branch to the PLWC Television Selection Committee made by Councilmember Rowland; seconded by Councilmember Aden.

All in favor. Motion carried eight to one. Appointment confirmed

ITEM #4

APPOINTMENT OF KAREN COOPER TO THE PARAGOULD HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Motion made to amend the agenda and add item number four appointment of Karen Cooper to the Paragould Housing Authority Board of Directors and item number five appointment of Adam Followell as Director of Public Works made by Councilmember Biggs; seconded by Councilmember Rowland. All in favor.

Mayor Agee stated that he has been contacted by Paragould Housing Authority Director, David Lange, and asked to appoint Karen Cooper to the PHA Board of Directors.

Motion made to appoint Karen Cooper to the PHA Board of Directors by Councilmember Baine; seconded by Councilmember Adams.

All in favor. Motion carried eight to one. Appointment confirmed

ITEM #5

APPOINTMENT OF ADAM FOLLOWELL AS DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

Mayor Agee stated that as of today, Public Works Director Terry McAbee has retired. Mayor Agee stated that he is requesting to appoint Adam Followell to this position.

Motion made to appoint Adam Followell to Director of Public Works by Councilmember Rowland; seconded by Councilmember Williams.

All in favor. Motion carried eight to one. Appointment confirmed

ITEM #6

PRESENTATION OF 2021 AMENDED BUDGET

The following amended 2021 budget was presented to the council for their approval:

**City of Paragould
2021 Amended Budget**

	2021 Original Budget	2021 Amended Budget
<u>Revenues and Bank Balances:</u>		
<u>Revenues & Transfers In:</u>		
General Fund	16,721,938.95	17,860,391.53
Act 988 Emergency Vehicle Fund	67,400.00	64,732.49
Advertising and Promotion Fund	102,400.00	137,038.17
Airport Grant Fund	471,528.00	0.01
American Rescue Plan Grant Fund	-	3,011,066.18
City Beautiful Fund	5,120.00	5,146.33
Court Automation Fund	40,000.00	32,775.08
Economic Development Fund	1,304,000.00	1,568,139.34
Landfill Account	700.00	472.21
Linwood Cemetery Trust Fund	9,000.00	7,965.72
Mission Outreach Grant #790-09042-19 Fund	218,500.00	127,365.00
PYSA Account	-	10,260.70
Street Crimes Unit/Police Drug Fund	5,175.00	30,310.67
Street Fund	2,986,401.00	3,357,486.75
Subtotal	21,932,162.95	26,213,150.18
<u>Available Bank Balances:</u>		
General Fund	8,391,336.24	9,391,123.24

Act 988 Emergency Vehicle Fund	145,706.31	151,690.56
Advertising and Promotion Fund	159,367.91	173,470.33
Airport Grant Fund	1.00	1.00
American Rescue Plan Grant Fund	-	-
City Beautiful Fund	18,017.16	18,017.16
Court Automation Fund	134,920.10	136,752.60
Economic Development Fund	1,041,819.23	1,164,646.61
Landfill Account	16,456.07	16,456.07
Linwood Cemetery Trust Fund	345,061.17	345,120.09
Mission Outreach Grant #790-09042-19 Fund	0.02	0.02
PYSA Account	-	-
Street Crimes Unit/Police Drug Fund	13,283.45	12,891.66
Street Fund	10,865,632.13	10,807,245.57
Subtotal	21,131,600.79	22,217,414.91
Total Estimated Revenues & Bank Balances	43,063,763.74	48,430,565.09

Appropriation- Expenditures & Transfers Out:

General Fund:

Administration & Miscellaneous	1,553,628.09	1,701,387.05
Airport Department	761,334.85	701,689.94
Animal Control	127,944.70	140,098.38
Cemetery	85,310.77	93,385.78
District Court	172,112.10	151,523.01
Emergency 911 Department	1,142,242.93	1,174,376.84
Fire Department	3,095,078.01	3,026,303.06
Mosquito Control	166,875.00	166,055.85
Parks Department	1,899,513.32	1,993,324.26
Planning & Development		-
Police Department	4,841,445.47	4,542,072.42
Police Department (Jail Expenditures)	21,000.00	12,080.02
Sanitation Department	2,043,423.94	2,057,332.56

Appropriation- Expenditures & Transfers Out (cont'd):

	-	-
Transfer OUT	-	-
Subtotal- General Fund	15,909,909.18	15,759,629.17
Act 988 Emergency Vehicle Fund	130,000.00	201,357.07
Advertising and Promotion Fund	100,000.00	191,777.88
Airport Grant Fund	471,528.00	-
American Rescue Plan Grant Fund	-	204,949.71
City Beautiful Fund	2,000.00	392.09

Court Automation Fund	46,000.00	13,380.04
Economic Development Fund	1,034,500.00	910,830.00
Landfill Account	-	16,928.28
Linwood Cemetery Trust Fund	4,200.00	2,265.72
Mission Outreach Grant #790-09042-19 Fund	218,500.00	127,365.00
PYSA Account	-	10,260.70
Street Crimes Unit/Police Drug Fund	5,175.00	4,420.69
Street Fund	5,015,474.84	4,239,887.72
Total Appropriations	22,937,287.02	21,683,444.07

Unappropriated Funds:

General Fund	9,203,366.01	11,491,885.60
Act 988 Emergency Vehicle Fund	83,106.31	15,065.98
Advertising and Promotion Fund	161,767.91	118,730.62
Airport Grant Fund	1.00	1.01
American Rescue Plan Grant Fund	-	2,806,116.47
City Beautiful Fund	21,137.16	22,771.40
Court Automation Fund	128,920.10	156,147.64
Economic Development Fund	1,311,319.23	1,821,955.95
Landfill Account	17,156.07	-
Linwood Cemetery Trust Fund	349,861.17	350,820.09
Mission Outreach Grant #790-09042-19 Fund	0.02	0.02
PYSA Account	-	-
Street Crimes Unit/Police Drug Fund	13,283.45	38,781.64
Street Fund	8,836,558.29	9,924,844.60
Total Unappropriated Funds	20,126,476.72	26,747,121.02

20,126,476.72 26,747,121.02

Note: The following City-owned bank accounts are used to process credit card transactions only: Municipal Airport, City Credit Card, and Parks Credit Card.

Councilmember Rowland stated that the finance committee met at 5:30 this evening. He stated that revenues were up because of the collection of internet sales tax and property tax was up. He stated that the departments that were over budget were due to expenses the council approved such as the truck, trailer and excavator in the street department, an extra IT position and vehicle and website in administration, certifying the dispatchers as EMD's in E-911, and renovations to the Senior Bees center in parks. Councilmember Rowland commended the Mayor and his department head on a good year.

Motion made to accept the 2021 amended budget made by Councilmember Rowland; seconded by Councilmember Boggs.

Roll call: Adams, yes; Aden, yes; Baine, yes; Biggs, yes; Boggs, yes; Camp, yes; Rowland, yes; and Williams, yes. Motion carried eight to zero. Amended budget accepted.

ITEM #7

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

*State of the City
Paragould, Arkansas
February 28, 2022*

The recently completed year of 2021 left the city of Paragould in great financial shape. Our revenues exceeded projections, and thanks to the hard work and conservative measures taken by our department heads, our expenditures were less than budgeted. Our overall bank balances ended the year with an approximate \$6.6 Million dollar increase. This increase includes \$3 Million from the American Rescue Plan Act Fund, and we expect to see an additional \$3 Million from this fund deposited into city coffers in June of 2022. These ARPA funds will provide a huge investment into our parks system and will also allow for saving toward a future municipal and justice complex. These increases in revenue are a direct reflection of the overall growth we are experiencing in our community.

This year PLWC finished the Fiber to the Home project making Paragould, Arkansas's newest GIG City. Fiber now brings GIG speed internet to every household in the city. PLWC also cut the ribbon on a 1.5-megawatt solar plant in November which will help keep our power costs low for our citizens (4th lowest in the state) and keep our city attractive to new industry. To go along with the green energy initiative, PLWC applied for and received a grant which allowed them to install two electric car charging stations. Lastly, PLWC is currently in the middle of a 20-million-dollar sewer and water project that will ensure our citizens always have the best utilities at their disposal. There has never been a better example of how great our Utility is than last February during the major snowstorm we experienced. While virtually every city around us experienced black-outs and rolling power outages the men and women at PLWC kept the lights on and the heat working.

As promised, in January, the city added an additional Code Enforcement officer and an Administrative Assistant to this office. We now have a Code Enforcement office that is unrivaled in the state. The Code Enforcement office was combined with the Inspector's office to form the newly created "Department of Planning and Development." As most of you know, Kevin Lang retired from the Fire Department and is now the Chief of this new department. Chief Lang has worked to equip his department with state of the art, innovative software that makes both the Code Enforcement job, as well as the Inspectors' job, easier and much more efficient. Code Enforcement and Inspector's office numbers for 2021 are as follows: a total of over 1700 code violation cases were opened, up 125% over 2020. Housing permits grew 14% as 175 residential units were permitted. Finally, overall permits were up 15% for a total of 4860 which includes 337 building permits bringing the total construction cost to over 42 million dollars.

The city commissioned a new website to be built this year that is fully interactive and will help keep our citizens informed on what is going on in our city. This website can be used by our

contractors to purchase building permits and operate in the field more efficiently. It can also be used by our citizens for everything from booking reservations in our parks, buying a business license, finding out about community events, making code enforcement requests, and a host of many other exciting features.

In the Public Works Department, drainage will be an area that we will have renewed investment in for the year. In 2021, public works received a new excavator, semi-truck and lowboy trailer to help with some major drainage projects we plan on tackling this year. Along with that addition, we have ordered a 16-yard dump truck. The combination of these purchases gives us the ability to work on drainage like never before. Public works also has an increased street sign budget, and most street signs will be replaced in 2022.

The Sanitation Department has ordered five new sanitation trucks for this year including a front load dumpster truck. This front load truck is the start of converting all our dumpster trucks to front load. We are looking forward to a day that we have very limited times where men are riding on the back of a sanitation truck. This will not only keep those guys safe, but they will in turn be able to utilize their talents in other ways, either in sanitation or the street department. Finally, architectural work has started on a new pet adoption center/dog pound. This will help our animal control officers find homes for the animals they pick up and ensure the animals they do pick up have a good place to stay in the meantime.

The Fire Department took possession of a new million-dollar ladder truck, ordered a new rescue truck, and Kyle Jackson took the Chief's position. Chief Jackson has requested a new side by side to help provide first-aid to any pedestrian who may need it on the soon to be opened 8-mile creek trail. Additionally, in 2021 the Fire Department logged over 13,000 training hours, made over 1000 fire inspections, had contact with over 3000 kids through public education and installed over 60 smoke alarms for residents. These smoke alarms were paid for with grant dollars so there was no cost to those citizens or to the taxpayers of Paragould. Additionally, this year the Fire Department will begin teaching quarterly CPR classes free of charge. Citizens of Paragould will be able to become CPR certified simply by signing up on our website and passing the certification classes.

This leads us into the Parks Department, which also saw a change in leadership. James Kashak took over our Parks Department in mid-summer and has hit the ground running. Since taking over, his department has added some new opportunities; an adult fall kickball league and a first ever "Trick or Treat" event at the Community Center, just to name a couple. This year's parks budget is full of new and exciting things for our citizens to enjoy. Just to hit the highlights: the Senior Bees center is in the middle of a major remodel, a 9-hole disc golf course will be opened, all the pavilions at Reynolds Park will be replaced, and new pavilions will be added at Labor Park. Darryl Brotemarkle will be taking over the Paragould Youth Baseball and Youth Softball Programs, and they have 11 tournaments planned for the spring of 2022. Improvements at every park are planned and of course the first segment of the 8-mile trail will be complete near Memorial Day. To wrap up the Parks Department, I would like to announce that we received an additional grant of \$300,000 this past fall to help extend the trail west from Rotary Park to South Rockingchair Road. This should connect the trail to both Bland Baseball Park and GCT Primary. This will bring the length of the trail to over six miles and bring our total grants for this project to be in excess of 1.25 million dollars. The 8-mile trail project also helped the city land its first ever TRENDSETTER CITY AWARD in the "Health & Wellness for cities of 20,000 residents or greater" category.

The Police department had a great 2021 that started with the addition of two new K-9 officers and ended with a significant pay increase. The K-9 department's two new K-9 Officers being added brought this section of the Police Department to three K-9 officers and handlers. I would like to remind you that through public-private partnerships, all of these officers were added at virtually zero cost to our citizens. Also, this year, four Mobile Sky Patrol cameras were added to the parks system to not only further enhance the safety in our parks, but to also alleviate some of the workload on our Police Department. I am happy to announce that an additional 36 Mobile Sky Patrol cameras are in this year's budget, bringing our total to 40. Of these cameras, 16 will be placed on the trail (one about every ¼ mile) for safety and 20 will be distributed city-wide in all areas to help deter crime and petty theft. The City has purchased two Tesla Model 3's, equipped with the latest technology. 2022's budget for the Police Department includes seven new hybrid interceptors and new GPS units for all patrol interceptors. The City Council also nearly tripled the SWAT budget. Finally, our police numbers for 2021 were 11,253 reports written, 900 accidents worked, 223 motorists assist, and 5,012 citations were issued.

The 911 Emergency Services Center continues to dispatch emergency medical and law enforcement services for Greene County, Greene County Sheriff's office, eight rural fire departments, Marmaduke Police Department, Arkansas Game and Fish, Arkansas State Police, AMMC, EMS for Clay County and all Paragould City Emergency Services. This year all dispatchers have started their Emergency Medical Dispatch certification process. This will allow them to better serve our citizens by providing medical instruction while waiting for EMS to arrive. The city of Paragould partnered with Greene County and is now in the final stages of finishing a major remodel of our Mobile Command Center. This \$120,000 joint effort will benefit all areas that our dispatch center covers and shows a great example of how the city and the county are working together for the benefit of all citizens. In 2021, our Dispatch Center took a total of 90,735 calls for service. Lastly E911 Director, Michael McCammon has started the process of getting a national accreditation on our training program. Once this is finished, we will be the second agency in the state to accomplish this.

Looking around the state you would be hard pressed to find a Downtown that had a bigger year than ours. This year brought about big changes in March with the addition of Miranda Reynolds helping Gina Jarrett with day-to-day operations at the Caboose. Gina retired at the end of December and Miranda has now taken over those duties full time. Downtown, you'll notice new restaurants are popping up. Nearly every empty store front is being remodeled and the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) has purchased real estate on Pruett Street and is beginning the build out of Northeast Arkansas' newest and largest Small Business Incubator/Innovation Center. The city also partnered with Greene County and the EDC to build a Farmers Market Pavilion that is unrivaled in the state. Just to name a few events this past year: the first ever "Big Grass Blue Grass Festival", a monthly after-hours concert series attended by around 5000 citizens, the Saints and Sinners Annual Angel Run to benefit the Arkansas Children's Hospital, the 5th Annual Get Downtown Festival, the 16th Annual Art & Stroll, a Trick or Treat event that was attended by over 3000 people, and more events during the Christmas season than we can name. Just to show the economic impact these festivals have on our local economy; this year the Get Downtown Festival was attended by approximately 7,500 citizens with an economic impact of over \$225,000. Also, in economic development news, Anchor Packaging announced an expansion in March with a capital investment of 21 million dollars and an additional 45 new jobs.

As you know a viable airport is a necessity in the ongoing efforts to maintain and recruit new industry. This past year, Kirk Field finally finished a taxi-way project that has been in the works for over a decade. The city was also awarded a grant in the amount of \$400,000 to put towards an 80'X60' hangar. This will be the first hangar we have that will be able to accommodate any jet that lands at Kirk Field. We truly feel this is just the beginning for jet sized hangars at our airport.

Paragould continues to grow and flourish thanks to the hard work of the cities' employees who work daily for our citizens. I am optimistic about the future thanks to the hard work of our employees, the progressive vision of the Paragould City Council and the great corporate partners we are blessed with. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "THE WORLD IS ALL GATES, ALL OPPORTUNITIES." I truly believe we are living in the greatest times in human history. I hope you all leave here today with a renewed sense of enthusiasm about the future of our city and realize all the opportunities that lay out before us in the coming year. Again, I cannot thank you enough for the privilege of working side by side with you all, and I call it an honor to be your mayor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Josh Agee
Mayor of Paragould

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Agee told the council that last week, during the inclement weather, Mississippi Counties E-911 system went down. Their calls were first directed to Craighead County and Craighead County was unable to manage their traffic along with Mississippi Counties. Mississippi County calls were then transferred to our E-911 center. Mayor Agee commended the dispatchers for their hard work and dedication to handle this situation.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the council, Councilmember Williams moved the meeting be adjourned; seconded by Councilmember Boggs. All in favor. Meeting adjourned 6:49 p.m.

Josh Agee, Mayor

ATTEST:

Andrea Williams, City Clerk