

City of Wynne

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 8, 2024

Recently, several community members have received a flyer listing items of concern. With this statement I hope to provide some clarity for our community members. If you have additional questions, please contact my office to schedule a time to visit with me.

1. Since 2018, I have been talking with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers concerning the flooding issue in Wynne. There are several factors contributing to our flooding issue such as continued development which removes natural barriers for water resulting in water flowing faster. Correction of the issues will be complex as we are dealing with several waterways, including the L'Anguille River which is the main recipient of our stormwater. A project with the Corps is not a simple undertaking and this process was considerably slowed during the global pandemic, as many were. Right now, we are in the planning stages and continue to have regular meetings with the Corps. The Corps is working diligently to find an affordable solution to our issue.
2. Since June 28, 2023, the city has issued 28 citations for code enforcement/animal control violations. Of those 28, six were issued in tornado effected areas. Of those six, four were written prior to City Council extending the date to October 31. Any citations written before the city council extended the date were dismissed. While several warnings were issued prior to city council extending the date to October 31, those warnings did not result in citations and no further action was taken.
In February 2019 City Council passed Ordinance 805 which states that "an RV, camper or ETSU may be used as temporary quarters no longer than five (5) consecutive days." This was amended after the tornado to permit property owners to live in an RV on their property for up to 18 months. For tracking purposes and to ensure safe hookups to city utilities, the city required property owners to purchase a permit for \$15.00. The city building inspector issued 52 permits.
3. The city received \$425,837.23 in insurance proceeds for the building at E.U. Deshay Park. The city also received \$51,896.78 via a FEMA project for the contents of the building. A portion of the insurance proceeds have been used to complete demolition and debris removal at the site to ensure safety at the park. The playground equipment remains in good working order and the park has been and will remain open to the public. The City Council will make the decision on replacing the building during the September city council meeting. According to Arkansas law, the mayor does not vote on City Council matters unless a tie occurs.

4. In July 2023 the Public Works Director requested approval from the City Council to purchase a UTV for the department. Arkansas Code 14-42-107 specifically permits city officials or employees to contract with the city for the furnishing of any supplies, equipment or services provided that the official/employee is specifically named in an ordinance. Due to my affiliation by marriage to Hobbs Equipment an ordinance and approval of the city council was required. The Public Works Director did his due diligence prior to requesting to purchase the item from Hobbs Equipment. He contacted two other local dealerships and received a quote of \$27,930.22 on a similar UTV. The second dealership was unable to provide a quote because they did not have a comparable UTV in stock and were unable to get one. Ordinance 898 was passed by a nine-to-one vote of the city council to allow for the purchase of the UTV for \$22,300.00 from Hobbs Equipment. I did not vote because the motion to approve passed with a majority.
5. Applicants for community development block grants (CDBG) must have a low-moderate income (LMI) level of 51% or higher. The current LMI for the City of Wynne is 47.2% therefore we do not qualify for block grants. If community development block grants for disaster recovery (CDBG-DR) become available, we may qualify because the requirements differ. If we qualify, we will apply for those funds.
The city has submitted multiple projects to FEMA. We have done our due diligence; our consultant has been incredibly thorough and has submitted for everything available to us.

I invite anyone to call or come by my office for discussion anytime they may not agree with or not understand a decision I've made while holding this office. I have maintained this policy throughout my tenure as your mayor, and it is one I will continue because it has been a great avenue for growth. It is an honor to hold the position of Mayor for this community, one that I take very seriously, and believe I have executed to the best of my abilities.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Hobbs
Mayor, City of Wynne