

2017 Community Accomplishments

1. Lake Ouachita Agreement

The Lake Ouachita Water Storage Agreement between the United States Department of the Army and the Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance (MAWA) for the storage of 30 million gallons per day (MGD) was signed on May 9, 2017. The Board of Directors approved an agreement between the Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance and the City of Hot Springs for 23 MGD of water storage, of which is the allocated portion set aside for the City of Hot Springs. This was the first reallocation of water supply from a project lake for the US Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District and a major milestone for the future water supply for the City of Hot Springs.

2. Water Rates

After receiving the 2017 Rate Analysis provided by Wildan/Economists.com, the Hot Springs Board of Directors unanimously approved an incremental base water rate increase to support revenue bonds that will sustain both new and existing water infrastructure. The board's visionary action represents a milestone achievement, capping an intensive 17-year process to ensure an adequate, reliable water supply for Hot Springs for the next 50 years.

3. ORVA Convention

The recent Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA) Convention, hosted by the City of Hot Springs, featured a number of distinguished speakers, including U.S. Senator Tom Cotton, U.S. Representative Bruce Westerman, and Major General Michael C. Wehr and Col. Michael Derosier, both from the Corps. There was a strong turnout of elected officials, government staff and industry professionals interested in the economic development of the Ouachita Valley.

4. Insurance – Qualchoice

The City of Hot Springs changed third party administrators from HealthScope to QualChoice effective January 1, 2017. Besides administrators, this change also entailed a change in provider networks and discounts which has made a favorable impact on the City's medical plan cost for 2017 and projected costs for 2018.

The following are measurable outcomes from this decision to change:

- For the period 1/1/18-10/31/17 the network savings discount has been 61% of actual billed charges
- A decrease in total medical and pharmacy claims paid by the plan:

- 1/1/17-11/30/17 – net aggregate claims - \$2,709,402
- 2016 - \$3,692,444
- 2015 - \$4,186,479
- Total costs have decreased by 39.3% since 2015
- A decrease in Emergency Room costs from \$582,158 in 2015 to \$26,115 in 2017
- National Park Medical Center and CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs continue to be top inpatient and outpatient facilities
- Maximum liability for the 2018 renewal with QualChoice is projected to be approximately \$700,000 lower than the 2017 maximum.

5. Resolution Approving Contract with Motorola (AWIN) for City P25 Radio Communications Network

In November, the Board passed a resolution approving a contract with Motorola Solutions in the amount of \$4.9 million for the establishment of the city's P25 Radio Communications Network. The new system includes, among other features, eight new radio dispatch consoles and a logging recorder; state-of-the-art network design; nearly 100 percent handheld radio coverage, both in-vehicle and in critical buildings; and interoperability with all AWIN customers. The sound methodology used in the review process, coupled with savvy vendor negotiations, resulted in a savings of nearly \$1 million below the estimated costs for this project. When complete, the city should have the best communications system in the State of Arkansas.

6. Levy 2.6 mills (second year)

The Board of Directors approved the second and final year of a 2.6-mill levy (to be collected in 2018) to fund a comprehensive public safety radio communication system. Over a two-year period, the levy will raise a total of about \$3.2 million, which will be combined with city funds to pay for the overall system cost.

7. LifeNet joins city in 911 services

LifeNet, the City's Emergency Medical Transport Franchisee, has agreed to an historic integration of communication and dispatch functions. Sharing a common vision with City Police and Fire for consolidation of emergency communications, LifeNet will soon move its dispatch functions to the City's new 911 Dispatch Center. LifeNet will also utilize the City's AWIN radio system to establish seamless interoperability with Police and Fire.

8. ETS Funding

Each year the City receives a substantial sum of money (collected by the State via telephone bills) for the operation of its 911 dispatch center. Hot Springs' share of these

monies was historically sent to Garland County, which would then send them on to the City. This year the City successfully obtained an alternative direct distribution from the State ETS Board.

9. Next-Gen 911 Plan

I am representing the City of Hot Springs and the Arkansas Municipal League in a series of statewide planning meetings for the purpose of developing a Next-Gen 911 Plan for the State of Arkansas. This experience has already allowed me to develop important relationships with other state and local officials to ensure smooth and effective emergency services delivery in our region and throughout the state.

10. Dispatchers Career Path

In the spring of 2017, the career path opportunities for the Hot Springs dispatchers were evaluated and found to be lacking in potential growth opportunities as well as salary incentives. A comprehensive study was done, and a restructured plan was developed, providing employees with an established career path that allows for professional growth, development, and retention of these vitally important employees.

11. Operation Thunderstruck and Operation Ice Storm

These were two extremely successful narcotics operations that were conducted jointly between the 18th East Drug Task Force, Hot Springs Police Department, Garland County Sheriff's Department, Arkansas State Police, Federal Authorities and Parole and Probation. The operations targeted local and regional narcotics dealers and resulted in the arrest of 57 individuals. These two operations severely disrupted the local narcotics trade.

12. Enhanced Police presence in Downtown area

With the increase of traffic and visitors to the downtown area the Hot Springs, the Police Department restructured patrol activities in the Central Avenue corridor during the peak season. Additional traffic enforcement, as well as patrol activities, were conducted from May through September with extended hours. This increased presence received numerous positive comments from merchants and visitors throughout the time frame.

13. Adopted Guiding Values for Majestic Site

On February 17, 2017, the Mayor and Board of Directors conducted a goal-setting retreat to identify, review, and prioritize important issues facing the community, both now and in the future. As a result, the Board took the important step of adopting four

guiding values for the Majestic site, future development of which must be consistent with the following:

- Enhance economic opportunities
- Improve the local quality of life and enhance the visitor experience
- Celebrate the natural wonder of our thermal water
- Respect the arts, culture, and history of Hot Springs

14. Majestic Hotel - Comprehensive Site Assessment

The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) approved the Comprehensive Site Assessment (CSA) at the Majestic Hotel property in late November 2017. The revised CSA, (also known as “Phase II”) consists of the collection of environmental samples (such as soil and groundwater); laboratory analysis of the environmental samples; and an assessment of the human health risk that contamination on the property may pose. The completion of this report is an important step in the redevelopment process for the property.

The report called for the remediation and removal of a fuel storage tank (which is still in place), as well as any additional contamination discovered during the removal process. By partnering with ADEQ and EPA, the tank will be removed by a licensed contractor through grant funds at no cost or liability to the city. All analysis and site work has been remediated to residential screening levels to allow for unrestricted redevelopment opportunities.

The next step in the process will be to submit a property development plan and conduct site visioning and planning meetings. Kansas State University’s Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) will facilitate the public input sessions, and the University of Arkansas will provide scenario development and site renderings to engage stakeholders.

15. Malvern Avenue Gateway Project

The Complete Streets team has overseen the completion of a visionary master plan for the Malvern Avenue Gateway. The Complete Streets team is composed of representatives from ten city departments and our MPO. We were fortunate to obtain the expertise of the University of Arkansas Community Design Center for the development of the plan. To fund the work, the Complete Streets team is working together to share department funds and to apply for grants from various sources. Complete Streets members are meeting with local residents and stakeholders to make sure that they are included in the refinement and implementation of the plan.

16. Craighead Parking Lot Project

The Complete Streets Team came up with the idea to renovate the Craighead Parking Lot into a Low Impact Development Stormwater project as part of the parking lot being scheduled for repaving this year. A more efficient vehicle parking layout emerged, as well as new bicycle parking.

17. Resolution Authorizing MOA between HSAPC & CHS Northwoods Bike Trails

In October, the Board authorized the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Hot Springs Advertising & Promotion Commission, for construction and maintenance of 14.75 to 16.6 miles of mountain bike trails on city property known as the Northwoods. City staff will monitor development to ensure the implementation of natural resource conservation planning. Advancing the Northwoods project is listed among the Board of Directors' stated 2017-2018 Priorities.

18. Northwoods Urban Wilderness Park Feasibility Study

Advanced the Northwoods project by acknowledging a Northwoods Urban Wilderness Park Feasibility Study developed by PROS Consulting, which was commissioned by Visit Hot Springs through a partnership with the City. This study report was adopted by the Board in May and stated that the proposed concept of developing the Northwoods property as a destination for outdoor recreation opportunities is a feasible endeavor.

19. Hired Urban Forester

In June, the City of Hot Springs hired Urban Forester Anthony Whittington. Anthony is off to a great start and chewing through a backlog of work that accumulated during the period in which this position was eliminated.

20. Green Initiatives Report

In June, a report was compiled of Green Initiatives providing details of city departments' environmentally-friendly, sustainable projects and practices. This report was shared with board members, staff and was posted on the City's webpage.

21. Green Infrastructure Landscape Study

A Green Infrastructure Landscape Study and Plan was conducted by the Green Infrastructure Center Inc. and was completed in January 2017. Green Infrastructure is a cost-effective, resilient approach to managing wet weather impacts that provide many community benefits. Green infrastructure elements can be woven into a community, from small-scale elements integrated into sites to larger scale elements spanning entire watersheds.

22. Greenway Trails Project

Began construction of the next phase of the Hot Springs Creek Greenway Trail (2016 TAP grant). This phase will contain 1,467 linear feet of 12' wide handicap accessible asphalt, concrete and elevated boardwalk trail sections and the route will go under Golf Links Bridge. Projected completion date is March 2018. Also, received Notice of Award of a 2017 TAP grant to build the Southern Trail Phase 1, which will pick up where the trail described above ends and is intended to make a neighborhood connection to TV Hill Road.

23. David F. Watkins Groundbreaking

In June, a groundbreaking ceremony was held at the David F. Watkins Memorial Tunnel Park. The Park Avenue Community Association's park committee presented the City with a \$20,000 check to help build the park. The current progress at this park includes half of the amphitheater/creek retaining wall being constructed and the other half currently out to bid. A landscape plan with native fruit and nut trees was developed along with an irrigation plan. Organizations continue to raise funds for other park amenities including a playground, bridge, and a splash pad.

24. Arlington Hotel Enforcement

Unsafe and dangerous building conditions necessitated enforcement actions at the Arlington Hotel to address the concerns with the structure. An engineering report commissioned by the hotel's previous owner highlighted conditions that rendered the structure unsafe and dangerous at five specific building locations. These enforcement actions resulted in the hotel retaining a licensed engineer to address concerns with the building consistent with code. Hotel ownership has communicated plans for a large-scale renovation of the property, which will continue the positive direction and ensure the safety of the public.

25. Rights' of Way (ROW)

Improved management of public rights'-of-way has been a major focus throughout 2017. The right-of-way (ROW) is the area owned and/or controlled by the City and typically includes the street surface, sidewalks, and grassy areas between pavement and property lines. The lack of coordination and planning between the City and property owners/developers has caused several issues that could have been avoided with better coordination. A best practices policy and an ordinance requiring a license for the installation of improvements within the ROW are being further developed. The public's

increased requests to locate improvements within the ROW have emphasized the need for improved management of this public asset.

26. Trip Hazard Removal Downtown Phase I & II

The City contracted with Precision Safe Sidewalks (PSS) for Trip Hazard removal in the area of the Convention Center, City Hall, Hotel Hot Springs, the Transportation Plaza, and Bathhouse Row. In addition, they removed trip hazards in the area noted as 'Downtown-West Part II.' This area is bordered by Mountain, Central, Market, Prospect, Court, and Exchange. The trip hazards were identified through a comprehensive review of all sidewalks in these areas. By utilizing PSS, the City was able to mitigate trip hazards at a fraction of the cost experienced in the past.

27. Garland County Health Unit Funding

A potential conflict with Garland County over Heath Unit funding was averted through successful negotiations between the city and the county which saved both entities money while adequately funding these important services. The success of the negotiation was possible due to the city initiating a meeting with the State Director of Health in Little Rock resulting in a reduced funding request for operations.

28. Animal Control

Successfully managed negotiation of new animal service agreement, which ended the previous subsidy, saving the City approximately \$123,000 annually. The service model has been updated and will provide for enhanced services and an equal share of expenses by both the City and County governments. A transition plan for leadership is underway which should result in greater efficiency, more effective supervision, and greater accountability.

29. Hazmat Funds

Antiterrorism activities and hazardous materials response are two issues that the City of Hot Springs and its Fire Department takes seriously. To facilitate the accomplishment of the City's goals to defend against these threats, we have captured a considerable amount of federal grant money to help defer the cost of these programs. Last spring, we were awarded \$124,348 in funding to purchase equipment in support of our HazMat/Weapons of Mass Destruction Response Team.

30. MCO Water Meter Customer Portal

PI assisted with launching MCO's new Water Meter Customer Portal, including designing the portal page, copy writing, creating a web presence and issuing multimedia PR. The

new portal offers water customers “anytime” secure viewing of their water usage through the new, web-based Water Meter Customer Portal, now online at www.cityhs.net. Customers will be able to monitor current usage, set usage alerts and view usage history and trends. Hour-to-hour water usage data is now available on the portal, using data transmitted from the city’s advanced AMI (automated metering infrastructure) system. The portal offers customers the opportunity for potential early leak detection if an abnormal amount of usage is indicated. The customer can even set usage thresholds and receive a text and/or email alert if that threshold is exceeded. The customer can set vacation or winter status on the portal account whereby they, or another caretaker they designate, can receive alerts if usage is detected or a threshold is met. Customers with numerous meters, such as landlords and large businesses, can look at multiple accounts from a single log-on.

31. Wastewater Refunding Bonds-Net savings 2.2 million

The Board of Directors approved the issuance of Wastewater Refunding Revenue Bonds, Series 2017, to pay off the balance of wastewater system improvement bonds that were issued in 2009 at a considerably higher interest rate. This resulted in more than \$2.2 million in net savings, considerably exceeding staff projections.

32. Voluntary Annexations

The City of Hot Springs has continued boundary growth in 2017 by approving six petition (voluntary) annexation ordinances. In the previous two years, 13 annexations were accomplished throughout the city’s boundary lines. These annexations consisted of a mixture of future residential development and existing commercial corridors. We will continue to identify and assist property owners in annexation proceedings as we close in on the 2020 Census. Planning activities have begun with the US Census Bureau to provide an accurate count of the existing and newly-annexed areas.

33. New Public Relations Strategy

An enhanced public relations plan was initiated in May by contracting with a professional firm to offer expertise and assistance in communication with residents, employees, and other stakeholders. This strategy has included a number of initiatives aimed at improving the city’s ability to provide accurate information to the public regardless of media coverage to the contrary. For example, the Board Report is a communication piece that summarizes the highlights of the Board meeting and is directly emailed to over 3,000 e-subscribers. The Board Report provides a managed message to interested citizens and is also shared on various social media platforms.

34. City Highlights / Board Reports (Public Version)

Weekly City Highlights are now distributed to the public with the intent to build awareness of the progress that city departments are making every day.

The Board Report was also created to capture major elements of the latest Board of Directors regular meeting and distributed widely via email, web e-subscription and social media. Both are part of the city's efforts to broaden its communications with the public.

35. New Bid Protest Procedures

New bid protest procedures were put in place to provide our vendors with better communication on bid acceptance and more timely and equitable appeals where needed.

36. New Purchasing Manual

The purchasing manual was updated to provide greater efficiency and purchasing authority for departments, along with better control and accountability for their budgets.

37. Backup Generator City Hall Annex

Backup generators were installed for City Hall and the Annex building to ensure uninterrupted service to the public and a safe effective work environment for employees.

38. Training Simulator

Hot Springs Fire Department was awarded a Federal Grant for the purchase of a Fire Training Simulator. The \$409,091 in Federal funds was matched by \$48,868 in City funds to make the purchase a reality. The simulator is designed to give firefighters training experiences under controlled live fire conditions. Fabrication and erection of the state-of-the-art training facility have been completed; a dedication will take place in January 2018.

39. Ultraviolet disinfection

The City of Hot Springs Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant converted to an ultraviolet disinfection treatment system. This conversion allowed for the decommissioning of chlorine and sulfur dioxide gas treatment. This is a much safer method of disinfection, which also removes the requirement for an Emergency Response Plan (ERP).

40. Incident Command Vehicle

Due to a large number of special events and tactical situations that occur in the City of Hot Springs, the HSPD began searching for an incident command vehicle. The department was able to obtain a used RV through the 1033 Federal Surplus program. The vehicle was modified and outfitted with all the necessary equipment providing the city with a mobile command vehicle capable of being used in any type of event. The 1033 program allowed us to purchase and outfit this vehicle for a fraction of the cost of a new vehicle.

41. eCite/eCrash Grant

The Hot Springs Police Department was able to continue moving forward with the eCite/eCrash platform this past year by obtaining a state grant that has enabled us to purchase 40 additional systems for installation in patrol vehicles. This will improve efficiency and accountability when issuing citations and completing accident reports.

42. Peaceful Demonstration

In August, local agencies were notified of a protest that was to be held in downtown Hot Springs in reference to the removal of the Confederate monument. The potential for violence and property damage was significant following the Charlottesville riots. A comprehensive operations plan was developed utilizing the National Park Service, Hot Springs Police Department, Arkansas State Police, Garland County Sheriff's Office, Arkansas National Guard and other state agencies. The execution of the plan resulted in a peaceful event without violence or property damage.

43. Confederate Battle Flag Removal

With help from Mayor McCabe, we earned trust and collaboration with the Daughters of the Confederacy to suspend the display of the battle flag, thereby eliminating a potential flashpoint for violence.

44. South Texas – City response

On August 28th, we received a Disposition and Inventory request from the State of Arkansas concerning our Zodiac Rescue Boat, which was dispatched to South Texas to deal with hurricane relief efforts, with all costs fully reimbursed to the city.

45. Resolution Supporting Internet Sales Tax

In July, the Board passed a resolution supporting federal and state legislation to ensure the collection of sales tax from all internet/online sales, thereby creating a fair market

for all businesses and consumers regardless of location. The estimated annual lost revenue for Hot Springs is \$1/2 - \$1 million.

46. Resolution Supporting Medical Marijuana Facilities within CHS

In July, the Board passed a resolution supporting the establishment of lawful medical marijuana facilities within the city, following the approval of final rules from the AR Medical Marijuana Commission, Alcoholic Beverage Control and the Arkansas Board of Health. The resolution also reflects the city's intention to consider competitive fees to accompany the establishment of such facilities.

47. Chamber Fly-In (meetings NEA)

As part of the Chamber DC Fly-in, City Manager David Frasher and Director Suzanne Davidson met with the Director of the National Endowment of Arts regarding grant opportunities. The Board authorized the City Manager to apply for and accept (if awarded) federal NEA grant funds up to \$200,000 through the FY 2018 NEA Our Town grant program to commission sculptors to design large-scale artworks for a Musician Sculpture Garden on Malvern Avenue.

48. Future Protection for City Cemetery

In February, the Henderson State University Station Archeologist and Special Projects Historian from Arkansas Historic Preservation met with city staff and other interested parties to discuss a path forward for protecting the old Pest House Cemetery site (aka City Cemetery). The site was mapped, identifying evidence of lost and unmarked gravesites. A report has been completed with recommendations on preserving the cemetery.

49. Improved City/County Relationships

Management began a series of informal meetings with Garland County leadership along with community leaders to discuss matters of importance. Relationships have improved dramatically. However, political dynamics, not within our control, dictate that there will always be challenges in managing these relationships.

50. Service to the Board

Quickly and professionally responded to hundreds of individual requests from Board members throughout the year, always endeavoring to provide same-day service with positive outcomes.