

**Searcy City Council – Special Session**  
**December 14, 2017 5:00 p.m.**  
**Minutes**

Mayor David Morris called to order a Special Session of the Searcy City Council. Council member Dale Brewer gave the Invocation, with the Pledge of Allegiance following, led by Council member Mike Chalenburg. City Clerk/Treasurer Jerry Morris called the roll with the following Council members answering “present”: Logan Cothorn, Mary Ann Arnett, J R Howard, Dale English, Don Raney, Dale Brewer and Mike Chalenburg. Also present was City Attorney Buck Gibson. Council member Steve Sterling was not present.

Mayor Morris asked that, without any objection, the Council deviate from the agenda and proceed to item (6) on the agenda. Item (6) was for the consideration of an ordinance authorizing the execution of an equipment lease-purchase agreement for the fire truck acquisition project and providing for the payment of the sums due under said agreement. He explained that Searcy City Attorney Buck Gibson had a prior obligation to attend and must leave shortly but that he is available to answer any questions regarding the consideration of this ordinance. A motion was made by Mr. Brewer, seconded by Mr. Chalenburg, to suspend the rules and allow reading of the ordinance by title only. Motion carried with the following voting “yes”: Arnett, Howard, English, Raney, Brewer, Chalenburg, and Cothorn. Mr. Gibson read the ordinance by title only. A motion was then made by Mr. Brewer, seconded by Mr. Howard, to adopt the ordinance. The ordinance passed with the following voting “yes”: Howard, English, Raney, Brewer, Chalenburg, Cothorn, and Arnett. Mr. Gibson then read the emergency clause of the ordinance. Motion was made by Mr. Cothorn, seconded by Mrs. Arnett, to adopt the emergency clause, with the following voting “yes”: English, Raney, Brewer, Chalenburg, Cothorn, Arnett, and Howard. **Ordinance 2017-37**

Item (3) on the agenda was a presentation regarding a proposal for the City of Searcy Parks and Recreation Department taking over the continued operation of the Rialto Theater. Parks and Recreation Department Director Mike Parsons presented estimations of the start-up costs as well as recurring costs for the operation of the Rialto Theater. These cost estimates include one-time costs for projector/sound/lighting equipment, and concession equipment, as well as recurring costs for utilities, concession supplies, and staffing. The one-time costs are estimated to be \$54,000.00 with the annual recurring costs estimated to be \$100,000.00. Mr. Parsons noted that the recurring costs should be offset by revenue generated from admissions and concessions and other activities that could take place at the Rialto Theater. Mr. Gibson pointed out that, with the City of Searcy administering the operation of the theater, any future restoration/renovation projects would not create any conflicts that might arise if the Rialto Theater was operated by a private entity. He reminded the Council that grant possibilities exist and are being pursued to restore/renovate the Rialto Theater. Mr. Parsons stated that he thought it was a good idea for the City of Searcy to operate the theater itself and that it would be his recommendation to do this.

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Item (4) was for the discussion of the various proposals that have been received regarding the continued operation of the Rialto Theater. Mr. Raney stated that, although he thought it would be in the best interest of the City of Searcy to operate the theater, he feels that the city has done a poor job in trying to make the transition to another operator. He noted that he regrets this on behalf of the groups that have presented a proposal for the continued operation of the Rialto Theater. Mayor Morris noted that the sudden announcement of the retirement of the previous operator created a short timeline to get another operator in place and that the idea for the city to operate the theater came about as sort of an ‘afterthought’. He further noted that he also thought it to be in the best interest of the City of Searcy to operate the city-owned Rialto Theater and continue to provide family-friendly, low cost movies to the public. Ms. Julie Pratt, one of the individuals who submitted a proposal to the City of Searcy for the operation of the Rialto Theater, was present and spoke to the Council about her proposal. She stated that she understood the city’s interest in operating the theater itself but she wished to still be considered and that she could do a good job operating the facility. Ms. Amy Burton, Executive Director of Main Street Searcy, said she thought it would be in the best interest of the city to operate the theater itself. She also stated that with the pursuance of grant funding for renovations, she thought any future projects for these renovations could be carried out more smoothly with the theater being operated by the city. Ms. Wendy Neill, Director of Center on the Square, noted that she thought the operation of the theater by the city itself was in the best interest of the city. She asked that the Council keep their business in mind so as to not create any hardship on them in the pursuit of other opportunities in the use of the Rialto Theater.

Item (5) on the agenda was for the selection of the group/entity to continue the operation of the Rialto Theater. A motion was made by Mr. Raney, seconded by Mr. English, to not lease out the operation of the Rialto Theater to any private entity and to incorporate the operation of the Rialto Theater into the City of Searcy Parks and Recreation Department. Motion carried with the following voting “yes”: Raney, Brewer, Chalenburg, Cothorn, Arnett, Howard, and English. Mayor Morris noted that a special Council meeting would need to be scheduled in order to present a request for budgetary appropriations in order to transition to the City of Searcy taking over the operation of the Rialto Theater.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Minutes Approved: January 9, 2018

/s/ David Morris  
MAYOR OF SEARCY

ATTEST:

/s/ Jerry Morris  
CITY CLERK  
Seal