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CITY OF BRANSON

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NEWS RELEASE

June 23, 2009

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Action taken by Branson Board of Aldermen at June 23, 2009 meeting

SECOND READING AND FINAL PASSAGE BILLS

Board eliminates nightly rentals in residential areas

Aldermen approved a change in the city code that prohibits the city from issuing business licenses for any nightly rental of single family homes in a residential area. This new law came about due to complaints from residents that homes in their neighborhoods were being turned into commercial, nightly rentals for tourists.

Money for fiddle contest

Aldermen approved bill to spend \$15,000 from the tourism tax contingency fund for marketing the Branson Fiddle Festival in downtown Branson that will be held the weekend of August 28.

Board approves bid for property and liability insurance for the city

Connell Insurance of Branson submitted the low bid to provide worker's compensation and property/liability insurance for the city of Branson. Connell's proposal came in at \$469,916 for the coming fiscal year. That amount is about \$188,000 less than last year's premium.

Demolition of buildings on convention center property

Aldermen approved a contract with an Arkansas contractor to demolish the city-owned buildings on the south side of the convention center site. Goolsby, Inc of Blytheville, Arkansas got the demolition bid at \$23,444. The buildings formerly belonged to Taney County Presiding Commissioner Chuck Pennel and his family. Once buildings removed, that land will remain vacant until city decides how to use it.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS (1st Reading)

The Branson Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce presented its marketing report covering January through April of this year. Highlights include:

- Overall visitation up 5.4% from 2008
- 52% of the visitors came from outside a 301 mile radius

- Spending per party was \$765 compared to \$638 in 2008
- First time visitors increase to 27% from 15% in '08
- Visitors stayed longer -- 4.7 days compared to 3.9 days in '08
- Average adult age of visitor was 59 compared to 55 in '08

The director of sales and marketing for the Branson Convention Center will present a first quarter marketing report (January –March). Highlights included:

- Convention center revenues January – March up \$145,500 from first quarter 2008, but down \$218,000 from amount budgeted. Some large conventions cancelled this winter due to the downturn in the economy.
- Event days totaled 47 compared to 45 in '08
- The top three states where convention center business comes from are Missouri at 50%, Kansas 16% and Kentucky 14%.

City to conduct utility study

Board approved on first reading a contract with HDR Engineering of Kansas City for a water and wastewater rate study. The city of Branson has not undertaken a complete, detailed utility rate study for several years. The study will be in two phases. Phase 1 will provide information needed to establish appropriate water and sewer rates to sustain these utilities. Phase 2 includes a multi-year financial plan to match capital projects to specific funding, a comparison of Branson's water and sewer service with other cities and a capacity fee study, which will determine appropriate charges to support costs of new development and system expansion. The total cost of this study is \$89,000.

More storm warning sirens

Board approved the acquisition of two more storm warning sirens in the city. They will be located near the Branson High School and on Bird Road near Branson Hills Parkway in the north part of the city. Branson has a total of 21 storm warning sirens.

Fire department gets new thermal imaging cameras

The Branson Fire Department will be getting three new thermal imaging cameras. These cameras allow firefighters to quickly locate victims trapped inside a burning or smoke filled building and to also determine the level of heat before entering a structure. These cameras will replace existing cameras that will be reserves. Each of the city's three stations has thermal imaging cameras. Cost of the three new ones is \$29,000.