

The city of Lafayette will sign agreements with two contractors for the clean-up of storm-blown debris left by the tornado that hit the city only a few hours after the February 5 city council meeting. At their regular meeting on March 4, council members approved contracts with P.E.S. (Professional Engineering Services) of Lafayette and NATCO, Inc. of Bristol, TN for the removal of debris. Council members Ronnie Krantz and Jerry Wilmore were absent.

NATCO, the low bidder for the job, will make three trips to pick up debris along city street right of ways, announced Mayor Bill Wells, and then they won't be back. There is an estimated 4,000 tons of debris to be taken to the Smith County Landfill, at an estimated \$150,165 cost.

The Smith County Landfill has offered to take the debris at a reduced rate of \$25 per ton, which is not included NATCO's estimated hauling cost and will have to be paid by the city. The regular load rate is \$30 per ton.

City street right of ways are measured 25 feet to either side, from the centerline of roads. NATCO can not go on private property, and cannot pick up any debris that is not deemed storm-blown. Refer to the press release on Page A-5 for guidelines.

"City ordinances will take effect if non-eligible debris is left along right of ways," said EMA Director Keith Scruggs, adding that FEMA prohibited the pick-up of any other debris on these contacts.

Calls to council members about what kind of debris qualifies and what doesn't should be referred to Chris Ballou at P.E.S., Wells suggested.

Debris pickup will begin sometime after the official contract signing on Tuesday, March 11 and end 45 days after a start date is set. The date will be announced as soon as possible.

The two-part contract with P.E.S. covers the administrative part of debris removal. It includes 1) the establishment and writing of a contract with NATCO and the monitoring of the debris removal, and 2) public assistance cost recovery.

The contract written by P.E.S. has already been reviewed and approved by FEMA representatives, Wells reported. P.E.S. will monitor debris removal by having an inspector on site at all times to keep track of the paper trail – load tickets, weigh tickets, and such – required for cost reimbursement by FEMA and TEMA. FEMA will pick up 75% of the cost and TEMA 12.5%, leaving Lafayette with the remaining 12.5% of the debris removal bill.

Some of the city's 12.5% may be paid for through the work of volunteers who work along city street right of ways, or those who did search and rescue and emergency service work during the long night of the tornado and the following days.

TDEC (Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation) has approved sites for the disposal of large stumps, and the Tennessee Division of Air Pollution Control has approved sites for the burning of burnable debris, reported Wells, adding that no construction debris will be burned.

Temporary mobile home permits will be issued in residential districts while property owners rebuild, council members decided by adopting Ordinance #536 at the recommendation of the planning committee. Permits will be issued for nine months, and then may be renewed for up to six months.

There are over 100 sites available for temporary FEMA housing, which may possibly be here within 10 days to two weeks, reported Scruggs. No permits have yet been issued, however.

In other business, the council:

- adopted a resolution authorizing Mayor Wells to apply for an \$80,000 grant from the state's Local Parks and Recreation Fund. The grant, which is being worked up by staff planner David Starnes, will pay for paving the walking track in Key Park (but not the part of the walking track on church property) and buy new playground equipment. Half of the matching fund grant, \$40,000 will come from the city.
- discussed the distribution of Community Enhancement grant money.

“Senator Mae Beavers advised that the \$5,000 must be donated to 501C organizations,” Wells reported to the council, saying that a donation list of 501C organizations was included in council members' packets.

The money cannot be saved, Wells said in answer to a question by Ruby Flowers, but should be distributed within the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2008.

After a fair amount of discussion, the issue was deferred to next month's meeting.

- approved a contract with Quality Lawn Care for mowing city property. All the mowing that the city needs to have done, every week, will be done for \$825 a week, said Wells, who recommended the contract.
- authorized the hiring of a pool manager and lifeguards for the 2008 summer season.
- authorized shift premiums for Water Treatment Plant employees at the request of Gene Reid. Second shift employees will receive an additional 25¢ per hour, while 3rd shift employees can expect an additional 50¢ on the hour. This is the same shift premium pay that city police officers get.
- approved the transfer of Mikey Oldham from the Water Department to the Parks Department, and from Level VI to Level V, at the recommendation of Gene Reid. Oldham will be replacing Charles Reid, who is retiring at the end of this month. The job was posted, said Wells. Both department heads have agreed to the transfer.
- authorized to advertise for personnel to fill the vacancy created by Charles Reid's retirement.
- approved the promotion of Jeff Harper, Gas Department, to Service Person II, from Level VI to Level VII.
- approved March employee evaluations and salary increases as recommended by the personnel committee.
- adopted, on first reading, an ordinance to change some of the wording about holiday pay. The newly adopted reading will reflect the council's decision to allow a maximum amount of 80 hours holiday pay to be saved up by employees. Also, if an employee is not working on a holiday, that holiday cannot be saved. The employee must be paid for it.
- adopted a resolution authorizing the codification and revision of city ordinances.

The next regular council meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on April Fool's Day; April 1, 2008.