

Storm shelter space available to residents

By Janet S. Lee

When Clinton's newest fire station, Station #4 at 1973 Pinehaven Road, was built, its design included a "safe room" in the center of the building. The safe room, built for community use, is made of reinforced 8" thick concrete on the floor, walls and ceiling to offer shelter to residents during threatening weather events, such as a tornado or hurricane.

The safety shelter is an idea that grew from the general devastation and days of sustained power outages following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The EF-3 tornado that wreaked havoc on a wide swath of Clinton in April 2011 also reinforced the need for such a facility.

According to Clinton Fire Chief Jeff Blackledge, the shelter is available to all residents of Clinton when weather

can present a clear danger.

"Since the station first opened last December, we've probably had folks come a half dozen times during a weather



Photo by Doris Bynum



Photo by Carrie Chennault

event. We have twenty-two tornado sirens scattered throughout the city, but the time to come to the shelter is not when the siren itself goes off - that means a tornado has been sighted. We don't want people out traveling to get to a safe place once a tornado warning has already been sounded."

Blackledge reminded Clintonians to always be weather-aware and not to rely on the sirens.

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Aldermen pass 2018-19 budget in close vote

By Janet S. Lee

In a close vote taken at a 7 a.m. September 14 meeting, the City's Board of Aldermen passed the 2018-19 \$17.6 million budget in public session, with

two aldermen absent and the Mayor casting the deciding vote for approval.

The \$17,652,079 budget is a four percent increase over the previous year's \$16,979,106 budget, with no tax increase.

The vote was a public meeting, as stipulated under Mississippi Code 25-41-5. State law also provides that "a public body may conduct any meeting through teleconference or video means...provided that the equipment used is located at the place where the public body normally meets... and provided that the equipment allows all members of the public body and members of the public who attend the meeting to hear the deliberations of the public body."

The statute was employed to accommodate the participation by phone of Ward 5 Alderwoman Jan Cossitt, who was absent due to illness.

The proposed budget, highlighted by

Department head current and new salaries, as approved in the 2019 budget, are shown below.

POSITION/DEPT HEAD	CURRENT SALARY	NEW SALARY
City Clerk	\$82,680	\$92,680
City Attorney	\$95,000	\$105,000
Community Development	\$73,861	\$78,861
Police Chief	\$80,000	\$90,000
Fire Chief	\$80,000	\$90,000
Parks and Recreation	\$65,624	\$70,624
Public Works	\$65,624	\$75,624
Therapeutic Recreation	\$65,619	\$70,624
Communications	\$65,619	\$70,624
Main Street	\$63,000	\$70,624
Visitor Center	\$65,000	\$70,624
Train Depot	\$60,000	\$65,000

provisions for hiring a full time Economic Development director in April 2019, a full time Municipal Court judge, growth and equipment for most departments, and substantial salary increases for department heads, was brought up

on a motion for approval by Ward 6 Alderman Mike Cashion and seconded by Ward 3 Alderman Bill Barnett.

Alderwoman-at-Large Ricki Garrett then presented a motion to amend the

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