

**A SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY
JANUARY 12, 2012
10:00 A.M.**

NOTICE OF A SPECIAL MEETING

Opelousas, Louisiana
January 11, 2012

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT a Special Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Opelousas, State of Louisiana, has been ordered and called and will be held at their regular meeting place in the Meeting Room at City Hall, 105 N. Main Street, Opelousas, Louisiana, on Thursday, January 12, 2012, at 10:00 o'clock A.M. for the following purpose:

1. INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE BUDGET.
2. INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE TO CHANGE THE COUNCIL MEETING TIME.
3. DISCUSS INTERIM POSITION FOR PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR.
4. APPROVE REQUEST BY MARGARET DOUCET FOR CHANGES TO THE MINUTES OF APRIL 2011 AND NOVEMBER 2011 AS FOLLOWS:

a. **April 12, 2011**

Under **PRESENTATIONS**

Item e States:

BM6 LLC, Lynette Angelle, T/S 810 N. Main Street (Asbestos, 03/08/2011)

Ms. Doucet stated that both of the buildings located at 517 E. North Street and 810 N. Main Street (Items d and e) *contain more asbestos than what the Code Enforcement crew can handle...*

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None

CORRECTIONS:

Ms. Doucet stated that both of the buildings located at 517 E. North Street and 810 N. Main Street (Items d and e) contain asbestos and the Code Enforcement Crew cannot handle.

b. **November 8, 2011**

Under **PRESENTATIONS**

Item #7 States:

Discuss request for approval for VARIANCE of property in R1 (Residential) Zone located at 802 Paggo Street to build a new home (Rita Woods). A public hearing regarding this matter was held by the Planning Commission on 11/07/2011. The original home was demolished because repairs would have been too costly. The homeowners were able to secure a loan to build a new home and they are requesting that the setbacks to be as the old setback was before the new zoning change. The new zoning change requires setbacks to be 25 feet from the street and 25 feet from the back property line. The old setbacks were 20 feet from the street and 18 feet from the back property line. The Commission approved the request. On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by alderman Louis Butler, Jr., it was resolved to APPROVE the request for VARIANCE of property in R1 (Residential) Zone located at 802 Paggo Street to build a new home (Rita Woods) with old set back requirements of 20 feet from the street and 18 feet from the back property line. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Julius Alsandor.

CORRECTIONS:

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The old setbacks were 20 feet from the street and 5 feet from the back property line...

It was resolved to APPROVE the request for VARIANCE of property in R1 (Residential) Zone located at 802 Paggio Street to build a new home (Rita Woods) with old setback requirements of 20 feet from the street and 5 feet from the back property line.

5. DISCUSSION BY ALDERMAN BLAIR BRIGGS REGARDING PROPER ORDER DURING MEETINGS.

To take all action necessary in the premises and to take up all other matters which might properly come before the meeting.

/s/ Donald R. Cravins, Sr.

DONALD R. CRAVINS, SR., MAYOR

**CITY OF OPELOUSAS, LA
RETURN OF SERVICE
STATE OF LOUISIANA
PARISH OF ST. LANDRY**

Received the foregoing call and did serve a duly certified copy on members of the Board of Aldermen of the City of Opelousas, State of Louisiana, on the date and at the hour specified opposite their respective names:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Month/Day/Year</u>
Joseph Charles	<u>/s/ Joseph Charles</u>	<u>10:25</u> a.m.	<u>01 /11 /2012</u>
Julius Alsandor	<u>/s/ Julius Alsandor</u>	<u>09:32</u> a.m.	<u>01 /11 /2012</u>
Louis Butler, Jr.	<u>/s/ Louis Butler, Jr.</u>	<u>09:41</u> a.m.	<u>01 /11 /2012</u>
Blair Briggs	<u>/s/ Blair Briggs</u>	<u>15:24</u> p.m.	<u>01 /11 /2012</u>
Reginald Tatum	<u>/s/ Reginald Tatum</u>	<u>11:00</u> p.m.	<u>01 /11 /2012</u>
Jacqueline Martin	<u>/s/ Jacqueline Martin</u>	<u>09:55</u> a.m.	<u>01 /11 /2012</u>

All of which was done more than twenty-four hours prior to the hour and date set for the holding of said meeting, (except where waived), as provided by law. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have signed hereto these 11th day of January, 2012 at Opelousas, Louisiana.

Lt. Dwain Grimmitt

Police Officer

Sgt. Loretta Etienne

Police Officer

Received the foregoing notice of Special Meeting as indicated above.

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/s/ Joseph Charles

Joseph Charles, Alderman-At-Large

/s/ Julius Alsandor

Julius Alsandor, Alderman, District A

/s/ Louis Butler, Jr.

Louis Butler, Jr., Alderman, District B

/s/ Blair Briggs

Blair Briggs, Alderman, District C

/s/ Reginald Tatum

Reginald Tatum, Alderman, District D

/s/ Jacqueline Martin

Jacqueline Martin, Alderwoman, District E

Karen Frank, City Clerk, read the Return of Service. With Donald R. Cravins, Sr., Mayor presiding, the meeting was called to order. The following Council members were **PRESENT**: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin; **ABSENT**: None.

After a moment of silent meditation, the Pledge to the U.S. Flag was led by Mayor Donald Cravins. On a motion by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, seconded by Alderman Blair Briggs and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adopt the agenda.

At this time, Alderman Briggs requested that Item No. 5 be discussed first on the agenda: **DISCUSSION BY ALDERMAN BLAIR BRIGGS REGARDING PROPER ORDER DURING MEETINGS.** Alderman Briggs stated that Tuesday's meeting was a circus—people taking too long, people hollering from the back. He will not attend the meetings if this continues. He feels that they need to get a handle on the meetings—people need to fill out a card to speak and then stay on the topic. He also feels that there needs to be a police officer present at the meetings. Alderman Julius Alsandor stated that the decorum needs to start with the Council. Chief Perry Gallow stated that they can escort people out only if they are committing a criminal act. These meetings are open meetings and discussions will take place. He informed the Council that it is their responsibility to maintain order and the Mayor controls the meeting. Chief Gallow stated that if any outburst from the audience that could be considered an assault or any type of threat, then the person is subject to be removed and/or arrested. This goes for everyone. Alderman Alsandor asked about heckling that disrupts the progress of the meeting. Chief Gallow stated that if the Council requests that a person be removed, then an officer can take action. Mr. Larry Martin pointed out that when Mr. Tatum made remarks about the Mayor, no one escorted him out. He feels that everyone should be treated the same. Alderman Tatum stated that he apologized to the Mayor. He commented that no one is perfect and the Council needs to follow parliamentary procedures. He suggested that at the beginning of meetings that the Mayor announces that outbursts will be dealt with during the meetings. Mr. Cyrus Auzenne commented that sometimes the Council discusses items that involve members of the audience. He feels that if he raises his hand and can't be heard then he is being denied. Rev. Walton Dunbar believes that part of the responsibility is the model that the Council has set for months. He stated that all he sees is a lot of disagreeing. There should be no fussing in meetings. He would like to see a resolution to adopt something to keep order. Mr. John Lamke feels

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that Rev. Dunbar and Alderman Alsandor have touched on something and that the Council should enter the chambers with the understanding that you are going to disagree at times. Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin stated that the public sees the body arguing and feels like they can do it also. It has to start with the Council. They are not there for a circus or a show. They have to give the public a chance to speak on the subjects of the meeting. Alderman Louis Butler, Jr., stated that in reference to a quorum, all Council members know that they can't meet unless a meeting is called because of the Lawrason Act. Once they get the agenda, they can get with the Mayor to discuss agenda items that they have issues on. He stated that they have to work collectively. Alderman Tatum made a motion to allow the Council and the Mayor to designate when someone needs to be escorted out of the meetings. The motion was seconded by Alderman Briggs. Mayor Cravins stated he has a problem with that motion. He feels that this will cause more confusion. Alderman Tatum withdrew the motion. Mr. Larry Martin stated that he has been coming to meetings for five (5) years and has never seen anyone put out of meetings and just because he said something at the last meeting then they want to escort citizens out of meetings. Rev. Dunbar stated that maybe the Council needs to adopt a resolution that they stand behind the Mayor in enforcing Roberts Rules of Order. They can agree to disagree but have a meeting that has the appropriate decorum to conduct the business of our City. Mayor Cravins believes that they should have audience participation in an orderly fashion.

INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE BUDGET.

**AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE OPERATING BUDGET OF
REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR
BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2011 AND ENDING AUGUST 31, 2012**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Aldermen, of the City of Opelousas, Louisiana in general session convened that:

SECTION I. The attached detailed estimate of Revenues for Fiscal Year beginning September 1, 2011 and ending August 31, 2012, be and the same is hereby adopted to serve as an Operating Budget of Revenues for the City of Opelousas, Louisiana, during the same period.

SECTION II. The attached estimate of Expenditures by departments for the Fiscal Year beginning September 1, 2011 and ending August 31, 2012, be and the same is hereby adopted to serve as a budget of expenditures for the City during the said period.

SECTION III. The adoption of this Operating Budget of Expenditures be and the same is hereby declared to operate as an appropriation of the amount therein set forth within the terms of the budget classification.

SECTION IV. Amounts are available for expenditures only to the extent included with the 2011-2012 budget.

Alderman Blair Briggs stated that he still was not in favor of the current budget as it sits. He stated that he has made repeated requests for various things to be done in this budget and he has gotten zero compromise from this administration. He pointed out that they have a lot of un-classified, non-Civil Service employees. He also pointed out that the Library is struggling. He feels that the solution is personnel and that cuts need to be made in the excess un-classified, non-Civil Service employees. He stated that the City has major deficiencies, such as the upkeep for the drainage canal which may cost the City a million dollars to maintain. Ms. Karen Frank asked Alderman Briggs who he had requested this information from. She pointed out that she has never had a conversation with him in regards to the budget since the last budget meeting in August. Alderman Briggs stated that he is asking for a reduction in the non-Civil Service workforce and since the first time they rejected the budget, people have been added to the payroll. Ms. Frank stated everyone is operating on one-half of that budget and when that money runs out, then that department cannot expend any funds. Ms. Frank stated that the auditors have been in to review the budget and have said that it is

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a balanced budget. Mr. Paul Gennuso stated that the City is held fiscally responsible to make these decisions. He pointed out that they must have a budget to run a business. He further pointed out that the budget can be amended.

On a motion by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin and seconded by Alderman Julius Alsandor, it was resolved to introduce AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE OPERATING BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2011 AND ENDING AUGUST 31, 2012.

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: Blair Briggs.

ABSTAINED: Joseph Charles and Reginald Tatum.

ABSENT: None

THE MOTION FAILS because two-thirds (2/3) majority did not vote in favor of the motion.

Alderman Julius Alsandor remarked that the budget committee has made a recommendation and it is the Council's responsibility to vote on it. Chief Perry Gallow stated for the record that this is critical to public service. He stated that to be so concerned about whether or not you will have enough employees based on the amount of dollars that are available to you and to maintain the security of this city is critical. Chief Gallow stated that he had made cuts to his budget where he could but to continue to do that would put the city in jeopardy when it comes to a safety stand point. Mrs. Margaret Doucet stated that with the funding she has now she will not be able to have the Trash Bash. She also has complaints to board up buildings that Code Enforcement will not be able to do because her department does not have the money. Alderman Briggs recommended that they vote on the introduction again and that the administration would contact him so that they could work together to get rid of some of the people they don't need and revisit it at the next council meeting. If the changes are made and they come to a compromise, at the next meeting they can either approve it or disapprove it. Mayor Cravins stated that if they are going to cut salaries, they are going to cut across the board and in every department.

Another motion was made by Alderman Blair Briggs and seconded by Alderman Reginald Tatum to introduce AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE OPERATING BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2011 AND ENDING AUGUST 31, 2012.

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE TO CHANGE THE COUNCIL MEETING TIME.

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 18 OF CHAPTER 2 OF THE
CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS,
CHANGING THE MEETING TIME FOR THE REGULAR
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN TO 3:00 P.M.**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Aldermen that Section 18 of Chapter 2 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Opelousas be amended as follows:

The Regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen shall be held on the second Tuesday of each month at the City Hall. The hour of holding such meetings shall be at 3:00 p.m.

Mayor Cravins stated that the City had passed an ordinance several months ago changing the meeting time to 5:00 p.m. to allow more people to come to the meetings. However, they didn't see a significant change in the number of people attending. Alderman Reginald Tatum stated that a lot of

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people he talked to like the 5:00 o'clock meeting time because the 4:00 o'clock time was a hardship for them. Alderman Blair Briggs stated that he personally likes the 5:00 o'clock meeting time. He pointed out that the people who regularly attend the council meetings at 5:00 o'clock will not be here right now to defend their position during this discussion. A member of the audience asked if the meetings could be broadcast. The Mayor stated that if they had an open channel they could do it. Mr. Paul Grnuso stated that the city does have that capability through Charter. The only thing the City needs to provide is the camera and someone to operate it because the bandwidth is already there. Mayor Cravins suggested that they utilize a system that the churches use where the time of the meetings is determined by Daylight Savings Time.

On a motion by Alderman Julius Alsandor and seconded by Alderman Louis Butler, Jr., it was resolved to introduce AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 18 OF CHAPTER 2 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS, CHANGING THE MEETING TIME FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN TO 3:00 P.M.

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

DISCUSS INTERIM POSITION FOR PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR. Ms. Laura Balthazar requested that Mr. Clarence Watson be appointed interim Parks & Recreation Director until a new director is appointed. She stated that Mr. Watson has been performing those duties since 10/01/2011 and, by Civil Service rules, anytime someone does that for two weeks, they should be compensated. However, they cannot go back from the day he first started. She is asking that the Council recommend for thirty days that Mr. Watson be the Interim Director for Parks and Recreation until a new Parks Director can be approved by the Council. Alderman Reginald Tatum stated that he was told that because of the litigation that they shouldn't do that. Ms. Balthazar stated that position of Parks Director is still a non-classified position as of now until the courts decide. Alderman Tatum pointed out that Mr. Watson is a Civil Service employee right now and after two weeks, according to Civil Service rules, he is automatically paid without the Council having to make any vote. Ms. Balthazar stated that if Mr. Watson is to be named Interim then he has to come in front of the Council for them to approve it. Alderman Tatum stated that the other problem with that is whether they are saying they are picking him as Interim. Alderman Tatum pointed out that this is another Civil Service issue and if they do that, they are breaking Civil Service laws by picking Mr. Watson as Interim that they are not allowed to do under Civil Service. Alderman Tatum stated that he wished that Ms. Walker was in attendance so that she could verify this information. Ms. Balthazar stated that Mr. Watson was told that if he would accept the position of Interim Director that it may have some bearing on the Civil Service situation as Recreation Supervisor. Mr. Watson stated that he received a letter from the Civil Service Board saying that to even become an Interim Director the Council had to take care of that. Mayor Cravins stated that at the Tuesday meeting, Ms. Walker made the recommendation for Mr. Watson to serve as Interim Director; but she told them something very different based on the correspondence they received. Ms. Balthazar stated that Ms. Walker was not present at this meeting because the matter was still in litigation. Mayor Cravins requested that Ms. Walker be notified to come into the meeting. The item was tabled until her arrival.

APPROVE REQUEST BY MARGARET DOUCET FOR CHANGES TO THE MINUTES OF APRIL 2011 AND NOVEMBER 2011 AS FOLLOWS:

a. April 12, 2011

Under PRESENTATIONS

Item (e) States:

**A SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY
JANUARY 12, 2012
10:00 A.M.**

BM6 LLC, Lynette Angelle, T/S 810 N. Main Street (Asbestos, 03/08/2011)

Ms. Doucet stated that both of the buildings located at 517 E. North Street and 810 N. Main Street (Items d and e) contain more asbestos than what the Code Enforcement crew can handle...

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Buller, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None

CORRECTIONS:

Ms. Doucet stated that both of the buildings located at 517 E. North Street and 810 N. Main Street (Items d and e) contain asbestos and the Code Enforcement Crew cannot handle.

b. November 8, 2011

Under PRESENTATIONS

Item (#7) States:

Discuss request for VARIANCE of property in R1 (Residential) Zone located at 802 Paggo Street to build a new home (Rita Woods). A public hearing regarding this matter was held by the Planning Commission on 11/07/2011. The original home was demolished because repairs would have been too costly. The homeowners were able to secure a loan to build a new home and they are requesting that the setbacks to be as the old setback was before the new zoning change. The new zoning change requires setbacks to be 25 feet from the street and 25 feet from the back property line. The old setbacks were 20 feet from the street and 18 feet from the back property line. The Commission approved the request. On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by alderman Louis Butler, Jr., it was resolved to APPROVE the request for VARIANCE of property in R1 (Residential) Zone located at 802 Paggo Street to build a new home (Rita Woods) with old set back requirements of 20 feet from the street and 18 feet from the back property line. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Julius Alsandor.

CORRECTIONS:

The old setbacks were 20 feet from the street and 5 feet from the back property line...

It was resolved to APPROVE the request for VARIANCE of property in R1 (Residential) Zone located at 802 Paggo Street to build a new home (Rita Woods) with old setback requirements of 20 feet from the street and 5 feet from the back property line.

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum, seconded by Alderman Julius Alsandor and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the request by Mrs. Margaret Doucet for changes to the minutes of April 2011 and November 2011 as follows:

April 12, 2011

Under PRESENTATIONS

Item (e) States:

BM6 LLC, Lynette Angelle, T/S 810 N. Main Street (Asbestos, 03/08/2011)

Ms. Doucet stated that both of the buildings located at 517 E. North Street and 810 N. Main Street (Items d and e) contain more asbestos than what the Code Enforcement crew can handle...

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None

CORRECTIONS:

Ms. Doucet stated that both of the buildings located at 517 E. North Street and 810 N. Main Street (Items d and e) contain asbestos and the Code Enforcement Crew cannot handle.

November 8, 2011

Under PRESENTATIONS

Item (#7) States:

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YEAS: Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Julius Alsandor.

CORRECTIONS:

The old setbacks were 20 feet from the street and 5 feet from the back property line...

It was resolved to APPROVE the request for VARIANCE of property in R1 (Residential) Zone located at 802 Paggo Street to build a new home (Rita Woods) with old setback requirements of 20 feet from the street and 5 feet from the back property line.

The matter regarding the Interim Parks Director was revisited. Alderman Blair Briggs asked Ms. Laura Balthazar why the Personnel Committee was not involved in the interview process. Ms. Balthazar stated that they would be contacted next week. Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin stated that she is a part of the Personnel Committee also and since she already was part of the first process, then maybe the three other members who were not a part of it can do that process. At this time, Ms. Walker arrived. Mayor Cravins informed her that there needs to be some clarity on an issue as it relates to the Parks and Recreation Interim Director's position. Ms. Walker stated that the position was opened as an unclassified position and their attorney has advised them that the Civil Service Board does not need to take a stand in this matter because the position is not Civil Service. Ms. Walker stated that she informed Mr. Watson that he is currently in a Civil Service position and if he accepts the Interim position, he is leaving a Civil Service position for a non-Civil Service position. If Mr. Watson is not chosen for the Director's position, then he would have to re-apply for the Supervisor's position, at which time, the Supervisor's position may have already been filled. Mr. Watson stated that Mr. Ken Vidrine retired 09/01/2011 and he took over all those responsibilities on 10/01/2011. Ms. Walker stated that she does feel that Mr. Watson needs to be paid that position's pay because he is doing the job and he has taken on all these extra responsibilities. Ms. Walker stated that if Mr. Watson is appointed as Interim, he can stay in that position for six (6) months.

On a motion by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin and seconded by Alderman Reginald Tatum, it was resolved to pay Mr. Clarence Watson the Director's pay while he maintains his Supervisor's status.

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: Julius Alsandor.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderman Joseph Charles and unanimously seconded and carried, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 P.M.

ATTEST:

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CITY CLERK

MAYOR