

CITY OF OPELOUSAS
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

The Council of the City of Opelousas, Parish of St. Landry, State of Louisiana, convened in a regular session on this 8th day of September 2020 at 5:00 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic mandates for social distancing and limited occupancy requirements, the meeting was open to limited general public and was **LIVE-STREAMED ON THE WWW.CITYOFOPELOUSAS.COM website.**

With Mayor Julius Alsandor presiding, the meeting was called to order.

Mayor Alsandor requested the Clerk to call the roll and the following Council members were PRESENT: Marvin Richard, Milton Batiste III, Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Davis. ABSENT: None.

A moment of silent meditation was observed. Pastor Eugene Reiszner with Our Savior's Church, could not be in attendance so Mr. Patrick Fontenot, Air Force Veteran and President of Williams Progressive Life Insurance Company, led the prayer. Mr. Fontenot also asked for a moment of silent meditation in observance of the passing of Mr. Robert "Bob" Morrison. Mr. Patrick Fontenot also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and Alderman Marvin Richard and seconded by Aldermen Charles Cummings and Floyd Ford, it was resolved to APPROVE the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held 08/18/2020. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Milton Batiste III, Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, and Marvin Richard.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and seconded by Alderman Floyd Ford, it was resolved to APPROVE the Minutes of the Special Meeting held 08/25/2020. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, Marvin Richard, and Milton Batiste III.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Davis and Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved to add the following item under the Executive Session Section: "*Discussion of pending litigation for Suit 11-C-4858-A (Elton Sam)*". A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, Marvin Richard, Milton Batiste III, and Floyd Ford.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Davis, it was resolved to add the following item under the Old Business Section: "*Discussion of streets referencing water leaks*". A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, Marvin Richard, Milton Batiste III, Floyd Ford, and Charles Cummings.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderwoman Chasity Davis and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved to ADOPT the agenda as a whole with the requested changes. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Chasity Davis, Marvin Richard, Milton Batiste III, Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, and Sherell Roberts.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

- **Three-minute recess for submission of public comments/questions.** Mayor Alsandor checked with the City Clerk to find out if there had been any public comments submitted. The Clerk confirmed that no messages, emails or comments/questions had been received regarding the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Reading of Public Comments/Questions, if any. None.
- Updates from Mayor Julius Alsandor. *Prepared statement, as follows:*

September 8, 2020

Mayor's City Update

To the citizens of Opelousas,

In an effort to provide more information about city matters to citizens, I will continue to deliver a brief monthly overview at city council meetings. As we all face many concerns in our community, state, and nation, I am pleased to report that we are making some progress here in Opelousas.

Prior to and in the aftermath of Hurricane Laura, our streets, water and parks departments worked to ensure the residents we were busy with storm preparation which involved trimming trees, clearing drains and filling sandbags as well as post storm clean-up which also included clearing drains from debris and tree limbs and cutting and removing trees from streets.

In our public works department, street repairs have been made at the intersection of Chachere and Oak Streets after a couple of years of being on the street repair and work order list. A complete street reconstruction was completed on Veazie Street.

I can assure you we are working as productive and as safely as we can to address the countless street issues we have in our city. Please remember that many of our streets are 1000 plus years old. Some streets are even older.

Just recently, we installed and upgraded a new chlorine system at our sewer plant. This upgrade enhances our disinfectant system (kills the fecal coliform) which allows treated waste water to safely drain into our streams and canals which is regulated under by the Louisiana Department of Health and Department of Environmental Quality requirements. As funds become available through capital outlay and grants, the City of Opelousas will continue to address the sewer and upgrades necessary to provide good quality service to our customers.

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We are also in the process of upgrading and rebuilding our **belt press** which would drastically help out disposal process of sewer sludge coming into the plant. Both of these improvements are beginning stages of a more up to date operating plant. There are certainly other concerns at our sewer plant; however, if we can get the belt press operating properly, it would be an improvement that would give our plant some sustainability for years to come.

At our **water plant**, through the assistance of our local Louisiana delegation, Representative Dustin Miller and Senator Gerald Boudreaux, we have acquired \$500-thousand dollars for our water distribution line system. This, of course, will help improve the quality of water going into our businesses and homes of our taxpayers. I should add that this is just scratching the surface of the many miles of water lines that need repair. Along with our streets, both plants remain a top priority for this administration. We must address our underlining foundation problems if we are to fix our streets for years to come.

In the coming months we will begin **replacing many of our water meters** in the city. This will help to stop some of the water loss we are experiencing. Our water plant supervisor and his team are to be commended for the efficient job they are doing at the city water plant. It has been a few years since the city has done some major work and upgrades at the water plant. It will take some time to address these issues and I thank you all for your continued patience; however, it is better to repair what we can now than to not do anything at all. Neglecting these problems is not an option.

Working closely with Rep. Miller and Sen. Boudreaux, the city has been able to acquire approximately \$2-million dollars for street overly and street reconstruction. As we move forward into next year, we plan to request additional funding in each category. We have compiled a list of needed street improvements that once improved will benefit our citizens and our businesses.

In the next couple of weeks, providing we are blessed with good weather, the opening of the **Judson Walsh Street bridge** should become a reality. After two years of construction, we know a lot of people are looking forward to using the Judson Walsh route again.

Decorative lights have been installed around the new one- mile asphalt **walking trail** at South City Park. Through this partnership with Opelousas General Health Foundation, CLECO and the City, we are proud to offer this quality of life amenity to our locals and visitors. Another enhancement we are seeing pop up around our city are traffic signal boxes that are wrapped with art. So far, four boxes have been unveiled and more are scheduled to come this year. Both of these projects were done through grant funding.

Each month at the city council meeting, I intend to provide our local newspaper and media a monthly report so that everyone can stay informed on the city's growth and progress. The monthly report will also be posted on our city website. Our improvements may not be as quick as we would like them to happen, but are moving **forward** for the better good of the citizens and the city of Opelousas.

God bless and take care,

Mayor Alsandor

REPORTS

Review Monthly Finances. Mr. Stephen Woods, City Accountant, provided the Council members with a financial summary report of the City's revenue and expenditures for the month ending August 31, 2020. On a motion by Alderman Milton Batiste III and seconded by Aldermen Floyd Ford and Marvin Richard, it was resolved to accept the Monthly Finance Report as presented. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, Milton Batiste III, Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Davis.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Engineer's Monthly Report. A copy of the Engineer's Monthly Report was provided to the Council members. Mr. William Jarrell gave a brief update on the status of the EPA Administrative Order in which the City is on a 10-year CCTV plan and the City will begin the cleanup process sometime in October 2020. He also stated that the discovery process has started for the meter replacement project. Questionnaires have been sent out to various staff regarding this matter.

City Attorney's Report (*Deferred to Executive Session*).

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of streets referencing water leaks. Alderwoman Sherell Roberts initiated a discussion regarding calls she has been receiving from constituents regarding water leaks. She stated that every time she contacts the Public Works Department to check the status of leaks, she is told that it is on the list. She would like a more definitive answer as to when the leak is expected to be repaired. Attorney Broussard stated that he had a video of a water leak in the middle of one of the City streets that someone sent him. The video was shown to the Council and those present in the audience. Mayor Alsandor suggested that the City Council have the i-Worq program downloaded to their iPad's so that they can go into the work order system to check the requests. The City Engineer also pointed out that the citizens have access on the City's website to create a work order as well. This service can be accessed on www.cityofopelousas.com under the Citizen Engagement tab.

NEW BUSINESS

Acknowledge the death of Permanent Police Officer First Class Gary R. Lazard, effective 08/16/2020. Mayor Alsandor requested that everyone stand to show their respect for the officer that was lost. On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Davis, it was resolved to accept the acknowledgement of the death of Permanent Police Officer First Class Gary R. Lazard, effective 08/16/2020. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Milton Batiste III, Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, and Marvin Richard.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Discuss request for approval for CONDITIONAL USE for property located in a DMU ZONE (DOWNTOWN MIXED USE ZONE) at 405 N. Main St. to open an Outreach Center providing Virtual Learning and Before School and After School Care at the referenced location (K Land Properties LLC – Kelia S. Guillory/Tara Pitre Gordon). The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on 09/08/2020 and recommended approval of this item.

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On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and Alderwoman Chasity Davis and seconded by Alderman Floyd Ford, it was resolved to approve the request for approval for CONDITIONAL USE for property located in a DMU ZONE (DOWNTOWN MIXED USE ZONE) at 405 N. Main St. to open an Outreach Center providing Virtual Learning and Before School and After School Care at the referenced location (K Land Properties LLC – Kelia S. Guillory/Tara Pitre Gordon). A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, Marvin Richard, and Milton Batiste III.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Discuss request for VARIANCE approval for property located in an R1 ZONE (RESIDENTIAL 1 ZONE) at 920 S. Court Street for a 3 ft. set back variance to build a garage/carport at the referenced location (John P. Carriere). The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on 09/08/2020 and recommended approval of this item. On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Aldermen Charles Cummings and Marvin Richard, it was resolved to approve the request for VARIANCE approval for property located in an R1 ZONE (RESIDENTIAL 1 ZONE) at 920 S. Court Street for a 3 ft. set back variance to build a garage/carport at the referenced location (John P. Carriere). A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, Marvin Richard, Milton Batiste III, and Floyd Ford.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Discuss request for CONDITIONAL USE approval for property located in an R1 ZONE (RESIDENTIAL 1 ZONE) at 610 Park Avenue to install a drive thru window at a fast food restaurant at the referenced location (Dups Express – Brenton Dupre). The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on 09/08/2020 and recommended approval of this item. On a motion by Alderwoman Chasity Davis and seconded by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts, it was resolved to approve the request for CONDITIONAL USE approval for property located in an R1 ZONE (RESIDENTIAL 1 ZONE) at 610 Park Avenue to install a drive thru window at a fast food restaurant at the referenced location (Dups Express – Brenton Dupre). A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, Marvin Richard, Milton Batiste III, Floyd Ford, and Charles Cummings.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Grant Authority to Advertise for Bids for Sewer Pump Parts for the Public Works Department. On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Davis and Alderman Floyd Ford, it was resolved to grant authority to Advertise for Bids for Sewer Pump Parts for the Public Works Department. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Chasity Davis, Marvin Richard, Milton Batiste III, Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, and Sherell Roberts.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

An Ordinance Providing for Administrative Fees Related to the Redemption of Property Sold for Non-Payment of Taxes.

INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE FEES RELATED TO THE REDEMPTION OF PROPERTY SOLD FOR NON-PAYMENT OF TAXES

WHEREAS, the City of Opelousas has for years assessed against those redeeming property for non-payment of taxes an administrative fee related to the redemption;

WHEREAS, the assessment of the fees was not provided by Ordinance;

WHEREAS, the fee assessed upon the redemption of property has been TWENTY DOLLARS (\$20.00);

WHEREAS, the City of Opelousas believes it is necessary to increase the administrative fee from TWENTY DOLLARS (\$20.00) to ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100.00).

Said Ordinance was introduced by Alderman Charles Cummings.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A PUBLIC HEARING TO DISCUSS AND CONSIDER ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR DISPOSITION OF ADJUDICATED PROPERTIES. Pursuant to an advertisement in the *Daily World*, a Public Hearing was opened at 6:42 p.m. for a Public Hearing DISCUSS AND CONSIDER ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR DISPOSITION OF ADJUDICATED PROPERTIES. Alderman Cummings stated that he would like to table this matter until next month so that he can get more information. Attorney Broussard stated that the public hearing had already been opened and he could not make any motions until after it was closed and they had moved to the next item at which time he could table the matter and request another public hearing be held at next month's meeting. No other questions or comments.

A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER levying additional or increased millage rates without further voter approval or adopting the adjusted millage rate after reassessment and rolling forward to rates not to exceed the prior year's maximum. In addition to being published in the City's official journal, the *Daily World* and in the *Daily Advertiser* on 07/01/2020 and 07/03/2020, this notice of public hearing was also posted on the City's website beginning on 08/11/2020 in the announcements section and also included on the 08/18/2020 meeting agenda which was posted for public viewing beginning on 08/14/2020. The Clerk made the following comments regarding the millage adoption: The millage rate is adopted every year and our representative that handles our millage from the Municipal Association is out ill. She would normally be here to do any explanations but we've been advertising for about two months now that we were going to have this public meeting and hearing here regarding the adoption without further voter consent to raising it—to rolling forward the rate. The first resolution is to adopt the adjusted millage rate for General Alimony in the City of Opelousas for tax year 2020. Now that resolution—the General Alimony rate is 6.9 mills—that's what the adjusted rate is. Okay, but we're going to be rolling forward in the second resolution. We'll go from 6.9 which was the adjusted rate—6.9 mills—to the new levy for 2020 of

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7.13 mills and that will bring an increase to our tax revenue for the upcoming tax year for the 2020 tax year. But we have to adopt two resolutions for this process and that's what we have before us—two separate resolutions.

Alderman Batiste asked what we calculated the increase at. Ms. Anderson replied \$32,456.80 would be the millage increase. Mayor Alsandor asked if there were any other questions from the Council. No additional questions or comments from the Council. Ms. Anderson asked if there were any comments or questions from the audience. No other questions or comments. The Public Hearing was closed at 6:52 p.m.

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR DISPOSITION OF ADJUDICATED PROPERTIES. (Vote Required)

On a motion by Alderman Charles Cummings and seconded by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and Alderman Milton Batiste III, it was resolved to defer ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR DISPOSITION OF ADJUDICATED PROPERTIES until next month's meeting and have a second public hearing at that time. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, Milton Batiste III, Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Davis.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

RESOLUTIONS

ADOPT THE ADJUSTED MILLAGE RATE FOR GENERAL ALIMONY IN THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS FOR TAX YEAR 2020.

On a motion by Alderman Charles Cummings and seconded by Alderman Milton Batiste III, the following Resolution was offered for adoption:

RESOLUTION 2020-11

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ADJUSTED MILLAGE RATE FOR GENERAL ALIMONY IN THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS FOR TAX YEAR 2020

BE IT RESOLVED, by the City of Opelousas of the Parish of St. Landry, Louisiana, in a public meeting held on September 8, 2020, which meeting was conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and the additional requirements of Article VII, Section 23(C) of the Louisiana Constitution and R.S. 47:1705(B), that the following adjusted millage rates be and they are hereby levied upon the dollar of the assessed valuation of all property subject to ad valorem taxation within said Parish for the year 2020, for the purpose of raising revenue:

MILLAGE

General Alimony (5134 001):

6.900 mills

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assessor of the Parish of St. Landry, shall extend upon the assessment roll for the year 2020 the taxes herein levied, and the tax collector of said Parish shall collect and remit the same to said taxing authority in accordance with law. The foregoing resolution was read in full; the roll was called on the adoption thereof, and the resolution was adopted by the following votes:

YEAS: Milton Batiste, Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, and Marvin Richard.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

ABSENT: None.

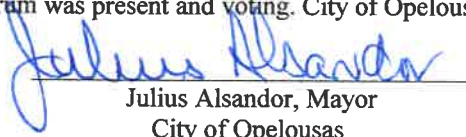
ATTEST:



Leisa S Anderson, City Clerk
City of Opelousas

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of the resolution adopted at the City Council Meeting held on September 8, 2020, at which meeting a quorum was present and voting. City of Opelousas, Louisiana, this 8th day of September 2020.



Julius Alsandor, Mayor
City of Opelousas

SET FORTH THE ADJUSTED MILLAGE RATE AND ROLL FORWARD TO A MILLAGE RATE NOT TO EXCEED THE MAXIMUM AUTHORIZED RATE FOR GENERAL ALIMONY IN THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS FOR TAX YEAR 2020.

On a motion by Alderman Milton Batiste III and seconded by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts, the following Resolution was offered for adoption:

RESOLUTION 2020-12

RESOLUTION WHICH SETS FORTH THE ADJUSTED MILLAGE RATE AND ROLL FORWARD TO A MILLAGE RATE NOT EXCEEDING THE MAXIMUM AUTHORIZED RATE FOR GENERAL ALIMONY IN THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS FOR TAX YEAR 2020

BE IT RESOLVED, by the City of Opelousas of the Parish of St. Landry, Louisiana, in a public meeting held on September 8, 2020, which meeting was conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and the additional requirements of Article VII, Section 23(C) of the Louisiana Constitution and R.S. 47:1705(B), that the taxing district voted to increase the millage rate(s), but not in excess of the prior year's maximum rate(s), on all taxable property shown on the official assessment roll for the year 2020, and when collected, the revenues from said taxes shall be used only for the specific purposes for which said taxes have been levied. Said millage rate(s) are:

General Alimony (5134 001):

Adjusted Rate
6.900 mills

2020 Levy
7.130 mills

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assessor of the Parish of St. Landry, shall extend upon the assessment roll for the year 2020 the taxes herein levied, and the tax collector of said Parish shall collect and remit the same to said taxing authority in accordance with law.

The foregoing resolution was read in full, the roll was called on the adoption thereof, and the resolution was adopted by no less than two-thirds of the total membership of the taxing authority voting in favor as required by Article VII, Section 23(C) of the Louisiana Constitution and R.S. 47:1705(B). The votes were:

YEAS: Floyd Ford, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, Marvin Richard, and Milton Batiste.

NAYS: None.

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ABSTAINED: None.

ABSENT: None.

ATTEST:



Leisa S Anderson; City Clerk
City of Opelousas

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of the resolution adopted at the City Council Meeting held on September 8, 2020, at which meeting a quorum was present and voting. City of Opelousas, Louisiana, this 8th day of September 2020.


Julius Alsandor, Mayor
City of Opelousas

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Aldermen Marvin Richard and Floyd Ford, seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Davis and unanimously carried, it was resolved to go into Executive Session at 6:50 p.m. to discuss the following matters:

- *Discussion of Written Demand Letter from Jonah Coleman.*
- *Discussion of pending litigation for Suit 11-C-4858-A (Elton Sam).*

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts, seconded by Alderman Charles Cumming and unanimously carried, it was resolved to return to Regular Session at 7:15 p.m.

On a motion by Alderman Charles Cummings and seconded by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts, it was resolved to tender notice of the claim related to Jonah Coleman to our insurance carrier. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Davis, Marvin Richard, Milton Batiste III, and Floyd Ford.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Discussion of pending litigation for Suit 11-C-4858-A (Elton Sam) was for discussion only. No action taken.

There being nothing further to come before the Council, on a motion by Alderman Charles Cummings and Alderwomen Chasity Davis and Sherell Roberts, seconded by Alderman Floyd Ford and unanimously carried, it was resolved that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

ATTEST:


CITY CLERK
MAYOR