

CITY OF OPELOUSAS
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 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 December 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 (*arrived late*), Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Davis. **ABSENT**: None.

A moment of silent meditation was observed. Pastor Kyle Sylvester, St. Mary Baptist Church, Port Barre, Louisiana, led the prayer.

Retired Command Sgt. Major Darrell Minix, Army Reserves, led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Minix is a recipient of the Bronze Star for service in Iraq as well as a recipient of the Legion of Merit Award for his 42 years of Service.

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderman Milton Batiste III, it was resolved to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held 11/10/2020. 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.

On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and seconded by Alderman Floyd Ford, it was resolved to add the following item: *under the PERSONNEL ITEMS Section, Item No. 19, "Approve the Police Chief's recommendation for hire of Kem L. Dwyer as a Police Officer Recruit, effective 12/28/2020 with working test period to begin immediately upon completion of the six month formal training or completion of P.O.S.T. certification, whichever occurs first"*. 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 Charles Cummings and seconded by Alderman Milton Batiste III, it was resolved to **ADOPT** the revised agenda as presented with the revised changes. 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.

- **Three-minute recess for submission of public comments/questions.** At this time, Mayor Alsandor allowed Mr. Tim Marks with Opelousas General Health Systems to give an update regarding COVID-19. Mr. Marks stated that about a month ago he was diagnosed with COVID; however, fortunately, he was able to avoid hospitalization but he is still not 100 percent. At this time, Mr. Marks started with the COVID positivity rate which is updated every week on Wednesday—currently we are at 10.9 and the threshold to continue moving forward is 5. It was 11.9 before that but this puts us back in a modified Phase 2. As of noon today, across the State there are 238,676 positive Coronavirus cases and 6,363 deaths. In Acadiana there are 33,638 cases and 734 deaths. Here in St. Landry Parish there are 5,248 cases and 161 deaths. At the hospital to date they have treated almost 400 patients in-patient positive with Coronavirus and tested over 800 out-patients and are continuing to track those patients. As of today, they are at 80 percent capacity for their in-patient acute beds and they are at-capacity for their critical care (ICU) beds. They are doing well with PPE's. They are at a critical level with blood supplies and are requesting that people donate blood. They are anticipating their first round of vaccines with the next week or two. Priority will go first to their front-line staff taking care of COVID patients. Access to rapid testing is improving. Now they are doing a combo test for COVID, FLU AND RSV. Mr. Marks stated that the most important message he can get out today is to continue masking, continue social distancing, continue hand hygiene and surface cleaning, and if you are sick, isolate and don't mix with anybody.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Reading of Public Comments/Questions, if any. No other public comments or questions were submitted.
- At this time, the presentation by Mr. Richard Lebouef, St. Landry Parish Solid Waste Director, regarding debris removal was moved up to accommodate Mr. Lebouef who would have to leave early for another meeting. Mr. Lebouef stated that the hardest hit part of the Parish was on the Southwest corner in the south and they have been working diligently since October 19th with minimal resources. He stated that there is a 13+ percent COVID positivity rate with Waste Connections and they will not send anyone from out of the district to assist. They are starting to make progress in Opelousas near the Harry Guilbeau area. If there is a safety concern, please call Mr. Lebouef at 337-826-5211 or 337-523-2900. Anything cosmetic will have to wait. Mr. Joey Boone, inspector with St. Landry Parish Solid Waste, stated that he has gridded out six grids for Opelousas. They will be working from South to North then from East to West. This encompasses about 2700 homes.

BIDS

Accept Bids for Bulk Lime (Bid #06-20). Pursuant to advertisement in the *Daily World* for Bids for Bulk Lime (Bid #06-20), one (1) bid was received:

<i>BIDDER NAME</i>	<i>BID AMOUNT, Per Ton</i>
LHOIST NORTH AMERICA 1785 S. Westport Drive, Port Allen, LA 70767 Contact: Bret Jackson	\$275.34

On a motion by Alderman Milton Batiste III and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved to take the bid under advisement and award if the bid meets specifications. 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.

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Accept Bids for Concrete (Bid #07-20). Pursuant to advertisement in the *Daily World* for Bids for Concrete (Bid #07-20), two (2) bids were received: *The Clerk noted that the bid packet that was sent to Church Point Ready Mix was returned to the City of Opelousas as undeliverable-no forwarding address.*

<i>BIDDER NAME</i>	<i>3000 PSI Per yard</i>	<i>4000 PSI Per yard</i>	<i>EXTRA CEMENT Per bag</i>	<i>CA. CHLORIDE Per yard</i>	<i>FIBER Per bundle</i>
BARRY CONCRETE P O BOX 2998, LAFAYETTE LA 70502 Contact: Patrick Barry	\$115.00	\$120.00	\$5.00	\$4.00	\$8.00
PORT AGGREGATES INC - PAI READY MIX 314 N MAIN ST, JENNINGS, LA 70546 Contact: Michael Justin Norman	\$112.00	\$116.00	\$4.00	\$3.50	\$8.00

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved to take the bids under advisement and award to the lowest bidder meeting specifications. 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.

OLD BUSINESS

Discuss request by Opelousas Downtown Development District (ODDD) for Resolution of Support for the proposed Infrastructure Improvement to Vine Street.

On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and seconded by Alderman Charles Cummings, the following Resolution was offered for adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 15 OF 2020
RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF VINE STREET PROJECT
A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT TO VINE STREET

BE IT RESOLVED that the Opelousas City Council supports the proposed infrastructure improvements to Vine Street in Opelousas, Louisiana, also known as U.S. Highway 190 Eastbound.

A roll call vote was had with the following results:

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


NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Done and signed this 8th day of December 2020.

ATTEST:


CITY CLERK


MAYOR

REPORTS

Engineer's Monthly Report. A copy of the Engineer's Monthly Report was provided to the Council members. Mr. Jarrell was not in attendance so the Mayor instructed the Council to review the report. On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Davis, it was resolved to accept the Engineer's Monthly Report as presented in writing. 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.

City Attorney's Report. Attorney Broussard stated that he had no report.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss request for VARIANCE approval of property located in a C1 ZONE (COMMERCIAL 1 ZONE) at 1131 S. Bullard Street to move a mobile home at referenced location to use as an office for Used Car Sales (Karl Thomas). The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on 12/07/2020 and recommended approval of this item. On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Davis, it was resolved to approve the request for VARIANCE approval of property located in a C1 ZONE (COMMERCIAL 1 ZONE) at 1131 S. Bullard Street to move a mobile home at referenced location to use as an office for Used Car Sales (Karl Thomas). 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.

PERSONNEL ITEMS

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderman Floyd Ford, it was resolved to approve the Termination of Permanent Police Officer First Class Darrell L. Wheeler, Sr., effective 03/17/2020. 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 Alderman Charles Cummings and seconded by Alderman Floyd Ford, it was resolved to approve the Extended Sick Leave for Permanent Police Lieutenant Michael L. Lacombe, effective 09/21/2020. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderwoman Chasity Davis and seconded by Aldermen Charles Cummings and Milton Batiste III, it was resolved to approve the Extended Sick Leave for Permanent Police Sergeant Ebony D. Martin, effective 10/07/2020. 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 Alderman Milton Batiste III and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved to approve the Police Chief's recommendation for hire of Kem L. Dwyer as a Police Officer Recruit, effective 12/28/2020 with working test period to begin immediately upon completion of the six month formal training or completion of P.O.S.T. certification, whichever occurs first. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

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

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Continuation of Reports Section: 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 November 30, 2020.

On a motion by Alderman Milton Batiste III and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard and Alderwoman Sherell Roberts, 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.

Continuation of New Business Section: Discussion by Fire Chief Charles Mason and Staff to adjust Firefighter hourly base from \$9.50 per hour to \$11.50 per hour. Chief Mason gave a video presentation of the training and procedures of firefighters. He stated that firefighters now face the risk of cancer from toxic fumes while fighting fires. He reviewed several surrounding areas base pay rates and pointed out that it had been over 10 years since Opelousas had received an increase in base pay. He pointed out that firefighting is not just a job but a career choice but the firefighters come and the City pays for their training and then after two years they leave to work somewhere else that is paying more—the City needs to get competitive to keep our firefighters by making this investment. The attorney asked if there has ever been an accrual program for bonuses. Chief Mason had some of his Assistant Fire Chiefs, Lieutenants, and Captains in attendance to comment on this matter. The general consensus was that they love their job but they deal with a lot of dangerous stuff for low pay. Police Chief Martin McLendon spoke at this time and stated that he stands in unity with the Fire Chief and feels that it is an embarrassment that these firefighters make such a low amount. He stated that the Police Department's narrative is identical to the Fire Department in that their base pay is also too low. Chief McLendon stated that they have to find a way to unify and address pay for everybody. He stated that he requested that the pay for entry level positions be raised. He once again stated that he is in support of the Fire Department and asked that the City also keep the Police Department in mind. Mayor Alsandor stated that this was only a discussion and no action will be taken at this time.

At this time, Mayor Alsandor gave the Council members, City Attorney, and City Clerk the opportunity to extend holiday greetings to the public prior to departing the meeting.

There being nothing further to come before the Council, on a motion by Alderman Charles Cummings, seconded by Alderwomen Chasity Davis and Sherell Roberts and Alderman Milton Batiste III and unanimously carried, it was resolved that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

ATTEST:


CITY CLERK


MAYOR