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MAYOR



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BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES  
Thursday, June 3, 2021 @ 4:30 P.M.

*A moment of silent meditation was observed. City Clerk Leisa Anderson led the Prayer and Alderman Charles Cummings led the Pledge to the U. S. Flag.*

PRESENT: Milton Batiste III, Chairman; Charles Cummings, Vice-Chairman; and Sherell Roberts.  
ABSENT: Floyd Ford (*arrived late*).

*Alderman Batiste asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Fire Chief Charles Mason requested that Chief Martin McLendon give the Police Department's presentation first. On a motion by Alderman Charles Cummings, seconded by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and unanimously carried, it was resolved to accept the Budget Committee Agenda and allow Police Chief McLendon to give his presentation first.*

1. Discuss salary increase for Police Officers, Records Clerks and Communications Officers. *Chief McLendon presented the Committee with charts and graphs showing the entry level pay rates for various Regional Police Departments and how Opelousas compared to them. Out of the eleven agencies listed, Opelousas ranked at second-to-last on the chart. Opelousas ranked last for Regional Communications Officers pay rates in a list of seven agencies. Chief McLendon pointed out that the City is continuing to lose officers to other agencies because of the low starting pay and due to the fact that new recruits are failing the psychological exam. He also noted the increase in gun violence in Opelousas and the shortage of staff available to police these issues. Alderman Floyd Ford arrived during the discussion. Lieutenant Dwight Brown stated that they have a limited number of officers working the night shifts. Sgt. Brody Ortego stated that they have to police the clubs at closing and they have a shift of five officers to police 250-300 people while trying to clear the crowds after the clubs close at 2 in the morning. He invited the Council members to ride with them to see what they have to deal with. Chief McLendon played an audio of gunshots being fired in a neighborhood. Major Mark Guidry stated that they have been having kids jumping out of cars spraying areas with bullets. He stated that they have picking up guns. He stated that the officers have been picking up 2-3 guns per shift. Chief McLendon would like for the Council to start looking at the budget so that these increases can be in effect when the new budget for FY2021-2022 goes into effect.*

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderman Charles Cummings, it was resolved to take the matter under advisement and forward to the full council for further review. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Milton Batiste, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Floyd Ford.  
NAYS: None.  
ABSENT: None.

2. Discuss hourly rate increase for Opelousas Firefighters from \$9.50 to \$11.50 per hour. *Chief Mason requested an increase for the entry level Firefighters. He stated that these men love their jobs but the pay is not enough and he will soon be losing a lot of higher ranking officers due to retirements. He also noted that the Firefighters are at a higher risk of getting cancer due to the toxins in the fires they fight. He pointed out that they now have to immediately strip down out of their uniforms and wipe their faces and necks off with baby wipes to remove some of the toxins that are entering their bodies. He asked that the City consider his request for the pay increase.*

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderman Floyd Ford, it was resolved to take the matter under advisement and forward to the full council for further discussion.

On a motion by Alderman Charles Cummings, seconded by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn. The Budget Committee Meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN**

MARVIN T. RICHARD, ALDERMAN AT LARGE • MILTON BATISTE III, DISTRICT A • FLOYD FORD, DISTRICT B • CHARLES CUMMINGS, DISTRICT C  
SHERELL ROBERTS, DISTRICT D • CHASITY DAVIS, DISTRICT E

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