

CITY OF OPELOUSAS
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 14, 2025

The Council of the City of Opelousas, Parish of St. Landry, State of Louisiana, convened in a regular session on this 14th day of January 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Alsandor read a prepared statement regarding meeting decorum as it relates to speaking on agenda items and conduct during meetings. This decorum is to be adhered to for all meetings.

Mayor Alsandor requested the Clerk to call the roll and the following Council members were PRESENT: Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Warren. ABSENT: None.

A moment of silent meditation was observed. Minister Marie Greene, Opelousas, Louisiana, led the Prayer and Mr. Greg Potter, military veteran, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherel Roberts and seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Warren, it was resolved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meetings held 11/12/2024 and 12/10/2024. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Warren.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderwoman Delita Broussard, it was resolved to *DELETE under the NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS Section, Item No. 10-a, "Confirmation of Mayor's Appointments-City Auditing Firm" and Item No. 10-b, "Confirmation of Mayor's Appointments-City Engineering Firm"*.

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Warren.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderman John Guilbeaux and seconded by Alderman Charles Cummings, it was resolved to *CORRECT under the CONSENTS Section, Item No. 22, "Approve the Police Chief's Recommendation for Hiring of Lisa G. Johnson as a Police Officer Recruit. Employee has received P.O.S.T. certification 11/21/2024 prior to the end of six month formal training period and is to begin a working test period, effective 11/22/2024" to state, "Approve the Police Chief's Recommendation Police Officer Lisa G. Johnson to begin her working test period, effective 11/22/2024. Employee received P.O.S.T. certification on 11/21/2024 and is to begin her working test period"*.

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Warren.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and seconded by Alderman John Guilbeaux, it was resolved to *CORRECT under the CONSENTS Section, Item No. 23, "Approve Probational Police Officer Tyrone J. Davis' Extended Sick Leave, effective 12/30/2024" to state, "Approve Permanent Police Sergeant Tyrone J. Davis' Extended Sick Leave, effective 12/30/2024"*.

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Warren.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and seconded by Alderman John Guilbeaux and Alderwoman Delita Broussard, it was resolved to *CORRECT OFFICER'S TITLE under the CONSENTS Section, Item No. 24, "Approve Permanent Police Sergeant Tyrone Abrams' Termination of Administrative Leave with Pay, effective 01/15/2025" which should have been, "Approve Probational Police Officer Tyrone Abrams' Termination of Administrative Leave with Pay, effective 01/15/2025". Corrected item will be DELETED from the agenda. No action to be taken.*

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Warren.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

The City Clerk noted for the record that Mr. James Bellard requested in advance to be allowed to speak during the PUBLIC HEARING Section regarding the condemnation matter. Mayor Alsandor stated that when this item comes up, Mr. Bellard will have that opportunity.

On a motion by Alderman John Guilbeaux and seconded by Alderwoman Delita Broussard, it was resolved to *CORRECT under the CONSENTS Section, Item No. 27, "Accept Permanent Police Major Craig A. Thomas' Resignation, effective 01/30/2025, and approve payment in the amount of \$119,404.83 for 2,415 hours of unused annual leave and 7.5 hours of unused compensatory time" should state, "Accept Permanent Police Major Craig A. Thomas' Retirement, effective 01/30/2025, and approve payment in the amount of \$119,404.83 for 2,415 hours of unused annual leave and 7.5 hours of unused compensatory time"*.

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Warren.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderman Charles Cummings and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved accept the agenda subject to the approved changes and deletions. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, and Chasity Warren.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COVID-19 Update from Opelousas General Health Systems (OGHS) representative. Mayor Alsandor gave the following update: hospital activity is very high—respiratory illnesses. Increase in positivity and hospitalizations. Flu and RSV are on the rise. Please continue to take precautionary methods and if you are ill, please separate yourself so that it does not spread.

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- Presentation by Mr. Eric Williams regarding his organization “Guns Down Power Up” partnering with the Opelousas Museum for an event. Mr. Williams emphasized that we, as adults, need to take a good look at ourselves because our kids are looking at us. Certain things should not be handled on social media. Mr. Williams stated that he will be partnering with the Opelousas Museum to do a “Peace Walk”. The Peace Walk will be 02/01/2025 from the Parish Courthouse to the Opelousas Museum beginning at 11:00 a.m.
- Presentation by Ms. Yocha Payne, Property Tax Clerk, regarding property tax payment updates. Ms. Payne announced that we have been receiving several calls from customers as to why their tax payments have not cleared yet. She stated that she and Ms. Leisa Anderson have been processing mailed-in tax payments as quickly as possible but we are the only ones putting in mailed-in tax payments. Interest fees will not be added to bills that are postmarked or received on or before 01/31/2025. Beginning 02/01/2025, an interest rate of 1% will be added to bills not paid by 01/31/2025. Certified letters for unpaid property taxes will be mailed out between the first and second week of March 2025 and a certified notice fee will be added to that bill. Property tax payments can be made online, in office, or by mail. Ms. Payne also pointed out that while processing the mailed-in tax payments, we are finding that water bill payments are being included with these tax payments and we are not able to processing these mailed-in tax payments on a daily basis and therefore, we are behind in processing. She urged the public to mail in their water bills separately from the tax bill payment to avoid any delays in crediting their water payments. Ms. Anderson emphasized that there are only 2 people putting in mailed-in payments for taxes at this time and it is best that water bills be paid online or paid in-house for immediate processing. Alderwoman Roberts asked why there is a delay in processing of the mailed-in tax payments. Ms. Payne stated that an email was sent out last September stating that the tellers would no longer be processing the mailed-in tax payments. That email was sent out by Ms. LaWanda St. Ann, City treasurer. Alderman Guilbeaux asked what we can tell customers who have not received their tax bill. Ms. Payne stated that they can call our office to find out the amount of their tax bill. Ms. Anderson also stated that customers can contact the Assessor’s office to make sure their mailing address is correct because the City cannot make any changes to property tax bills—only the Assessor’s office can do that. Alderwoman Roberts asked Ms. St. Ann, why the tellers were not putting in the mailed-in payments. Ms. St. Ann stated that the tellers are doing the walk-in payments—just not doing the mailed-in payments. She did not address the issue of why they are not doing the mailed-in payments.

NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Nominate and Appoint Mayor Pro-Tempore for Calendar Year 2025. A motion was made by Alderman Marvin Richard to nominate Alderwoman Sherell Roberts as Mayor Pro-Tempore. The motion to nominate **Alderwoman Sherell Roberts as Mayor Pro-Tempore** for Calendar Year 2025 was seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Warren. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Warren, and Marvin Richard.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

On a motion by Alderwoman Chasity Warren and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved to accept the following **Committee Appointments** submitted by Mayor Julius Alsandor for Calendar Year 2025:

Budget Committee:

*John Guilbeaux, Chairman
Sherell Roberts, Vice-Chairwoman
Charles Cummings
Chasity Davis-Warren*

Personnel Committee:

*Chasity Davis-Warren, Chairwoman
Marvin Richard, Vice-Chairman
Sherell Roberts
Delita Rubin-Broussard*

General Services Committee:

*Marvin Richard, Chairman
Charles Cummings, Vice-Chairman
Delita Rubin-Broussard
John Guilbeaux*

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Warren, and Marvin Richard.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

The item to designate the **Official Journal (Newspaper)** for Calendar Year 2025 will be postponed until a later date. The *Daily World* will remain the current Official Journal until this item is revisited. Mr. Bobby Ardoin suggested that his online news media *St. Landry Now* could be used as an alternative source of publishing City notices although *St. Landry Now* does not meet the criteria to serve as the City’s Official Journal at this time.

REPORTS

Review Monthly Finances. A copy of the December 2024 financial summary and analysis was provided to the Council. Ms. LaWanda St. Ann gave a brief overview of the reports. On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Warren, it was resolved to accept the Financial Report as presented. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Warren, Marvin Richard, and John Guilbeaux.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Public Works Director’s Report. Public Works Director Travis VanWright was not present. Alderwoman Broussard stated that she had a question for the Public Works Director and she wants it on record that she has been putting in work orders, making calls, and sending emails regarding a leak on Redmond Street but Mr. VanWright has not responded to her. Alderwoman Warren and Alderman Richard also stated that Mr. VanWright should be present to answer any questions. The Council as a whole agreed that in the future that the Public Works Director should be at the Council meetings to represent what he has going on in the City.

Engineer’s Monthly Status Report. A copy of the Engineer’s Monthly Status Report was provided to the Council members. Mr. William Jarrell gave an overview of the following projects:

OPELOUSAS BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS (B#292): City has been approved for \$2.1M in capital outlay funds for bridge repairs/replacement. Work included in this project includes Augustus, Heather, Phillip, Plaisance Street Bridges and Frilot Street cross drain replacement as described below. Bids were received on Thursday, August 8, 2024 and contract awarded to the low bidder, Seina Construction, LLC in the amount of \$1,770,913.00. Pre-construction meeting was held on October 10, 2024 at 9:00 am at office of MGA, Inc. Contractor mobilized project on Monday, Dec. 2nd and has started work at Augustus Street Bridge & Frilot Street cross drain.

SANITARY SEWER PUMP STATIONS UPGRADE (SC#261): As of March 2023, pumps at all of the twenty-five pump stations included in the project have been replaced. All work included in the original pump station project has been completed. Currently, there are remaining unobligated grant funds remaining in the project and these funds will be used to towards the cost of relocating the Bernice Street Pump Station. Problems with Bernice Street Pump Station are cited in LDH Compliance Order and City is mandated to address. A change order has been approved and executed and plans are under way to relocate the Bernice Street Pump Station. The contractor has ordered materials and equipment for the project and is awaiting delivery to begin the work. Contractor has advised that he is scheduled to mobilize project in Mid-January 2025. Several easements on private property were required and the Administration has obtained these easements. The total cost is estimated to be \$886,462.00 and approximately \$478,065.00 is available in CDBG funds, with the City being responsible for the remaining \$406,397.00.

LDH COMPLIANCE ORDER (SC#251): City received Compliance Order on October 17, 2022, from LDH. Order requires City to address overflows and bypasses in the sewer collection system and WWTP issues. This is an ongoing problem with addressing non-compliance issues and CENLA continues to manage compliance reporting for the City. The lack of qualified and knowledgeable personnel in the wastewater department will prevent the city from complying with current and future regulatory issues facing the city. The Phase I Sewer Collection Rehabilitation Project is currently in progress next step to addressing overflows and bypasses in the collection system.

PHASE 1 SEWER COLLECTION REHABILITATION (SC#251-1): This project is the first project included in the \$25M DEQ loan to address overflows and bypasses in the sewer collection system. Contractor has begun work on the project and work is being performed daily. The area included in this project is the area served by the Diesi Street, Jasmine Street and Randy Street pump stations (primarily the Park Vista and Creswell Lane service area).

PHASE 2 SEWER COLLECTION REHABILITATION (SC#251-2): This project is the second project included in the \$25M DEQ loan to address overflows and bypasses in the sewer collection system. MGA is in design phase using inspection information acquired in 2023 to prepare plans and specifications for the work. The areas to be included in this project include The area included in this project is the area served by the Olindes, Lakeview Drive, and Linwood Pump Stations (primarily the Lakeview Subdivision, Linwood and Clois du Bois Subdivisions, and area along Creswell Lane east of I-49).

WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS (W#302 CAPITAL OUTLAY): This project is for the repair of several waterlines crossing existing railroad facilities and replacement of ground storage tank at the Med-South Well Site. Construction has been delayed as the City cannot maintain minimum pressure at Med-South when the facility is taken offline, meaning there is no way to replace the ground storage tank. The materials for the ground storage tank have been on-site since August 2023 and no considerable progress has been made towards resolving this situation. Contractor has advised that due to the delays beyond their control, additional costs will be incurred once some direction from the City is obtained. These delays are due to the poor condition of the water system and the inability of the system to maintain adequate pressure in the southernmost portion of the water system to sustain operations when the Med-South Facility is taken out of service. Until

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critical water supply and distribution system issues are resolved, this will continue to be a problem, and the much needed and mandated (in the case of the Med-South Ground Storage Tank) improvements will not be rectified. This issue is discussed in more detail in the System Improvement Plan prepared by MGA and submitted to City and LDH for review and approval.

WATER SECTOR GRANT APPLICATION: MGA is preparing a grant application for some of the water system improvements outlined in the System Improvement Plan (SIP) with a total estimated cost of \$9,889,000, of which \$5,000,000 is being requested in grant funds (Maximum amount allowed) and \$4,889,000 will be the City match. If funded, this will reduce the City's loan obligation by \$5,000,000. LDH loan funds will be used for the City's required match.

CITYWIDE STREET IMPROVEMENTS (CAPITAL OUTLAY): MGA was provided a list of streets to provide preliminary cost estimates to City for consideration. MGA has provided the preliminary cost estimates to the Mayor and is awaiting direction on which streets to include in project.

On a motion by Alderman Charles Cummings and seconded by Alderman John Guilbeaux, it was resolved to accept the Engineers Report as presented. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Warren, Marvin Richard, and John Guilbeaux.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Presentation by City Attorney. Attorney Travis Broussard stated that he had no report this month.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and seconded by Aldermen Charles Cummings and John Guilbeaux, it was resolved to approve Contract Change Order No. 3 in the increase amount of \$29,921.08. This change order is necessary for Emergency repair to fix a roadway failure in the centerline of Vine Street (U.S. Hwy 190). This work was completed under Work Order No. 1254 that involved the repair of several sewer and water mainline and service line repairs to correct the issue. This change order is for Sewer Collection System Rehabilitation - Phase 1 Project, DEQ Contract No. CS-221198-01, MGA Project SC#251-1 (Contractor: Bihm Construction Company, Inc.). A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Charles Cummings, Sherell Roberts, Chasity Warren, Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, and Delita Broussard.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

No Ordinances Submitted for Consideration.

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS TO PROPOSED ORDINANCES

No Amendments for Consideration.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Pursuant to an advertisement in the *Daily World*, a Public Hearing was opened at 6:24 p.m. for A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONDEMNATION/DEMOLITION OF THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES:

(a) Helping Hands Rental Inc., 604 Sapphire Street, (Lots 1, 2, 4) (abandoned mobile homes)

Mr. James Bellard spoke regarding this property. He stated he is the owner the property at 604 Sapphire Street but he does not own the mobile homes which have been abandoned. He pointed out that the owners of the mobile homes moved out and that he would have to go to court to get authority to enter the mobile homes and/or do any repairs. He stated that the mobile homes have been vandalized by children in the neighborhood. He would like to repair the mobile homes after that and make them livable. Mrs. Etha Semien Amling who lives right behind the trailers stated that water collects under the trailers and that snakes, rats, possums, and raccoons are coming from that property onto her property. She said that the mobile homes are abandoned and are derelict at this time and she is afraid that a snake will get into her house and she cannot let children play in her backyard because of all the rodents. She stated that teenagers run in and out the trailers all the time. She has called the police several times and they told her that when the kids see the police car, they scatter. She stated that a man went into one of the trailers about 2 weeks ago with a dog and if he starts a fire because it is cold and if the trailer catches fire and the embers burn her house down then what is he supposed to do? She stated that this has been going on for over 6 months. Recommendation is that authority be granted for demolition of the mobile homes located at 604 Sapphire Street, (Lots 1, 2, 4). The Public Hearing was closed at 6:37 p.m. Mr. Lance Ned stated that they have to give Mr. Bellard the opportunity to rehab the property with significant changes within 45 days. Mayor Alsandor stated that significant difference means that it has to be livable—not boards on the windows and it has to pass inspection to be livable. On a motion by Alderman John Guilbeaux and seconded by Alderwoman Delita Broussard and Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved to approve the recommendation to grant authority for condemnation/demolition of the property located at 604 Sapphire Street, (Lots 1, 2, 4) (abandoned mobile homes) unless significant improvement is made within 45 days, pending inspection. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Sherell Roberts, Chasity Warrar, Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, and Charles Cummings.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

RESOLUTIONS

On a motion by Alderman John Guilbeaux and seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Warren and Alderman Marvin Richard, the following Resolution was offered for adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 01 OF 2025

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SALE, EXCHANGE OR DISPOSAL OF ANY SURPLUS PROPERTY NOT NEEDED OR USED BY THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS MUSEUM FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES, FIXING THE MINIMUM PRICES AND TERMS OF THE SALE OR EXCHANGE THROUGH ADVERTISEMENT OF PUBLIC SALE

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of Opelousas, Louisiana, the Governing Authority of the City of Opelousas, that the Mayor is hereby authorized for and on behalf of said political subdivision to sell, exchange or otherwise dispose of the property, subject to the minimum price and terms set by the City of Opelousas. Said property is not needed for any public purposes:

ITEM 1 – DISPLAY CASE. Glass and steel. Measuring 45” x 60” x 24”. Good condition. Estimated value: \$150.

The surplus property is owned by the City of Opelousas and descriptions and estimated values are listed. The surplus property will be awarded to the highest bidder. The City of Opelousas reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

The sales shall be made for cash. Should the City use an Auction Company, the designated Auction Company will deduct handling fees from the total proceeds collected following auction.

The Resolution having been submitted to a vote, was adopted as follows on this 14th day of January 2025.

YEAS: Chasity Warren, Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, and Sherell Roberts.


NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

ATTEST:



CITY CLERK



MAYOR

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CONSENT AGENDA (PERSONNEL)

On a motion by Alderman Marvin Richard and seconded by Alderwoman Chasity Warren, it was resolved to approve the following personnel items:

- Accept Firefighter Recruit Bryson Landry's **Resignation**, effective **12/11/2024**.
- Approve the Police Chief's Recommendation for **Police Officer Lisa G. Johnson** to begin her **working test period** effective **11/22/2024**. Employee received P.O.S.T. certification on 11/21/2024 and is to begin her working test period.
- Approve **Permanent Police Sergeant Tyrone J. Davis' Extended Sick Leave**, effective **12/30/2024**.
- Approve the Police Chief's recommendation to hire **Christopher L. Gallow** as a **Probational Police Officer**. Employee has received P.O.S.T. certification prior to this appointment and will begin a working test period, effective **01/19/2025**.
- Approve the Police Chief's recommendation to hire **Angela M. Victorian** as a **Probational Police Officer**. Employee has received P.O.S.T. certification prior to this appointment and will begin a working test period, effective **01/20/2025**.
- Accept **Permanent Police Major Craig A. Thomas' Retirement**, effective **01/30/2025**, and approve payment in the amount of **\$119,404.83** for 2,415 hours of unused annual leave and 7.5 hours of unused compensatory time.

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Chasity Warren, Marvin Richard, John Guilbeaux, Delita Broussard, Charles Cummings, and Sherell Roberts.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- *No Items Submitted.*

There being nothing further to come before the Council, on a motion by Alderman John Guilbeaux and unanimously seconded and carried, it was resolved that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

ATTEST:



CITY CLERK



MAYOR