

City of Abbeville
Regular Meeting
June 18, 2024

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on June 18, 2024 at 5:30 P.M., at the regular meeting place, the Council Meeting Room, located at 101 North State Street, Abbeville, Louisiana, with the Honorable Roslyn R. White, Mayor, presiding.

Members Present: Council Members: Carlton Campbell, Terry Broussard, Brady Broussard, Jr. and Tony Hardy

Members Absent: Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr.

Also, Present: Bart Broussard, City Attorney
Jude Mire, Fire Chief
Mike Hardy, Police Chief
Chris Gautreaux, Public Works Director
Stewart Head, Electrical Department Superintendent
Cristian LeJeune, Digital Media Assistant
Bryan Fisher, Code Enforcement Officer
Kathy Sellers, Municipal Employees Civil Service Director
Byron Dozier, Parks and Recreation Coordinator
Gene Sellers, Engineer
Kim Touchet, Engineer
Gabriel White, Godchild of the Mayor

Mayor White called the meeting to order and requested a roll call. Mayor White asked Councilwoman Terry Broussard to lead those assembled in prayer. Mayor White asked Gabriel White, her Godchild, to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor White asked if there were any comments from the public on any agenda item prior to action. Mr. Jarrett Young had a comment on new business item number 2, to update the public records request policy. He asked if the updates were posted prior to the meeting. Mayor White stated they were not because this is a discussion right now. Right now, it is just a standing policy we have. If we choose to adopt it by ordinance, then it would have to be advertised and adopted at another meeting. Mr. Young asked that the City keep in mind that these public records requests are for the people so we can see the transparency of our government. There are State and Federal policies that cannot be changed. Mayor White stated that our policy was written in 2007 and hasn't been changed since then. It will be changed to reflect what is currently the state's policy. Mr. Matt Thomasse, who works for Citizens for a New Louisiana but is here personally, pulled up the agenda packet and wanted to discuss the proposed change, Section 4. If it is necessary for an IT firm to research email accounts, the City of Abbeville must be reimbursed for such fees charged by the IT firm. This is not in line with state law. Per state law you can only charge certain fees for public records requests. It is limited to copies, transmission of electronic records and if you make accommodations for someone to view records after hours you can charge for the overtime someone has to sit with that person after hours. There are no other fees that can be charged for public records outside of a court order. The City must incur the cost of the IT firm. They cannot pass that fee on to the requestor.

Mayor White introduced Mrs. Kathy Sellers, the new Municipal Employees Civil Service Director. Mrs. Ann Hardy is retiring. The Municipal Employees Civil Service Board did an extensive search and we had a few qualified candidates who applied. The Board held interviews and they

selected Mrs. Sellers. She spent 20 years working with AT&T working as a team manager with a lot of customer service experience. She will be a great fit for the team.

-01 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to ratify bills paid in the month of May 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the budget to actual report for May 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

Carlton/T. Broussard
Resolution R24-15

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an intergovernmental agreement with the Vermilion Parish Police Jury to participate in cost sharing of the expense to repair the sidewalks around the Vermilion Parish Courthouse.

The motion carried unanimously.

Bart Broussard stated that the update of the public records request policy came about due to the number of recent requests that we have received. We had not really paid attention to it much because we have not had many requests in the last several years. Once we started getting all the requests, we examined the policy and he reviewed the law and several attorney general opinions. It had not been updated in a long time. We are proposing to decrease the cost from \$1.00 per page to \$.25 per page. We did not have electronic reproduction prior so we added that at \$.10 per page. We left off the cost of the drive that we have to put it on so we will have to add that. Mayor White stated that the previous policy had a provision if someone wanted a CD of the meeting audio, the cost was \$5.00. Bart stated the IT charge was added after reviewing several AG opinions and other municipalities' policies. He will look at what Mr. Thomasse cited. We are still looking to include that in the policy because we don't have the capacity and the manpower to be able to handle these several broad records requests. Mayor White added that we have spent the last 2 weeks trying to go through emails. Bart stated that we can charge the overtime for our staff but it would be a lot cheaper to pay an IT firm to find these things quickly. He will work with it and figure it out. Everyone has to understand that we don't have the capacity of personnel to fulfill the enormous number of requests we have received in the last weeks. The requests are so broad and vague. There is not a folder or file to go to. You are spending countless hours and money trying to search emails and going through text messages. We are trying to streamline it as best we can. Councilman Campbell asked what has provoked these requests. Bart stated that it is all about "Rails to Trails". They believe it is something that the City Council is pushing. Bart stated that he would bring the policy back at a future meeting for adoption.

-03 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Tony Hardy to table adoption of an updated public records request policy so that the City Attorney may make adjustments and to bring it back up at a later meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

-04 introduced by Mr. Carlton Campbell and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve change order number one relative to the Downtown Abbeville Street Improvements Project. The motion carried unanimously.

-05 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by to approve payment of partial payment number 2 payable to Glenn Lege Construction, LLC in the amount of \$308,653.98 relative to the

Downtown Abbeville Streets Improvements Project. The motion carried unanimously.
-06 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the purchase of transformers for stock from Sunbelt Solomon in the amount of \$14,138.00. The motion carried unanimously.

-07 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve payment of the invoice in the amount of \$12,663.08 payable to CTC Gunworks, LLC for the purchase of 10 bullet proof vests for the Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

Bart Broussard stated that the City entered into an extension of the contract with Crime Fighters recently. The cameras they provided are manufactured in China. That is not allowed. We will need to void the contract. They will return the funds and resupply us with new cameras not manufactured in China.

Campbell/T. Broussard
Resolution R24-16

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement to cancel an extension of a contract with Crime Fighters of Louisiana, LLC.

The motion carried unanimously.

-08 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the Emergency Debris Removal contracts from June 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

-09 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the contract with Primeaux, Touchet & Associates, LLC for Extraordinary Emergency Recovery Events from June 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

Gene Sellers, Engineer

- *Shaw Construction has completed the final tie-in to the force main. It needs to be tested. Once it is tested and passes, the bore holes in the road can be repaired. Mayor White told Mr. Gene to tell the contractor that she wants the roads repaired as soon as possible once the line has been tested.*

Byron Dozier, Parks and Recreation Coordinator

- *Tomorrow starts the Pony All Star section of the tournament.*

Mayor Roslyn White

- *Apologized for missing the last meeting. She had a family emergency.*
- *City Hall will be closed tomorrow for Juneteenth.*
- *Thanks to everyone who attended the first Coffee Talk with the Mayor. The next one will be held on July 11, 2024 from 7:00 AM to 8:30 AM and the guest speaker will be Sheriff Eddie Langlinois. The location has not yet been determined.*
- *The master plan meeting will be held on June 22, 2024 as follows: 10 AM to 12 PM at A. A. Comeaux to discuss the Martin Luther King Jr. to A. A. Comeaux Park corridor and 2 PM to 4 PM at J. H. Williams to design the N. Lyman Street corridor. The meetings are floating style.*
- *She has written an emergency plan and it has been reviewed by Chris Gautreaux. We are actively working on that.*
- *LaFitte Drive-In Park opened this week. We will move the dog park to shaded area at a later*

time. The fence will be relocated.

- *The water plant provided water to Magnolia Water System after they had a catastrophic failure of a pressurized tank.*

Mike Hardy, Police Chief

- *Three recruits are taking the tests and all have passed so far.*

Jude Mire, Fire Chief

- *The two new recruits are at school. They have four weeks down and 10 more weeks to go.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *Asked Bryan Fisher about the tall grass at 804 S. Jefferson. Bryan stated that it was cut over the weekend.*

Councilwoman Terry Broussard

- *The Juneteenth Day was beautiful and a huge success.*

Councilman Carlton Campbell

- *Residents along Gross Isle Road are thankful for the City providing water to Magnolia.*
- *Thanked Ms. Raven St. Julien for her work with the Juneteenth Day.*

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor White declared this meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Roslyn R. White
Mayor