

City of Abbeville
Regular Meeting
May 21, 2024

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on May 21, 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
Cristian LeJeune, Digital Media Assistant
Gene Sellers, Engineer
Steve Moosa, CPA
Lloyd Campisi, Health Insurance agent

Mayor White called the meeting to order and requested a roll call. Mayor White led those assembled in prayer. Mayor White asked Councilman Tony Hardy 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. There were none.

-01 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the April 2024 budget to actual report. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve the renewal for health insurance from UMR and stop loss coverage from Tokio Marine HCC for the period from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

Chief Mike Hardy began a discussion pertaining to the one-year employment anniversary increase of 15% for Police Department Officers. Chief Hardy stated the new police officer salary was increased to \$40,000 per year in 2023. The next raise would be for the classification of SPO which the City Attorney states is still Police Officer First Class as per State law. He is encouraging the City Council to pass this as it is an incentive to keep officers here. Three employees will make their one-year anniversary this month. Mr. Bart Broussard stated right now Civil Service only has the classifications of Police Officer, Lieutenant and Sergeant. The State statute provides for the classification of Police Officer First Class. He and Mayor White have met and discussed this issue. We need to clean that up with Civil Service. We need to go to Civil Service and have them pass a resolution adding the classified position. There would have to be requirements for them to move up in rank as the Fire Department does. Chief Hardy is here asking you to support something that has been a policy of the police department for quite some time. There is no civil service rule or state statute that mandates the 15% pay increase. We had previously put the department on notice that we would stay any and all raises until such time that the litigation is resolved. He would recommend to the Council to approve the 15% for the three employees that were hired prior to this stay being put in place. They were promised

this when they were hired. Going forward this is something that the Council needs to address and determine on its own versus an automatic policy. At the time the policy was created, they were making \$18,000 to \$19,000 per year. That is no longer the case. They have received significant raises. Bart stated that it is totally up to the Council if they want to grant this particular increase. Mayor White stated the three were hired as police officers and the practice has been that they are promoted after one year to a senior patrol officer. The problem is that the police department skipped the step of going to civil service and actually creating the certified position. Although it has been the practice, it has never been a position that was approved by civil service as classified with parameters set. The fire department has the position of firefighter. When you want to become a firefighter first class, you have to wait 18 months and pass the test. If you pass the test, it is a 5% increase. When we pulled the civil service book for qualifications for SPO, the position doesn't even exist. That is a problem. That needs to be rectified. It needs to go before civil service so that we can have a classified position with whatever requirements that need to be met. There needs to be a test like there is in every other civil service promotion. That also has to be looked at with the State statute. She thinks these 3 officers were promised it but going forward that position has to be created with parameters. It should not be an automatic promotion. It should be based on testing and qualifications that every other civil service position is subject to. We can't give automatic raises to certain people. It needs to be subject to the same things all our other departments are subject to. The Council needs to make a decision. Bart stated that he can take the issue to civil service in order to make it a classification and set the requirements but it will be the City Council that decides how much of a raise that promotion will have. The City Council sets pay.

-03 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Tony Hardy to authorize the 15% increase for the three employees expecting the pay increase in May and to have Bart take the issue to civil service to clean up the classification issue and then once that is complete, the City Council will set the percentage increase at a future meeting since the City Council sets pay. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor White stated that there have been issues with people wanting water at the pavilions on weekends. She asked Chris to discuss the park pavilion agreement he has developed. Chris stated that he began utilizing a park pavilion agreement that must be completed by the requestor prior to the date of the event. The deposit is \$75.00, cash only, and they will receive \$50.00 back if all is ok. The trash must be picked up and the restrooms have to be left in an acceptable condition. We keep the \$25.00 for cleanup and other supply costs. The bathrooms will be opened and the water will be turned on. We furnish the toilet paper for the restrooms. This makes someone responsible for use of the pavilion. Often times people would utilize the pavilion and leave trash every where and the bathrooms were a mess. The form was first utilized last weekend and it worked well.

-04 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to ratify payment for a transformer purchased from LUS in the amount of \$8,555.96. The motion carried unanimously.

Campbell/Hardy
Resolution R24-13

A resolution granting the authority to the Mayor to sign and submit all necessary documents along with adopting certain policies, plans and procedures in connection with the Fiscal Year 2023 Community Development Block Grant Clearance Program.

The motion carried unanimously.

-05 introduced by Mr. Carlton Campbell and seconded by Mr. Tony Hardy to approve payment of estimate for partial payment number 2 in the amount of \$2,888.95 payable to Mesotech International, Inc. relative to the Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) III P/T Replacement project. The motion carried unanimously.

-06 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve payment of estimate for partial payment number 1 in the amount of \$44,727.43 payable to Glenn Lege Construction, LLC relative to the Abbeville Road Transfer Program Downtown Abbeville Street Improvements Project. The motion carried unanimously.

-07 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to accept the recommendation from the Abbeville Planning Commission to re-proportion the property lines of the property belonging to Eldredge Town Properties, LLC and Hal Properties, LLC located at 309 Veterans Memorial. The motion carried unanimously.

Gene Sellers, Engineer

- *Met with Shaw Construction today. They are the contractor doing the LCDBG Sewer Project and are 156 days in arrears on the project. They have one bore left and are committed to completing that by Saturday. They also need to complete the dress up. Valves need to be installed to pressure test the line and the control wire needs to be tested too. After that we can begin the work on the two pump stations so we can use the new force main. Chris Gautreaux added that they need to clean up the property the City let them use to store their equipment. The grass needs to be cut and the barricades need to be picked up.*

Chris Gautreaux, Public Works Director

- *The contractor is doing a good job on the Downtown Street project.*
- *There is a bad water leak on South State Street.*
- *The splashpad will be opened for Memorial Day weekend.*
- *Straw mat was put down to help the grass grow around the pond at LaFitte Park. The grass is growing but it is not quite ready. The straw mat will make it difficult to mow at first until it disintegrates.*
- *The Go Mow program did not work out as planned so Willie and his crew have to pick up the slack.*
- *Hebert Park is closed right now because a tree with bees fell. The beekeeper came collect the bees today so we can now remove the tree. We also repaired and painted the merry-go-round that was there. It came out very nice and will be reinstalled.*

Mayor Roslyn R. White

- *When we received the last portion of the property at LaFitte Park, we received it as a donation. As part of that donation, we agreed to put up a fence. Chris will get quotes for that to the Council.*
- *We are opening bids on May 30, 2024 for the Graceland Avenue sidewalk and overlay project. Should have those ready for approval at the first meeting in June.*
- *We hired a camera crew to CCTV the lines downtown prior to the new overlay. We found a lot of crushed pipes that will be repaired prior to the overlay.*
- *The electrical crew discovered a wooden pipe in the ground. It is from 1867 and was used as a drain line that cut across Magdalen Square to the river. It is made from cypress.*
- *Stated that the church incident was a very traumatic event especially for those that were there. This is a great example of what happens when we act as a community. The people who were in the church stopped that incident from escalating. They were their own heroes.*

Please keep everyone in your prayers.

Jude Mire, Fire Chief

- *The house on City property next to the fire station on Joffre will be moved next week.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *The Daylily Festival will be held on June 1, 2024 in Magdalen Square.*

Councilwoman Terry Broussard

- *Congratulated all the recent graduates.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Roslyn R. White
Mayor