

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on September 7, 2021 at 5:30 P.M., at the A. A. Comeaux Recreation Center, located at 300 A. A. Comeaux Memorial Drive, Suite 101 North State Street, Abbeville, Louisiana, with the Honorable Mark Piazza, Mayor, presiding.

Members Present: Council Members, Francis Plaisance, Brady Broussard, Jr., Terry Broussard, Jr., and Roslyn White

Members Absent: Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem

Also, Present: Ike Funderburk, City Attorney
Jude Mire, Fire Chief
Bill Spearman, Police Chief
Lieutenant Jonathan Touchet
Lee Schexnaider, Wastewater
Gene Sellers, Engineer
Richard Primeaux, Engineer

Mayor Piazza asked Councilman Francis Plaisance to lead those assembled in prayer. Councilman Plaisance requested a moment of silence for the victims of Hurricane Ida and then followed the moment of silence was followed by reciting the Lord's Prayer in unison. Mayor Piazza asked Councilwoman Terry Broussard to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Piazza stated that the first item was to recognize Megan Pearson Bertrand and Brad Pearson for their artistic work on the splashpad at Comeaux Park but Ms. Bertrand was feeling under the weather and could not be here tonight so we will recognize her at a later meeting.

-01 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the minutes from the August 3, 2021 Committee meeting and the July 20, 2021, August 3, 2021 and August 17, 2021 regular City Council meetings. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to ratify bills paid in the month of August 2021. The motion carried unanimously.

-03 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to amend the agenda to change new business item number 11 to read as follows: To adopt a resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a purchase agreement with the owners of the property located at 303 Joffre Street for the full sum of \$80,000.00, of which \$10,000.00 shall be paid upon the execution of the purchase agreement, with the balance payable upon the execution of the cash deed. The closing shall be on or before January 15, 2022. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza asked if there were any public comments on any of the agenda items prior to action. There were none.

-04 introduced by Ms. Terry Broussard and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to award the contract for the McKinley Scott Park pavilion concrete slab to Magnate Construction, LLC in the amount of \$69,000.00. The motion carried unanimously

Mayor Piazza stated this part of the project was not added to the 2021 budget because we had to wait to see if we would receive any reimbursement for the two hurricanes last year. We recently received about \$500,000.00 as part of an insurance settlement for the two hurricanes. We still have not received all the reimbursements from FEMA however. FEMA is slowly reimbursing us a few dollars at a time. We will need to amend the budget for the concrete slab project at McKinley Scott pavilion. He checked with Gene Sellers today and the money we have budgeted for the Streetscape Project is not going to happen this year. That frees up about \$130,000.00 which is about what we will pay for the elevation and the slab of the McKinley Scott pavilion. So, the money is actually budgeted but it is in a different place. We will move the money budgeted for the Streetscape Project to McKinley Scott Park. We will reallocate the funds for the Streetscape project in next year's budget.

-05 introduced by Ms. Terry Broussard and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to amend the 2021 budget to move \$130,000.00 from the City Sales Tax Fund general ledger line item 422610-Streetscape project to general ledger line item 453600-McKinley Scott Park Capital Outlay. The motion carried unanimously.

-06 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to award the contract for the Wastewater Treatment Plant generator repair to MMR in the amount of \$5,240.00. The motion carried unanimously.

-07 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the quotation from Bihm Construction of \$5,000.00 per day for the sewer main repair at John Hardy and E. Lafayette Street. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Lee Schexnaider reported the repair had been completed today. It only took one day.

-08 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve the quote from Griner Drilling to repair one pump at the Washington Sewer Lift Station in the amount of \$9,635.00. The motion carried unanimously.

-09 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve the accounting of the 2020 Tax Roll. The motion carried unanimously.

-10 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to award the contract, from quotes received, for the Rehabilitation of the Lime Sludge Thickener Unit for the Water Treatment Plant to Southern Constructors, LLC in the amount of \$186,742.00. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza asked if the ARPA funds could be used to pay for this repair. Mr. Gene Sellers stated it could be used and we will also apply for additional grant funds through the Water Section Program and the Capital Outlay program. Mayor Piazza added that the State was also awarded ARPA funds and they have decided to give some of their money to municipalities for water and wastewater improvements. That way if we get those additional grants, we can put up the match instead of paying for the entire repair ourselves.

-11 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to authorize Sellers and Associates, Inc. to prepare the Water Sector Program application on behalf of the City of Abbeville. The motion carried unanimously.

White/T. Broussard
Resolution R21-33

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Abbeville, the Vermilion Parish Police Jury and the Coulee Kinney Drainage Board for Sellers and Associates, Inc. to conduct a drainage study for Allen Alexander and the adjacent unincorporated island #2.

The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Broussard stated that the Council is the legislative body of the City and it is their responsibility to tweak and strengthen ordinances when necessary. Right now, we have more garbage, more rubbish, more tall weeds, more tires in the ditches, more broken windows, more blue tarps and other things. City employees have spoken to him to see if we can keep these enforcements moving. Letters go out and the City waits, and waits and waits. The good neighbors of these offenders, are tired of waiting and our employees would like to see if we could have consequences for the non-compliant property owners. We do have consequences and those probably worked in 1972. This is not society today. He hopes that the Ordinance Committee can work with Ike to see what we can do to strengthen our ordinances for this so there is more compliance. Councilwoman Broussard stated she is with Councilman Broussard on this. The problem is when you can't identify who did the illegal dumping. We need to find a way to tweak that. Councilman Broussard stated that we hit brick walls and obstacles and we can't trample on the Constitutional rights. The constitutional right does not include tires blocking our drainage, houses torn down and pushed to the street and etc. Councilman Plaisance stated that constitutional rights do not allow you to be a pig. There are people who bring garbage into the City and deposit it. He called the police department the other day because he saw an elderly gentleman and his son unloading trash by the side of the road. He also saw a trailer full of trees being deposited into the City. It is a mindset where people don't have to pride in the City. There needs to be consequences. Councilman Broussard asked Ike to work with the Ordinance Committee and report back to the Council some time in October. Councilman Plaisance asked Chief Spearman if they can charge someone for illegal dumping. Chief Spearman stated sometimes yes and sometimes no. Councilwoman White asked if a witness calls in something and has the license plate number if that is enough to press charges. Chief Spearman stated if the witness is willing to sign a statement and come to court to testify. Mr. Funderburk stated that is one of the major problems. No one wants to spend any of their precious time waiting in court for something to go on trial. Every Wednesday it is a battle for him to have witnesses for the cases that are being tried. People don't want to come to court or they can't be served. You have to have live testimony. Mayor Piazza asked if the additional cameras would help. Mr. Funderburk stated he would love to have that for every case along with the testimony of someone. The camera alone has issues regarding getting it into evidence. If we can prosecute, we will. If we have the case that we can make, we will prosecute. The existing ordinance already provides for misdemeanor penalties on this. Misdemeanor penalties have gone up in the last five years. We can make that change. Councilman Broussard stated that it is so bad that the contractors are now not taking the jobs for fear of their safety. Our good citizens don't deserve that. We are tasked with getting a stronger ordinance for things like that.

-12 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to surplus a seized Glock, Model 19Gen4, 9mm pistol, awarded to the Abbeville Police Department. The firearm will only be sold by sealed bids and to FFL dealers only. The motion carried unanimously.

White/Plaisance
Resolution R21-34

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a purchase agreement with the owners of the property located at 303 Joffre Street for the full sum of \$80,000.00, of which \$10,000.00 shall be paid upon the execution of the purchase agreement, with the balance payable upon the execution of the cash deed. Closing shall be on or before January 15, 2022.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza stated that we had originally budgeted \$16,000.00 in the 2021 budget to purchase additional property near LaFitte Park. We did not need to use that because the DeGrauw family donated that property to the City. Chief Jude stated the property is next to the fire station and will allow the addition of another driveway and additional parking.

Richard Primeaux, Engineer

- *At the end of September, we will be near the end of the 45-day lien period for the drainage project.*
- *The rotor project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant is basically ready and he is waiting for Lee Schexnaider to review the plan.*

Mayor Mark Piazza

- *We dodged a very serious storm. There are a lot of people without electricity. It is a very serious situation. Some of them don't have a lot of food to eat. There is a gasoline shortage right now too. He spoke to his nephew who works for St. Mary Magdalen Church and he and a big group went down on Saturday and helped out with trimming trees and cleaning up debris and other things. He had also done this for Hurricane Laura last year. He told him that the destruction from Ida is worse than Laura. Mayor Piazza's good friend in Grand Isle has been sleeping on his front porch for two weeks. They don't have gasoline to fill up generators. Their generators were damaged by the salt water and salt air so most of them are not operable. There is no water, no fuel, no electricity and no sewer. They are living on sandwiches and bottled water. Mayor Piazza stated he is supposed to hear from Patrick Duhon tomorrow to see if he thinks the fuel shortage problem is improving. His station on Charity was open today. He has also guaranteed him that our emergency personnel will have fuel at his station. He has shut down the sale of fuel to the general public so he could reserve fuel for the first responders. He has enough fuel for them for one week. We will be rationing fuel at the City Barn. We normally go through one-half of the tank in a week. We still have three quarters of the tank. We are in good shape with the fuel we have in stock and Jude and Pat are letting our first responders fill up at their station.*

Bill Spearman, Police Chief

- *Distributed a breakdown of types of calls the department has responded to in the last two weeks. They had 586 calls.*
- *He has 9 people out on sick leave.*

Jude Mire, Fire Chief

- *Distributed a breakdown of types of calls the department has responded to in the last two weeks. They ran 108 calls*
- *There is a broken garage door at the station on Maude.*
- *The aerial truck is still in the shop. It has been there 3 weeks.*

- They received an AFT Grant in the amount of \$53,000.00. They will purchase an air compressor that will fill up their air bottles.
- We received a Centerpoint Energy grant. We purchased 6 thermal imagers. When they go into a house fire, they can use this to find people. They can see a person through the smoke.
- The new boat is outside for everyone to view.

Councilwoman Roslyn White

- The Hollingsworth Street overlay is about halfway done. The project is going well.
- The street overlay at the R V Park may begin as early as this week.
- The next street overlay project she is looking at is overlaying the beginning of Graceland.

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- He has been working with Kenny Patton with ARC. They want to set up a large facility here and we tried to work on the old Schwegmann building but that is a problem that I can't seem to break through. We went from there to the old Bay City Ford location and he thought it was going to work because they offered them \$1,000,000.00 and they agreed then changed their minds and upped the price. Now, they are interested in the property directly across the street from John Craig Texaco. They want the whole front but that part belongs to the City so they would have to lease that from us. He spoke to the Mayor about that. They will approach the Council to lease only the entrance to the property. Councilman Broussard stated there is a precedent for that. Other businesses on the By-pass do lease property from us for their driveways. Mr. Funderburk stated he has communicated with Mr. Patton and he informed him that we do not have sewer lines on that property they are interested in. That would cause an additional expense for them. Councilman Broussard stated that he had told Mr. Patton the same thing. He also told him that Sassy Suds paid to bring sewer to their business. Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Gene Sellers if the line would be large enough or deep enough from Sassy Suds. Mr. Sellers stated that he would have to research that.

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- Asked what is the status of the LCDBG street overlay program? Mayor Piazza stated that it was eliminated. Mr. Sellers agreed that there are none now. Mayor Piazza stated that most awards are for water and sewer projects. Street overlays score very poorly. We can only apply for CDBG funds every other year. We will, supposedly, be able to use the Federal Infrastructure bill funds for street overlays according to Senator Bill Cassidy. Councilman Broussard stated that street overlays are desperately needed.

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor