

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met for a committee meeting on August 2, 2022 at 5:15 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., Francis Touchet, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem and Tony Hardy

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Ike Funderburk, City Attorney

Mayor White stated we are here for an Ordinance meeting chaired by Councilman Tony Hardy. She asked if there were any comments from the public on any agenda item. There were none. She turned the floor over to Councilman Hardy

Councilman Hardy stated we are here to consider an ordinance to amend Section 11-9, Prohibitions on living in campers and travel trailers. This would increase the penalties for violations. In conversations he has had with the Mayor, this problem has been going on for two years. Apparently, the penalty is not high enough or hard enough to convince these people that they need to take care of the problems or move. That is what we need to decide tonight. We need a stiffer penalty. Councilman Touchet asked Ike what the penalty is right now. Ike stated that for any offense that does not have a specific penalty assessed to it, it is the standard misdemeanor of \$500 or six months in jail. What we are proposing tonight is an amendment to this provision to add a special penalty provision to it in the form of subparagraph (e), which reads: that any person who violates this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment of not more than 60 days per violation. Each day of occupancy shall constitute a separate violation. If you are there five days beyond the 30-day period, you are looking at potentially a \$5,000 fine. Mayor White stated that this discussion came from a specific area that we have been having problems with. Trailers seem to be multiplying instead of going away. We have stealing of utilities and basically a drug camp. It is a problem that we have been dealing with for two years. The problem is that we have ordinances and we have no enforcement of those ordinances. When we do enforce them, there is no penalty or not enough teeth in the ordinance to make people comply. In light of the situation at this particular property, and one very close to there also, she and Councilman Hardy discussed yesterday how we might put more teeth into this ordinance so that on these repetitive violators who are stealing utilities and everything else, that we do actually get some teeth to our ordinance. It will require enforcement and the will of the Council not to bend when someone is upset with them for putting a penalty on them for violating an ordinance. It is important. If we can't make people follow our ordinances then we shouldn't have them. These are put in place for a reason and to protect people. It is not safe. People are not supposed to live in campers, travel trailers and motorhomes inside the City limits. We have an RV Park where they are welcomed to stay for a short period and there are places where they can go. Councilman Touchet asked Ike to further explain the proposed amendment. Ike stated that we cannot fine someone or imprison someone like it would be for a felon. We do not have felony jurisdiction. We can only deal with misdemeanors. It wasn't until the last couple of years, that the State Legislature increased the misdemeanor fines maximum from \$500 to \$1,000. We got on that bandwagon as quickly as we could for some of these. We have recurring problems with regard to litter, people stealing utilities and people living in a structure that does not have utilities or living in a structure that is not supposed to have utilities. We are trying to do test cases on each one of these. Granted, we can't get anything more than a misdemeanor conviction, but the language that we have added making each day of occupancy a separate occurrence, quickly builds up. Even if the Judge only fines them \$250, we can't tell the Judge that he has to fine them \$1,000, and it is for 5 days, then we are talking about some serious money. This is an approach that can be taken.

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to recommend to the City Council to adopt an ordinance amending Section 11-9, Prohibition on

living in campers and travel trailers, to increase the penalties for violation, at their regular meeting scheduled for August 16, 2022. The motion carried unanimously.

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Roslyn R. White
Mayor