

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on February 1, 2022 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 Mark Piazza, Mayor, presiding.

Members Present: Council Members, Francis Plaisance, Terry Broussard, Brady Broussard, Jr., Francis Touchet, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem and Roslyn White

Members Absent: None

Also, Present: Ike Funderburk, City Attorney  
Jude Mire, Fire Chief  
Bill Spearman, Police Chief  
Lieutenant Todd O'Bryan  
Chris Gautreaux, Public Works Director  
Stewart Head, Electrical Superintendent  
Lee Schexnaider, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent  
Charlene Beckett, Main Street Manager  
Allie Horton, Digital Media Assistant  
Richard Primeaux, Engineer  
Gene Sellers, Engineer  
Tommy Picard, Parks Director QSA  
Stacey Neal, Director Community Competitiveness  
Nikki Vidos, member LDRC Committee  
Joey Boneski  
Mike Hardy

*Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Joey Boneski to lead the assembly in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Ike Funderburk to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.*

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to appoint Deontray Cassimere to the position of Police Officer with the Abbeville Police Department, pending successful completion of all post-hire assessments. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to table the appointment of Rochaundra Tyler to the position of Police Officer so that additional references can be checked. The motion carried unanimously.

*Ms. Stacey Neal, the Director of Community Competitiveness with LED was at the meeting tonight to discuss the strategic plan for economic development for the City of Abbeville as part of the Louisiana Development Ready Communities program. Ms. Neal stated that 48 communities have gone through this process. Abbeville is the 49<sup>th</sup>. LDRC started in 2009. It is to come up with a strategic plan for community development. The things that we focus on in this are the things that industry is looking at when they are looking at your community. It makes the community take a hard look at what you have and what you need. We want to set realistic goals on those things we can realistically accomplish. We do not want to set expectations that are not really there. A*

lot of time, when we come into communities, what we find is that we have to start at the base level. We have to identify funding before we can move into the next level of a plan. Anne Falgout contacted her last spring or early summer and asked her to do a zoom with the Mayor as an introduction to LDRC. Abbeville applied for the program. We started this in July of last year. We met with the committee. The Council approved a resolution to move forward with this process last June. We came in July and had a kickoff meeting. At that point in time, there was an assessment done of the community. The committee researched the quality-of-life things that industry would be interested in to help them be successful. We did a community survey and over 200 surveys came back. That is an astronomically number for a community this size. The committee did a great job with that. There were a lot of the same things said over and over again. That is good because it shows that everybody has that same focus of what needs to be done. Between the community assessment and the survey, we did a SWOT analysis and then we came up with some draft goals. LED's role in this is facilitation and they match up the City with resources. The committee and this community did these things. LED just facilitated and kept it on the rails. From there we did a public meeting of what came out of those goals. Drainage got added at that meeting and other things. We were here for a whole day and had a very good turnout. We finally did our second goal meeting in December to try to get everything cleaned up. Here we are today. The plan will be announced by LED On February 16, 2022. The Council has been given a copy of the plan. Benefits that you get by being an LDRC are that everyone knows where you are heading and this will help your community. Our private managers match up projects to communities that are on that map. They know that they will come in here and have a leadership that will work with them. They know that you will have all the things needed for a project to be successful here. We also have tuition assistance and will prepare testimonial videos of the good things happening in Abbeville. It takes locals to make this successful. Without our local economic development folks, we don't know what is going on here every day. If you have some good stuff going on, LED wants to know. We need to know what is going on so we can sell you. On the 16<sup>th</sup> you will be recognized as a certified City. You will be put on all of LED's mapping stuff and we will start working for you. Then this community will have to implement this plan. Mayor Piazza stated there will be a luncheon at the old Riverfront and we will invite the chamber of commerce and some of the business community leaders. It is open to the community and we will ask for a head count. Ms. Neal stated that Secretary Pierson will go over the entire plan at the luncheon. The plan will be available for the public at that time. This is a living, breathing document and things can be changed as needed. These are not set in stone. As we check things off then we can add new things to it. They will help you do that. Councilwoman White stated that the committee is a living committee and continues to work on the checklist. We currently have one person working on economic development, Anne Falgout, but now we have expanded that times 90 because we have the State team working for us. This is at no cost to the City of Abbeville. It was done completely with volunteer labor and under the umbrella of LED. We will post the plan on the website after February 16<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Piazza stated that he has never been a big fan of these types of plans because there was usually no funding available to implement the plan. Now with all the federal grants coming from the infrastructure bill there may be money available to do this. There are finances out there that we need to go after.

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

-03 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to authorize the Mayor to execute the Audit Engagement letter with Darnall, Sikes and Frederick. The motion carried unanimously.

-04 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to authorize the Mayor to execute the AUP agreement with Darnall, Sikes and Frederick. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Broussard/White**  
**Resolution R22-01**

*A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the agreement with DOTD relative to the Downtown Abbeville Streetscaping Phase II Project.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

-05 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to accept the quote from Bayou Fencing for the repair of the fence along the coulee across the street from LaFitte Park by Dollar General. The fence was damaged by a tree that fell as a result of a hurricane. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Broussard/Plaisance**  
**Resolution R22-02**

*A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the Low-Income Household Water Assistance vendor agreement with the Louisiana Housing Corporation.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

-06 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve a Class B beer and liquor permit for Murphy Oil USA located at 3007 Veterans Memorial Drive. The motion was put to a vote and the vote thereupon was as follows:

YEAS:	4(T. Broussard, B. Broussard, Touchet, White)
NAYS:	0
ABSTAIN:	1(Plaisance)
ABSENT:	0

Therefore, the motion carried.

-07 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve a variance to the Airport Hazard Zoning Ordinance to Dunn Exploration Company, LLC for the installation of a temporary drilling rig up to 130 feet in height with the understanding that all conditions designated in the FAA determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation for Temporary Structure are met. The motion carried unanimously.

-08 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the quote from Allen Enterprises, Inc in the amount of \$8,765.69 for the purchase of a new wind cone for the Airport. The project will be paid from the CARES Act. The motion carried unanimously.

-09 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to authorize the purchase of one 5HP Zoeller submersible pump to be purchased from Griner Drilling at a cost of \$8,275.00 and the installation of the pump to be performed by MMR at a cost of \$620.00 for the North Abbeville Lift Station. The motion carried unanimously.

-10 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to approve the quote from Luke Deshotel Construction to pump out and clean sewer plant basin #4 at a cost of \$4,500.00 plus \$.60 per gallon that will be pumped out. The expense will be paid from ARPA funds. The motion carried unanimously.

*Mr. Lee Schexnaider stated that one foot of debris equals about 50,000 gallons. We believe there is about 2 to 3 feet of sediment in there. It is not consistent across the aeration basin. Mayor Piazza stated that this basin has never been cleaned. It could be filled halfway so we are only taking ½ of the capacity. We really won't know the total cost until it has been completed. Basin number 1, 2 and 3 were cleaned several years ago.*

-11 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to surplus unit 618, a silver Ford pickup truck, unit 560, a Snapper lawn tractor, unit 279, a 1988 Ford 800 pole truck, unit 274, a Simplicity tractor, unit 361, a diesel Gradall hydraulic excavator, unit 501, a 2008 Chevrolet Impala from the City Marshal's office and various other equipment. The motion carried unanimously.

*Chief Jude Mire discussed Operation Save a Life smoke detector distribution. The department received 120 smoke detectors and it is mandatory that they install 2 in the households that receive them. The firemen will install the detectors for the residents. The residents can begin calling the fire department on 2/14/22 to give their names, phone numbers and addresses and the fire department will set up a time to install it for them. The residents have to be in our response area. There are no income restrictions.*

-12 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to approve change order number 2 relative to the LaFitte Park Walking Trail Project. The change order reduces the contract amount by \$3,091.69. The motion carried unanimously.

-13 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve payment of partial payment number 3 in the amount of \$20,768.21 payable to Patriot Construction for the LaFitte Park Walking Trail Project. The motion carried unanimously.

**Plaisance/T. Broussard**  
**Resolution R22-03**

*A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an act of acceptance from Patriot Construction relative to the LaFitte Park Walking Trail.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

*Allie asked when is the park open. Mayor Piazza stated the park is open every day for the walking trail but only open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday for fishing. Mr. Gene Sellers stated the public can now start using the trail.*

*Councilman Touchet began a discussion of requiring permits for street legal golf carts on City roads. They would need insurance, horn, lights, seatbelts and windshields. He would like Ike to research that to see if that is something we could permit through out permitting department. Ike stated that if the State is licensing them already, we cannot prevent them. Councilwoman White stated there is a big difference between a street legal golf cart and a regular golf cart. She doesn't want the public to think they are the same. Chief Spearman stated that Youngsville allows them but only in certain neighborhoods so they can permit them. They are only allowed there on City*

*streets and not State highways. Ike stated that he would do more research and send out a memo or email of his findings to the Mayor and each Council member.*

-14 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to approve the quote from American Integration Contractors in the amount of \$42,842.48 for the Comeaux Park Security Camera upgrade. The quote is on state contract. The motion carried unanimously.

**T. Broussard/Plaisance**  
**Resolution R22-03A**

*A resolution authorizing the Mayor to negotiate a purchase price with the owners of 601 S. East Street. Said price is not to exceed the appraised value of the property. If successful, the City Attorney is authorized to conduct such title work as deemed necessary and further to authorize the Mayor to execute a cash deed transferring ownership of said property to the City.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

-15 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve payment of partial payment number 3 (final) in the amount of \$16,653.00 payable to Glenn Lege Construction, LLC for the cleaning of the concrete lined coulee project. The drainage board will reimburse the City for this expense. The motion carried unanimously.

-16 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the quote from Versalift in the amount of \$5,021.60 for the repair of the bucket truck and the quote in the amount of \$6,884.25 for the repair of the pole truck. The motion carried unanimously.

-17 introduced by Ms. Terry Broussard and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to approve the quote in the amount of \$9,760.00 from Echo Powerline for the installation of a 3-phase 4/0 ACSR tie for three spans. This will tie in Gertrude Electrical Substation to Felicity Electrical Substation. The motion carried unanimously.

Charlene Beckett, Main Street Manager

- *The Chamber Leadership toured the Blacksmith Shop on January 20, 2022.*
- *We are preparing for the upcoming Sounds on the Square. The 3/17/22 date is still up in the air because we will have our tour group that usually comes. We will serve them breakfast. 3/24/22 is Beau Young. The City partnered with Madeline Dehart, the music coordinator for the parish, and on 3/31/22 Blake Miller and the Old Fashion Aces will perform with the student fiddlers. On 4/7/22 there is a teacher and she has a band called "Poisson Rouge" and there are high school students from the parish that will perform. The name of their band is Bayou Tigre and the Steppers. They will be playing together. The band has not yet been determined for 4/21/22.*
- *Yesterday was the deadline to report for the 2021 Community Challenge AARP grant. The fit trail at LaFitte Park is complete. Easiest grant we have ever had.*
- *She looked over the LDRC plan and she loves that they have a whole section on litter. It is great.*
- *KLB is offering some grants. She will be applying for cleaning supply grants and for a trash can grant. If you are awarded the trash can grant you receive 5 of them. We have already received 15 trash cans from this type of grant in the past.*
- *The Cleanest City Contest is 4/4/22-4/8/22.*
- *Love the Boot initiative to get the word out throughout the entire State is April 18th and April 24<sup>th</sup>. She will email the Council the details of the initiative.*

- *The Garden Club planted the pansies in Harmony Park and the materials have been purchased to build the garden beds.*

Chris Gautreaux, Public Works Director

- *We had our annual audit at the Water Plant. He has not yet seen the final results but Roger said we did really well. One thing is that we will have to change our water sample taps.*
- *The water crew had 30 water leaks in the month of January. 25 have been fixed and the other 5 are pending Louisiana One Calls before they can be fixed.*
- *The electrical crew is busy doing service calls and working at Comeaux Park.*
- *We finished the basketball court at McKinley Scott Park. Paul Tomino painted the court and got the goals up. The kids love it.*
- *The trash still has not yet been cleaned up at the City yard. He is still waiting for Larry with HIDCO. He said he is coming and the weather is holding him back right now.*
- *The street crew is busy working in Comeaux Park and in several districts and doing what they can around the weather.*
- *A salesman stopped by the office and discussed an interesting machine for road cut patches. They make a trailer that you put cold mix in and it heats the cold mix so you can work with it. It also has a sprayer on it where you can spray down the whole once you clean it. It also has a packer on the trailer that allows you to pack it down good. Then you spray it to seal the patch. That doesn't allow water to get in it. He and the Mayor have been discussing this equipment. A 4-ton machine is about \$60,000.00 and he is awaiting a price on a 2-ton machine. Mayor Piazza stated that the last time we hired a contract crew it was \$36,000.00. Before that it was \$32,000.00 and before that it was \$50,000.00. It is getting more and more expensive. He and Chris have been discussing this for quite a while. Sometimes we have to wait months to get a road patch fixed. We keep having to put limestone over and over. Councilman Touchet asked if ARPA funds could be used. Mayor Piazza answered that maybe we could. Chris stated that he is doing concrete when he can because concrete is quicker. Mayor Piazza stated that he prefers us to use concrete on a concrete road and use asphalt on an asphalt road. Chris has been working with the Police Jury for the very large road cuts or those that are severely deteriorated.*
- *Chris stated that we have the large patch on Graceland that we will work with the Police Jury. Larry will order the water pipe for the side of the shoulder. Councilwoman White stated that she spoke to Gary today and he said to go ahead with our crew and do the work and as soon as it warms up, he will put us on the front of the list to overlay that portion. Chris stated they still not have been able to see who the water line feeds. Mayor Piazza stated that Larry said he would try to do it on the shoulder so that he would not have to cut the road anymore. There are also two bad road cuts on Maude that he is working on. They go all the way across the road.*
- *Mayor Piazza asked Chris about the rotor repair. Mr. Gene Sellers stated the contractor had another setback so it has been pushed back to April.*

Tommy Picard, Park Director QSA

- *You need to go see Sellers Field. When it is finished, it will be the nicest high school field in the state of Louisiana. Councilwoman White asked Tommy to share the video with Allie so she can post it on the City page. Tommy stated that they will go to Theriot Field next.*
- *The covers are on Parker and only have Vorhoff left. Councilman Touchet stated that he is concerned about Abbeville High School and Vermilion Catholic. Baseball season is coming up so he asked Chris and the Mayor to work with Tommy. He asked Tommy to go through Chris to schedule the work. Chris will get the answers from the Mayor. Those schools are relying on us to get this done. We need to get a punch list on each of these*

*fields and knock that out. Take advantage of the weather we have. Tommy stated that we are waiting for the mounds. They should be in pretty soon. We should not rush it. We rushed it with this sod thing at Sellers Field and that was a mistake.*

- *They have a tournament on March 18<sup>th</sup>. It is an adult softball tournament. There will be 120 teams. They come play all night long. They will play on Sellers and Theriot. They will finish Sunday night.*

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *The Louisiana Cattle Festival is coming back October the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>. The pageant will be held March 5<sup>th</sup>.*
- *On March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, The Zerbini Family Circus will be at the Red Barn. They will have 2 performances each day.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *We have a need for jail space. The police department is picking up (panhandlers) and booking them and there is no place to put them so they are going back on our street and are repeating the crime. It is a revolving door and it is because they cannot place them in a jail cell. We are responsible for finding jail space when there is none. The City of Abbeville had a jail and for whatever reason we don't have it now. He has been getting complaints about the panhandlers who make a living on our corners. The police department pick them up and book them 6,7,8 times and then let them go and they are right back in the same place. We better start thinking outside of the box about how we will take these people off of our streets.*

Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr.

- *Asked Ike if we are prosecuting these panhandlers. Ike answer yes and we have been doing it the entire time that he has been a prosecutor for the City. We have hot spots. We used to have problems at Robies. Now we have problems on Charity Street and the By-Pass. Two weeks ago, in his packet of cases, he had the same guy on three different panhandling type charges. We can't put them in Iberia Parish Jail where we have beds that we pay for. Mayor Piazza stated we can't put them there because those offenses are misdemeanor offenses. They will not take them in any of the jails for a misdemeanor. Councilman Touchet asked if the officers are seeing about this problem. Chief Spearman answered yes. If they are in the road or if they are violating an ordinance, his officers are taking care of it. Ike stated that generally we get the complaint from the business. Mayor Piazza stated if the property owner allows them to be there, we cannot do anything. Ike stated we can deal with those that are on the right-of-way. If the property owner calls to report a panhandler on their property, then the police respond to that. Chief Spearman stated they can prosecute those on the right-of-way. They are issued a citation. Councilman Broussard stated that if there is an arrest then the police cannot put them in jail because of the jail space issue. Councilman Touchet stated that we need to continue to do what we have to do so that these people understand that they can't do that here. Mayor Piazza stated that Councilman Broussard is incorrect. Chief Spearman cannot put a person in jail for a misdemeanor. All he can do is issue him a citation. The judge at City Court is the only one that can put a person in jail for a misdemeanor. Ike stated the judge can order someone to go to jail if they fail to pay their bond. Mayor Piazza stated however the parish jail does not have to take them because it is for a misdemeanor. Ike stated that we do not have our own jail facility. When we did, we could use that as our leverage in order to get people to pay their bond. Grandma would come in and pay Junior's fine so Junior wouldn't have to go to the Abbeville City Jail.*

- *He thanked the constituents of District B for him having no opposition again. He will be here at this table for another four years. In the twenty years he has been on this Council, something happened during qualifying time that he is very disappointed in. He will take an active role with whoever will be on this Council because he really believes that there are certain people that did certain things that tried to get people to run against him that were not even in his district. You have to be kidding me. You were disrespectful to the citizens of District B and himself. We have people that come to this Council that don't even belong in our parish that come over here and talk about this, that or whatever that get on the phone and say things like we still have time to get somebody against him. These people need to grow up. Mayor Piazza has done an excellent job and you will be ending your term. We will have a new Council and a new Mayor and we will have a new Chief. Elections have consequences. If the citizens of Abbeville don't understand that, then we will have the same old, same old take place. That is what it comes down to. We have to make sure that we put people in office that will stick to their word and do the things that they have to do. He pledges to this Council, to the future Council and to the community that we will work on safety. He doesn't feel safe. His kids don't feel safe in this community. We need to work on economic development. We have 50+ buildings that are not occupied. We need to work on cleaning our City. Those three things will make all the difference of what we will do as far as moving this City forward. He is not from here. He has been here; he is not leaving and his family is here. Elections have consequences. People need to go and do the things they have to do or else it will be the same old, same old. Mayor Piazza congratulated Councilman Touchet for him running unopposed. He wanted to follow up on something that he said. Many economic development people will tell you that cleanliness of your City is the number one thing you need to concentrate on to attract people to your City. If you can't pick up your own litter then you will never attract a major company into your City to open up business and to hire people. We suffered a huge loss, because of some of the actions at the Police Jury, that made Sheriff Couvilion have to discontinue his litter abatement program. That was a huge loss to this parish. That was the main topic at the Keep Abbeville Beautiful meeting held last week. We need to keep the entrances to this City clean and losing that litter abatement program with the Sheriff, that was not his fault but because of actions of the Police Jury, has really hurt us with the ability to pick up litter in this parish.*

Councilwoman Roslyn White

- *Congratulated Councilman Touchet on him running unopposed for the District B seat.*
- *On the last cleanup day, she picked up herself with Nikki, walking from Highway 14 to St. Francis Woods subdivision, 7 bags of trash. It is a problem and people will see it and absolutely no company will come and invest in Abbeville if we have piles of trash, litter and roadside debris littering our roads. It is problem that we need to work on and it is a problem that we need to work with the Police Jury to try to solve. They are in charge of waste pickup and waste management. It is something we have to focus on.*
- *Thanks to KAB for allowing us the volunteer them to help out with the economic development plan.*
- *November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> will be the Omelette Festival this year.*

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



ATTEST:

Kathleen S. Faulk  
Secretary-Treasurer

APPROVE:

Mark Piazza  
Mayor