

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on February 2, 2021 at 5:30 P.M., at the A. A. Comeaux Recreation Center located at 300 A. A. Comeaux Drive, Suite 200, 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  
Kelly Mire, Assistant Fire Chief  
Bill Spearman, Police Chief  
Clay Menard, Public Works Director  
Charlene Beckett, Main Street Manager  
Allie Horton, Digital Media Assistant  
Deanna Touchet, City of Abbeville Retiree  
Richard Primeaux, Engineer  
Gene Sellers, Engineer  
Pastor Steve Delino, Parks & Recreation Board  
Felicia Williams, Parks & Recreation Board  
Gerald Gaspard, Chamber of Commerce, American Legion  
Pastor Walter August, Jr., James A Herod Development  
Tiffany Williams-Spraggins, Williams Scholar Academy  
Dr. Twyla Williams-Damond, Williams Scholar Academy  
Wayne Landry, Former City of Abbeville Councilman  
James Broussard

*Mayor Piazza asked Pastor Walter August, Jr. to lead those assembled in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Wayne Landry to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.*

*Mayor Piazza presented a certificate of appreciation to Mrs. Deanna Touchet for her years of service to the City of Abbeville. She recently retired after serving the City for 27 years.*

*Pastor Walter August, Jr., pastor of Bethel's Place in Houston, Texas, was here to discuss the James A. Herod Development. He thanked the Mayor and Council for allowing him to come today and this is an opportunity of a lifetime for us. For those of you that are vested in the City like he is, we eventually purchased the old James A. Herod School back in January through the bidding process. The Lord has been kind to us over the last 9 years we (Bethel's Place Church) have been working in Abbeville with camps and working in the schools. Over the last nine years, and also with the support of supporters who are in this room like Wayne Landry who worked with the Council to get funds to send kids to camp, we have invested over a half of a million dollars over the last nine years in Vermilion Parish, primarily with students to make sure they have opportunities that are not afforded to them because of the shortage of money that Mom and Dad don't have. We have been able to do that and he has also given money to the various schools in Vermilion Parish. One time he met with some educators at Shucks and he gave out \$40,000 to*

seven schools. He did not want the news shared and he didn't want a camera there for a picture. He is here tonight along with Bethel's Place and with Williams Scholar Academy to tell you about a vision that the Lord has truly laid on our hearts. This vision is about a school that he attended as a youngster; the James A. Herod School located now on the corner of MLK and Schlessinger Street. That school was built in 1954 and as you can imagine, 66 years ago, that was the talk of the town when that school was available. It educated a lot of the children in Abbeville and in Vermilion Parish. We began to look at the research of that and realized that whole campus was an educational dynamo for the parish. It educated so many students that are doing extremely well even now. We are coming back to give this particular City an opportunity to see something built that would be a replacement of what they have currently. We have done our homework. We have done the surveys. We have figured out that our children in that region truly need something to inspire them. What got him more in tuned to get into the bidding process to get that school is that he has a great nephew and his mother named him after him. This young boy took another kids life right there by Maude Store about seven years ago. This crime wave amongst the kids has nothing to do with race. It has to do with the lack of opportunity and inspiration. A lot of children don't have dads at home or men that can encourage them forward. His great nephew was one of these guys. Now he is in prison for the next 25 years. He was 17 years old when that happened. He can't sit back and not try to do something. He visited the family of the boy that got killed and gave them some money to help with the funeral. He attended the boy's funeral in Lafayette to let the family know that he doesn't know a lot of things but he does know pain. He does know that you cannot go through a tragic death and have your heart just feel good about itself. We got a little more focused on the work that we wanted to do. His church's commitment, over the next three years, is \$600,000 for this project. This project that we are talking about is a \$10,000,000 base project to put a cultural center and the Williams Scholar Academy School all in one dynamic building that has two faces. The face of the school will face McKinley Scott Park. The whole cosmetic feature on the front exterior will look like a collegiate campus building to let the kids know that this is for higher learning. The other side, the James A. Herod Cultural Center, will face MLK Street and the apartments. In that cultural center we will bring the artifacts of all of the educators that were used to educate them. They will have a special place in that building where the kids and the community can learn the history of these phenomenal educators that educated him and allowed him to do the things he is doing now. He stands on some shoulders that are no longer here in voice but they are here in spirit. There will also be opportunities to do business development and to bring those moms in who have multiple kids and dropped out of school. These young men just hang out all day and do absolutely nothing. Where his great nephew and his friend were out there was foolishness. They will have an opportunity to come in and we will work with them to get them to another level. The other thing that helped us in this facility is that it needed to be torn down because asbestos has taken over the elementary school. There is asbestos inside the gymnasium area. Right now, currently, we have already spent, or signed off to spend, the \$33,000 that we purchased the building for but we have to clean the old building out. They are taking the asbestos out this week. That by itself is \$30,000. We have partnered with Vermilion Shell and they will come and tear the building down so that is another \$100,000 worth of work. Before the end of February, we will have already spent \$200,000. He is in it for the long haul. When this building comes to pass, it will have a double gymnasium in the midst of one building. It will be 65,000 square feet of space. It will be the best building in Vermilion Parish. If anybody is within 100 miles of Abbeville, they will want to come to Abbeville just to see that building. He believes it is going to transcend that community and it will be an uplift to the parents and the students. The school will come in and just take it to a whole new level. We also have some vision because some of the partnership is that he had to contact every African American pastor to get them on board. We have African American pastors signing off that we can do this and they will support it. What he asked the pastors to do is to pledge 5% of their monthly proceeds and give it to this vision and this project over the next 3

years. That is what we are doing at Bethel's Place. When he mentioned the \$600,000, his church in Houston does over \$4,000,000 annually so 5% of that will be \$200,000. \$200,000 times 3 is \$600,000 that they will be sowing in and he is asking the churches to do the same because this is all hands-on deck. They pretty much have agreed, verbally, to go ahead and commit to sow this into this project. We also have a plan to start cleaning up the neighborhood. He will ask the churches and the pastors to start adopting blocks. The churches will be responsible for cleaning up the houses. Some of the people still living there are elderly and unable to go in their yards. We want to spruce that whole area up. When people come and drive down MLK or come the back way through Maude and Schlessinger, he wants them to see what we saw as kids. People took pride in their yards. They took pride in flowers and gardening. People can be outside without fear and they can let their children go outside to play. We are talking about a brand-new day and he believes wholeheartedly that will come to pass quicker than most people assume. He doesn't want anybody to assume that this is a black project. It is not. This is a Vermilion Parish project. He is inviting all hands-on deck. He has been down here yesterday since 10:00 and he has had about 7 meetings already. He has three meetings to do before he returns to Houston tomorrow. We are meeting with everybody because he wants people to hear it from him. He will give everyone his cellphone number in case they have any questions. He wants them to contact him individually and not speak to anyone else. He knows the vision and he knows what they are doing and you will get the correct answer when you call him. He doesn't speak out of both sides of his mouth. If he says he will do something that is exactly what he does. We have integrity. We have opened an account at Gulf Coast Bank. All the money will stay in Vermilion Parish. We have two signers on the account. One is Dr. Damond and the other is Jina Dockery. They are from Abbeville. Every dollar that is sown into this project stays in Vermilion Parish. In this document it talks about what's in it for Pastor August and what part does Bethel's Place play. There have been some rumors that we have a whole army of people coming down from Bethel's Family in Houston to run this. We are not coming to run anything at all. He lives in Houston and he is a married man of 33+ years. He has three children and eight grandchildren. Home is where he is in Houston but his heart is also in Abbeville. He can't run anything down here. This is something that God has called him to do. To come and help and to push this vision forward. The only things he asks, personally for him, is the area where the school is to have a little section to have some little children seem like they are in a garden. That section is dedicated to people like his Mom and some of your parents and grandparents who didn't get a chance to go to school because they had to sharecrop. His Mother was one of these. That is the only thing he is asking for. His name will not be on anything outside that door whatsoever. Pastor August is not coming to run anything. He has enough work in Houston. But he will help raise the funds and share the vision with anybody. We can do this. He does believe that as we all pull in together what will happen is that other cities that are dealing with the same stuff that we deal with here will come to take notice and begin to look at those areas in their own cities and begin to look for transformation. His commitment to the City, the Council and the business owners is that his word is his bond. If he says he will do something he will do exactly that. He doesn't mind writing his own checks and he doesn't mind anybody vetting him. You can vet him. He graduated from Abbeville High in 1977 and he joined the Marine Corps. He worked in banking and he has been pastoring the church he founded for 27+ years. They have over 20 acres of property that is valued at \$18.5 million dollars. He has a staff of 65 people full time in Houston. Chris Rosas from the Meridional came down to Houston and he saw it with his own eyes. He wants everyone to know that they can vet them. He introduced Ms. Tiffany Spraggins and Dr. Tywla Damond to discuss the Williams Scholar Academy. It is so important that education be brought back in that same location that educated most of them. He thanked everyone for allowing him this time to come and share. His heart is in Abbeville and that is why he is here. Dr. Twyla Williams-Damond stated her sister is Tiffany Williams-Spraggins. Pastor August really said it all. We had many opportunities to go several places with the school. The community was very engaging with them and there are several buildings here

that are empty. We were offered those buildings but when we spoke with Pastor August, we had a colliding vision. We could not pass up this opportunity to change the community as a whole. There was no way we could pass that up and also partner with him to be the director and curator of this building once it is done. Their goal is to change the narrative in Abbeville. To change the narrative when we are talking about certain areas of Abbeville. We want to change the conversations, the conscientiousness and the environment when it comes to the community as a whole. That is one of the things we promise to do. It is a very honorable task to take this on and we are honored to do so. She wants to make sure the students matriculate more seamlessly into college and get the college credits while they are in high school. We have also spoke to the Vermilion Parish School Board and have told them that we are still open to collaborate because we have to work together even though they do have their own district now. We are asking you to get on board with us because there will be great things happening. We are excited about the opportunity. Mrs. Tiffany Spraggins stated she has been here in Vermilion Parish for a while. She graduated in Vermilion Parish and she worked in private industry with computer science at Proctor and Gamble and then at NASA. Then she returned home and worked privately here. She was called into the field of education. She went back to school and pursued education in higher education. She has been teaching and being an administrator for the last 17 years at Lighthouse Christian Preparatory School in Abbeville. She is the person who is over the academics of Williams Scholar Academy and we will have grades 6-12 open. Often, we are questioned why because the educational system is good in Vermilion Parish. It is one of the best in the State. She is proud to say that. However, the numbers do show that we still have room for improvement for certain demographic groups and we want to make sure that those students are also having additional choices. Especially those students who are attending those schools that the grade may not be what some of the higher grades are. We want to make sure that we provide another choice. Truthfully, we need to remove some of the pressure from the system. So many kids that need help are populated into some of those schools. We will try to remove some of that pressure. In doing so, not only will we serve the kids but we believe it will help all of the schools because there are more of us to try to dig in and help. We want to become a part of the entire changing of narratives as Pastor August and Dr. Damond expressed understanding that from a school perspective, sometimes it is beyond just the academics. There is also parental support that has to put in place and sometimes daily support because kids don't have access to after school programs and things like that. We try to design the school in such a way that those supports are there and will give some kids a fighting chance that might not have that otherwise. We are hoping to find job placement prior to graduation and getting those dual enrollment credits and exposing them to college prior. We will increase the rate of students that are not only matriculating to college but getting their degree. We believe we will be a part of a larger narrative. We have a school structure that is heavily connected to the community because one of the things that we want our students to feel a part of Abbeville so that while they may go and do other things they will come back and reside in the City to make the City better. We want buy ins so that not everybody leaves so this place becomes a home to the best of our best. We will be a part of the fabric and a part of the solution. We don't claim to have all the answers but we certainly know that we do have talent and we can be a part of making our community better. Mayor Piazza really appreciates everyone for being here tonight and the words spoken tonight. This will be a tremendous accomplishment. We believe in your cause Pastor August. This is something that will not only be beneficial to that part of the community but to the whole City and the whole Parish. This is not just about that one neighborhood. You bring a lot to the table and we appreciate everything that you are bringing to Abbeville. Councilman Touchet asked about the timeline for completion. Pastor August stated it will take three years for completion. Right now, we are removing the asbestos in the building as we speak. As soon as that is done then demolition will occur. We have already signed off on those contracts. The asbestos removal will cost \$37,000 and then it will cost \$135,000 to come in and destroy the building. By mid-March that whole area should be cleared

out and at the same time we are on a serious fundraising campaign. His church will kick in \$200,000 per year for the next three years. We do have a serious marketing campaign in Houston amongst the alumni of Abbeville who don't live in Abbeville anymore. The brochure discusses several ways to send in gifts of financial donations. He has a young lady in Houston working on the Facebook page just for this campaign so it will go out to all the alumni wherever they are. They will support this endeavor as well. Mayor, we will be bending your ear, as well as the Council's, because there are things that you know that he doesn't that can help us in those doors. He has an introduction meeting tomorrow with the Rotary Club. He will be meeting with them and hopefully within the next couple of weeks he will be meeting with the Kiwanis Club. He is going to every venue in the Parish. He is dedicated to this and he will talk to any and everybody. That is how it is going to be. We do have a young architect in Baton Rouge and he will give us some type of drawing in about six weeks so we can get a visual of what it will look like in that space. The Lighthouse of Jesus Church will house the school for the next year or so until that new building is ready. They will add some modular buildings to incubate the school there until the new facility is up and running. It will be probably two years out that we will be close to having the building ready. It depends on construction and supplies and right now supplies are hard to get a hold of in Louisiana. We will have to keep a gauge on that too. It is difficult to get a contractor with the two hurricanes that have passed through here. There are people still trying to get repairs done to their homes. We do like to use local contractors for this work. Give us about three years and if the money comes in faster than that the work will be done as the proceeds come in. All donations are going to a 501C3 so they are tax deductible. Councilwoman Broussard asked if the school is currently taking applications. Pastor August stated the school is taking applications now for the 2021-2022 school season. We have a town hall meeting here in this building on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February at 6:00 PM. We will be registering kids to go to school even at that meeting. The town hall meeting is basically for anybody and everybody. We want to make sure that no person in Vermilion Parish doesn't know about what they are doing. Their hands will be completely open and so will the books.

Councilman Broussard asked to deviate from the agenda at this time to authorize the Mayor to negotiate with QSA's contract that they presented in 2020 to serve as the Park Director and occupy this building. Councilwoman Broussard stated that at the Parks and Recreation Board meeting that they had that we did say that we would come back with another meeting to discuss this. Councilman Broussard stated that was said but all this is doing is getting the ball rolling. This does not commit the City to any contract. It will allow the Mayor to negotiate the terms for a possible contract. Councilman Touchet stated this is so pressing because we will have youth looking for something to do in March. If we will have our kids involved and we will do what we have to do to get them involved somebody needs to make this work. We have not had a Park Director and we have had all of these renovations that we had to do because of the hurricane. Who has been doing all that? We need to make sure that we are moving forward so our kids don't get pulled away from the community. Councilwoman Broussard stated that it is important to her that we keep our word to the public. We told them that we would come back with another meeting. There is nothing with having another public meeting within a week or so to let the public come back and give their input then we can bring this back to the Mayor. Councilman Touchet stated we could authorize the Mayor to meet with anybody who wants to present a proposal and let him negotiate then we can look at the results of the negotiations. If there is another group that wants to provide a proposal then the Mayor can look at. Councilman Plaisance stated that it appears Councilman Broussard is specifying that the he wants the Mayor to negotiate with QSA, correct? Councilman Broussard stated that the QSA proposal is the only one that has been received. He does agree that any proposal that is brought would give the Mayor that opportunity to review and negotiate. The grass is growing and children are registering for multiple sports and that doesn't even include the repairs that are going on right now. This gets the ball rolling in the

Mayor's office to look at those things. Councilman Touchet stated we only have one more meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> and we have to make a decision at that meeting. Mayor Piazza stated that the 16<sup>th</sup> is Mardi Gras so we will not have a meeting that night. Councilman Broussard stated that we are near the beginning of March and this has been a vacant position for months and authorizing you to move that forward is even more important. Mayor Piazza stated we would have to have a special meeting to approve any contracts. The motion on the floor is to deviate from the agenda to authorize him to negotiate a contract and not to approve any contracts because we don't have a contract in hand to approve. There is another meeting at the beginning of March and we will have another meeting between now and the end of the contract. He feels like Councilwoman Broussard in that we need to keep our word as it was said at the last Parks and Recreation meeting. Councilwoman White agreed that she is 100% on board that we told the public that we would put it on the agenda so they know it is on the agenda before we make a decision. In prudence sake, the Mayor needs to start gathering our options so we can make a decision but it needs to be put on the agenda before we decide anything so that we keep our word to the public. Councilman Touchet stated it will still be put on the agenda when it is time to approve something but the Mayor needs to start looking at what these proposals are so that we have the leg work so that when it is put on the agenda, we can make a decision. Mayor Piazza stated we do have the Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Board, Pastor Steve Delino and a presentation was made, and we have copies of it, to the Parks and Recreation Board. It is not like we haven't had any presentations since we have had the presentation in our hands since the beginning of December. Ms. Felicia Williams stated they never received a proposal. She also asked if the City would do away with the position of Park Director. That was never mentioned. If you will give the Mayor permission to proceed it should be to open up the position to the public as opposed as to opening up for proposals. Mayor Piazza stated to deviate from the agenda requires an unanimously vote.

-01 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to deviate from the agenda to discuss the topic to authorize the Mayor to negotiate a contract with QSA for the best term possible for the services of Park Director. The motion was put to a vote and the vote thereupon was as follows:

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

The motion failed because to deviate from the agenda a unanimous vote is required. The item was not placed on the agenda.

Councilman Plaisance asked if we still have a valid contract with QSA. Mr. Funderburk stated we are not in the original term of the contract although it is still valid but it can be cancelled with notification of 90 days. Mayor Piazza added that we have an existing contract in place until about mid-March. Councilwoman White stated it is valid until the 14<sup>th</sup> of March. Councilman Broussard stated this is about the vacant position of Park Director not the recreation contract. Mayor Piazza stated that Councilman Broussard is the chairman of the Recreation Committee for the Council and he can call a meeting anytime he wants with a 24-hour notice and he recommends that maybe he do so or the Parks and Recreation Board also made a commitment to have another meeting open to the public for discussion and it could be a joint meeting between the Recreation Board and the Committee. His advice is that we start putting together that meeting. Pastor Delino and Councilman Broussard need to get together to make some decisions about a future meeting and when that will occur.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2020 regular City Council meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

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

*The Keep Abbeville Beautiful and the Main Street report were given by Charlene Beckett. We have a new City employee, Allie Horton, and we will get together and we will finally have a Keep Abbeville Beautiful Facebook page. The Garden Club Federation Cleanest City Contest will be held in May. The most important thing about Keep Abbeville Beautiful is that we received a donation from the Community Foundation of Acadiana, Vermilion Chapter, by Mrs. Phalie Sellers to have seed money to create a community garden. The way this community garden came about is that Keep America Beautiful was offering a grant and whatever you ask for has to be on the MLK corridor. She, Tracette Hillman, Sarah Alpough and Councilwoman Broussard came up with a community garden that would be on the corner of South Lamar and MLK. This is property that the City already owns. We didn't get the grant but we did get some seed money to start the grant. Because we had the groundwork laid out, we formed a committee. She recognized James Broussard who is with an organization that had a community garden on their radar so they connected. We have had two meetings and we have had several volunteers who have come up. On the property, we had volunteers to clean the property. There were 17 tires located on the property. The property is clean and we have assessed some things that we will need. We are asking people to donate money to purchase all the material for a bed. It is \$200 per bed and we will have 15 beds. Once those beds are constructed, then we will ask individuals or families to adopt a bed. They will be responsible for the watering and everything else that is involved in getting this off the ground. We would like fruit trees against the fence. The Garden Club hasn't voted on it yet, but they would like to put, in the center of the property, a healing garden with benches and a shed. We will ask for donations even though we have seed money to do this we would like the donations to start off and then we can use the seed money to maintain it year after year. This will beautify that area and people have already started to clean up. We were notified Friday that there is a \$55,000 grant that is available to Main Street communities across the State with a \$5,000 match. It is a Historic Revitalization Grant. They had this opportunity last year and there were five communities that received the award. We have 16 memorial benches that have been purchased and two of them have not yet been delivered. That program has definitely taken off. The Farmers Market will be Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. James Broussard stated we are hoping to connect different people in the community with the community garden. We hope to connect with those who have a green thumb, the older gardeners, and we want to get the youth involved. It is a healthy thing to do from a nutritional standpoint and it gets everybody outside. He recognized former City Councilman, Carlton Campbell who will be the manager of the Community Garden. Councilwoman Broussard stated one of the things that they would like to focus on is involving the youth in the community garden. Councilwoman White stated she loves the idea of a community garden. Good job on that. Asked Charlene to explain how the route for the Cleanest City Contest is chosen. Charlene stated it is a requirement by the Louisiana Garden Club that we bring them in front of a park, a municipal building, a school, and a library. The route gets picked by the requirements that they ask us to do. There is also only a certain amount of time allowed so you can't start at City Hall and bring them to Abbeville High. It is too far away so you have to go to a school that is close to the downtown area. The first year we tried to bring them to Abbeville General Hospital and J. H. Williams but we ran out of time. It just doesn't work. We have to keep it centralized. Mr. Wayne Landry asked how can we adopt a bed. Charlene stated once the bed is constructed you can pick the bed and your name will go on the bed and you will have a list of duties that will be provided. Mayor Piazza suggested that Charlene visit the garden*

*the kids have built at Eaton Park Elementary. Charlene added that Dan Davenport will be helping out with the community garden too.*

**Touchet/T. Broussard**  
**Resolution R21-02**

*A resolution authorizing the development of Harmony Park (A Community Garden) on the property located at 820 S. Lamar Street.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

*-03 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to award the base bid only for the Flood Damage Reduction and Drainage Improvements Projects to the apparent low bidder, LA Contracting Enterprise, LLC, in the amount of \$420,104.00, contingent upon concurrence by Facility Planning and Control. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Mr. Richard Primeaux stated on the Robert Wells Project, he did meet with the Drainage Board at 5:00 PM and they are going to do their part there by cleaning the coulee out. This is a big part of that project and that will assist now to help that area drain. There is a build up of material and water has to build up three feet high to be able to start draining. They will start doing that in the next two weeks.*

**Plaisance/White**  
**Resolution R21-03**

*A resolution adopting the 2021 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

*-04 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to table item number 5 under new business, Mrs. Debbie Garrot to discuss showing a movie in LaFitte Drive-In Park, since Mrs. Garrot was unable to attend the meeting tonight. The motion carried unanimously.*

Gene Sellers, Engineer

- Asked to deviate from the agenda to approve the quotes to repair the major outfall drainage pipe on Main Street since they will be receiving quotes Friday and there will not be another City Council meeting this month. The estimate is \$65,000. Mayor Piazza stated that we could not approve that tonight because it is not in the budget and it is too late to deviate to add that item to the agenda tonight. That would have had to be done prior to receiving comments from the public on any agenda item. We will have to put that on our next meeting agenda.*

Ike Funderburk, City Attorney

- At the last City Council meeting he was asked to look at the outstanding franchise agreements for Cox and AT&T. He has done that and he has sent everyone an email outlining his findings. He has an opportunity to discuss that with everyone to the extent that they felt it was necessary. He believes the next step is for he and Mayor to make contact with these two companies and see about getting some updated work on the existing franchise agreements. Councilman Touchet would like us to go into executive session to negotiate these agreements. He doesn't want the same contract. They need*



to come in front of us and hear from us so we can put some things in that contract. Ike stated that franchise agreements are pretty much dictated by State statute so any franchise agreement will reflect what is allowable by State law. There is certainly room to look at some things. Mayor Piazza stated that most of that is regulated by the Public Services Commission. He asked Ike to reach out to the Public Service Commissioner's attorney as well as LMA's attorney to see what options we have other than the ones that are in place now. When we first drafted the contract with AT&T, there were some things that we were not allowed to put into the contract. He is unaware if any of this has changed. When we implemented the franchise fee, it was granted by the legislature as requested by the Public Service Commissioner for all municipalities. That is why we went to the table for the contract to begin with. Now both contracts are on the verge of expiring or have already so we need to go back to the table but we need to see what is available to us and what we can or cannot negotiate. He will involve Councilman Touchet with this and we will try to meet one on one with them. Jason Jones stated the service with Cox and with AT&T are unacceptable and there should be opportunities given to local authorities to put their shows or programs on there so you can talk with them about this. Those emergency lines cannot go down during emergencies so that needs to be discussed especially with how hardy our lines are especially with hurricanes. Councilman Touchet stated that he would like someone from Cox to come to a meeting to answer some questions. Ike stated he is trying to facilitate a meeting where we can get better service for the constituents. City Hall is on Cox too and we have had our problems too. Their representative is not authorized to attend a public meeting.

Clay Menard, Public Works Director

- Councilwoman White asked about the culverts on Assay Drive.
- Councilman Touchet asked about the dumping near Tiffany Plaza.
- Councilwoman Broussard asked about the quote for McKinley Scott Park. The Mayor did not have it with him tonight.
- Mayor Piazza asked if Clay had attended the drainage board meeting tonight. Clay stated they discussed the cleaning of the concrete coulee. We should be getting quotes for that Friday and the drainage board has agreed to participate in some fashion.
- DOTD is reviewing our permit application to repair the water leak on State Street.

Mayor Mark Piazza

- Great meeting tonight and great input and concern about the community. He very much appreciates Pastor August being here and all the other pastors tonight. Thank you all for being here tonight and showing the interest in the community.
- He apologized to Councilman Plaisance because if the QSA contract does come into place, it would include all parks and that is Councilman Plaisance's Committee. He is the chairman of the Park Committee. QSA will take care of all our parks not just Comeaux Park. Councilman Plaisance needs to be included in the meetings.

Councilwoman Roslyn White

- Asked Clay to reach out to Bayou Fencing about the repairs to the baseball fields since they are getting ready to play ball. They were wondering about the net. Mayor Piazza stated this is a challenge. We call them every week. They can't get materials and they have a back log of fences to repair. Clay stated they started working in the park today. They will try to straighten the net and get the nets hung as best they can in order to play and then when the material comes in, they will replace it.
- The new website went live over the weekend.

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *He got with Shaun with the Merdional because there has been some confusion about LaFitte Drive-In Park. Word got out that people could fish there and were caught fishing out there. Shaun will clarify the hours and state that fishing is not allowed.*
- *Asked Clay about the progress on the fishing piers. Clay stated they are waiting for it to dry up enough to begin hauling material in. It is too wet right now.*

Councilwoman Terry Broussard

- *Excited about the James A. Herod Development for the City of Abbeville and for Vermilion Parish. She thanked Pastor August for his overwhelming support of the kids in our community. Thank for your affection and thank you for caring. That is a property that has been neglected and there is a lot of blame to go around but thank you for taking the leadership. Thank you for the vision and thank you for caring about what takes place in your home town. You are no longer here but thank you for caring from a distance. As a citizen of Abbeville, she is honored to work with Pastor August to be able to communicate with someone who has so much compassion. Thank you so much from the bottom of her heart for coming back home to do this. Thank you so much to Dr. Damond and to Mrs. Spraggins for caring about the kids, whether they are black or white. Thank you for caring that every kid gets an equal opportunity to have someone care about them and nourish them outside of education. Thank you for that.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *Mrs. Spraggins, Dr. Damond and Pastor August, he is overwhelmed by what they are offering to do in this community. His prayers and support are with them to bring hope where it may not be and to be a beacon of light where it may not be currently. You are investing in something that is so important to society, not just Abbeville or Vermilion Parish. We want to do whatever we can to help you in this journey and we are excited to say that we are fans of you, we support you and we will continue to pray for you. Thank you.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk  
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza  
Mayor