

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on April 6, 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, Francis Touchet, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem and Roslyn White

Members Absent: Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

Also, Present: Ike Funderburk, City Attorney  
Jude Mire, Fire Chief  
Bill Spearman, Police Chief  
Clay Menard, Public Works Director  
Allie Horton, Digital Media Assistant  
Gene Sellers, Engineer  
Richard Primeaux, Engineer  
Tommy Picard, QSA  
Judge Laurie Hulin  
Bridget Winters, Vermilion Charter Foundation  
Murphy Guilbeaux, Vermilion Charter Foundation

*Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Murphy Guilbeaux to lead those assembled in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Judge Laurie Hulin to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.*

*Mayor Piazza stated Ms. Bridget Winters was present tonight to discuss the Vermilion Charter Foundation. Ms. Winters stated she is here tonight with Mr. Murphy Guilbeaux. They represent the Vermilion Charter Foundation. The Vermilion Charter Foundation is a non-profit board of community members who will govern the proposed Vermilion Charter Academy which will be a Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade public school that will be built in the North Vermilion area. Because it will be a public school, there is no tuition or fees associated with enrollment. Core content will be taught from a tier one curriculum that is aligned with state standards. Services for students with exceptionalities and SPED identifications will be offered. Teachers will be qualified and will set yearly goals and will be evaluated. This school will be in a state-of-the-art facility that will be built at no additional costs to taxpayers. As a public charter school, many of the curriculum offerings will be determined by the families who attend the school. A one size fits all educational model will never be used. The needs of the individual students will be addressed with interventions and innovative teaching methods. Before and after school care and tutoring may be available at no additional cost to parents. Our foundation has hired Charter Schools USA. They are an outstanding and competent educational service provider who will manage this school. Charter Schools USA has 90+ schools in 5 states. Closest to us, they manage the Acadiana Renaissance Charter Academy and the Lafayette Renaissance Charter Academy, both in Lafayette Parish. Their foundation would like to positively impact and be a part of the solution when addressing the overcrowding and projected growth in the North Vermilion Community. They can make an impact both educationally and economically. All the schools in the North Vermilion area are at their designed capacity and there has been a need for many portable buildings to be added to the campuses to accommodate the needs of the growing student population. These portable buildings were meant to be a temporary solution but they have now become a permanent fix.*

Campuses in the area have anywhere from 10 to 20 classrooms in portable buildings. In April of 2020 demographer, Mike Hefner, presented the Vermilion Parish School Board a detailed document entitled, "Five Year Student Population Projection Report". According to this report, Cecil Picard Elementary will grow from its current 880 students to 1,121 students by the 2025-2026 school year. North Vermilion High will house some 780 students in a school built for 375 students under roof. According to projections, the North Vermilion area will see an additional 840+ more students within the next 5 years. We are all aware of the safety and security issues posed by overcrowding as well as the accelerated wear and tear on a facility. We should never accept overcrowding as an effect on the educational experience of any student. The Vermilion Charter Foundation along with Charter Schools USA, submitted an application to the Vermilion Parish School Board yesterday. We want to become a collaborative partner and open and operate a public charter school by August 2022. The Vermilion Parish School Board has until the end of June to render a decision. We are awaiting a favorable outcome because we do believe that the Vermilion Charter Academy can offer students quality educational opportunities and choice for parents leading to a win-win for everyone involved. Councilman Touchet stated the process is that anyone who wants to open a charter school has to go to the local school board and that decision will be either for the charter school to be a part of the system or it will not. If the school board in June says yes then they will draw the lines for you and you will be a part of their system. If they say no, you will go to the BESE board and BESE will either give you the thumbs up or down. That is when you will be able to open up your doors. Here is the issue, we have our own charter school that will be here in Abbeville. This will give us two charter schools competing against each other. Ms. Winters stated that is a good analogy of how the process works. If there was a plan in place to alleviate the overcrowding as well as the projected growth there would not be a need for Vermilion Charter Foundation to submit an application to open a school. Their goal is to help in the North Vermilion area only. That is our purpose for being. We will make sure that the largest percent of our population comes from the North Vermilion area. If we cannot draw those numbers that are necessary to keep us in compliance then we will be allowed to bring other kids from Vermilion Parish but they will not be the priority. Mr. Guilbeaux stated they do not want to be a Type 2 they want to be a Type 1. Type 2 opens up to the state. Youngsville has a waiting list of 800 people. The distance between Youngsville and Maurice is close. We want to dictate the percentages to alleviate the overcrowding situation. Mayor Piazza stated the two proposed charter schools are being built for two completely different reasons. We just recently found out that the federal government has allocated to all different segments of the governmental realm, millions of dollars. We haven't received the check yet but from what we understand Abbeville will receive about \$4 million dollars. Francis (Touchet) told us Lafayette School Board will receive a lot of money too. We have just found this out. With this funding coming from the federal government perhaps there is money there to build this school and add on to the North Vermilion area where it is needed. Mr. Guilbeaux stated they personally sat down with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and talked to them to see if there was a plan in place. If there is one, then we don't need to be doing this. They did not have a plan. It is a wash. It is projected there will be 800 kids coming into the school system and we are building this school for 800 kids. He hopes they understand that. We would love to do a Type 1 and be in conjunction with the School Board. Councilman Touchet stated that the Vermilion Parish School Board is getting \$13 million. Ms. Winters stated when they began this, there was not a plan in place. During this journey, we have spoken with members of the school board several times to say that. We can guarantee if that application is favorably accepted, within 8 months we can have a school up and running. It won't cost any taxpayers in the North Vermilion area anything. They haven't given us any assurance that they can build a school by August 2022 to help with the situation that is going on there. Councilwoman White asked where the school will be located. Mr. Guilbeaux stated they are looking at 5 or 6 properties that have been proposed. Ms. Winters stated that Charter Schools USA is using a development company that they use for all their schools. It is called Red

*Apple Development Company. Because they are the experts at development, we are going to have to listen to their recommendations as far as the site choice. We are not sure of the exact location right now. We have looked at land everywhere. Mr. Guilbeaux stated he doesn't live there but he is here to do what is right. The growth is there. If they rezone, people will move to where they want their kids to go. Rezoning is not the answer. The school board gets a certain amount of money per child. If the kids go to this school, those funds will go to that school. If we have 800 students then that MFP money will come to the school. That is used to pay the expenses.*

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to ratify bills paid in the month of March 2021. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to approve the minutes from the March 2, 2021 and March 16, 2021 special City Council meeting, the March 2, 2021 Committee meeting and the March 2, 2021 regular City Council meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

-03 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to deviate from the agenda to move item #9 under new business to item #1 under new business. The motion carried unanimously.

*Mayor Piazza asked if there were any public comments on any agenda item prior to action. Ms. Marilyn Mitchell asked for clarity on agenda item #4 under new business. Ike Funderburk stated that the Vermilion Parish School Board donated property that is known as Williams Park to the City with the intent that it would always be used for recreational purposes. With Bethel's Place coming in, the School Board is amending all of the donations that it made. They had given one to us, one to the Police Jury and one to Herod Village. This will take out the restrictive covenants so that if Bethel's Place acquires the property, they will not be burdened with that reservation. Ms. Mitchell asked if it will remain Williams Park. Mayor Piazza answered yes.*

*Judge Laurie Hulin stated she is here in support of item #9 (moved up to item 1). Her neighborhood is Fairview, Oak, Hollingsworth and the end of Main Street. It is a common walk and exercise path. We are asking for the Council to do something about the speeding on that route.*

*Councilwoman White stated she put the item regarding speeding and measures to deter speeders on the agenda. We get a lot of complaints about that. Many people have asked about speed bumps. She wanted to open the floor for discussion. Chief Spearman stated we are trying to do it but it is all over town. He would have to put people everywhere. We trying to put up patrols but he doesn't have a traffic officer. If he can put a guy up somewhere he does. Councilman Plaisance says he understands that. The reason people don't speed through Maurice is because they know they will get a ticket. People have to pay those tickets. Would giving more tickets be increasing the fines help? It would take a while for people to get that mentality. People are speeding all over the City. There is no fear of consequences. Ike stated the fines are up to the judge. In 2020, 1919 traffic citations were issued by the Police Department. They are issuing tickets. Of those tickets, almost 96% of them have been paid. Chief Spearman stated that in the last two weeks the department has issued almost 50 citations. Councilman Touchet asked about speed bumps. What is the reason they are not allowed? Ike asked the fire chief to explain what happens to fire trucks when there are speed bumps. Chief Mire stated it is not a good thing. They lose the bottom of the truck. It messes up all the steering. Mayor Piazza asked if we really want our ambulance and fire trucks to have to slow down for every speed bump while they are going to your house when you are having a heart attack? He doesn't. Chief Mire stated it caused a lot*

of damage to the fire trucks. Councilman Plaisance asked if the Police Chief could set up a dummy car. Chief Spearman stated they can. Mayor Piazza stated on a street like Fairview, there should be some signs that say "No Thru Traffic". That might help. Judge Hulin stated that is a very good suggestion in theory but after the hurricane we had a lot of trees and power lines down and road blocks were put up. People were getting out of their cars and moving the road block. They were driving through our yards. She is having a hard time understanding the easy dismissal of speed bumps. She knows that they work. She has patrolman in her neighborhood all the time. The problem is that the Chief has priorities. If we can find another solution other than putting a patrolman, it would be greatly appreciated by the members of her neighborhood. Chief Spearman stated people drive around the road blocks put up by the police department too. When Chris Hardy is out of school, he will put him on traffic. Mayor Piazza stated that ultimately this fall on Chief Spearman's shoulders and he can make those recommendations. Chief Spearman stated the Sheriff's office has signs that tell you your speed and flash slow down. We could put those in the neighborhoods. Councilwoman White would like us to look into speed bumps in the small residential areas. She has seen those in Lafayette and they work. Mayor Piazza asked Chief Mire if the fire department in Lafayette runs medical calls. Chief Mire stated not like we do. Mayor Piazza stated you cannot compare us to Lafayette. Find other cities our size that run major medical calls with their fire department like we do. Richard Primeaux stated that the State has a program for traffic calming methods. They have grant money available for these types of devices like Chief Spearman was talking about. There may be some other traffic calming devices too. Councilwoman White asked if we should increase our fines? Chief Spearman stated when he worked for the Marshal's office, a lot of people can't pay their court costs and fines so they put down a down payment. Ike stated court costs are between \$160 to \$180 and the fine is insignificant. The Judge has no control over the cost of the court because the legislature has mandated that costs be made in certain amounts and then be divided up into different agencies, including the City for processing and handling the criminal justice system. Councilwoman White stated that this conversation is not a reflection that the police department is not doing their job. They are doing a wonderful job. It was just to get us all together to discuss this problem and come up with solutions. Mr. Gene Sellers stated he could get the requirements that Lafayette uses for speed bumps.

-04 introduced by Ms. Terry Broussard and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to grant a variance from the setback requirements for Mr. Tony Boudreaux for a building located at the corner of Maude and Bernadette. The motion carried unanimously.

**Plaisance/T. Broussard**  
**Resolution R21-16**

*A resolution adopting the annual Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for audit engagement of government entities for the auditing of Fiscal Year 2020.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**T. Broussard/White**  
**Resolution R21-17**

*A resolution to authorize the Mayor to execute a cooperative endeavor agreement with Crime Fighters of Louisiana, LLC.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**Touchet/T. Broussard**  
**Resolution R21-18**

*A resolution amending the donation of 4.468 acres from the Vermilion Parish School Board to the City of Abbeville to remove the restrictive covenants.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**T. Broussard/Touchet**  
**Resolution R21-19**

*A resolution ratifying the appointment of J. Isaac Funderburk as the Alternate Director on the board of directors of Louisiana Energy and Power Authority.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

-05 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve a liquor license for Champagne's Supermarket located at 604 S. State Street contingent upon approval by Sellers and Associates, Inc., of the list of required signatures. The motion carried unanimously.

*Lieutenant Lester Luquette asked for permission hold an "Anything over Rice" cookoff on May 29, 2021 at LaFitte Drive-In Park. It would raise funds for a scholarship in the honor of Lieutenant David Hardy. Officer Trent Guidry stated the benefit would be hosted by the FOP Organization, Lodge 48 and not the Abbeville Police Department. Lieutenant Luquette also invited members of the City Council to be judges for the cookoff. It is in the planning phase right now so the times have not yet been decided.*

-06 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to grant permission for the FOP Organization, Lodge 48 to hold the "Anything over Rice" cookoff at LaFitte Drive-In Park on May 29, 2021 and to waive any fees that we normally have. The motion carried unanimously.

**Plaisance/T. Broussard**  
**Resolution R21-20**

*A resolution to authorize Councilwoman Roslyn White to complete an application for submittal to Louisiana Economic Development for the Louisiana Development Ready Community Program to develop a ten-year vision and a five-year community and economic development strategy for the City of Abbeville.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

*Councilwoman White began a discussion to request that Chief Spearman establish and follow protocol for notifying the Mayor of shootings and other emergency events within the City. This is one of these things you don't know you need until a situation happens. We are all aware that we had a situation in the City last week and the police did an excellent job of responding to it. The response time was very quick and they were able to apprehend the suspect within an excellent amount of time. What she did see is that a lot of people were reaching out to her and the Mayor to know if it was safe for them to go out. We didn't have any communication with the department. Now that this situation has passed us and we are all together, and not in a heat of*

emergency, we can discuss how to have better communication between the Chief and the Mayor so that we don't have to reach out to the police force and we can reach out to the Mayor for the information. That way we can give the information to the public when they request it. Chief Spearman stated he notified his PIO, like he always does, and they put it on TV. He rode around on his PA system to notify the neighborhood to go in and then he went back after it was done. Councilwoman White asked Chief Spearman if he or his designee could contact the Mayor directly. Chief Spearman stated what he would like to do is bring them (the Mayor and Council) out and put up a crime scene and let you work it so you can understand that we are getting calls from Sheriff's deputies, every newspaper and every news outlet. We don't have time to pick up the phone and do that. What we need to do is that he and the Mayor need to sit down together to discuss this and then we can come up with a plan. We don't need to discuss it right now. Councilman Touchet asked if the PIO could call the Mayor? Chief Spearman stated that could be included in the discussions. Mayor Piazza asked how does the TV and other news people find out about it. Chief Spearman stated from his PIO. Mayor Piazza stated that the PIO has time to call them but they don't have time to call the Mayor? The Mayor should be called first. You should give me enough respect for my office. He has earned it with the 20 years in office to make him be the first phone call when you have a shooting in Abbeville that police officers are involved in. He doesn't know about it and the TV stations are on the scene before he even knows about it? Chief Spearman stated they did not contact the TV on that because they were too busy calling the State Police. They found out from Facebook. Councilman Plaisance stated the Mayor needs to be notified immediately. A simple text or call is all that is needed. Councilwoman Broussard stated that she would be able to better inform her constituents if the information came directly from the Mayor. Councilwoman White stated she understands that in the heat of the moment, that is not where your mind is and that is not where your mind should be. That is why we are having this conversation tonight so that you can establish a protocol so that moving forward he is notified first before anyone and we know what is going on and you can handle your business and we are not bothering you. We need to have this in place now so that going forward we don't have this issue again. Mayor Piazza stated that it seems like he is the last person to find out. He is not watching TV or sitting next to a scanner. He is getting phone call after phone call. Chief Spearman stated he sometimes is not notified either. Mayor Piazza stated we are elected, just like you are, to keep the public informed as best as we can. Our phones are ringing off the wall when some of these events are happening. We cannot give the public accurate information unless you tell us what is going on. That line of communication has to be open and remain open. Councilman Touchet stated the Mayor needs to know. Councilwoman Broussard stated that a lot of misinformation takes place. Open communication would help that. Councilwoman White stated she understands you are busy Chief, but the Mayor has to be informed. Mayor Piazza asked Chief Spearman to come up with a plan and put it in writing. Chief Spearman stated he would like the Mayor to come by his office to discuss this. Mayor Piazza stated he thinks Chief Spearman has some other issues that he wants to discuss besides the notification of the Mayor when there is a shooting in Abbeville. Chief Spearman answered no. Mayor Piazza stated to Chief Spearman that he can pick up the phone any time and call him to discuss any issues. Chief Spearman stated he doesn't have any other issue but this. We can come up with a protocol. He feels like he should call the Mayor if someone takes out a transformer or a utility pole and the power will be out or if there is a leak at the Water Plant of chlorine. Those are things the Mayor needs to know. He doesn't remember any other time when the Mayor was notified of a shooting. Unfortunately, this is new territory. Councilman Plaisance stated he expects the Mayor to be informed. He needs to know. Mayor Piazza stated he and the Council have been especially interested in shootings because we have had a rampage of shooting within the last couple of years. It is happening in their neighborhoods. They want to know what is happening. They want him to know so he can tell them so they can tell their constituents. Chief Spearman stated he will call the Mayor every time he gets something. Mayor Piazza stated good. Mayor Piazza stated he is in his office every

day. Chief Spearman stated he would like the Mayor to come to his office. Mayor Piazza stated he would go to his office.

Bill Spearman, Police Chief

- Has 3 officers on extended sick leave. The other two are now getting help from psychologists. Councilman Touchet wanted them to come back to work so he made a motion (see below). Ike stated that the officers have to be cleared by a professional to come back to work or else the City can have exposure for things that may take place after they return to work. We have to get them cleared for duty before they come back. Councilman Plaisance asked Chief to speak to the psychologist. Councilman Touchet asked if they could just work in the office. Chief Spearman stated they do not have light duty. Councilwoman White asked when their appointments are. Chief Spearman stated within this week or next week. Councilman Touchet asked if those officers could be trained to work dispatch. This would save money since you are paying people to come from outside. Maybe when the budget comes up, we will look at those things and we will do something about the budget. We can't do anything other than the budget. We control the budget and if you have that much money to spool out then we don't need to give you that money. That is just being creative to use the employees to be put in situations that I wouldn't have to pay any additional funds. Chief Spearman said he would see what he can do. Mayor Piazza stated the motion is not appropriate because it has to be an agenda item. Councilman Touchet stated that people take advantage of certain situations. Councilwoman White stated that within two weeks we will have a better idea so that we won't put the City at any additional risk and we will give them the time to get their minds right to come back to work. Lieutenant Jason Hebert stated that they already feel like they are not being taken care of when something happens. Chief Spearman is trying to take care of these officers. We want them to come back to work and we have been fighting to get them insurance and we are doing everything we can. We are really trying. We can't just bring them in and put them anywhere. If we could we would. We are worried that they come there and something bad happens. That is our concern. We have to take care of these guys. As soon as we can get them back to work, they will be at work even if he has to ride with them that first day to make sure they are alright.
- We have installed a new program that is working well. It is a patrol list.
- We have one lady going through our hiring process right now. She will be a great asset but she hasn't trained yet. We have two others looking to be hired but they have to take the Civil Service exam first.
- Discussed several calls and explained what each call meant on a report that he distributed to the Mayor and Council.
- Their equipment is starting to get old. They are not making batteries or cartridges for the tasers. Taser International is now charging \$1,163.09 for the Taser with one cartridge. They are charging \$71.06 for the battery. They are charging \$73.67 for a new holster. That is a cost of \$1,307.82 per taser. To outfit the whole department with new tasers would cost about \$36,000. That is something they are looking in to. Motorola doesn't make our radios anymore. We will need to buy radios. We are looking into grants for this. Chief Spearman would like a three-year contract for the tasers. Councilwoman White would like an inventory of tasers report at the next meeting.
- In two weeks, we had 330 calls and issued 48 citations. We have picked up 18 guns so far this year.

-07 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to make the two officers that were involved in the shooting come back to work pending the recommendation of the psychologist. **After the discussion above the motion was withdrawn.**

Gene Sellers, Engineer

- *Discussed the 2020 census. The federal government thought they would be able to deliver the census on April the first. Because of the pandemic they are running behind. They are running about 4 months behind. We hope to get the numbers by September. If the population is within 5% of the same amount you won't have to move districts. We will prepare the reapportionment plan if it is needed. It has to be done before qualifying for the 2022 election.*
- *On April 20<sup>th</sup> the contractor will begin the Main Street Outfall repair project and once that is completed, they will move onto the Cleaning of the Concrete Coulee project.*
- *They are 90% finished with the plans for the Hollingsworth overlay project.*

Richard Primeaux, Engineer

- *The notice to proceed will be issued next week for the Flood Reduction Drainage project. They will start on Second Street first then they will go to Lafayette Street then down to Franks Alley. They will keep at least one lane open when they do the Second Street project. They will work almost seven days a week so they will be made aware of the church services on Sunday.*
- *We have received an extension on the discharge permit because they have requested additional parameters.*

Ike Funderburk, City Attorney

- *City Court has jurisdiction on civil cases. In the year 2020, 292 civil suits were filed in City Court. We had almost 1,500 criminal cases and almost 1,000 have been resolved. There were almost 2,000 traffic tickets and 96% of them have been resolved (pled).*
- *We have some vacancies on some boards and commissions. On the Municipal Employees Civil Service Board, we have one vacancy. The Mayor has already sent out letters to all of the civic organizations to ask them to suggest people to serve. When we get those letters back, we will be able to put that on the agenda and the Council can pick someone from that list. There is one vacancy on the Abbeville Planning Commission. That is a District C nomination and that term will end on 1/17/2022 since it is filling the term of a member that has resigned. We have two vacancies on the Parks and Recreation Board. One appointment is for the Councilman at Large and the other one is District D. Mayor Piazza asked Tommy to recommend some names. Councilwoman White asked if there are any restrictions. Ike stated that we try to get someone from the community but there are no real restrictions.*
- *We should receive the LWCC dividend on or about April 30, 2021. We don't know how much it will be.*
- *House Bill 334 was filed by Ryan Bourriaque. That is our piece of legislation to include all of our islands into the corporate limits. It will be referred to the committee on Municipal and Parochial affairs. The session begins on the 12<sup>th</sup>.*

Clay Menard, Public Works Director

- *Has located a contractor that does small projects. State Street has settled enough and is ready to be overlaid. We are dressing that street twice a day. The reason we are having issues with that is because of the speed of the motorists. We have a City made speed bump on that road and it is not deterring many of the motorists. People that do care slow down and others go through it and there is limestone flying everywhere. We have 10 other road cuts but that overlay will be done first.*
- *The contractor will be coming on Friday to work on the sidewalks at the splash pad and the church.*



- *The water line that was causing a problem at Harmony Park has been moved, the trees have been taken care of and we are starting to haul dirt into the low areas.*
- *The tree trimming contractor started yesterday. They will trim the trees off the main power lines as Stewart dictates. They will chip the debris so we will have mulch available.*
- *Sellers and Associates have reached out to a contractor concerning the gear box at the Water Plant. He hopes to have a quote by the next meeting.*
- *The contractor for the Flood Reduction Project was looking for a piece of property in order to store their equipment and materials. They will utilize the old electrical substation on S. Louisiana. It is close to one of the areas and is fenced in and is locked.*

Tommy Picard, Park Director

- *We made a schedule. We have 90 kids from Mount Carmel that came back that weren't there before. That helps us. We will have 30 games here. We will be playing Broussard and Kaplan. All our games will be played here, not at QSA. It will be 13 and 14 year old kids so all the games will be played at Sellers Field. We will take off 10 feet of the grass and then we will grow it back when we are finished.*
- *We have to find a way to get the word out to kids. He will get with Shirley to put a mailout in the utility bills. We will put banners all over too.*
- *We need security for all games.*
- *We need a new tractor and a new lawn mower. Mayor Piazza asked Tommy to get prices together and submit those to him for the lawn mower. Tommy stated they will put a new spray tank on the 4-wheeler. Would like a new tractor in the next budget year.*
- *We are playing in Abbeville this weekend because one of the goals fell last weekend in Henry. It will be repaired.*
- *We can hire up to 10 kids in the summer. Five people here and five in Erath. He has the applications and the information. It is ages 16-24 and they have to meet a certain criteria.*
- *Discussed what they made first weekend of basketball. Friday night they made \$206 at the gate, concession they made \$251, Saturday they made \$330 at the gate and \$889. We made \$2,000 in concession and at the gate \$879. Security costs them \$144, gate personnel \$224, concession workers \$592, referees \$795 and score keepers \$346. It cost them \$2,100. We loss \$286. Mayor Piazza stated you used to be able to get a lot of volunteers to work concession.*
- *We have 150 kids playing basketball and we will have a summer league too. It will be free for the kids that are already registered.*
- *We have the following registered for baseball: 5-6 years old, one team about 12 kids, 7-8 year old- we have one team, 9-10 year old- we have one team, we have no 11-12 year olds team, one team in the 13-14 year olds, we have a girls team ten and under and we have a girls team 14 and under.*
- *We started working on the fields today. Wanted to take the fence down since it has been surplused.*
- *He wants one inch of cement under the bleachers of Theriot Field and in the football field. It would be expensive but it would pay for itself in the long run. We would not have to cut the grass we would just have to clean the cement. He has been begging for that for a long time and a storage building too. Mayor Piazza asked Clay to get with Tommy to see what needs to be done and to come back with a cost estimate for the cement.*
- *Councilwoman White asked Tommy to put sand around the merry-go-round at Parker Hebert Park.*

Allie Horton, Digital Media Assistant

- *She did an audit of our social media when she first started working here and our numbers were low because you really didn't post much. She has an assessment of those numbers*

available for the Mayor and Council. She did another audit back in March and the numbers are way up. Our engagements are up 329%, especially with the Black History month campaign that we did. A lot of people are checking in with the weather updates and outage updates. Normal engagement back in January was 17% and about 9 people interacted. Now our numbers are up. For the Black History month posts we received 52 comments and things like that. She shares our events with Vermilion Updates page too so that they will come to our page as well to look at our list of events. She tries to cross promote. She sent out a pdf that can be completed in order to keep her updated on anything that is going on in each Council Members district. You can also let Nicole know and she can inform me. Spring Fest is this weekend and she posted it yesterday and will post about it again Friday.

- She is planning a weekly post on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We will have a theme for those.
- She is waiting for the new Italian restaurant to let her know when they will open so she can promote them too.
- She is working with tax and permits to consolidate and simplify forms for permits. That way people will be less confused when they go to the website. Everything will have a packet. She is working with the website developer too on this.
- Her and Councilwoman White are in the process of learning a new program that sends out emergency texts. It is called Nixle and it was paid for by Vermilion Parish so it is free to us. We had to make a log in and sign up for it. It gives us a number and you can text a keyword and our constituents can sign up for it. It is free. Whenever we have outages, community events, emergencies and other things like that we can inform them. It is in real time. For those that only have a house phone, it can call them. She is still learning all the ins and outs with it. She is working with Homer Stelly to learn about the program.
- Her degree is in Public Relations and she took a class on Crisis Communication Planning and you can develop a master plan on how to develop each situation and protocols on how to get in touch with each individual person that needs to be informed. It is all laid out in paper form so if anything happens and the media calls you, you already have a statement ready to respond. Everything is already ready and everybody is on the same page. You have the same line of communication each time. She has written three crisis communication plans.
- Councilwoman White stated we currently have 4,488 people following our page and our engagement is reaching 30,000 people in the last 28 days and posting engagements are at 5,257.

#### Mayor Mark Piazza

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> test strip on the runway was completed on Friday at the airport. The test strip came back ok. The smoothness cannot have any raised elevation on it that is higher than .25 of an inch. We only had one and it was .24. We made it by the skin of our teeth and that saved us a lot of time and a lot of money. They think the first test strip didn't bond well because they had just completed the crack sealing and the seal coating. They gave it a couple more weeks to harden up and that worked. It is smooth and it met FAA guidelines and standards. Monday and Tuesday of this week they did all the patching that needed to be done. The actual overlay will start tomorrow and their anticipated completion of the runway is April 23<sup>rd</sup>. That includes the temporary striping. FAA will not approve it or open the runway until the temporary striping is complete. The gentleman from Omega called him and they have some airplanes that are stranded here and they can't move them to another airport. Their season starts on April 12<sup>th</sup>. We are working with Omega to try to get them out of there. He thinks FAA will at least let them take off and move to another airport once the asphalt is down and approved without the striping.

- *He attended the Municipal Employees Civil Service Board meeting Wednesday of last week. The board voted to give the Civil Service Director 30 days to report back to work permanently or they will terminate her and hire someone else. Carlton Campbell contacted her to notify her and she probably will not come back so they will be in the process of looking for another Civil Service Director. He spoke to her today and she is not coming back.*
- *Kathy felt like Denise Mire has been trained and is working efficiently enough in the Accounting Department to cross train with Mary Rogers in the Payroll Department. Mary has no help whatsoever. She is the only person in payroll. If Mary takes a week's vacation, then we are not getting paid. Denise is cross training with Mary so she can take some time off from time to time. She hasn't been able to take any of her days because payroll never stops. We have payroll every week.*
- *We did interview a second apprentice lineman last week. He called us back and declined the job not because of the pay but because he has accepted a job as a truck driver and he felt like he would prefer that type of work. We did hire one guy a month ago and he is working. We are still looking for an apprentice lineman. Clay has been in contact with the SLCC instructor in Crowley who does the lineman class. There may a couple potential students attending the class right now. There was another gentleman that Stewart was going to contact.*
- *We hired Paul Tomino, provisionally, to work at the Street Department and to help out in the parks. He started Monday.*
- *We also hired Guy Poche at the Wastewater Plant and he has been helping out in the Lift Stations to assist them if Robert has to be out.*
- *The tree trimming did start this week. Stewart will have them on the 34.5 first and then do some additional tree trimming from there. A lot of times people call and say the branches are on the power line and you go over there and it is telephone and cable lines. It is not even in the electrical wires. They will not trim around cable and telephone lines. They will only trim around power lines. Even when it comes to power lines, if it's a secondary line and not a primary line, they will not trim around it because they can't electrocute you. The secondary line is the big thick one that goes to security lights. They are not a primary. The primary lines are the three at the very top. That is what they will prune and that is what causes the outages. A branch falling on a secondary will not cause a power outage. If you have areas, please let him or Clay know.*
- *The tennis courts came out spectacular.*
- *We will bid out the first 6 houses for the demolition program on April 27, 2021. It won't be complete until July. They are starting the asbestos procedures on the rest of the houses then we will be able to demolish those. He hopes to get Richard Minvielle at the next meeting to give a more thorough report.*
- *This is Easter week and the kids are out of school. He drove by every park today at 3:00 PM and it is a beautiful day. At Gertie Huntsberry, he did not see a soul, at Hebert Park there were 5 small kids on the playground equipment, at Mouton 0, Lafayette Park had 5 small kids there playing on the playground equipment, Godchaux has three or four groups of 2 or 3 kids and there were people on the walking trail, at McKinley Scott there was 0, at Williams Park there was 0, LaFitte Park was closed, Motty Park had 0 and Comeaux Park was packed. They had kids on the skateboard park, they had ladies playing tennis, they had walkers, they had people hanging out at the pavilion, they had people on the swing sets and playground equipment behind the skateboard park, they had a softball game at Vorhoff, they were practicing at Sellers and tonight they had a game. The park was full all afternoon. This park is very active and all areas are used. The bigger parks don't have more playground equipment but the atmosphere is more spread out and there is a wide-open area so people feel more comfortable coming here. They feel safer here*

*than they do at other parks. He rides this town everyday and he sees which parks are being utilized and those that are not being utilized. He has never seen anybody at Motty Park.*

Jude Mire, Fire Chief

- *He still has one open position. On April 20, 2021 he has 7 applicants they will interview and hopefully the first meeting in May he will present one individual to hire. They will not start school until August so they will not be working for us until December. We will be short for a while. We have two on extended sick leave.*
- *The firetruck on Maude just got out of the shop and it is back in the shop. We are having engine problems.*
- *We got a 16-foot boat that was donated to us. We picked it up this week. It can go in 10 inches of water so if it does flood, we will be able to utilize it.*
- *Each shift has been going to the airport the last two weeks for hands on training.*
- *We ran 7 structure fires in the last two weeks. We had an 80-year-old on Graceland that had smoke inhalation and went to the hospital. The others were outside the City limits. We had 2 grass fires, 14 fire alarms, 2 trash fires, 1 CO2 detector that was going off that we had to check, 3 auto accidents, 6 medicals, 3 heavy lifts that we assisted Acadian Ambulance and 3 reports of people not breathing and we had to do CPR.*

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *Check out LaFitte Park because the walking trail has been staked off by the engineers. It is exactly 6/10<sup>ths</sup> of a mile. It is beautifully laid out. He and the Mayor are working with Wildlife and Fisheries because the Mayor would like to see public fishing get started. We are working in conjunction with them that would open it up for fishing. The plan is to have the dog park closed on Friday and that would be the fishing day and Saturday and Sunday would be the dog park days. The area for the dog park is right down to the bank and we don't have the fishing pier yet. We will paint the building in front. It will be red with white doors. Charlene knows someone that will do artwork on the doors. The first big event was two weeks ago and it was a large group and they had a great time.*

Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr.

- *Asked Clay about the bids on the trailer that is supposed to be demolished on Prairie. Clay stated that the tax and permit department is responsible for soliciting bids and presenting those. Mayor Piazza stated that he believes she is receiving bids now and we will award that at the next City Council meeting.*

Councilwoman Terry Broussard

- *We had a great time with Representative Alexander Green and Congressmen Clay Higgins who came to visit our City. We had a groundbreaking ceremony. Pastor August brought a bus with his church members.*
- *The Fun Day for Williams Scholar Academy in LaFitte Park was very nice.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk  
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza  
Mayor