

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on March 3, 2020 at 5:30 P.M., at the regular meeting place, the Council Meeting Room located at 101 North State Street, 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: Jude Mire, Fire Chief  
Jason Hebert, Police Lieutenant  
Jonathan Touchet, Police Lieutenant  
Ike Funderburk, City Attorney  
Clay Menard, Public Works Director  
Denise Mire, Park Director  
Gene Sellers, Engineer  
Richard Primeaux, Engineer  
Brac Salyer, Wildlife & Fisheries  
Pastor Osborne Taylor  
Pastor Crystal Randle, A New Chapter P U S H  
Pastor James Broussard, A New Chapter P U S H  
Donovan Davis, New Chapter P U S H  
Drevian Evans, S T A R

*Mayor Piazza asked Pastor Crystal Randle 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. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Terry Broussard approve the appointment of Angela Lemoine to the position of temporary dispatcher with the Abbeville Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the probational appointment of Heather Chambers to the position of Police Officer with the Abbeville Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

*Pastor Crystal Randle was at the meeting to invite the Mayor and City Council to the Partnership for Change Conference Vermilion. Councilwoman Broussard stated Pastor Randle has informed her that someone with the Governor's office will there for this Conference. Pastor Randle stated that on behalf of A New Chapter P U S H organization they would like to invite the Mayor and City Council. She introduced the President, Pastor James Broussard and Donovan Davis. On March 18, 2020 they are having a Partnership for Change Conference. The doors open at 3:00 PM and the event begins at 3:30 PM. It takes all of us to come together to create change. She was elated that they would host this conference in Vermilion Parish. This is the third year they have hosted the conference but this is the first year they host it in Vermilion Parish. There are a lot of things they want to incorporate in this parish. We are so grateful for the other parishes that are coming together to join with us. The purpose is to bring the churches, non-profits, employers, law*

enforcement, local government and other groups and organizations within the community in an effort to compile together resources to make available to those that will be targeted in the initiative. The individuals targeted in this initiative are the youth, the young and old people as well as those in transition from incarceration back into our community. Our plans are to provide mentoring as well as counseling. We know that to change the person, you have to change the mind. You change the mind state, you change the person. Therefore, we believe heavily in mentoring and counseling. This is one thing we want to introduce to Vermilion Parish. We want to assist the Vermilion Parish School System with trained, skilled and reliable mentors to be assigned to schools throughout the parish to mentor struggling students. She works with struggling students so she knows there is a need. They want to be able to provide a meeting place, safe haven, for youth that are at risk through an after-school program that will allow them additional opportunities for mentoring and to help fill the void some of the students have. We want to provide holistic support to the offenders and returning citizens by essential preparatory training which would occur pre-release, post-release and after-release. Pastor Broussard stated they are A New Chapter P U S H and they work in St. Mary, Vermilion, Iberia and they are starting to go into St. Martinville. The conference is to bring all their networks together so we can bring a change. If we can change our people then we can change our community and then we can change our settings and goals. We have worked with the Iberia Parish School Board, with probation and parole and with the government in Louisiana. We want to bring people back into society and back to our community. We need to teach them how to live all over again. That is why our organization is called "A New Chapter". We begin to bring a new chapter to them and we want to bring them hope. We are doing this through the Ark of the Covenant Church in Abbeville. Pastor Randle is one of our board members with the committee. There are a lot of programs we have in place to bring to Vermilion. One is the Brother to Brother program where we begin to teach them how to get back into society coming off of drugs. It is like you are starting all over again. These are some of the programs that we will initiate here. We also have a program with struggling youth that we are planning to do. We are looking forward to working with you and we invite you to come on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March at 3:00 PM at the Ark of the Covenant Church. Our guest speaker will be someone from the Governor's office out of Baton Rouge. Councilman Broussard stated that he commends Pastor Randle, Pastor Broussard and everyone here tonight. You are among the most powerful influencers of young people and thanked them for carrying that torch for a great need throughout society. Without mentoring, without education, and without people who step up when it is not their children, this cannot happen. Pastor Randle stated it is a \$45.00 donation per adult to attend the conference and food will be provided. Pastor Broussard stated that money will go back into the community.

Councilwoman Broussard introduced Drevian Evans. Mr. Evans represents S T A R, Stay True and Rise. He wanted to discuss activities that we will be bringing to McKinley Scott Park to bring families and kids together. She has been meeting with him at the library on Saturdays. They want to implement a family day at the Park and get the community involved. They would like the blessing of the Mayor and City Council to do this at least three to four times a year. They are also interested in working with the youth. We will start targeting the five to six-year olds. Mr. Evans stated he is from Abbeville. He went to Abbeville High School. He sees the change of people wanting to do better and those not doing so good in our community. We are the voice of the youth. Everyone in our organization is under 25-years old. Some of us graduated high school and some others went on to college. We are trying to spread positivity back into our community. We are asking for your blessing on April 11<sup>th</sup>. We will be doing a Family Fun Day in McKinley Scott Park. That is the park we played in when we were growing up. It is like we are giving back to our own community. It is a free event. There will be free food, games and other things to spread a little positivity in our community. Councilman Plaisance stated it is very refreshing to hear this tonight. This is the second thing here tonight that is good for our community and our kids. We

*have to do something with our kids. It is wonderful to see you guys standing up here and taking a role. He complimented Councilwoman Broussard for initiating this activity. It is a good thing and he will support it 100%. Mayor Piazza stated that he is encouraged to see some activities planned at McKinley Scott Park. He has been discouraged lately. He rides the town weekly and on weekends. He just doesn't see kids outside anymore and we spend a lot of money on our parks to try to get the kids out and give them something to do. Whatever we can do to get more kids and have them utilize our parks is a good thing. Councilwoman Broussard asked if she needed a special event permit. Mayor Piazza stated if Councilwoman Broussard is spearheading the venture then no permit would be needed. Councilwoman Broussard stated she will be out there and will be taking responsibility for the event. It will be reasonable hours like 10-4 or 12-5. We hope to form a few basketball teams to allow them to play each other on weekends. Mayor Piazza stated those are basic activities that we want out there anyway. If you let us know, we may want to pass by during the event.*

-03 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to deviate from the agenda to add emergency repairs for collapsed culverts on Airport Road. The motion carried unanimously.

-04 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the minutes from the February 4, 2020 and the February 18, 2020 Personnel Interviews, the February 4, 2020 Committee meeting and the February 4, 2020 regular City Council meetings. The motion carried unanimously.

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

-05 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve the estimate from Glenn Lege Construction in the amount of \$128,956.00 for asphalt patching of 84 road cuts due to repairs to water and sewer lines. The invoice will be paid as follows: 50% City Sales Tax Fund and 50% from the Utility System Reserve account. The motion carried unanimously.

*Councilman Plaisance presented an update on LaFitte Drive-In Park pertaining to the new signage, announcement of grant award for walking trail and the fishing demonstration sponsored by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. We are in the seventh year of development of this park. The last picnic table was just sold to Whittington Veterinary Clinic. He purchased it to have a plaque in honor of the young Broussard fellow that was recently killed in an automobile accident. Raising Cane's sponsored the new signage at the dog park. Pet Sense has purchased two benches that will go in on both sides of the dog park. They haven't been installed yet because they have to be installed in concrete and Richard hasn't had a chance to do it plus the ground is too wet. Since January 4, 2020 there have been 271 cars. We only open the park on weekends. People are very excited about the dog park. He put up some of his discretionary funds to complete the fence between the two parks (large dog and small dog). Bayou Fencing donated the fencing around the pump. One of the problems we are having now is that we need to put the fence up on the west side so the dogs don't run into the woods. He is currently looking for a sponsor for that. We already have the fencing material. We want to try to get this done as soon as possible. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, he and the Mayor and Clay will be meeting with the Lieutenant Governor, Billy Nungesser, to show him the master plan for the park. That is where we are right now. We have a fishing demonstration coming up. He introduced Brac Sayler, with Wildlife and Fisheries. He is responsible for the killing of the fish that was in the pond initially. They put a chemical to kill the fish so we could start over again. Wildlife & Fisheries paid for that. They also stocked*

5,000 brim, 1,000 chinquapin, 1,000 bass and 2,000 catfish at this point. Wildlife & Fisheries paid for these fish. The City bought 1,000 bass from Shepherd's Farm for \$600.00. The City crew cleaned up the west side of the pond last Friday. Mr. Brac Saylor stated he has been working with Councilman Plaisance on this pond for 5 years. This pond was dug when Lowe's came to town. They dug a huge pit so they could use the dirt to build up the foundation for their store so they wouldn't flood. When you do that and leave a pond sitting for multiple years at a time, you will attract unwanted species of fish such as bullheads, gars and other things that are undesirable as far as a fishing pond goes. Our standard protocol, if you will start a pond all over, it to get rid of the fish that are in there beforehand. You need to get rid of the gar, especially. A gar will grow very big in two years and he will eat as much as he possibly can. He is altering the food chain you want to establish in a fishing pond. That is the reason we used the chemical to knock the fish population out and start over. That is when the well was put in and we started pumping water. This is going to be a fabulous fishing pond. It is for the kids and adults and for those adults that wish they were still kids. We have blue gill, chinquapin, catfish and wide-mouth bass. On the morning of April 17<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries will be holding a Family Fish Fest. We will have some people from Baton Rouge come over and set up fishing stations for the kids. If they want to learn how to cast there will be a station for that. If they want to learn how to tie fishing knots, there will be a station for that. We want to educate the kids as much as possible to show them how to fish and educate them about fish. The idea is to promote the LaFitte Park pond and to get the kids excited about fishing. We are working to get sponsors to get door prizes. We will do the best we can. It won't be as big a deal as the one in Baton Rouge but it will be exciting. He is working with the Agriculture folks and the 4-H people. When he was a kid, he remembers riding his bike with a stringer full of fish in one hand and a fishing pole in one hand. He would go to his grandma's and they would clean the fish and fry them. That is what he wants every kid to experience. It gives them an opportunity to catch their dinner and they can fry those fish with their family. They had a great day fishing and they also provided dinner for their family. He is very excited about the event and it will be fun. He will be there and other biologists from the department will be here too. One or two of the enforcement agents will be there too so people can understand and to help the public's fear of these agents. He wants them there to answer questions and to explain the rules. We will also put more catfish stock in the pond a couple of days before because we want every child to be able to catch a fish right on the spot. We want to promote our natural resources and promote fishing and hunting. He is thrilled to be associated with this event. He is a resident of Abbeville and he will take his little girl fishing there when she is old enough. Adults 16 years and old will need a fishing license. Fishing regulations do apply just like they do in the rest of the State. Councilman Touchet asked about enforcement. Mr. Saylor stated that Wildlife & Fisheries would be in charge of enforcement however since you have no motor boat traffic on the pond, there really won't be much of a necessity for this like other places. He hopes to maintain the pond on the honor system. This is a public water body and they will maintain enforcement just like they do at Girard Park. Councilman Touchet asked about the safety of the fishing area. Mr. Saylor stated that he spoke with their manager over the "Get out and Fish" program, and there has never been a problem because the parents are usually actively involved when kids come out to fish. You can put up some signage that tells parents to stay with their child. We need to take some space and rope off areas that are unsafe and we will promote areas of the pond more to the west/southwest side that have very good footing. We need to make sure the kids are encouraged to go to that area. There has never been a problem across the state and no insurance has been required. It is about the parent wanting to be actively involved with their children. We will enforce that concept as people show up to fish. There has never been an incident and that pond is not that deep. Councilwoman White asked if Mr. Saylor has seen the pond before they filled it up with water. It is very steep. Mr. Saylor stated that he has been there and has seen it. Councilwoman White stated that it is steep and not sloped like a fishing pond. That is the problem. Mr. Saylor stated that certain portions are very steep and we

*will not promote those areas for fishing. We will only promote the southwest and the south corner. There is level access there. That is closest to the gate anyway. People will come into the gate and go fishing to the property closest to the gate. We will not allow fishing on the north bank of the pond because that is steeper. There are a lot of places where we deal with these types of situations and there have never been a problem. If we put up flagging and signage then that is the best we can do. We will tell people where they can fish. Councilwoman White stated then if somebody doesn't obey that and an accident happens when we have been repeatedly told not to allow fishing from the banks without a pier. Mr. Saylor stated that he was unaware of that. He suggested that we would have to confer with our legal counsel on that. Councilman Plaisance stated we should not have fishing on the north side but the west side is just sloped down into the water. Mayor Piazza stated that we are only talking here about a one-day event sponsored by Wildlife & Fisheries. They will be out there regulating where the fishing will occur and giving these children an opportunity to go out there and catch a fish with Wildlife & Fisheries agents there. They will make sure people are supposed to be fishing where they are supposed to be fishing and doing what they are supposed to be doing. Some of these questions may be concerns about future fishing at the pond and we are really not talking about establishing those parameters right now. We will talk about that before we will open it up to the public. This is a pioneer program and a start to give kids an opportunity for an interest in fishing and to see if we can fish in a very safe environment. Our ultimate goal is to have a couple of fishing piers. He and Brac has talked about that on several occasions. These piers would have railings and people would go out there on a wooden dock. Brac will help try to get us a grant for that. Until that happens, we will have to closely monitor if and when we allow fishing, what type of fishing and where they can fish. We have Ms. Bridget Levy sitting right behind Brac tonight and she is our person at the Park. She is doing a fantastic job on Saturday's and Sunday's. That is the only two days that the park is open. When we have fishing like this, the dog park would be closed at that time so you wouldn't have people fishing and people in the dog park. All that can be discussed at a later time. Basically, tonight we are here just to announce this special one-day event sponsored by the City and Wildlife & Fisheries. It is wonderful opportunity for the children in our community and we want to thank Wildlife & Fisheries for taking an interest in our community and coming down here to host this event. We really appreciate Brac's interest in our community and the whole park. Councilman Touchet asked Bridget if she knew how many visitors are from his district. Mayor Piazza stated she only has numbers and hasn't been taking names. Councilwoman Broussard asked if the City decides to do fishing once a month, if it is Bridget's job to monitor and count who is coming in or would she be where there is fishing. Councilman Touchet stated we would need additional personnel. Mayor Piazza stated that those issues need to be discussed and we need to be out in the open with them and we need to be upfront with them and we need to discuss that as an administration and a City Council. You have to depend on your Park Director, Denise Mire who is here tonight, and Councilman Plaisance, who is the chairman of the Park Committee for the Council and who also established a "Friends of LaFitte Drive-In Park", to come up with these rules and guidelines. They can decide who will be out there watching these people and these kids when they will be out there fishing. Those are the people we need to ask the questions to and those are the people that need to come back with a plan and a proposal to present to the Council on if we will provide fishing, when it will be and how it will be accomplished. We have guys like Brac who are willing to help us and that is a tremendous benefit.*

-06 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to award the contract to repair and secure the structure located at 407 Clark Street to the low bidder, Russell Alexis, in the amount of \$1,500.00. The motion carried unanimously.

*Mayor Piazza stated we had Guidry's Construction camera the culverts from Young Broussard Road right at the corner of North Airport Road to the State Highway going South. There are four*

*different places where the huge culverts collapsed. One place is very serious and there are three other places that are not quite as serious but do need to be repaired. At the last City Council meeting we passed a resolution requesting the State to clean out the culverts on the By-pass right there at the corner of the By-Pass and Airport. This is the next phase in a series of steps to try and alleviate some of the flooding north of there. We have already completed another area of this project. The Police Jury dug out the ditches on the east side from Young Broussard Road all the way to the north. This emergency repair cost estimate is about \$20,000.00.*

-07 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the emergency repair work on the culverts as discussed. The motion carried unanimously.

Gene Sellers, Engineer

- *Gave an update on the Downtown Sidewalk project. The work began in January and most of that month was spent on the handicapped ramp in front of Black's. More work was completed in February. We have completed the estimate for January and February and are processing that tomorrow through the State. They are anticipating a May or June completion.*

Richard Primeaux, Engineer

- *Reported on the drainage project. We hope to present a cost estimate to you at your next meeting. We have a couple of hurdles we need to cross. One is at Lafayette/East Street. There is a spaghetti of fiber optic cables. We have to try and negotiate around those.*
- *We are trying to schedule a meeting with the drainage board to discuss cleaning out the channel.*

Clay Menard, Public Works Director

- *The flushing machine is being repaired so we are not able to flush right now.*
- *We will be starting our summer schedule next week. District A and C will have Monday and Wednesday, District B and D will have Tuesday and Thursday and the Councilman at Large will have Friday. We have a full crew.*

Mayor Mark Piazza

- *Had an opportunity to meet and go to the business that is providing the security cameras throughout town yesterday. He met with the gentleman and viewed some of the footage that he has of our community. He wanted to compliment Lieutenant Touchet and Lieutenant Hebert who both work very closely with this gentleman to provide security. It is working for the most part and it will be something that will benefit us in the future. Hopefully we can solve some of the crime. He was very impressed with the facility and the owner has invited the Council to tour the facility.*

Jason Hebert, Police Lieutenant

- *Thanked the Council for the new hires tonight on behalf of the Police Chief.*
- *Chief Spearman is in Lake Charles at a conference.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *Thanked Police Juror Ronald Darby for utilizing his road fund in the City of Abbeville. The job on S. Lyman Street is beautiful. He appreciates this and doing work in the City of Abbeville is a wonderful thing.*

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *Thanked Brac Saylor, a graduate of the University of Tennessee Biology Institute, who decided to move to Louisiana. He is glad he is here and has a passion for the kids as far as the work he is doing. His wife is in charge of all the endangered species for the State of Louisiana. Both of them work very hard. They have a brand-new baby girl. He was stuck in traffic but he made it here tonight. Thank you Brac for being here tonight. We appreciate it so much.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk  
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza  
Mayor