

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in emergency special session on August 23, 2020 at 5:00 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, Brady Broussard, Jr., Francis Touchet, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem and Roslyn White

Members Absent: Councilwoman Terry Broussard

Also, Present: Ike Funderburk, City Attorney
Clay Menard, Public Works Director
Jude Mire, Fire Chief
Bill Spearman, Police Chief
Ralph Hutchinson, Assistant Fire Chief
Stewart Head, Electrical Superintendent
Shirley Bertrand, Billing Manager

Mayor Piazza stated this emergency special meeting has been called to declare a state of emergency and discuss emergency measures due to approaching tropical storms or hurricanes. We are faced with a different situation than we normally are because we have the potential of two hurricanes in the gulf at the same time. That is a first for us in recorded history. It looks like Hurricane Marco does not present as much of a problem as Hurricane Laura. He and Councilwoman White attended a 10:30 AM OEP meeting this morning. They are very concerned about the potential of Hurricane Laura being a category 2 hurricane and hitting right to the west of us. This is the same track as Hurricane Rita and we all know what kind of devastation that caused. Hurricane Marco looks like it will hit around the mouth of the Mississippi River. It looks like we will be on the good side of that. We need to declare a state of emergency so all the departments can do what they need to do. We will declare this through both storms. We have already reached out to electrical crews for assistance.

Plaisance/White
Resolution R20-16

A resolution authorizing a state of emergency as a result of Tropical Storm Laura and Hurricane Marco.

The motion carried unanimously.

Chief Jude Mire stated all the stations and generators are prepared. Every truck has been checked to make sure we have all the chain saws and gear that we need. All 4 stations are open and fully staffed. Councilman Touchet asked Chief Mire to make sure he contacts the grocery stores to let them know we need for them to let us in to purchase groceries if the power is out for an extended time. Chief Spearman stated they had already contacted Robie's.

Councilman Touchet asked who will track expenses. Mayor Piazza stated each department head would track those expenses.

Chief Spearman stated all people are on standby and all vacations have been cancelled. Mayor Piazza asked if Chief Spearman was prepared to implement a curfew on Wednesday if needed. Chief Spearman answered yes. He only has two people out on vacation out of state and he has two out sick but they should get their test results soon so they can return to work. Mayor Piazza stated normally APD takes control of the streets to block flooded streets. Chief Spearman answered yes and they have all the emergency numbers at the dispatch office. Mayor Piazza asked Clay if we have people on standby to assist with barricades. Clay answered yes. Chief Mire stated they would assist with that too.

Mayor Piazza stated sandbags would be available beginning at 7:00 AM on Monday. They can be picked up at the City barn. Clay Menard stated the Street Department crew have been bagging sand and cleaning ditches. We will also utilize the water and wastewater crews to assist in bagging sand. Councilman Touchet asked that the workers be allocated by district. Mayor Piazza stated that we cannot allocate the crew by district because we have to be prepared for everything like a lift station going under water. We will need Timmy's crew to handle that so they can't be assigned to a particular area.

Mayor Piazza asked all departments if the generators are up and running. Everyone answered yes.

Stewart Head stated the crew is on standby. He reached out to Lafayette and they will help us. He put out a couple of other calls and he will know more tomorrow morning. Greg Labbe will inform us tomorrow what we will get. He doesn't know which company it will be. A crew is 3 people. Mayor Piazza stated in wants one or two crews here in Abbeville Wednesday morning. Councilman Touchet asked when will the power be shut off. Stewart stated that is the Mayor's call. It is usually when it causes too much damage to the system. Mayor Piazza stated there is no set wind speed. Normally Stewart and his crews put all the electrical substations on what is referred to as "One shot". One shot is when you have something that is detrimental to the system it will shut itself off. All of our substations have that capability. The system will shut itself down when things get too serious. That is to save the system from too much damage. The crew doesn't go out and shut it down themselves. Stewart stated they will try to keep the power on as much as possible. It just depends on the type of outages we will have. If it gets to the point where it is unsafe for him and his crew to be out there then we can't go out. We don't want somebody to get hurt. Until that point, we will do what we can. He contacted a couple of our suppliers to let them know we will reach out to them if we need anything. We are pretty much stocked up right now so it just depends on the type of damage we will have. Mayor Piazza asked Councilman Plaisance to reserve hotel rooms for the contract laborers that will be coming in.

Councilman Plaisance asked if there will be any evacuation shelters. Councilwoman White stated at the OEP meeting this morning they did discuss that there would be a staging area at North Vermilion School if needed. From there they would be brought to a shelter. North Vermilion School is not a shelter. They also talked about putting in the request to have the National Guard on standby if we need them.

Councilwoman White reminded people that if there is flooding to be a kind neighbor. A lot of times the damage is caused by people sightseeing after a storm and causing a wake that pushes into people's houses. You can do a lot of damage to someone's property who may just be borderline from flooding. It has been a problem in the past. Ike stated after the flood in 2016, this Council passed an ordinance for no wake in flooded streets. He hopes that APD will enforce that to protect people's safety and property.

Shirley Bertrand stated they will answer the phones. Marco is not that bad so she will try to handle that from her home. If she can't she will move to City Hall and call for help. We will do the same for Hurricane Laura. She will be in contact with Councilwoman White so she can put the information on Facebook. She will keep the Mayor informed about what is going on. She asked the Council to please be patient because her goal is to answer the calls. She will let you know the information when she can. She will ask Chris Landry, the new service worker, to help answer the phones. She will ask Mary Rogers and usually Lynn and Charlene will also assist. She will not call anyone until she has to move to City Hall.

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor