

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on February 15, 2022 at 5:30 P.M., at the regular meeting place, the Council Meeting Room, located at 101 North State Street, Abbeville, Louisiana, with the Honorable Mark Piazza, Mayor, presiding.

Members Present: Council Members, Francis Plaisance, Terry Broussard, Brady Broussard, Jr. and Roslyn White

Members Absent: Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr.

Also, Present: Ike Funderburk, City Attorney
Jude Mire, Fire Chief
Bill Spearman, Police Chief
Lieutenant Jonathan Touchet
Chris Gautreaux, Public Works Director
Sarah Alpough, Director of Revenue and Permits
Stewart Head, Electrical Superintendent
Allie Horton, Digital Media Assistant
Richard Primeaux, Engineer
Gene Sellers, Engineer
Gerald Gaspard, Chamber of Commerce & American Legion
Richard Dubois
Joey Boneski
Mike Hardy

Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Richard Dubois to lead the assembly in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Gerald Gaspard to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to appoint Blake Miller, Terry Grice, Erin LaPoint and Brittany Hebert Kent to the position of Police Officer with the Abbeville Police Department, pending successful completion of all post-hire assessments. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to ratify bills paid in the month of January 2022. 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.

-03 introduced by Ms. Terry Broussard and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to enter into a public hearing to discuss ,with the property owner, the demolition of a dilapidated camper and abatement of all trash/rubbish off the property located at 511 S. Young Street. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

The owner of the property stated that she needed more time to have the camper demolished. Her husband had a stroke. Councilwoman Broussard stated that she realizes he is not well. She has been receiving complaints from the neighbors. The property owner requested 30 days.

-04 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to reconvene the regular meeting from the public hearing. The motion carried unanimously.

-05 introduced by Ms. Terry Broussard and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to grant the property owner of 511 S. Young Street 30 days to get the camper demolished or removed off the property. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza stated that he had received a letter from Representative Clay Higgins about grant opportunities. He distributed the letter to the Council. He has also received other documentation from LMA which he distributed too. He also received some correspondence from Anne Falgout about this topic too. He wanted to make the Council is aware that there are a lot of grants and funding opportunities out there. The letter he received from Representative Higgins has 25 different competitive infrastructure funding opportunities for local governments in the form of grants. There may be more out there because the terms and conditions of the infrastructure bill is just being rolled out now. What types of grants, how to apply for them, and how much money is allotted in each grant are all different. There are some great opportunities out there. We have talked about transportation grants before and there are things for buses and bus facilities which could include bus stops. There are infrastructure grants for roads, streets and bridges. There is a very big variety of grants. There are things that would include crosswalks and other things. They also have things about reconnecting communities for parks and other infrastructure to address legacy impacts. Another one is the Brownfield remediation which would include asbestos remediation. That would affect our blighted properties. Asbestos remediation is a big expense when it comes to blighted properties. There are some in there for flood mitigation. We can always use grant money for drainage issues. In the past we have used Richard Minvielle for the majority of our grants. He is talking about retirement. He still does want to do some grant work but he no longer wants to do federal grant work. Federal grant work is very competitive and there is a lot of paperwork involved. It is very confusing and requires matching dollars. We may need to either look for another grant writer or look to Mr. Gene's office or Mr. Primeaux's office in the future. We have used your firms for mostly water, sewer, drainage and road projects. These grants go beyond that. If there is some interest from either one of you, we would like to know that. If the Council wants to seek a grant writer, that is something that you need to discuss. There is so much money out there and it will take a lot of tedious work to apply for these grants and keep up with them. Councilwoman White stated that she spoke with Mr. Gene and called Mr. Primeaux and also spoke with Todd. Richard gave her a list of other people who do the CDBG programs and gave us some recommendations on that if we should choose to go that route. Todd Vincent assured her that he has two grant writers that will be keeping up with all of these federal grants that are available and he will make those people available to us for any grants we want to go after. It is an option to go through Sellers & Associates for the federal grant money. He also said he would be hiring some additional administrative assistants to make sure they can handle the paperwork. That is one option. You have to first start with the projects before you can write the grant. We need to figure out which projects we want to go after then match the money pots with them. Mayor Piazza stated that normally it starts with an idea then you develop a plan or there is some type of grant that you want to pursue then you have the grant writer reach out, look online or call that department and see exactly if what you want will fit into that grant opportunity. It takes some leg work. He advises the Council, if they choose to reach out to a grant

writer, that they have them do that research. LMA has a grant writer that can advise the Council on some potential grants. Most of that would be through the State. The State has some matching grants for water and wastewater infrastructure so there will be an opportunity there. Some of these grants have deadlines that are not that far off. It needs some attention if the Council wants to pursue these grants that the federal government is dishing out so you will need to act now. You need to decide who you want to use as a grant writer and reach out to that individual or that company. He advised the Police Chief and the Fire Chief to do the same thing. These grants are very competitive. There is a lot of grant money available out there. Recently, only 28 of the applicants received funding out of 300 for the Water Sector Program grant.

Plaisance/T. Broussard
Resolution R22-04

A resolution approving the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for the 2021 fiscal year audit.

The motion carried unanimously.

-06 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to approve payment of pay application number 3 in the amount of \$365,750.00 payable to GeoSurfaces, Inc. for the Comeaux Park Renovation Project. The motion carried unanimously.

-07 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to surplus a 2011 Mercedes C-Class and a 9MM Glock Model 45 that were seized and awarded to the Abbeville Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

-08 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the quote from DBT Transportation Services, LLC in the amount of \$14,764.00 for the repair of the AWOS at the airport. The balance of the CARES act funding will be used towards this expense. The motion carried unanimously.

-09 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to surplus Unit #263, a Case 580SL diesel loader backhoe. The motion carried unanimously.

Gene Sellers, Engineer

- We received a letter from DOTD. They had a few comments for the Sidewalk project. We are responding to them at this time and they expect to have that project let by the end on June 2022.*
- Abbeville's application for the Water Sector program was missed only by 3 points. They will have a second round but there are a lot of people who didn't do it the first time so you will be back in the mix.*

Richard Primeaux, Engineer

- His office does do federal grants and other grants. He did look at some of the funding opportunities and there are some that may apply. His office is currently researching the opportunities.*

Mayor Mark Piazza

- We should be complete with both Sellers Field and Theriot Field by the end of the week. They turf is laid down and the sand has been applied at Sellers and they are in the process of doing that at Theriot. Stewart should be almost finished at Sellers and moving on to Luquette. He has already completed Theriot. The street crew has been assisting with a*

lot of dress work. A lot of the concrete has been laid and most of the roofs and structures are finished. The bleachers should be in any day. Things are progressing very rapidly and very well. We ran into a few problems with drainage but nothing that we didn't expect.

- He met with Councilwoman White, Anne Falgout and Charlene Beckett regarding Tiffany Plaza. Tiffany Plaza has been purchased. They met with the new owner. He is from Houston. He seems to have a great deal of financial backing and he is open to remodeling the Tiffany Plaza commercial complex. We made suggestions about the parking lot and some of the buildings and he was very open to those. He is open to working with businesses and individuals and wants to change some of the makeup of some of the buildings. It was very exciting news. He has made a substantial financial investment in this property and intends to continue to make a substantial financial investment into the property. He wants to renovate it so he can start getting tenants there. We threw out many suggestions that would benefit Abbeville like different types of businesses, activities, and things for the kids and he was open to all suggestions. He was very thankful. He will be working very closely with Anne Falgout and he will seek out any grant opportunities that may help him. Councilwoman White added that he will also be here in our community actively participating. He will have an active role here.
- He also had a meeting with Don Benoit. He owns D & T Crawfish by Maximart. He has a very huge wholesale and commercial crawfish operation. He has purchased the old Fruit of the Loom building. He has big plans for that building. He is negotiating with one major corporation. He is encouraged and he believes they are very close to making a deal. Anne Falgout has been working very closely with him. He will do something with that building. That is encouraging news too.
- There is an interested party in the old Stine Lumber building. He is not at liberty to say who or what at this time but it was very encouraging. If that deal goes through, people will be very surprised and excited to see what will happen with that building.

Bill Spearman, Police Chief

- In the last two weeks they have handled 320 calls.
- We had 68 complaints and we removed 53 subjects. That are all our loiters near McDonald's and Burger King and Circle K. 95% of those were panhandlers. The jail did refuse to keep them however. We bring them back here and write a citation. We keep them as long on the bench and book them in as long as we can. That is all we can do.

Jude Mire, Fire Chief

- Discussed calls responded to and personnel. All stations are ok. The truck on the west side had to go to the shop because it had a leaking water tank but it was under warranty so they fixed it. The truck on the By-pass is out right now. It is in the shop being repaired. They had 211 calls since January 1, 2022. There have been a lot of grass fires lately. There is currently a burn ban. Mayor Piazza asked if the sugarcane farmers are exempt from the burn ban. Chief Jude stated only if they have been to the class and they were taught the proper way to burn. They need to have the certificate from the State. They can also ask for permission from the Fire Chief to burn. Right now, he is not giving permission to anyone.
- We have placed 30 of the smoke detectors and still have about 90 left.
- He received a call last Monday that we will be getting our reimbursement for Hurricane Laura. Mayor Piazza has allowed the fire department to go help Iowa after the hurricane.
- Chief Kelly is going to the Rotary meeting tomorrow. Last year they donated a boat to us and this time they may be giving us a rescue tool. That is a \$10,000 piece of equipment. It is the "jaws of life".

- *He applied for AFG grant for a brand-new aerial truck. Theirs is 20 years old. The grant is for \$950,000 and a new aerial will cost about \$1,200,000.*

Allie Horton, Digital Media Assistant

- *She has worked with the Nehemiah Project on the Black History Month Campaign. She interviewed some former graduates of Herod on Friday to get personal stories on their education. She highlighted black owned businesses last week.*
- *She is starting to promote Sounds on the Square and the Black History Month exhibit at the Cultural Center.*
- *She is starting to plan content for the month of March because that is when her baby is due. That will be Women's History Month so she is planning those posts so they will automatically post. Councilwoman White stated that she could take over the posts for the month of March.*
- *She is working with Mrs. Ann Hardy on the Municipal Civil Service Board page on the website and job postings. She also got with Kathy at the Meridional and she will send a proof of the job posting.*
- *We are having a lot of French tourists that are coming visiting the Tourist Center and groups are coming in to view the voting rights exhibit.*

Councilwoman Roslyn White

- *Tomorrow we will have the LDRC certification luncheon at the old Riverfront. We were not able to make it open to the public because it is not big enough so we will have limited seating. We sent out invitations to all the parties listed that we will need cooperation in order to execute the plan. Once that is done, she and Allie will post the plan on the City's website and share it on Facebook so that everyone will have access to it. It will be an exciting day because we will have our final plan and will be able to start executing it. We have a good list and 48 people have RSVP'd and they are any where's from the State to Lafayette planning and all the local agencies here. It should be a very good luncheon.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *When you are traveling eastbound into Downtown, on Highway 14, and you get to the Main Street light, and turn south on Main, there is not a turning lane there. Our citizens are complaining because if you are parked at the light with your blinker on to turn right, cars are passing on the side of you to turn right (south on) on the shoulder. That is not a turning lane and he would like Chris to talk to Randy with DOTD to see if they can do anything with this. He asked Lieutenant Jonathan Touchet to explain this issue to the Police Chief. It is not a turning lane and people are doing that and collisions and near collisions are occurring. Citizens are asking for a solution for that.*

Councilwoman Terry Broussard

- *Williams Scholar Academy will have its first Spring Gala, Saturday, March 19, 2022 at Magdalen Place. It will begin at 7:00 PM. It includes a dinner, drinks, auctions and entertainment. It is semi-formal. If anyone is interested, please contact Nicole Desormeaux. She has her phone number.*

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *Discussed the dilapidated properties across from Popeye's. We have sent letters to these people but he does not what else we can do. It is terrible and an awful sight. These people do have a right to have a place to live but we need to try to do something.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor