

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on December 1, 2020 at 5:30 P.M., at the A. A. Comeaux Recreation Center located at 300 A. A. Comeaux Drive, Suite 200, Abbeville, Louisiana with the Honorable Mark Piazza, Mayor, presiding.

Members Present: Council Members, Francis Plaisance, Terry Broussard, Brady Broussard, Jr., Francis Touchet, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem and Roslyn White

Members Absent: None

Also, Present: Ike Funderburk, City Attorney
Jude Mire, Fire Chief
Bill Spearman, Police Chief
Clay Menard, Public Works Director
Richard Primeaux, Engineer
Gene Sellers, Engineer
Jason Hebert, Police Lieutenant
Ted Johnson, representative for Entergy
Gerald Gaspard
Norman Levine

Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Ike Funderburk to lead those assembled in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Gene Sellers to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilwoman White discussed the proposed revision of the job description for the open unclassified position. She had spoke with the Mayor about the vacant position we have and that we should think about adjusting it to include someone who could help with digital media and website maintenance. She also spoke with Kathy Faulk, Charlene Beckett and with Alli Miller to ask them what areas they need the most help with. Most of them needed assistance on the digital side. She is proposing that we look for a digital media assistant that will work at City Hall and the Alliance Center to help with those items. We will also incorporate some of the items that were already part of the other job description. The necessary skill sets required are also listed on the job description. We could go to UL to see if they have a student that is just coming out of media classes that would need placement. We may also have someone in the community that has these skill sets. Councilman Broussard stated that he likes the job description and that it goes to where society is going. That is the future and we are already in the infancy of it. He endorses the changes. That will provide a more qualified person in City Hall. Councilman Plaisance stated he reviewed the job description very carefully and he likes the way it explains things. He hasn't seen anything on there that should be different. He appreciates the work Councilwoman White has done on this and it explains very well where we are going in the future. We will need a person like this. It is an essential position. Councilman Touchet asked to add knowledge of Zoom, Google meet and things like that for the future. Ike suggested that instead of going with a brand name we go with something generic, like virtual meetings, so that we won't have to change it in the future. Mayor Piazza stated in the absence of the Secretary-Treasurer and the Director of the Cultural Center, that individual should report to the Mayor's office or the representative of the Mayor's office. Councilwoman White stated the seven days notification to request leave came from Alli so she can plan better. That is a change we clarified.

-01 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to approve the job description, with the revisions discussed tonight, for the open unclassified position. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza stated we have a guest, Mr. Ted Johnson, who is the government relations executive for Entergy in Acadiana. He and Ted have had many conversations throughout the summer with the numerous tropical storms and hurricanes. We appreciate him taking his time to be here tonight. When he called Ted a couple of weeks ago, they had a lengthy discussion about the process that Entergy goes through in the event of a hurricane. We had several issues. The City of Abbeville does not generate its own power. We cannot produce our own electricity here like some cities do. We have to purchase power elsewhere and transport it over Entergy's lines to the City of Abbeville for us to resell that electricity. You could have a tornado somewhere or a hurricane in other parts of Acadiana where our lines may not be as damaged as Lafayette or Crowley, where Entergy transmission lines may suffer severe damage. That affects us here. We may have our own system up and running and not have power that can get to Abbeville or we may have power to our substations but Entergy's customers south of Abbeville may not have electricity because of some transmission lines that are down in Entergy's side of the transmission grid. We, as elected officials, get all the phone calls about when the power will be restored and we need to answer those questions. He asked Ted to be here tonight just to answer some questions and to give us a brief explanation of Entergy's policies and procedures of how they get their system back up and running, how they assess their damage, how they inform municipalities and parish governments regarding how long it will take to restore the power and how do we get a line of communication with Entergy and who should we be talking to when those situations arise. He turned the floor over to Ted. Mr. Johnson stated if you start at a generation station somewhere in Texas, they make the power there and they transport it over transmission lines. Those transmission lines will be on the low end at 69,000 volts and on the high end, 500,000 volts. They do have some transmission structures that go up to 1,000,000 volts. All the transmission lines go to substations. Substations step down the voltage from a transmission voltage to a distribution voltage. Distribution voltages will run from 7,000 volts and 34,000 volts. All the transmission feeds are loop fed. You will have generation station, transmission substation, substation, substation and back to the transmission. So, if you have a fault between two substations, you can isolate that fault and feed it from the other direction and those substations stay hot. All customers on the distribution behind the substation remain with power. You will have a brief interruption. Such is the case with the City of Abbeville. Imagine Abbeville in the center, two transmission feeds coming into the City. If we have damage on one of these facilities, it is no problem. All we do is open a switch, close a switch then feed the substation that feeds the City of Abbeville. The residents may see a short outage. In the case of the storm, we had multiple damage to both sides of the transmission feed. It was unprecedented in our area the amount of transmission damage that occurred. It was way outside of Abbeville and that is what caused the extensive outage. Most of our distribution feeds are loop fed but not all like our transmission feeds. Some of your distribution feeds in the City are loop fed and some are not. You will have distribution feeder and you will see the transformer on it and that goes to secondary. It steps it down from 7,000 volts to 120 volts to the meter on your house. That is a big picture. We have distribution customers south of the City that we feed with an Entergy meter. The City takes care of the distribution for their customers and we take care of the City on a transmission level. The easiest way to see where the outages are is to go to the Entergy app. The green lines on the map are their customers. This is real time data. You can look down to your address if there is an outage. It will tell you what the projected restoration time is. The algorithms on the map depend on the customers who call in. We are installing smart meters now so the meter will report when there is an outage. This will be fully implemented within 6 months. All areas of the electrical grid will be monitored real

time including generation, transmission and distribution. After a storm, we go out and check the transmission lines for their area that is predetermined prior to the storm. We can predict by those assessments how many customers we will have out. Customers at the end of the distribution lines that are not loop fed are the last to come back on. We try to pick up the feeder that will bring on as many customers at one time. Councilman Broussard stated our customers depend on the Council to find out what is happening. Not everybody has the internet or a smart phone. If the City can't reach you then we can't tell them what we don't know. We have some of your customers south of Abbeville and if we can't get the information from the Mayor then we cannot reply to our constituents. Some of your customers in the City of Abbeville do not understand that we do not supply their electricity. Please keep the good relationship that you have with our Mayor and keep the line of communication open and answer the Mayor's calls because we can't take care of Entergy customers' in the City if we don't know what is going on. We can spread your good news if we know it. If we don't know it citizens may expect the worst and not the best. Please take the Mayor's calls and the Mayor will certainly take your calls. It is good communications and that is a good business practice. This year was not normal. You are not the only provider of electricity we also have SLEMCO. Councilman Touchet stated that for Hurricane Laura our Mayor and supervisors could not get in touch with you. This caused us a two-day delay in power restoration. We got a lot of heat for that. Nobody answered our calls. Can you give us a name and number that somebody will answer our call so we can spread the word out? He was telling citizens that it was Entergy's fault. Mr. Johnson stated that is a fair question. He handles a large portion of the state and he will average about 6 missed calls when he is speaking with someone. He was working 16 hours per day seven days a week straight. After that storm, Laura, he asked for somebody in Lafayette with the computer that knows how to work it. He got a team of professionals that came to help him. That will happen again for the next storms. That will give him the relief he needs to get the information to you. Mayor Piazza stated he is very impressed with the app. The question we get asked is how long. That is all they want to know because they have food sitting in their refrigerator and they are running out of ice. We need to figure out a way to get to a warm body that will give us a little heads up to be able to say how long it will be. This way we will know what to tell them. You can't answer 1,800 calls a day personally. Entergy knows what our concerns are and you are making a lot of headway with this technology and that will help tremendously. When we go out to do an assessment, we will go to areas that are the least damaged and get the greatest number of people on that we can. The ones that have the most severe damage in their neighborhoods will be last. That is the way Entergy operates too. Mr. Johnson wanted to compliment the Mayor. It was late in the evening and they weren't projected to get power until the next day. He called him at 10 PM to say that they could heat it up and if the Mayor could get somebody to the substation. He made it happen by 11 PM that night. The electrical crew had gone home already but got back in their trucks and went back to the substations. Kudos to those guys. Mayor Piazza stated that the City has some excellent workers and linemen here. We do not have the substation expertise in-house. We rely on Harvey DuBois for this. We had to get him here too that night to make this happen. All those things have to fit and there are not a lot of people who are aren't privileged to how our electrical system and distribution system works. That is why we asked Ted to be here tonight to get that information to the public. These things take time and we are communicating and making these things happen as quickly as possible. There are a lot of moving parts out there and a lot of people out there that are working tireless hours to get the light back on. We are trying to communicate, as best we can, with our citizens. Mr. Johnson stated we will be sending a GCR report that will be broken down by parish. It will be emailed twice a day. That will free up some time because he won't have to make a phone call to give this data. The management team will also help too. Those things will help with communication.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the minutes from the regular City Council meetings held on October 20, 2020 and November 3, 2020 and the special City Council meetings held on November 3, 2020 and November 17, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza asked if there were any comments from the public on any agenda item prior action. A gentleman in the audience asked how will it be determined where the cameras will be placed on utility poles around the City. Mayor Piazza stated that is a coordinated effort between the Chief of Police, the Sheriff, Lieutenant Jason Hebert and the narcotic task force representative, Mr. Drew David. It was those individuals that determined that.

-03 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve contract change order #3 for the LA 14 Downtown Abbeville Streetscaping Project. The motion carried unanimously.

-04 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve revised contract change order #5 for the LA 14 Downtown Abbeville Streetscaping Project. The motion carried unanimously.

-05 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to void contract change order #4 and approve contract change order #6 for the LA 14 Downtown Streetscaping Project. The motion carried unanimously.

-06 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to approve payment of estimate for partial payment #8 for the LA 14 Downtown Streetscaping Project. The motion carried unanimously.

Plaisance/White
Resolution R20-23

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the notice of acceptance for the LA 14 Downtown Abbeville Streetscaping Project.

The motion carried unanimously.

-07 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to accept the quotation from Bayou Fencing and Supply for fence repairs for several parks. All fences were damaged as a result of Hurricane Delta. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Roslyn White presented the new website design. She stated this is the initial design. We took into account the audience as opposed to designing it according to departments. Not everyone is familiar with the departments of the City. We have three audiences. We have government, community and businesses. We will also have a search bar if they are not sure where they have to go, they can put in a question and it will navigate them to where they need to go. The current website design has a lot of information but it is not easy to navigate and it is not current. That is part of why we wanted to rewrite the job description of the person who will manage the website. There are buttons to make payments, permits and reporting an issue. We want the constituents to be able to report an issue and the email will go directly to that department. That will help with communication with the public. We will have a hero banner where we will feature photography and current events. We can change that out. We will have an event calendar with where to stay, where to eat and what to do. Photography will be updated

every month to go along with the activities that are going on at that time of year. The three squares will be our blog. You can click on that and get current information. This is a sneak peek of the design. The color scheme is taken from our logo. Mayor Piazza stated that this was a part of the budget for this year and we have allocated \$5,000 in 2021 to update the photography and video. Councilwoman White also presented the print ad that was discussed at the last meeting.

Chief Bill Spearman stated they found three units that were turned in by the New Iberia Police Department through Midsouth leasing. We bought a car a little over a year ago and it is still running and has not given us any problems. What is nice about these cars is that when you buy them for \$20,000, they have between 56,000 and 60,000 miles on them. They paint them white for us and it comes with lights, cages, the radio console, the push bumpers and everything that we would have to buy separately. All the units are 2017 models. We are getting a good deal on this. Two months ago, a car took out one of his units and it is out of commission. He is almost at full staff and when he gets at full staff, he won't have enough cars. We have a lot of old Crown Vics and they are costing a lot of money to maintain. Mayor Piazza would prefer if we would pay for the units outright instead of lease them. He would like to amend this year's budget so the Chief can order and purchase them now.

-08 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to amend the Police Department 2020 budget to add an additional \$40,000 to the Sales Tax budget to purchase used police units. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Francis Plaisance asked Chief Spearman to ask his officers to slow down especially on Charity Street. If a car pulls out, there will be some fatalities. Chief Spearman said he would.

Chief Spearman stated that for over a year they have been receiving cameras from Crime Fighters of Louisiana. They have been putting the cameras up and we have been supplying the poles, the electrical boxes and the sims card. Mr. Brooks has been doing this for agencies all over Acadiana and at this time they need more money for more equipment. We were presented with a contract from Mr. Brooks that would show us what he would provide for the City and he what he wants the City provide for him. There is an estimate on what it would cost for two different packages. Councilwoman White asked Chief Spearman if the price was an annual figure or for a three-year term. Chief Spearman stated that he thinks it is three years for both figures. The Mayor spoke to Mr. Brooks and he was having e-mail trouble so he didn't receive the quotes. Councilman White stated she would like that clarified in the contract since it does not specifically say that. Chief Spearman asked Ike to review the contract for us to get the specifics. Ike asked the Mayor and Council to consider to authorize him to do some research on other communities that have entered into an agreement with Mr. Brooks. He has already started that process. He would also like to negotiate with Crime Fighters of Louisiana, LLC because there are some things in the contract that need to be discussed. It is not a contract. It is a cooperative endeavor agreement. It is not a lease nor a purchase. He has some areas of concern with the agreement. Chief Spearman stated he would like to help Mr. Brooks because he has given us the cameras this year. Mayor Piazza stated he is not happy with allowing Ike to negotiate the contract because he has some concerns. That is not the same as actually pursuing and funding this amount of money if it meets the terms of the contract and Ike's satisfaction. Councilman Touchet stated he has not yet read the agreement and this is the first time he sees it. He would like Ike to bring this back and then we could take it up. Chief Spearman asked if he, the Mayor and Ike could meet in private to iron out those details so that there would not be much delay. Councilman Touchet stated he was not sure of the exact dollar amount requested. He would like Ike to get those specifics and then have Ike present it again with all those specifics. Chief Spearman stated there is a clause that will allow a cancellation period within 60 days. Mayor Piazza stated he is still uncomfortable with assigning

the City Attorney to negotiate a contract for the Police Department when this is a law enforcement issue and our law enforcement agency should be doing the negotiation. It should not be our City Attorney. Our City Attorney should review the contract after the negotiations are made and to review the contract to make sure it is acceptable to the City legally. The Chief really needs to be negotiating the terms of the contract and he should present that to the Council. Councilman Touchet stated he is not asking Ike to negotiate anything. He was trying to buy some time because Ike said there is some stuff that causes him concern. He doesn't even know what this will cost us and what are we tied to. Councilwoman White stated she thinks the cameras are invaluable. It is a resource that we need. Putting this agreement on our desk when we walk in here without an opportunity for us to review it and read it makes it difficult to agree to it. She needs more time to review it and needs more concrete details. She is onboard for this but she needs to make sure she knows what she is signing the City up for. That is how she feels. Mayor Piazza stated he agrees with Councilwoman White completely. Councilwoman White stated she needs to be clear what the terms of payment are and what our out-of-pocket costs will be. It is well worth whatever it is but she needs to know that. Mayor Piazza stated what we should have done is put this in committee first tonight and then adopt it at the next City Council meeting. The problem with that is that he has to tell our City Auditor tomorrow what to put in the budget. This item came up during the Thanksgiving holidays. If it doesn't get put in his budget then it can't happen. Councilwoman White asked what the dollar amount for the 2021 budget is. Mayor Piazza stated the Police Chief asked for the \$71,000 to be put in the 2020 budget and the \$35,000 in the 2021 budget. This is a cooperative endeavor agreement. It is not to purchase cameras. We are buying a security service that provides cameras and detailed information through their camera system in Abbeville, in Vermilion Parish and throughout Acadiana. We will have access to his entire network of cameras, city to city and parish to parish. We are part of a larger network of cameras that include the City of Abbeville and the Vermilion Parish Police Jury who are also in the process of acquiring this camera service in and around Abbeville and Vermilion Parish where the Sheriff wants these cameras to be. They are also networked in Lafayette Parish including Lafayette, Youngsville, Broussard, Maurice and Opelousas and several other places. If we have an incident here whereby some crime has taken place in a particular area and a camera picks up a red ford explorer, they can track the vehicle through the cameras and through the networks going through. Chief Spearman stated they have utilized these cameras in this fashion already. Mayor Piazza stated we have 9 of these locations already. They just put two more up recently. These cameras are very expensive and Mr. Brooks will not continue to put those up for free. The cameras work very well and we have made arrests based on the footage. Mr. Brooks knows that and that is why he has offered those in the past for free. He also knows these cities will want more and down the road it will be an expensive proposition. It is worthwhile. Lieutenant Jason Hebert stated the cameras have been very useful and have helped solve many crimes. Chief Spearman stated the cameras help solve the crime of the murder of the 16-year-old. Councilman Broussard stated everyone on this Council knows the extreme value of the cameras to the safety of the citizens of Abbeville. He has talked to the Mayor for years to try to get that in place. He is glad the Chief is implementing this now. The camera never goes on vacation, it never catches COVID, it doesn't go on maternity leave and these cameras are the best investment we can make in fighting crime. Councilwoman White stated she agrees but she needs to know if something happens to the cameras, then are we responsible or will he fix those. She needs to know those details and is 100% onboard for us budgeting the money. It is necessary for fighting crime in Abbeville. She cannot approve this contract tonight without reviewing it. Mayor Piazza stated there is another issue with the budget too because it is a cooperative endeavor and not a purchase of cameras, which we don't want to do because there are other issues involved if we own them. It is not a sales tax item. We have to find this amount of money in the General Fund and that will not be easy. He knows the Council is uncomfortable voting on this tonight since they have not yet been able to review the agreement. He is not positive that he can work this into the General Fund

but he will work hard to get it in there with the auditor. He recommends that the Council grant him the authority to meet with the auditor to see if this can be worked into our current and future budget and to authorize him, Chief Spearman and Ike to negotiate the terms of the contract and get back with the Council. Councilwoman Broussard stated she would agree to that because we need to keep our citizens safe. Councilman Plaisance agreed this is a critical need.

-09 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to authorize the Mayor to meet with the auditor to see if the cooperative endeavor agreement for the camera service can be worked into our current and future budget and to also authorize him, Chief Spearman and Ike to negotiate the terms of the agreement and to present the final agreement to the Council for approval. The motion carried unanimously.

Richard Primeaux, Engineer

- *We will open bids for the Flood damage reduction project on 1/14/2021 and will present those at the 1/19/2021 meeting.*

Ike Funderburk, City Attorney

- *The Governor has put us back into a modified Phase 2 with COVID. He has a copy of the proclamation and can email it to the Council if they want it.*

Mayor Mark Piazza

- *Before coming to the meeting, he watched Dr. Henry Kaufman, Jr. on the television. He was pleading with the public. He is the Chief surgeon at Lourdes. Many of our hospitals are at capacity and they are talking about shutting down unnecessary surgical procedures and only hospitalizing people in critical condition. We need to do what we are supposed to be doing and take COVID seriously. It is far from over.*
- *Under the advice of Councilwoman Terry Broussard, he gave Pastor Walter August a telephone call this afternoon. They had a long discussion about several issues in Abbeville. He is a minister to several of our youth in Abbeville that have been to his church in Houston during summer camp. Pastor August is a product of Abbeville High School and he was born and raised in Abbeville. He has a lot of concern and care for Abbeville especially regarding the crime we have suffered through this year. Pastor August stated that law enforcement is very reactive to the crimes that happen and we have to get to our community before some of these crimes happen. The way to do that is through parents. Parents have to take responsibility. That is what he and the Mayor spoke about in detail. Pastor August's suggestion is that we have a committee formed with some of the religious leaders in our community that may want to undertake this and reach out to some of the families of some of the high crime areas and some of those who have suffered through crimes. We are dealing with a lot of juveniles. Somebody needs to reach out to the parents and grandparents of these juveniles to see if we can do something to help with their family situation. That is something he will work on with the help of Councilwoman Broussard and Councilman Francis Plaisance. Councilman Plaisance worked a lot with children with his previous job dealing with child protection. This would really help our police department out. We need to get into some of these homes before the crime happens. Mr. Norman Levine stated that his child knows that if he hits him then he (Norman) can be arrested. That is a problem. Councilwoman Broussard agreed and stated the kids know they can call 911 or tell their teacher then the parents will get in trouble. That is State law. Councilman Touchet stated he has four boys. It is what you do, as a parent, in their formative years that counts. You have to stay on that and if you have to discipline them then you do. You shouldn't beat them but they can be spanked so that they understand right from wrong. The government is not telling you that you can't raise your kids. You*

can raise them. When you have boys, they will want to test you but you have to start early. We have to make sure that parents are educated. Our young people need to understand that when they have babies, you can't pass them off on grandparents or someone who is not totally responsible. We have to make sure our parents are parenting as soon as they come out of the womb. He has worked in the educational field for 30 years. He sees it. He has worked in Abbeville and has had to discipline kids at Abbeville High School. It goes back to having parents that will do what they have to do in those formative years and continue with that, consistently, until they become teenagers. That is what society is missing. Yes, you can spank your children and you can discipline them. Chief Spearman added that according to the State law, parents have the right to discipline their children. They cannot beat them and leave marks all over but they can discipline them. They can spank their children. Councilman Plaisance added that there is a big misunderstanding out there. There is a difference between discipline and abuse. People have misunderstood that. He has taken photographs of an autopsy of kids that were beaten to death in this parish. We need to try and get a parent group together and talk to them about parenting and how to parent the children. Parents need to be responsible for the actions of their children. We need to teach them the difference between discipline and abuse. You can spank your child. We have to start somewhere because it starts in the home. We can't correct any of these problems unless we go to the parents and start right there. We tried it in the churches but you are preaching to the choir. Those people are not the people we have to be concerned about. We have to be able to reach out and get the parents involved with their children. Chief Spearman stated if we start this then it needs to be consistent. We can't start a program with 50 people then it gets weened down to only 2 or 3 showing up. It can't be that. We need to also bring people in with educational backgrounds too.

Councilwoman Roslyn White

- When we had the Peace March a lot of church leaders were there and there was conversation then that this would continue. The Christian Service Center and St. Mary Magdalen put it on but it had a bunch of other religious leaders so maybe we could reach out to them. No other meetings happened probably because of COVID but they had people who were engaged into a start of that conversation and working on that. She has the contact information for that.
- Drive through COVID testing site this Friday at the Vermilion Parish Health Unit on Charity Street. It is free testing. The Vermilion Parish Office of Homeland Security has more information if you need that. It is also on the City's Facebook page. It is from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr.

- Told Clay that the focus on the grass cutting crews should be on picking up litter right now since the grass is not growing.

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- We have hundreds of street lights out in the City of Abbeville. Being hit by Hurricanes Laura and Delta have caused a lot of damage to those. We have a dire shortage of personnel in our electrical department. They are doing Christmas decorations now. He would like to see if we could get FEMA reimbursement for the street light damages. Maybe we could bring contractors in to repair those. Mayor Piazza stated the FEMA representative will be here Thursday and he would ask him about that. Charlene had asked Stewart to try and do the Christmas lights because of the Christmas Stroll. The Stroll has been cancelled. The Christmas lights are not as critical as they were. We can ask

Stewart to concentrate on street lights instead. The Council agreed this would be a good thing for Stewart to work on the street lights since the Christmas lights are not as critical.

- *There is a Farmers Market Saturday in Magdalen Square.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor