

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on November 16, 2021 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, Brady Broussard, Jr., Terry 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
Lieutenant Jonathan Touchet
Chris Gautreaux, Public Works Director
Lee Schexnaider, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent
Allie Horton, Digital Media Assistant
Gene Sellers, Engineer
Richard Primeaux, Engineer
Tommy Picard, Park & Recreation Director, QSA
Eddie Langlinais, Vermilion Parish Crime Stoppers
Rita Marks
Gloria Mitchell

Mayor Piazza asked for a moment of silence to ease the suffering of the family that had an incident here in Abbeville this afternoon. Let us pray for that young child and that he will make it and for the violence to stop in our community. Mayor Piazza led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Eddie Langlinais stated that Crime Stoppers is an organization that is over 40 years old. It is a proven organization that helps law enforcement to gather tips anonymously. We started out in March and it was up and running in October. Crime Stoppers is funded through the courts. It is called a Tips program. Every court charges a \$2 court cost and it is accumulated and sent to Crime Stoppers. These funds are used to pay off tipsters. It cost about \$4,500 to run the program. You have an answering service, the P3 app and a dedicated phone line. With the help of some local sponsors, like the Abbeville Rotary Club, it helped us to get where we needed to be. Mayor Piazza asked how do we get the message out? Mr. Langlinais stated they are on Crime Stoppers on all three local television networks and Acadiana Open Channel. We have our own videographer and send the video to all the networks. They also have a Facebook page. Crime Stoppers will pay out for a substantial tip. The tips line is 740-TIPS and you can also use the P3 App. We also share our videos with the Abbeville Police Department too for their website. We recently featured an old case through the Abbeville Police Department. It was the Rita Jordan case that remains unsolved. He was able to meet with Ms. Rita Jordan's family.

-01 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to ratify bills paid in the month of October 2021. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza asked if there were any public comments on any agenda item. There were none.

-02 introduced by Ms. Terry Broussard and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to enter into a public hearing to receive comments regarding a proposed ordinance to adopt LSA R.S. 32:2531, et sequa, "Louisiana Litter and Penalties". The motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr. stated that the State legislature made changes to their littering statutes so the City's should equal to those. That is why we are proposing these changes.

-03 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to reconvene the regular meeting from public hearing. The motion carried unanimously.

White/Plaisance Ordinance 21-08

An ordinance to adopt LSA R.S. 32:2531, et sequa, "Louisiana Litter and Penalties" as subpart 176 of Chapter 13-Offenses Miscellaneous, Article I, Section 13-1, state statutes.

The motion was put to a vote and the vote thereupon was as follows:

YEAS:	5(Plaisance, T. Broussard, B. Broussard, Touchet, White)
NAYS:	0
ABENT:	0
ABSTAIN:	0

Therefore, the motion was adopted unanimously.

-04 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to approve a special event permit for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Acadiana to hold the "Making Spirits Bright" event at A. A. Comeaux Park on December 11, 2021 from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM. The motion carried unanimously.

-05 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to surplus unit 477 (2006 Ford Crown Victoria), unit 531 (2009 Ford Crown Victoria), unit 566 (2011 Ford Crown Victoria), unit 530 (2009 Ford Crown Victoria), unit 570 (2011 Ford Crown Victoria) and unit 568 (2011 Ford Crown Victoria) for the Abbeville Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

-06 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to award the bleacher bid for A. A. Comeaux Park to the low bidder, Sturdi Steel, in the amount of \$113,755.00. The motion carried unanimously.

-07 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to authorize advertisement for public bids utilizing LMA/LAMATS services for ADA 6 station portable restrooms to be funded by American Rescue Plan Act funds. The motion carried unanimously.

-08 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the quote from Griner Drilling for the upgrades to the Barn Lift Station pump #1 and #2 in the amount of \$9,985.00 per pump plus labor to be paid from the American Rescue Plan Act funds. The motion carried unanimously.

-09 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve payment of the invoice from Griner Drilling in the amount of \$13,046.40 for repairs to pump #3 at the Barn Lift Station. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Broussard discussed the purchase of two basketball goals with gooseneck posts for the McKinley Scott Park Pavilion. She had received quotations from Hahn Enterprises for different options. The fiberglass backboard is \$5,334.00, the aluminum backboard is \$6,248.00 and the glass backboard is \$7,350.00. She would like the glass backboard. Mayor Piazza stated that these prices include installation but we could install those ourselves. He was also concerned about the placement of the gooseneck posts shown on the quotation. He doesn't want to drill holes in the new slab because it will crack it. Mr. Tommy Picard stated that the City has two fiberglass backboards in storage at the Delcambre concession. Brandon Briggs could fabricate something custom. You would get exactly what you want. The goals are very nice as they were from Abbeville High School. They would be better than what you can purchase here since they were on a high school court. Mayor Piazza thought that was a good idea and our crews could install them. Tommy stated he would meet with Councilwoman Broussard and Brandon.

-10 introduced by Ms. Terry Broussard and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to table the purchase of two basketball goals with gooseneck posts for McKinley Scott Park Pavilion and to authorize Tommy Picard to meet with Councilwoman Broussard and Brandon Briggs to utilize the two basketball goals in storage and to have Brandon build the custom posts are needed for the pavilion. The motion carried unanimously.

-11 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve plan change number 3 relative to the Rehabilitation of the Runway and Partial Taxiway Project. The motion carried unanimously.

-12 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve estimate for partial payment number 5 payable to Elliott Construction, LLC for the Rehabilitation of the Runway and Partial Taxiway Project. The motion carried unanimously.

Touchet/White
Resolution R21-40

A resolution of acceptance authorizing the Mayor to execute an act of acceptance relative to the Rehabilitation of the Runway and Partial Taxiway Project.

The motion carried unanimously.

Plaisance/Touchet
Resolution R21-41

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an electrical and service road servitude agreement with Erath Sugar Company, Ltd.

The motion carried unanimously.

Plaisance/T. Broussard
Resolution R21-42

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a sewer servitude agreement with Erath Sugar Company, Ltd.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. Broussard/Touchet
Resolution R21-43

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Abbeville and Abbeville General Hospital for surplus equipment belonging to the hospital.

The motion carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was a report by the Chief of Police on recent shootings, status of communication officer and camera installations at apartment complexes. Mayor Piazza stated that his issue in the past has been communications between the City fathers and the Police Department. You (Chief Spearman) told us several meetings back that either you or your communications officer was going to keep the Mayor and Council informed whenever there was a shooting in our community. This is no reflection on Jonathan. He is an excellent employee and one of our finest Lieutenants. Where did the breakdown occur? What happened? Chief Spearman stated that the Mayor is supposed to have an app on his phone that comes out every time there is a shooting. Mayor stated he does not have that and no one told him about that. Lieutenant Touchet stated the Mayor should be receiving a page about shots fired. Chief Spearman stated that Todd O'Bryan was supposed to install it on the Mayor's phone. Mayor stated that it has not been installed. Chief Spearman stated he would get Todd to install it. Chief Spearman stated that we have arrested a suspect in Sunday's shooting. They came from Lafayette to do the shooting. We had a shooting today and we have a suspect at headquarters being questioned by the detectives. The other shooting that everybody wants to know about, they threw us out of their hospital rooms. They do not want to talk to us and they do not want to give us any information. Councilwoman Broussard stated that the shootings are taking over our City. It is really bad and people are afraid. She understands that in the past we have had meetings where the City Council, Mayor and Chief of Police put forth effort to go out to the community. In the beginning, for two or three meetings, it was full. Then after a while people slacked up on attending the meetings. We had a meeting in McKinley Scott Park and only 7 people showed up. Then following that, a month later, a mother called a meeting at McKinley Scott Park and we had about 15 people there. People want to hear more from our Chief of Police. They need to be comforted so they can feel safe. She represents a district that has been hit very hard especially today when the young man was getting off a school bus. It is troubling. She is very troubled by that. People are scared and what do we say to them? They are scared and they want answers. She understands that if you have nothing to go on that is hard. Homes of innocent people are being shot into. How do we, as a Mayor and Council, go out and continue to say that it will be ok when a kid getting off the school bus today was shot? Councilman Plaisance stated that it is not going to be ok. The problem we are having right now are the ages between 14 and 17 years old. Chief Spearman stated that both people involved in today's shooting are juveniles. The other night the car we stopped were juveniles, except for the one who was driving the car. Councilman Plaisance asked Chief Spearman if he is zoning the City? Chief Spearman stated that they have patrol requests. They are all over the City. Councilman Plaisance stated to the Chief that he has the hardest job around. You are working hard. Somehow, somehow, as a community, we have

to find a solution for this. We could lose a child here. He may not make it. He feels for Councilwoman Broussard in her district but it is not just there. A couple of night's ago there was a borage of gunshots that they heard from his house. Maybe we need a coalition of members from all the districts. Somebody has to come up with a solution. He wanted to also address the cameras at Stonebridge. He understands that they are not working. Chief Spearman stated that he knows they are installing them and they are still using the courtesy officers from the Sheriff that live out there. Councilman Plaisance stated that we have an ordinance that says that they have to have those cameras working. Your department has to enforce that. Are we enforcing that? Mayor Piazza stated that he knows we can't have people checking those cameras every day but if you can could take one apartment complex a month or every other week to see if these cameras are working. If they are not working then you need to immediately notify the City attorney where he can contact the owners. The City attorney will handle it from there. The burden on you, the Chief, is to see if the cameras are working. If they do not comply, then we will fine them. Councilman Touchet asked are people fearful if they do something, there will be consequences? Are we being proactive? We have to do what we need to do so that there is that respect out there that you better not come into Abbeville just like you don't go through Maurice and speed. If you speed in Maurice, you will get stopped. It is not just happening there. It is happening in Councilwoman White's district too. It will start spilling over into places where we will be shocked that it is happening. Chief Spearman stated they are working with the violent crimes task force and we are putting up cameras. His guys are working overtime. Councilman Touchet asked if the State Police could come to help. Chief Spearman stated the State Police will not come. Mayor Piazza stated they will not come. We have called them numerous times. They do not have the manpower. Mayor Piazza asked Lieutenant Touchet about the Neighborhood Watch program. Was there any luck there? Chief Spearman stated they had 1 person attend a meeting one night, 5 attended another night and 2 attended another night. We have advertised a lot. Councilwoman Broussard stated that she had attended and none from her district showed up. Ms. Rita Marks stated that she lives in the sticks. If you are from Abbeville, you know where the sticks are and you know the condition it is in. People are afraid of retaliation. People are afraid to call the police because they don't know who is answering the phone. People don't know who will respond to the call. Its not so much responding, as how you respond. One of the issues is that they need to give raising the children back to the responsibility of parents. There is a thick line between chastising and abuse. You know your child is bad. You know your child goes out the window at night and goes God knows where and does God knows what. Police officers have a job to do and parents have a job to do. She has grandchildren. She will not let anybody tell her that she can't whip them. Because when they go downtown, if you get a bad police officer, you will get yourself beat. Would you rather a beating from them or a whipping from me? They shoot in her neighborhood. They ride down the street with loud music that you can hear from blocks away. The solution to this problem is teamwork. We can't point the finger at the police department. We can't point the finger at the sheriff department. We can't point the finger at the school system. It takes all of these entities to make one good resolution. The problem is people coming from outside of the City because they heard how Abbeville is "Cush". You can do anything you want because the police department is scared to come out. You are getting everything that is coming in from all over and doing what they want in Abbeville and they are leaving Abbeville with a name. We will not generate any new businesses in Abbeville with a reputation like that. We won't generate jobs. People don't want to come here and bring their families into turmoil. You walk out your door and you don't know who will pass by and shoot you or who will break into your house and hurt your family when you are not there. We can solve this problem but what we have to do is go back to basics. She raised her children as a single parent and she was not afraid to spare the rod. She told them that when you will call the police, by the time they get here, she will do you in. They are going to take me, give me my keys and you need to find somewhere else for you to stay because you cannot stay in my house. You have to let the

parents be parents. If the child is hard-headed and wants to do what they want to do, that parent brought them here. Call 911, call 119, call whoever you want but we have to get back to basics. That is the only way we will solve any problems here. Finger pointing is not going to solve any problems. She doesn't care where you live, it is coming. You can live in St. Francis on the highway. Somebody could easily pass in your neighborhood there and start shooting for no reason. It is to find somebody who will pick the phone up, that will not be afraid, and say somebody needs to come and see what is going on here. You have too many people hiding behind closed doors but they are the first ones to want to point a finger when something goes wrong. If you are not part of the solution then you are part of the problem. Chief Spearman stated that they have a lot of ways they can call anonymously. Crime Stoppers is just the latest one. As long as they don't give their name, they will never know who called in. Councilman Broussard agreed that it does begin in the home and it will always start in the home. You can end it in the home. Ms. Rita Marks stated that there are single parents who are leaving children home because they have to work. If that child does something that they know they are not supposed to do, then you go home and they get a whipping for it. They should just take their licks. Ms. Gloria Mitchell wanted to speak about what was said earlier about not calling in something. She was sitting out on her porch two years ago when there was an incident where they were shooting at each other. She called it in, gave her name, the police came and took the statement and then the parents told her that the police told them that she has reported it. That is why a lot of people don't want to say anything. She falls and hits the floor. She has bullet holes in the carport. What do you want her to do? Every time she calls then they will say what she said. This is what happened to her. Chief Spearman stated there is a way for them to call anonymously. They have had that in place for years. Councilwoman White stated that she agrees that the Chief has the hardest job in the City and our officers have one of the hardest jobs in the City. She would not want that job. Our community is looking for leadership from you, Chief, where you come out and express to them, just like you just said to us, the measures you are taking to try and protect them. They want to hear it from you (Chief). They don't want to hear it from Steven Menard. She asked Chief Spearman to be proactive in that message. It would go a long way to rebuild trust and people feeling safer in their community if you would speak to the people publicly about it. That is part of what they are looking for. We have a long way to rebuild trust in our community. She knows that broke down over time in the past. It wasn't just one person sitting up here's fault but we all have a lot to do and it starts with communication. That is how you make the first step. Rebuilding that communication between City Hall and the police, rebuilding the communication between the community and us, as Mayor and Council; that is where we start taking those steps.

-13 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to table the request to authorize the payment to Glenn Lege Construction in the amount of \$30,655.70 for the cleaning of the concrete lined coulee because the job is not complete and there will also be a change in the price. The motion carried unanimously.

-14 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds to pay for the replacement of rotor #3 and #5 at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The quote was approved in the amount of \$159,750.00 from Superior Services at the October 19, 2021 regular City Council meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Broussard asked if the engineering fees could also be paid from the American Rescue Plan Act funds. Mr. Gene Sellers stated only if you go through a procurement process. It would be best to pay those out of pocket instead. Mayor Piazza asked Ike to review this for future projects.

Chris Gautreaux, Public Works Director

- *He has been on the job for 6 days. He grew up the second day with a boil water advisory. There a lot of good employees in his department. There are a lot of good people. His plan is to work with them and give them some supervisory skills to make that department better.*
- *He will get the Barn and the Yard cleaned up with the Mayor and Council's support. He has already started on that. Tires have been piled in a pile and he will call a company to come pick those up. He has a couple of companies coming to give quotes to remove all the stuff that is there now. We have also started a cleanup of the two buildings on the By-pass. Councilman Touchet stated that he met with Mr. Gautreaux and it is so refreshing because there are a couple of things that we fail to understand. We hold our constituents and our residents to a certain standard as far as their properties but yet when you look at our properties, it is a total embarrassment. If we hold other people accountable, then we need to do it ourselves too. We have two main buildings on the By-pass and if we don't keep those up, how are we expecting other people to do so. He fully supports everything that he is doing. He likes what he hears from him as far as being proactive. When you see a stop sign that needs to be changed: change it. You don't have to call him. We will do whatever we can to support Chris. Councilman Broussard stated that Rome was not built in one day. Thank you for the start and we love your energy to get it done.*
- *He toured all the different departments. We can help you spend the \$4,000,000 because we have a lot of projects where it can be used.*
- *As he goes, he will know more. If you have any questions, please call him.*

Mayor Mark Piazza

- *We have just completed two really big significant drainage projects. We still have a little bit of work to do at the concrete lined coulee. They did a fantastic job. We took it a step further than that. After Glenn Lege completed the main trunkline of the coulee, Sam Riche and his grandson went and put stump killer on every stump that was cut so they don't come back. We also completed the drainage project on 2nd Street, 5th Street and Lafayette Street. He asked Richard Primeaux about the ditch by Harvestime Church. Mr. Primeaux stated the drainage board has agreed to take care of that but they haven't done the work yet. He will ask them to put it on their agenda again at their next meeting to get an update. He is not sure why that hasn't been done yet. He will ask them about Hunter Canal too. Councilwoman White also stated there is a tree that is down in Valcourt Coulee that is already on the drainage board's project list. It is Valcourt Coulee where it comes out at the Vermilion River. Mayor Piazza stated that Richard will need some support from the Police Jury. He asked Councilman Broussard to reach out to Wayne Touchet about Hunter Coulee. We want it cleaned from A. A. Comeaux Drive to the Vermilion River. He also asked Councilman Touchet to reach out to his Police Juror too. Councilman Broussard stated that Juror Touchet is in favor of that and we have confirmation from Mr. Gaspard that Hunter Coulee is the next project in line and they would like to use the City's dump trucks. Mr. Primeaux stated that Wayne Theriot has also committed some Police Jury dump trucks.*
- *The street patching project started yesterday.*
- *The walking trail at LaFitte Park has been staked and is ready to go. There will be a preconstruction meeting in the next few weeks.*

Jude Mire, Fire Chief

- *Jason Harmon will be retiring on December 22, 2021. Captain Macy Broussard will move up to Assistant Chief. Firefighter David Landry will be moving up to Captain.*

- *Jared Ruffin will be graduating from LSU Academy the second week in December. He is at the top of the class of 22 recruits.*
- *Firefighter C. J. Daniels that was hired recently is an excellent firefighter.*
- *Station 1 repairs to the air conditioner and hot water tank have been completed.*
- *The aerial truck is broken and we are waiting for parts.*
- *They had 50 calls within the last two weeks.*

Bill Spearman, Police Chief

- *Discussed calls in the last two weeks. They had 326 calls.*

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *The first annual Veterans' Festival was a big success. The displays on Friday and Saturday were excellent. They were from different wars throughout history. They also had tours inside the museum. There are a lot of good items in the museum. He had to call Chris Gautreaux because the barricades never came. Chris did an excellent job and he got some barricades over there.*
- *The drainage board cleaned Youngs coulee on both sides and they also did the pond. Bridget has some community service people who weedeated around the pond. It is really nice for fishing right now except there are a whole lot of water moccasins. They have nested in the rock area that goes down to the water pipe. He is working with Wildlife & Fisheries to trap those snakes and remove them. People are still fishing out there though.*

Councilwoman Terry Broussard

- *Thanked the Mayor and Richard Primeaux for meeting with her to discuss the flooding in her district and what they are working on.*
- *Her constituents are happy about the coulee.*
- *Thank Ms. Rita for praying with her. There is a lot happening in her district and it became overwhelming for her today.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *There will be a Farmers Market on 11/20/21 and the Christmas Stroll is on 12/2/2021.*
- *Ms. Rita hit the nail on the head. If we do not correct the home, if we do not correct the parent and we do not take control of what comes from the home we will never solve this.*

Councilwoman Roslyn White

- *After the stroll, on December 11, 2021, we will be having a large Christmas celebration in Abbeville. There will be multiple civic organization working together. We will have a walk in the morning by Junior Auxiliary, a Christmas parade, vendors in the street, entertainment in the Square and a holiday light trail at A. A. Comeaux Park.*
- *She is happy that the roadcut repair crew is in town. She is happy we will finally repair the roadcut on Graceland. It has been needing it for a while. She looks forward to doing some updates on that street in 2022.*
- *One shooting in any area of this City is too many. She would like us to work towards having a zero tolerance for violent crime in Abbeville and making us become a place where no one would dare come here and commit a violent crime. That is what our goal should be and we need to work together to get there.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor