

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met for a committee meeting on December 7 2, 2021 at 5:00 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., Francis Touchet, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem and Roslyn White

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Ike Funderburk, City Attorney
Chris Gautreaux, Public Works Director
Jude Mire, Fire Chief
Bill Spearman, Police Chief
Allie Horton, Digital Media Assistant
Steve Moosa, Accounting Consultant
Marilyn Mitchell

Mayor Piazza stated we are here for a Finance Committee meeting chaired by Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr. and an Ordinance Committee chaired by Councilwoman Terry Broussard.

Mayor Piazza asked if there were any comments from the public on any of the agenda items. There were none.

Mayor Piazza stated that the first item on the agenda is a presentation of the proposed budget for 2022 by Mr. Steve Moosa. The highlights from the budget for the year are that the City has a history of giving annual raises to employees on their anniversary date. They will continue to receive a 2% annual increase. That is in this budget. The City has some debt obligations that are outstanding. We recently issued a \$3,000,000 debt obligation and we will be paying off a previous obligation early next year. Overall, the debt service payments for the City will be \$10,000 less going forward per month. That is in the new budget. The debt service payments are around \$700,000 in principal payments and interest payments. Mr. Moosa discussed the expenditures and revenues as found on page two of the budget. There is a total of \$11 million of operating expenses for the general fund. It takes in \$1.7 million of revenue between taxes and licenses so we have to bring in about \$9 million as a transfer from the utility system fund. We do have a balanced budget for the general fund. We also have a balanced budget for the special revenue funds. On page 22, the debt service obligations are shown. The budget plans for about 160 employees. Mayor Piazza stated that we have a balanced budget. Lonnie was able to meet with the Council individually. He was hoping that the numbers would look a little better but we took a hit in our health insurance fund. Steve stated that 2021 has been the highest cost as far as health insurance goes. It was up 10% without having any increase in the premiums charged to the employees. You are self-insured up to \$75,000 for every claim. That has put a strain on the cash flow. The amount was up \$500,000 so you were overbudget on that. Mayor Piazza stated that we did reduce that number back to an average and we are hoping that the number will come back down. Health insurance can swing a half of a million dollars in either direction in any given year. We had the worst health insurance year that we have ever had. On the positive side, we had the best sales tax year we have had. Steve stated that is true and we kept it conservative again in 2022. If the Utility System Revenues stay consistent, you should be fine. Councilman Touchet stated that he wanted to continue the quarterly updates of the budget as in the past. Mayor Piazza asked Steve to contact him regarding the monthly expenses charged so the schedule of services can be tweaked. Councilman Touchet stated that it would be a good idea to ask Lloyd to have a break down of our insurance expenses as it relates to unvaccinated COVID participants. We will not have the same thing that happened last year happen this year. We will not sit here and let our entire fund be used because people are ignorant and not wanting to get vaccinated. We need those hard numbers for evidence. Councilman Broussard stated that we can quantify that because it is a distinct increase because of that reason. We already have those numbers from the broker and we should all be armed with that information in case we need to make any policy changes. Councilman Touchet stated that we can't let our taxpayer's dollars go to things like that. We

need to be good stewards of the money. Councilwoman White stated that what happens to employee healthcare is completely in the hands of the employees. It is your decision to get vaccinated or not but look what it is costing you and what ultimately it will cost you and your whole team. We hope that our team will be more responsible and make the responsible choices. Mayor Piazza asked Steve if the ARPA funds are in the budget. Steve stated yes as a capital outlay type. As you spend the funds, they will be moved to capital projects. Mayor Piazza stated this is a balanced budget which includes the annual 2% pay raise for all full-time employees. They will receive that on their anniversary date. We will continue to carefully monitor overtime. The budget will be available at City Hall for the public to view.

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to recommend to the City Council at their meeting scheduled for December 21, 2021 to approve the proposed 2022 budget. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza asked Councilwoman Broussard to read the item for the Ordinance Committee meeting. Councilwoman Broussard stated the item is the presentation of the reapportionment plan from the results of the 2020 census and to consider an ordinance to adopt the plan. She asked, Ms. Janis Fabre, from the office of Sellers and Associates, Inc. to discuss the plan. Ms. Fabre presented the proposed maps. We have to do this every ten years. Mayor Piazza stated that District B increased in population. District A & D remained about the same. District C has a decrease in numbers. District A stays the same except for J. H. William's Middle School plus one block. The simplest thing was to move those 4 blocks because the districts have to remain contiguous to each other. District A will lose 31 people. District B gained so many that the percentage change was greater than 5%. District C would gain 148 people and District B would lose 117 people. This is a proposed ordinance that would be adopted in two weeks. We are required by law, according to the Secretary of State, to have this in his office by December 27, 2021. According to the 2020 census our population dropped to 11,186. At the 2010 census the population was 12,257. They did not go a very good job with the census. Ms. Fabre stated that the census workers did go door to door but many people did not open their door. Mayor Piazza stated that a lot of mayors were disgruntled with the numbers. The numbers are what they are and there isn't much we can do but live with them for the next ten years. Ms. Marilyn Mitchell stated that today they were supposed to receive an email from the SPLC regarding the redistricting. The SPLC and the NAACP created a redistricting map too and they want to be a part of that process. We want fair representation and they want to create two minority districts and make it a fifth district and get rid of the at large district. Or we could have two minority districts and it is all in the letter that was sent. Mr. Funderburk stated that everyone has received a copy of the letter. Ms. Mitchell stated they want to be a part of the process before the vote. Mayor Piazza stated that the ordinance is being introduced tonight and at the next City Council meeting there will be a public hearing. Ms. Mitchell asked if the Southern Poverty Law Group could get in touch with the Ordinance Committee before. Mayor Piazza asked if they didn't want to come to the public hearing. Ms. Mitchell stated that she would ask because she doesn't know where they are out of. The national from Washington D. C. contacted us. Mayor Piazza stated that the letter stated they wanted public input. That is what a public hearing is for and we are having a public hearing at the next City Council meeting for this ordinance. Ms. Mitchell stated that she would tell her to be here for that. Mr. Funderburk invited the Council members to read the letter from Southern Poverty Law Center in great detail and to get with him if they have any issues or questions. Mayor Piazza added that before we have too much conversation and discussion and thought goes into this, one of the recommendations is about removing the Councilman at Large seat. The Councilman at Large seat is specific to our City charter. Mr. Funderburk stated that we cannot do that on our own. It could not be done by the end of this year. If the Council were to choose to do that, we would have to go to the legislature next session. Mayor Piazza stated that only the State can change our charter and it is specified in the charter that we have a Councilman at Large position. Councilman Broussard added that the City of Abbeville was created under a special legislative charter. That means that only the legislature can make changes to our charter and we cannot.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to recommend to the City Council at their next meeting scheduled for December 21, 2021 to adopt an ordinance to adopt the reapportionment plan from the results of the 2020 census. The motion carried unanimously.

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

ATTEST:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

APPROVE:

Mark Piazza
Mayor