

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on November 17, 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
Pastor B. K. Stevens
Joey Songne

Mayor Piazza asked Pastor B. K. Stevens to lead those assembled in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr. to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

-01 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to accept the resignation of Katti Luquette from the position of unclassified office assistant effective November 12, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Funderburk stated he had reached out to the Cox representative, David D'Aquin on Friday November 13, 2020 and had asked him to attend this City Council meeting. He informed Mr. D'Aquin of the nature of the concerns and the customers who were complaining about Cox having a deaf ear to their problem. He again spoke to Mr. D'Aquin yesterday. Mr. D'Aquin informed Ike that it is not the policy of Cox to discuss the problems of an individual customer in an open meeting but would be willing to meet with both customers and members of the administration at City Hall on a mutually convenient date and time. Mr. D'Aquin also stated that he had contacted a Cox VP of operations who has assigned a field inspector to monitor the mode which feeds the area around AGH. Cox is aware of the technical issues on its end at that location and has communicated to both AGH and Mula's. He advises that AGH had some issues on its end with one of its subs. Cox and the customers are working together to resolve the issues. It is a priority of Cox to solve this issue. Ike stated he spoke to one of the customers mentioned and is also here tonight and he has not yet been contacted by Cox. Ike stated that he will get back with Mr. D'Aquin to make sure he gets into contact with that customer. Councilman Touchet stated we were not going to speak about any particular individual tonight. We wanted Cox to come in front of this Council and hear from us who represent the people who are complaining about the service they receive. He is concerned about the children who are attending virtual schooling and they cannot get online because Cox is causing problems with the Vermilion Parish School Board. We have people who cannot get their medicine because businesses cannot run credit cards. We have a hospital who cannot care for the people and send off certain things because Cox is causing problems as far as downloading. Don't we have leverage on these people. They are in our City and they are utilizing

our poles. They pay us a franchise fee. He doesn't understand Mr. D'Aquin's rationale for not attending the meeting tonight. We are not trying to abuse on them and we want to make sure these issues are corrected. Councilman Plaisance stated he agrees with Councilman Touchet. We do not have control over their rates but they should have the courage to come to a City Council meeting so we could ask them these questions. Councilman Touchet stated these issues are not from the hurricanes. There were problems before that. Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Funderburk if the franchise agreement has a requirement that Cox provide an annual report. Mr. Funderburk stated he would have to look at the agreement to see. Mayor Piazza also asked Mr. Funderburk to reach out to Cox again and tell them we are not discussing an individual customer. This is something that affects all of the City. We would like them to come to a meeting. We have had Cox representatives here several time before. Mr. Joey Songne stated that anybody who provides internet to the City should provide the reason for the outage every time there is an outage. The internet is no longer a luxury, it is part of our everyday life. Mr. Gene Sellers asked if Cox is regulated by the Public Service Commissioner. Mayor Piazza stated he believes they are. Councilman Touchet stated we need to know when the contract comes up for renewal.

Mayor Piazza stated the Entergy representative will be here at the next City Council meeting.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to ratify bills paid in the month of October 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza asked if there were any comments on any agenda item prior to action. There were none.

-03 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve change order number 4 to grant a time extension for the LA 14 Downtown Abbeville Streetscape Project. The motion carried unanimously.

-04 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to approve change order number 5 to revise the striping for the LA 14 Downtown Abbeville Streetscape Project. The motion carried unanimously.

-05 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to accept the quote from Tiffin Metal Products in the amount of \$10,006.50 for the Sellers Field fence that was damaged as result of Hurricane Delta. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza stated they are working on the list of parks that sustained damages during Hurricane Delta. He is still awaiting quotations for some of the damages. Those quotations that he has received that are under \$5,000 he is approving. Those over \$5,000 have to come to the Council meeting for approval.

Councilwoman White announced that the City is investing in advertising through the Louisiana Sunshine Plan. The State of Louisiana's Office of Tourism is covering 50% of the advertising in their guide that goes into all the hotels, rest areas, anyone who requests the guide and also on their website louisianatravel.com. We had money in the budget for the website and that project will come in under budget. She asked the Mayor if she could use some of those funds to do this. She would like to run an ad in the print guide and also on the website. The City of Abbeville will be featured on the louisianatravel.com website for 6 months out of the year. It will coincide with the festivals. We won't start advertising on the website until March 2021 so that we will have some time for COVID. She is working with the Tourist Commission to design an ad. The Tourist Commission is buying a quarter of a page and the City is buying a quarter of a page. This will be

very good for our businesses, the hotels and the bed and breakfast industry. A lot of international travelers look at the guide. Hopefully our local businesses will pick up some business from that. It is already budgeted and the cost is \$2,894.00.

-06 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to approve the advertising as discussed through the Louisiana Sunshine Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Broussard stated she received a call requesting to rename Duroq Street to B. K. Stevens Drive. They have gone through the process with the tax and permit department and have acquired the required number of signatures for the name change. Pastor Stevens stated his members came up with the idea and they wanted to do something for him. He is grateful and thankful. Mayor Piazza asked Pastor Stevens to get with Councilwoman Broussard to make sure we get the name correct on the new signs.

-07 introduced by Ms. Terry Broussard and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to approve the street name change from Duroq Street to B. K. Stevens Drive. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Mark Piazza

- *We are getting into the holiday season and Thanksgiving is right around the corner. He wanted to wish everybody a safe and healthy Thanksgiving. It has been a tough year for many reasons and it is approaching the end of the year, thank God. Hopefully 2021 will be a better year.*
- *He asked Chief Spearman to let the Council know about the meeting this morning. We are working on a plan of action. Chief Spearman stated they met with the Captain and with State Police Troop I today at the Sheriff's office with the task force. We are formulating a plan for them to come help us. Mayor Piazza stated they all have issues like we all have with staffing due to COVID but they have agreed to help. The Police Chief, the Sheriff and Louisiana State Police have a game plan but it will take a while to implement. He personally will make it more of a priority to make streets safe in 2021. He will do everything he can in his power even though it is limited because he does not have any law enforcement capability or experience. He will do whatever he can to assist the Chief and he will go to bat for him. He personally wrote a letter to the Governor and received an immediate response. Those things are not privileged to the public. We are working on it, we are conscious of it, we are concerned about it and it will continue to be a top priority and of the utmost importance to survival of our City. Chief Spearman added that his Street Crime Suppression Unit traveled to Jennings today where they set up surveillance on a house with the assistance of the Jennings Police Department. They were able to arrest the murderer of the 16-year-old. Councilman Plaisance congratulated the Chief and his staff for the work they have done.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *Thanked the Police Chief and Lieutenant Hebert for assisting with the escaped convict in downtown. We appreciate that.*
- *The Christmas Stroll will occur on December 3, 2020.*

Councilwoman Terry Broussard

- *Thanked the Chief and Lieutenant Hebert for their work and hard effort.*
- *Thanked the Mayor for going that extra mile to let everyone know that what is happening in our City has not gone unnoticed. We are limited on what we can do.*
- *Wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. May God continue to bless you and that everyone will be safe.*

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *In spite of all the difficulties we have encountered all year long, we still have a lot of blessings and he wanted to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and let's thank God for the blessings that we do have.*

Councilwoman Roslyn White

- *She wanted to echo what everyone else said tonight.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor