

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on April 7, 2020 at 5:30 P.M., at A. A. Comeaux Recreation Center, 300 A. A. Comeaux Drive, Suite 200, Abbeville, Louisiana 70510, 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: Bill Spearman, Police Chief  
Ike Funderburk, City Attorney  
Anne Falgout, Vermilion Economic Development Alliance

*Mayor Piazza asked Councilman Francis Plaisance to lead the assembly in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Councilwoman Terry Broussard to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.*

-01 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve the probational appointment of Michael Touchet to the position of Police Officer with the Abbeville Police Department, pending all post-hire assessments. The motion carried unanimously.

*Mayor Piazza stated this meeting is being streamed on Facebook Live. We are all spread out at least 10 feet away. We are limiting access to the building to 10 people. We currently have the City Council, Ike Funderburk, himself and the lady filming the meeting. She has volunteered to film the meeting and we very much appreciate Ms. Nikki Vidos doing that. We also have the Abbeville Meridional here that is present and is always present for our meetings. We also have the Chief of Police who is monitoring and regulating the number of people that come inside the building to make presentations to the Council. We have several items on the agenda that are very important and were pressing. One of those was the hiring of a police officer. We want to make sure the Chief has as many officers at his disposal especially during the time of crisis that we are currently in and the situation being a state of emergency. It is the Mayor's obligation to allow public comment and it is very difficult to do that when you can only have 10 people in the building at one time. He will read each agenda item very briefly and we have a telephone set up here in the room. The phone number is 337-898-4242. If anyone has a comment on an agenda item, they can call in. Our City Attorney will answer the phone and you can ask him the question. If he cannot answer the question, he will present the question to the Mayor and Council and we will see if we can do our best to answer the question. We do have to allow public comment on each one of these agenda items prior to voting on them.*

*Mayor Piazza stated our first item on the agenda is Ms. Anne Falgout to discuss available loans and grants through the SBA package and the State's Economic Development Program for COVID-19. He asked Ms. Falgout to be here tonight to start preparing to help our businesses get back on their feet. Right now, we are still in the crisis mode and in the stay at home mode and we want to be up and running to help our businesses get back on their feet and get back in business. Anne will be instrumental in helping us to do that and she will inform us on what is available through the State and Federal Governments to help our small businesses in Abbeville. She will work closely with Councilwoman White who is the chairman of our Economic Development Committee for the*

*City Council. She will also work with Lynn Guillory who is with the Chamber of Commerce. Those three people will be instrumental in helping our businesses get back on their feet. After Ms. Falgout's presentation we have some bills to ratify and some minutes to approve. Mayor Piazza then read each agenda item aloud at this time so that the public was notified of those agenda items in the event they had any public comments on any agenda item prior to action.*

*Ms. Anne Falgout provided a handout that contained the Economic Recovery Toolkit. She stated the two main topics that will be discussed today are the SBA-Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the SBA-Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) and Grant Program. We get excited when we hear the word grant being used because for businesses those are few and far between. The PPP is very new and last week the banks began taking applications for this. Right now, our local lenders are Gulf Coast Bank, First Guaranty Bank and J. P. Morgan Chase. These are all SBA approved lenders. The great thing about this loan is that under the right circumstances, it is a fully forgivable loan. If 75% of the loan application is surrounded around payroll related costs then the whole loan can be forgiven by SBA. The threshold is up to ten million dollars. The loan amount a company is eligible for is 2.5 times the amount of the annual payroll. They apply through the local bank and it is completely underwritten through the SBA. The interest rate for this loan is under 1%. The covered loan period is from February 15, 2020 through June 30, 2020. The amount that is not forgiven has a payback time frame of 2 years at the 1% interest rate. You don't have to make payments for the first six months. The interest will accrue. Councilman Touchet asked if businesses, like our restaurants, could also claim loss revenues with this type of program. Ms. Falgout stated the PPP program focuses only payroll and employee sustainability. If you had to lay people off but rehire them by June then you are fine. You can put them back on the payroll and have that loan cover all those costs. Only 25% of the loan can be associated with other costs of running your business, like utilities. It is very finite because it is 100% forgivable. It is really targeted towards employment and keeping people on board. Councilman Touchet asked if personal contact is being made to our local restaurants to inform them about these programs. Ms. Falgout stated they are informing the public through use of media outlets, social media, their newsletters and also by answering direct calls and making contact with those people who need assistance. We are targeting those people who need it the most. They are on our list and we are doing this for the whole parish. Councilwoman White stated they are calling and reaching out to the local businesses. She, Anne and Lynn are putting together a task force to keep in touch with the businesses personally to make sure they know what is available to them and how to access it. If they need help accessing it, they will provide that to them. They are working on this as quickly as possible and we are taking a targeted approach to contact businesses. Councilman Broussard stated that he is especially concerned about the "Mom and Pop" businesses in Abbeville. They are the backbone of our community. Ms. Falgout stated they had reached out to those in March once the Governor issued the proclamation to make sure they could conform to it if possible so they could continue receiving revenue. We have their information and are staying in contact with them. We have a feeling that a lot of these programs will run through December. The Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program focuses on those expenses outside of payroll. It can also be used with the PPP. We are encouraging people to apply for both. The EIDL has nothing to do with banks. The individual applies online through the SBA. It takes about 15 minutes to apply. Councilman Plaisance stated we are concerned that a lot of our small businesses will not make it and they are in a panic mode. We are happy you are reaching out to them to help make them aware of these programs. Councilwoman White stated she and Anne are researching and learning the resources so they can educate others. They are only 3 people so the Council members should also reach out to the businesses in their districts and pass out contact information of who to contact for information. We can't tackle every business in Abbeville. We as leaders need to reach out to those businesses in those districts and put them in contact with the right person so they can help. Ms. Falgout stated you can give me their contact information and we will follow*

up with them. Councilman Touchet stated we may not see the effect here directly for a few months when we get our sales tax dollars. Ms. Falgout stated the EIDL is designed to pay expenses you could have paid if not for COVID-19. That one will use six months of operating costs. You can request an advance of up to \$10,000. Whether you get approved or accept the loan, that advance never has to be repaid. That can be used for any costs associated with running the business. Once the application has been received and reviewed, the Department of the Treasury, will calculate the amount of the advance awarded and then deposit the amount of the advance directly into your account within 72 hours. Councilman Broussard stated that Gulf Coast Bank has already secured \$50 million for 300 businesses for the PPP. Ms. Falgout stated the EIDL has an interest rate of 3.75% for small businesses and 2.75% for non-profit organizations. They can take up to 10 years to pay this back. The loan cap amount is \$2,000,000. You cannot use the same expenses for both programs. The EIDL loan is designed for independent contractors to apply. They do have costs that are not really payroll related. We are also recommending the independent contractors to apply for unemployment benefits because those have been extended to them. Our local workforce office is still accepting calls and can assist with questions about applying for unemployment. If you own your company and you are taking regular draws that are equivalent to some type of payroll, stipend or just a monthly expense that you can document, you can claim unemployment. It has to be something regular. This will not prohibit you from applying for those two loans we discussed. The idea about the stimulus package is for the business to stay open by keeping their employees paid and keeping their costs down. If you don't do the PPP and you retain your employees, you will be able to receive a 50% tax credit. You will be able to get \$10,000 per employee. Sick time taken due to COVID-19 will be fully reimbursable to the company. These will accommodate those who don't want the liability of a loan. The State announced this week that they are beefing up their loan guarantee program. This is a \$100,000 loan under 4% interest. There are other things coming around. We want our businesses to apply for these programs. Governmental entities are not eligible to apply for these funds. There may be something further down the line for those. We will pass that information on once we have it. This is not coming through FEMA. FEMA is pretty much restricted to physical damage. Ms. Falgout stated she can be reached through [developvermillion.org](http://developvermillion.org). All of her contact information is on that page. Mayor Piazza stated that this is very valuable information to help our businesses. This will be vital to the economic success for the future of Abbeville. We really need to focus on this when the crisis is over and get our businesses back in business. We really appreciate Anne Falgout being here and doing such a tremendous job for us.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to ratify bills paid in the month of February 2020 and March 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

-03 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the minutes from the special City Council meeting held on February 18, 2020, the regular City Council meetings held on February 18, 2020 and March 3, 2020, the emergency Special City Council meeting held on March 19, 2020, the Personnel Interviews held on March 3, 2020 and the Committee meeting held on March 3, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza stated now is the public comment period. He reminded everyone that there is a telephone line to call in and submit your question or comment. If you have a comment or question on any agenda item, please feel free to call in. The number is 337-898-4242. The agenda was posted on our City website and has been shared on our Facebook page. The agenda has been posted on the website for 24 hours.

*Mayor Piazza requested a public hearing to hear comments on the proposed ordinance to revise and reorganize Chapter 15.5-Solid Waste Ordinance. The changes pertain to large garbage bins for businesses.*

-04 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to enter into a public hearing to hear comments on the proposed ordinance to revise and reorganize Chapter 15.5-Solid Waste Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.

*Mayor Piazza stated we do not have any public attendance at this meeting because of the Governor's stay at home order so the only comment we would have would be by telephone. The telephone did not ring. He asked Mr. Funderburk to explain the ordinance. Mr. Funderburk stated since the Police Jury is no longer providing large garbage bins for businesses, we had to split up our solid waste ordinance so that it would cover three different aspects. One would be applicable for all collections, residential and commercial. The second one are rules that are applicable to single residential units. The new part, the third part, has been reorganized and is applicable to multi-resident units such as apartments, commercial units and industrial units. What is does is set forth, in the third section, the process for companies to do business within the City of Abbeville to provide services to our businesses for the pick up of their refuse. We have a very simplistic permitting process for them and the bulk of it deals with the location and the maintenance of the larger bins that are used by commercial enterprises. Mayor Piazza stated the public works director would go out with the customer and approve the location of the bin. There is a one-time \$5.00 fee per bin. That is not an annual fee.*

-05 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to close the public hearing and reconvene the regular meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

***Touchet/White  
Ordinance 20-01***

*An ordinance to revise and reorganize Chapter 15.5 – Solid Waste Ordinance.*

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

<i>YEAS:</i>	<i>5(Plaisance, T. Broussard, B. Broussard, Touchet, White)</i>
<i>NAYS:</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>ABSENT:</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>ABSTAIN:</i>	<i>0</i>

*Therefore, the ordinance was adopted unanimously.*

*Mayor Piazza stated the next item is to approve the purchase of heaters for the truck rooms at the Main Fire Station. Of course, Chief Mire, can not be with us tonight but he will pay for these out of his Maintenance and Operation Fire Department funds. The ones they have are old and obsolete. They are as old as the fire station. It is in his budget. Councilman Touchet asked because of the unknown impact of the economy if this is something that can wait since we don't know what our budget will look like later. Mayor Piazza contacted Chief Mire by telephone during the meeting. He stated that Chief Mire said this was an agenda item that he wanted to present a month ago but we were not able to hold that meeting. Now that we are into spring, this is something that can definitely wait until the fall. He would prefer that we table it at this time.*

-06 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to table the request to purchase heaters for the truck rooms at the Main Fire Station. The motion carried unanimously.

-07 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to ratify the payments of partial payment estimate number 1, \$6,991.05, and partial payment estimate number 2, \$118,709.82, both payable to Glenn Lege Construction for the LA 14 Downtown Abbeville Streetscape Project. The motion carried unanimously.

*Mayor Piazza stated he had a conversation with Mr. Gene Sellers regarding the Streetscape Project. We don't know what the future will bring as far as finances, especially for the State of Louisiana. This is a reimbursable grant that we received from the State. Mr. Sellers was concerned about how long it would take the State to reimburse us. In this particular program, we have to pay for it first and then get reimbursed by the State. Mr. Seller's recommendation is to go ahead and pay what we owe this contractor now and let them stop work where they are on the corner of Jefferson and Washington and Pere Megret. Once this is all over and he feels more comfortable that the reimbursement will come in a timely manner, we will get the project kicked back off. He has already informed the construction company to finish the corner and then stop so that we can get through this crisis.*

-08 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to ratify payment of partial payment #3 in the amount of \$49,050.00 payable to TyBe Company for the Mechanical Screen project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The motion carried unanimously.

**Plaisance/White**  
**Resolution R20-04**

*A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the act of acceptance to TyBe Company for the completion of the Mechanical Screen project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

-09 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to ratify the payments totaling \$38,507.50 to convert Stonebridge Lift Station to suction re-lifting pumps. The motion carried unanimously.

*Mayor Piazza stated this will save us money. We have two pumps in every station. One of the pumps burned out. It needed to be replaced. We had to rent a pump in the meantime because you cannot leave only one pump. If the second pump goes out, then no one on that side of town will have sewage. They will not be able to flush their toilets. This includes many businesses and the entire apartment complexes on Rodeo Road. The rental on this pump is in excess of \$5,000 per month. To convert this to a submersible pump will prevent these pumps from going out the way they are and we have some leftover pumps from the LCDBG. We already own those so we don't have to go out and buy some. To do that we have to convert this lift station to a suction re-lifting pump. This is a different type of pump that will be more dependable and not burn out as fast as the ones we have been using in the past. It is usually about \$20,000 to \$25,000 when we have to buy a pump. We will save money in the long run.*

*Councilwoman White discussed the next agenda item which was to award the contract for rubbish abatement at 103 Gauraud Street. She passed in front of the area today before the meeting and it is much cleaner than when the original pictures were taken. She doesn't know if it warrants the awarding of the contract at this time because it appears the landowner is in the process of cleaning the property. Right now, they have been responsible and if they do not complete it, we can go after this again.*

-10 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to table awarding the contract for rubbish abatement at 103 Gauraud Street. The motion carried unanimously.

**Plaisance/Touchet**

**Resolution R20-05**

*A resolution ratifying the execution, by the Mayor, of an intergovernmental agreement wherein Sheriff Mike Couvillion has donated personnel vests to the City of Abbeville, Abbeville Police Department.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

-11 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to approve payment of application number 4 in the amount of \$33,545.70 payable to L. Michaud Construction for the Rehabilitation of the Main Hangar Project. The motion carried unanimously.

**Touchet/White**

**Resolution R20-06**

*A resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an act of acceptance for the Rehabilitation of the Main Hangar Project.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

-12 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to authorize advertisement for bids for the Rehabilitation of the Runway and Partial Taxiway project subject to FAA and DOTD funding availability and their review and approval of the plans and specifications. The motion carried unanimously.

*Mayor Piazza stated there were no telephone comments received for any agenda item throughout the meeting.*

-13 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to enter to into executive session to discuss COVID-19 Virus Crisis. The motion carried unanimously.

-14 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to reconvene the regular session from executive session. The motion carried unanimously.

*Mayor Piazza stated the executive session was held to discuss the COVID-19 crisis. They discussed a couple of issues dealing with Public Safety concerns with the Police Department and the Fire Department as well as safety concerns with the City employees and the citizens of Abbeville. No decisions were made. He made a report to the City Council.*

Mayor Mark Piazza

- *This is holy week which is a very important week for all of us and our families. It is unfortunate that we have this crisis during Easter week when it is normally a week when we are all together and going to church services and having crawfish boils and barbeques and all those wonderful things that we do here in Abbeville. This is not a time to let our guard down. This is not a time for gatherings. The 10 room gatherings rule still applies. It applies to everyone. It applies to everyone's families and their homes. There should not*

*be any large gatherings. His son lives in Dallas, Texas. We told him not to come in for Easter. This will be the first time in 34 years that he will not be with his son for Easter. We don't feel comfortable with him being here and we worry about him being able to get back to Texas. We are worried about his safety and his health as well as our health. We have to make this sacrifice during this crisis. It is not the time to invite relatives from out of town to come in for the holidays. We have to give this a few more weeks to level out. He asked the public to follow the Stay at Home order and tell their families from out of town to stay at their homes.*

- *He wanted to thank Councilwoman White for helping us out with getting the message out on social media. She has done a fantastic job. We have put something in there everyday to keep the public informed. We want the public to know we are on top of the situation. He is part of a conference call that encompasses all 8 parishes of Acadiana. We have the call every Monday and Thursday of every week. We have several Mayors, other local officials, State officials and Federal officials on the call. We talk about this crisis and what we should be doing. He passes that information on as much as possible. We are doing as much as possible to keep the public informed. He appreciates the public's patience and confidence in himself and the City Council and our Police Chief. We are asking the public to do their part and stay home. If you have to go to the grocery store, then only one person from the household should be going. If you don't have to bring your children with you, then leave them at home.*

Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr.

- *Complimented Councilwoman White on her efforts to keep everyone informed.*
- *We need to support our local businesses as much as possible. We need to shop local.*
- *We do have to run a government. When it comes to utility bills, we gave the authority to the Mayor, at our last meeting, to look at every situation individually and make decisions when it comes to utility bills. Government still needs to continue. He doesn't want the perception that we are shutting them down and not being sympathetic. We are going to look at every situation. The Mayor will look at it and will consult with that individual Council member and we will make decisions. He feels like people need to pay their bills but there are certain situations where there are extenuating circumstances. He wanted to make sure everyone understands that. We still need to run government and when it comes to situations, let us know what that situation is and we will make a decision together.*

Councilwoman Roslyn White,

- *Thanked Mayor Piazza for his efforts because she knows how hard he has been working and she knows how he feels at the end of the day. Sometimes you are just exhausted but you still feel like we need to put the message out. Thank you for that.*
- *Thanked Shaun with the Abbeville Meridional. They have been very good with helping us get the message out. Not everyone is on social media and we recognize that.*
- *For any businesses or people who have lost their jobs, she is not hard to get a hold of. Ask anyone how to get in touch with me.*

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *We are at war here and the enemy is something we can't see. It takes an effort by all of us: nationwide, statewide and citywide. Let's listen and follow what the Mayor said earlier and we will get through this okay as a community. We are here for you and please call us if we can help you in any way.*

Councilwoman Terry Broussard

- *Thanked Mayor Piazza for his day to day operations for our citizens. She thanked Chief Spearman and his staff. It is rough out there. They are doing a great job protecting the citizens of Abbeville. She thanked the employees of the City of Abbeville. She wanted to especially thank Ron Darby and Soulful Eats for feeding the children last week who were out of school. Plans are underway to cook for first responders. She thanked Councilman Touchet for saying that we all operate with compassion for other people.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *He is very proud of the City that we call home and that we represent. We want the public to know, confidently, that we are open for business. We can give permits, collect utility bills at City Hall, and we are pouring concrete for streets and sidewalks. The City is operating and we are here to help our businesses who need help at this critical time. He is very happy that we are a public body that continues to meet through this crisis and he is happy that we are here for the public that we represent. He thanks each Council Member and the Mayor for their participation to get us out of this crisis.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk  
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza  
Mayor