

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on July 18, 2017 at 5:30 P.M., at the regular meeting place, the Council Meeting Room located at 101 North State Street, with the Honorable Mark Piazza, Mayor, presiding.

Members Present: Council Members, Francis Plaisance, Mayor Pro-Tem, Brady Broussard, Wayne Landry, Joe Hardy and Francis Touchet, Jr.

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Jude Mire, Fire Chief
Tony Hardy, Police Chief
Ike Funderburk, City Attorney
Richard Primeaux, Engineer
Gene Sellers, Engineer
Clay Menard, Public Works Director
Joseph Vallee, Municipal Civil Service Board Member
Wayne Theriot, Mayor of Village of Maurice
Nick Sims, Army Corp of Engineers
Kevin Sagera, Police Juror
Nathan Broussard, Office of Attorney General Jeff Landry
Jack Gremilion, Wendy's
Linda Plowden, to receive Key to the City

Mayor Piazza asked Mayor Wayne Theriot to lead the assembly in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Nathan Broussard to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Wayne Landry to ratify bills paid in the month of June 2017. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Wayne Landry to approve the minutes from the Special City Council meeting held on June 13, 2017, the regular City Council meeting held on June 20, 2017 and the Committee meeting held on June 20, 2017. The motion carried unanimously.

-03 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the probational appointment of Joe Appling and Brent Landry to the position of Firefighter with the Abbeville Fire Department pending successful completion of all post-hire assessments. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Piazza asked if there were any comments on any agenda item prior to action. There were no comments.

Councilman Landry wanted to recognize Ms. Linda Plowden. Ms. Plowden has been teaching children and adults to swim for over 7 years. She has been doing this with the help of Donna Libersat. They have taught 250 kids and 15 adults. She has had a lot of support from the City Council, the Police Jury and a lot of businesses to help her fund this. She lost her son in 2009

because of drowning. It was an accident. Councilman Landry presented Ms. Plowden with the Key to the City for her dedication to this cause.

Councilman Plaisance stated after the flood in August of 2016 a lot of work has been done on the West side of the City to improve the drainage. This work was done in conjunction with the Drainage Board and the Vermilion Parish Police Jury. He believes there is a problem at the mouth of the Vermilion River where it empties into the Intracoastal Waterway. He asked Mr. Nick Sims to be here tonight to discuss this. He is from New Orleans and is with the Army Corp of Engineers. Mr. Sims stated the request he received from Councilman Plaisance was to dredge the Vermilion River at the mouth. Everything the Corp does requires Congressional authorization. We do have authorization to dredge the Vermilion River in that area. However, we took surveys last month. The authorization is for a 9 x 100 foot channel. The survey in that area showed that that area is 9 X 100 feet. So right now, we do not have a mechanism to dredge the channel. Mayor Piazza stated there were some rumors that the mouth of the river where it goes into the Intracoastal Waterway was silted up. Is that true? Mr. Sims stated not according to their survey. We can share the survey information with you. The survey is based on navigation traffic and is strictly for navigation. It does not look at flood control. With that being said, we need to look at a Civil Works project. Do you want construction assistance or planning assistance? That will decide what type of program we can go with. If you want construction assistance there are two programs. One is the general investigation program and the other is the continuing authorities program. The general investigation is for large projects. They are not quick projects. It may take years to complete the study and years to get funded to complete construction. Those require Congressional authorization. You have to have authorization to request the study, you have to have congressional funding and the construction dollars have to be appropriated. If you want a small scale construction project then you look at a continuing authorities program. That means there is a standing authority to go out and construct the project. One is Section 205 and that is for flood control. We can start a project like that and go look at the mouth of the river and see what type of alternatives we can have. We would look not only at dredging but we would look at retention and detention ponds, structure raising, culvert cleanouts and any other alternatives. The difference is that in the continuing authorities program there are federal limits. You have about a ten million dollar federal limit. You add the cost share and you are looking at about a 15 million dollar project. If you are looking for only planning and design then we have the Planning Assistance to States program. You don't need congressional authorization for this. We can go in and help you look at a problem, come up with some alternative and do the design. There is no construction phase with this program. There is currently no authorized construction project for flood control in the area at this time. We have a study right now from Alexandria to the Gulf Coast to look at this area but we have not put in any request for dollars yet. We can start to do this. We have put in a request for this entire region. It is called the Western Comprehensive Study. You have to get the whole thing fixed. Councilman Touchet asked if there is anything that the Corp is doing right now north of us that is going to cause more water to come back this way. Mr. Sims stated he does not know of any active construction projects at this time that would bring water down here. Mayor Piazza stated this is a delicate situation near the major metropolis of Lafayette where there is tremendous growth. Youngsville, Broussard and Maurice are the fastest growing communities around here. To the South we have the rice farmers that don't want any more salt water intrusion than they already have. It is a real delicate balance. Where do we start? Mr. Sims' recommendation is to look at it as a watershed approach. We are putting in a request for that watershed project. It has not yet been funded. That is where you have to work with your congressional representatives. That is the large scale project. Small scale you can do the CAP program. Send a letter to him and we can go and look at it. There is a cost share to this program. First, we have a study phase to make a case for federal dollars. If you are not interested in a construction project you can request help from the corp. If you do this, you would

take the information we would provide with the help and then you would go bid it out on your own. Mr. Kevin Sagrera stated the Acadiana Planning Commission is doing a study on the Vermilion watershed. It is a six or seven parish study. It is from north of Lafayette and further down. They are also taking in the Mermentau Basin. When you have flooding at Mermentau, it spills into our basin. He would like Acadiana Planning Commission and the Corp to get together so the work is not duplicated. Mr. Sims stated the Acadiana Planning Commission's study got funded before the Corp's but the goal has always been to merge the two studies so we will have the information then we can go in and get those federal construction dollars. Mr. Sagrera asked all City Councils and Mayors to get involved. At our last meeting, there was no representation from the municipalities. We need them there. It affects the municipalities too. The next meeting is Thursday, August 3, 2017 at 5:30 PM at the Cajundome Convention Center in Lafayette. Mayor Theriot stated once the water gets to the Vermilion River, it backs up. It backs up into Maurice and other areas in Vermilion Parish. We need to meet collectively and start from the bottom improving to the top. Lafayette is dumping their water onto us. It has probably been 50 years since the Vermilion River has been dredged. The silt is building up.

Councilman Hardy left the meeting because he was ill.

Mr. Sims stated to do a large- scale project, like dredging, you are looking at a three year study. That is based on the Corp receiving all of their federal dollars. You have to start because if you don't start you will never get anything. He urged the Mayor and Council to look at the Continuing Authorities program. Mayor Piazza thanked Mr. Sims for being here tonight.

Mayor Piazza stated the ordinance proposed for adoption is in regards to the new electrical contract. It will lower the cost of electricity for everyone. It is a reduction in the cost of electricity of about \$600,000 for our customers. They should see a 5% to 6% savings on the electric portion of their bill. We will also keep a portion of the savings to be deposited monthly into the Utility Reserve Account. Some cities our size in the same shape we are have a greater amount in reserve. No one has been hit with more catastrophic events than we have. How we have survived it with the small amount of cash reserves we have is beyond him. It is a real struggle. That is why he recommends that we keep a small portion as we have the last four times. The majority of the savings will be passed on to our customers.

**Landry/Plaisance
Ordinance 17-03**

An ordinance to amend Chapter 6 – Electrical Utility, to repeal Section 6-4.1; to amend and renumber 6-4.1.1; and to amend and supplement Section 6-8 – Power Cost Adjustment.

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

YEAS: 4(Plaisance, Broussard, Landry, Touchet);
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1(Hardy)
ABSTAIN: 0

Therefore, the ordinance was adopted.

-04 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Wayne Landry to ratify the replacement of the gear reducer on a rotor at the Wastewater Treatment Plan at a cost of \$14,165.00. The motion carried unanimously.

-05 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Wayne Landry to place a four-way stop sign at the intersection of North East and Edwards Street. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Jack Gremilion, representing Wendy's, was at the meeting to request a variance from the sign ordinance for the new sign to be placed at Wendy's. Because of the design change they need to change the face of the sign and the current sign is in poor condition. They no longer make the design of the current sign. The pylon sign is currently 35 feet high and the ordinance restricts us to a 20 foot sign. He understands this applies to a brand new pylon sign but all we want to do is change the faces. Other competitors in Abbeville have signs that are over 20 feet. Ike Funderburk stated the Planning Commission does not recommend that a variance be granted. Councilman Plaisance stated all businesses that are changing their signs must comply with the ordinance. We need to abide by our ordinances. Councilman Broussard stated our sign ordinance is only three to four years old. We did not give anyone else that exclusive variance. Things were done before this was adopted by the City Council to clean up the City. Some of our businesses were not reasonable in what they wanted to put up so some of the citizens came to the City to try and clean that up, to have some uniformity and not give anyone an advantage over someone else. We appreciate Wendy's investment in our City and we hope they see what Hardee's and Dairy Queen have done is not a disadvantage to them. What we want Wendy's to do is not a disadvantage to them either. Councilman Plaisance stated if your competitors come to us now, they will have to follow the same ordinance we are asking Wendy's to follow.

-06 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to deny the variance from the sign ordinance as requested by Wendy's. The motion carried unanimously.

-07 introduced by Mr. Wayne Landry and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to approve the quote from Griner Drilling in the amount of \$13,765.00 for a new pump at Alley Lift Station. The motion carried unanimously.

-08 introduced by Mr. Wayne Landry and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to approve the quote from Griner Drilling in the amount of \$18,715.00 to repair the pump at the Barn Lift Station. The motion carried unanimously.

Gene Sellers, Engineer

- *Provided an update on the LCDBG Coulee Kinney Sewer project.*
- *Councilman Landry asked Mr. Gene to research grants available to beautify Martin Luther King, Jr. Street in the future.*

Clay Menard, Public Works Director

- *The rain and employee turnover have caused the grass cutting crew to fall behind. They are working this weekend to try to catch up.*

Mayor Mark Piazza

- *Discussed looking into other options for the telephone automated answering system at City Hall. We need to simplify the options. Councilman Broussard has looked into several systems. When finances were tight, we cut the switchboard position at City Hall. We did this to save money. It is about servicing the constituents. There are too many options and some of our employees are not answering their phones and not deleting their voice mails. He asked the Council to help with ideas for alternatives.*

Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr.

- *Asked Mr. Gene Sellers about the status of the overlay project.*

Councilman Wayne Landry

- *Asked the Police Chief about the bike sale held last Saturday.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *Wanted to show his support for Councilman Plaisance and the Cake and Ice Cream Festival that will be held Saturday.*

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *The Cake & Ice Cream Festival is this Saturday, July 22, 2017 at A. A Comeaux Park from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The American Legion and the Rotary Club are sponsoring the first ever Skateboard Competition in conjunction with the festival.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor