

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on October 18, 2016 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
David Hardy, Lieutenant
Ike Funderburk, City Attorney
Richard Primeaux, Engineer
Gene Sellers, Engineer
Clay Menard, Public Works Director
Charlene Beckett, Main Street Manager
Tracette Hillman, Municipal Employees Civil Service Director
Joseph Vallee, Municipal Civil Service Board member
Judge Marilyn Castle

Mayor Piazza asked Councilman Wayne Landry to lead the assembly in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Councilman Joe Hardy to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

-01 introduced by Mr. Wayne Landry and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to ratify bills paid in the month of September 2016. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Tracette Hillman provided an update of personnel transactions as follows:

- *The City obtained 3 employees through a FEMA grant called Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant in conjunction with Louisiana Workforce Commission. We have the opportunity to utilize these workers up to one year at no cost and liability to the City as long as they work on disaster related activities. The employees are hired by a staffing agency in Lafayette called WeStaff. Two of the employees are working with the Street Department flushing out culverts and ditches of debris brought by the flood waters. They will go street to street to clean those. The other employee is working with the Parks and Recreation Department to assist in maintaining the fields which were overgrown with weeds during the flooding.*
- *We made two provisional appointments to the position of Maintenance Worker 1 in the Street Department to assist the crew during the busy festival and holiday season. These two workers are Kevin Scott and Aaron Morris.*
- *We currently have three vacancies. One is a Maintenance Worker 1 position in the Street Department. One is an Equipment Operator 2 or 3 in the Wastewater Department. The last vacancy is a Utility Maintenance Worker 3 position in the Wastewater Department. The positions are posted on the City of Abbeville website and advertisement will begin in the Abbeville Meridional tomorrow and will run on Wednesdays and Sundays through November 7, 2016. Mayor Piazza stated we also still*

have a vacancy in the Electrical Department. The vacancy is an Apprentice Lineman position and it has been vacant for a while.

Mr. Funderburk stated we held a pre-disciplinary hearing yesterday with Christopher Harrison. As a result of the findings, he has been relieved of his duties as an employee of the City of Abbeville.

-02 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Wayne Landry to deviate from the agenda to move Judge Marilyn Castle to the bottom of the agenda since she is running late and to add an approval of the quote from Griner Drilling for a new pump for Alley Lift Station. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Board Reports:

Main Street report given by Charlene Beckett. *Sounds on the Square has begun. The next event is October 20, 2016 and Warren Storm, Willie Tee & the Cypress Band will perform. On October 27, 2016 we will have Alligator Blue performing and on November 10, 2016 we will have the Five O'clock Shadows performing. At the Blacksmith Shop we had two meetings there: The Garden Club and the Vermilion Chamber. We are one of the stops on the Tour of Homes for the Giant Omelette Celebration. The cemetery tour will be held on November 11, 2016 at the Old Catholic Cemetery. Christmas Stroll is December 1, 2016. The Christmas ornament this year is the Cultural Center. She also distributed a visitor center distribution report that shows how many Abbeville brochures were requested at the welcome centers listed since January 2016. They have requested 1,510 brochures so far this year. The State Welcome Center in Slidell is the most with 250.*

Keep Abbeville Beautiful report given by Charlene Beckett. *In July LMA and KLB honored Keep Abbeville Beautiful with a newly created Beautification Award. The Keep Louisiana Beautiful conference was in October and we received a Circle of Excellence Award. The award was \$500.00 for Keep Abbeville Beautiful. Keep Louisiana Beautiful created a new logo and she asked the Mayor to place it on all the City vehicles. The logo is "Love the boot, don't pollute". The Civic Pride Award is tomorrow morning at 10:00 AM. The recipients are Abbeville Lenders and Vickie Nunez.*

Abbeville Planning Commission report given by Ike Funderburk. *They ratified 3 sign applications at the meeting today. They approved a plan for a Kidney Dialysis Center to be located at 1820 Veterans Memorial. They will demolish the existing building and construct a new one. Richard Primeaux stated they were sensitive to our needs. Their plan exceeds our green space requirements. They are maintaining a heritage oak on site and they will plant additional trees and shrubs. Mayor Piazza stated that the construction will not be completed until about this time next year.*

Parks and Recreation Board had nothing to report.

-03 introduced by Mr. Wayne Landry and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to authorize the Mayor to execute a letter authorizing Primeaux, Touchet & Associates, LLC to prepare and submit a 2017-2018 Capital Outlay request for flood damage reduction and drainage improvement projects. The motion carried unanimously.

-04 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Wayne Landry to approve change order number 1 for an increase of \$5,350.00 in the contract amount for Southern Constructors, LLC and to increase the contract by 20 days for the FY 2014-2015 LCDBG sewer system improvement project. The motion carried unanimously.

-05 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. to award the bid for grass cutting and removal of overgrown brush on the property located at 605 N. Lamar Street to the low bidder, Brady Coleman, at a price of \$150.00. The motion carried unanimously.

-06 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Wayne Landry to approve the recommendations of the hearing officer for hearings held on October 12, 2016 for the following properties: NW Corner of S. Lyman and Godchaux – given 10 days, 801 S. St. Victor – given 10 days, 705 Hawthorne – given 5 days, 1001 E. Lafayette St – given 10 days, 605 Gibson St – issued compliance certificate, 130 S. Main – given 7 days, 303 S. Young St – issued compliance certificate, 1434 S. Louisiana – given 5 days and 702 Eraste – given 5 days. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Ike Funderburk, City Attorney

- *Ethics training on 10/20/16 at 9:00 AM at City Court and 10/21/16 at 8:00 AM at A. A. Comeaux Recreation Center.*
- *Would like us to get the appropriate signage for all of our buildings and parks where we have a fire arm free zone so that we will be in compliance with our ordinance.*

Jude Mire, Fire Chief

- *Tomorrow at the Fire Station on the by-pass we will make history for our Fire Department. We will have two women manning the fire station for 24 hours.*
- *Discussed the Fire Station on Joffre that was damaged by the flooding. The contractor has given a verbal estimate in the amount of \$100,000 to repair the station. We are awaiting a firm estimate. We can purchase a metal building with Ideal Steel that is 2,800 square feet and an 800 square foot truck room for \$30,000. This is the cost for materials only. Another contractor, Southern Constructors can build a new building that is turn key for about \$200,000. This estimate is a high number so we hope not to spend that much. We can get a firm estimate. We received about \$46,000 in flood insurance proceeds. The building was built in 1960. Mayor Piazza stated we will apply for an improved project with FEMA. We may or may not get that. He would like the Council to put their blessing on moving forward for a new building as opposed as to putting money on the old building. He will put it in the budget for next year. If approved tonight to build a new building, then we will proceed with demolishing the building. If the cost is over \$150,000 we will have to go out for formal bids. Councilman Touchet asked if some of our employees could do the work. Chief Mire stated the mentality of his employees is that they built the building at the Main. Some of them don't want to touch this. Some of them don't have a problem with painting and other things like that. Mayor Piazza stated last time there was a question that if it exceeds the public bid law, then we cannot do any of the work ourselves. Over \$150,000 we have to use a contractor.*
- *Two new firetrucks should be in by the end of January.*

-08 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Wayne Landry to move forward with a new Fire Station at Joffre, authorize the demolition of the old building and to authorize advertisement for bids for a new turn-key fire station building to be built at the same location. The motion carried unanimously.

Judge Marilyn Castle believes the Louisiana Supreme Court race is the most important race because it will directly affect us. The Supreme Court only has 7 members so that means it takes 4 people to make a decision. The person that is put in this position will have a great deal of influence on our judicial system being one of four that can make a decision. She hopes that in making that decision that everyone will look at the record that she has for the 18 years that she has been a district judge in Lafayette, Acadia and Vermilion. When she ran the first time and was lucky enough to have this position, her motivation is that she wanted people to have more faith in the judicial system. People unfortunately feel that sometimes the outcome of the case depends on who they know or which judge they get or which one has the deepest pockets in the room. None of those are ever considerations that a judge should look at in deciding the case. A judge's job is to apply the law fairly to the facts of the case and it is not to pick favorites. The judicial branch is important. Judges need to recognize and respect the limitations of their job. Their job is not to decide that they know better than the legislators. People are elected to create the law and everybody has to respect the law that they create, whether you agree with it or not. As judges it is important that we do that. It is important because if people know that the rule that the legislature sets will be followed consistently then people know how to plan. If you have a system where people feel that the rule may say this but depending on what judge we get, this may not be the outcome then there is a lot of uncertainty and that is not what we need if we want businesses to come here and feel comfortable investing money here. We want families to come and live here. It important that the law in our state is applied fairly and consistently and without favoritism. Everybody is equal in the eyes of the law. It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor or if you are a corporation or an individual. It doesn't matter if you are a man or a woman or what race you are; everybody is equal in the eyes of the law. The Supreme Court, just as every judge has, an obligation to work to improve our judicial system. She has tried in the 18 years to do that. She has been president of the District Judges Association and we have a real good relationship with the Department of Corrections. We have worked hard over the years to try to come up with better programming within our correctional centers. As a judge, you want them to try to change their lives and come out a productive citizen. We have the highest incarceration rate in the country. We need to work on that. The answer is not just to let people out of jail. The answer is to make sure that we are sending the right people to jail and that we are giving the people who have a chance to be rehabilitated on probation that opportunity. When we do have to send people to jail they should be given an opportunity to change their life. Judges need to push for those kinds of programs. The legislature and executive branch ultimately have to approve them but it is up to the courts to explain to them why we need this and why it would benefit the State. She hopes everyone will vote for her and look at her record. Councilman Landry asked Judge Castle what took so long for us to have a rehabilitation program for people as they exit jail. Judge Castle thinks it took the legislature to understand that this is not just a social problem it is an economic problem. If you spend money on these programs you will come out better in the end. You will not keep that cycle of those coming back to jail. In Lafayette we have a lot of rehabilitation programs available and we now have statistics from those programs. The national rate of people who go back to jail within 3 years of release is in the 60 percentile. In our state it is 48%. People who go through the programs in Lafayette Parish it is 22%. That tells you it works.

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *Thanked all who helped out for the Louisiana Cattle Festival, especially the Police Department, the Fire Department and Chief Jude Mire, Clay Menard and all of the employees, the Mayor and Council and the Abbeville Meridional.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *Thanked the Police Department for a safe festival and he congratulated Councilman Plaisance on a great festival.*
- *Sounds on the Square is Thursday.*

Councilman Wayne Landry

- *Thanked Councilman Plaisance for allowing him to say the invocation for the Cattle Festival banquet.*
- *Thanked the Abbeville Police Department for beefing up patrols in his district.*

Councilman Joe Hardy

- *Thanked the Police Chief and the Sheriff for assisting with the parade.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor