

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on September 3, 2019 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, Terry Broussard, Brady Broussard, Jr., Francis Touchet, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem and Roslyn White

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Jude Mire, Fire Chief
Jason Hebert, Lieutenant
Ike Funderburk, City Attorney
Clay Menard, Public Works Director
Charlene Beckett, Main Street Manager
Richard Primeaux, Engineer
Tom Carroll, Engineer
Joseph Vallee', Municipal Civil Service Board member
Gerald Gaspard, American Legion & Chamber of Commerce
Ralph Libersat, Vermilion Parish Coastal Committee
Reverend Osborne Taylor

Mayor Piazza asked Reverend Osborne Taylor to lead the assembly in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Lieutenant Jason Hebert to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Ralph Libersat was at the meeting to update the Mayor and Council on the activities that the Vermilion Parish Coastal Committee has going on. On August 6th we had a meeting and the Mayor and several Council Members attended. It was an opportunity to inform the public what is going on in our parish. We have a lot of coastal activities that have been going on for 20 years. That surprises a lot of people that we have been doing this for 20+ years. For the last 27 years, there has been about \$89,000,000 of projects put into coastal Vermilion Parish. That takes up everything from Pecan Island to Freshwater Bayou. Some of the projects were large and others were small. He wanted to concentrate on the plans for the next 5 years and the two or three programs that they have on-going right now. In the next 5 years we will try to put about \$26,000,000 worth of coastal activity. This funding comes from a variety of sources. Prior to this, the funding mainly came from the federal government. We had the CWPPRA program where you had funding from the federal agencies at 85% cost share and the State had a 15% cost share. That came about in 1990 when a tax was passed all over Louisiana for costal restoration. That was the catalyst for a lot of these project. For many years this was our funding and it was very competitive. The east and west side of the state had to compete against each other. It is easier to protect what you have now rather than restoring it after it is gone. These 5 projects have a variety of funding. We will use funding through GOMESA. GOMESA are oil revenue in the Gulf of Mexico. There is a formula based on the number of leases. Those dollars are coming to the State and each coastal parish. Vermilion Parish received \$850,000 last year. This year we will receive almost \$1,000,000. What the parish did was to monopolize on that money and bond it out. It will take more than \$1,000,000 to do a project. We bonded it out for \$10.5 million dollars. That gives us an opportunity to do three very needed projects. If you have fished in Vermilion Parish

and have gone through Southwest Pass, you will notice that point of land that is eroding every day. It is called Southwest Pass Point. It is so thin you can throw a rock across it. We will put shoreline protection around the perimeter of it and if we have enough money, we will pump some sediment behind it. This will help with salt water intrusion. There also some oyster beds around there and that will help to protect those too. Hopefully we will be able to do both sides. This project will cost from 6 million to 6.5 million dollars. In the past we did a shoreline protection project at Chenier au Tigre in the Gulf of Mexico and Tiger Point. We want to extend those projects with the same materials. It is astounding to see what happens after only a couple of years. They put these breakwaters about 200 feet offshore. Almost immediately we had about 50 to 60 feet behind them that had already accumulated. We are hoping that will bridge that and connect it to Chenier au Tigre. We do not have the Mississippi River silt because it gets diluted before it gets to us but the Atchafalaya is sending out a lot of sediment and we will capitalize on that. We also have some Restore dollars. The Restore dollars are from the BP fine. Those dollars are a little bit more problematic because we can not bond those out. We get a certain amount each year for the next 15 years. It is about \$80,000 per year. The parish has already established an account to put the money into. This money has to be used for projects pertaining to restoration and conservation. We have managed to leverage some of that money with the State. The State also receives some Restore dollars. There was a competition. They had \$20,000,000 that the State was going to cost share with us. We submitted projects for proposal. We had two really good projects. We got a project that the State will put in a majority of our funding and we will use two years of our Restore dollars to match. That gives you leverage. With that money we will put in some shoreline protection along Freshwater Bayou. Freshwater Bayou already has a lot of rocks but it is a very fragile piece of marsh. We want to protect and keep that as much as possible. We have two stretches of a project that we just completed through the CWPPRA project but it did not have shoreline protection. That project was about \$26,000,000. For the other two projects we will use funding from some state surplus money. They periodically have some surplus dollars. These were surplus dollars from 2007 and 2009. This surplus is usually created when a project sounds good so they go ahead and do the E & D but when they do the E & D, it doesn't quite fit the bill. This leaves the construction dollars. That goes into the surplus dollars. We managed to get some surplus dollars. We will do two projects on Freshwater Bayou and we will do another project off of Boston Canal. If you go to the mouth of the Boston Canal, we put some rock about 20 years ago in the open water. Almost as soon as we constructed those rocks, you had sediment come in on top of that and filled it in. Right now, it is solid land all the way to the rocks. What we want to do it mimic that again going east and west. We will do it in segments since we don't have the money to do the whole thing now. We will go about 75 feet to 100 feet offshore. Those are the projects we have going on in the next 5 years. We also have two other things. One is the Southwest Study feasibility. At one time the Corp would come in and repossess a lot of our homes. It was not voluntary. The study included Cameron, Calcasieu and Vermilion Parish. We made some close bonds with Cameron and Calcasieu and we fought hard to get rid of that mandatory expropriation. It is a voluntary program now and we got some E & D money to study raising some houses. Vermilion Parish has the most houses that will be affected. This is 100% voluntary and 100% federal dollars. That is in the process right now and there will be some additional meetings on that. The other thing he wanted to talk about is the watershed initiative. In 2016, we had the flood that affected ten parishes statewide. The Governor formed a task force. Congress has appropriated 1.2 billion dollars for mitigation and recovery to make our communities more resilient. It is broken down into river basins. This is how the money will be spent and studied. Vermilion Parish is in zone 5. This is comprised of the Vermilion, Teche and Mermentau basins. All these parishes need to work together as one voice so we can address the basin wide problems. The state has to put together an action plan by February 2020. We need to stay active in that. Acadiana Planning Commission will be very active in that. They will put forth an application. Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Libersat if they are looking at rock jetties on the south shore of Southwest

Pass. Mr. Libersat stated this is not in the state master plan. We had to fight hard to get the northern rim of Vermilion Bay back into the master plan since they had taken it out. We are fighting to keep shoreline protection like that here because they work.

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the minutes from the Committee meeting held on August 6, 2019, the Personnel Interview held on August 20, 2019 and the regular City Council meetings held on August 6, 2019 and August 20, 2019. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to table new business agenda item number 4, 5 and 6 and also old business agenda item number 1. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Councilman Broussard reported on our sister City, Tracadie, New Brunswick. He had attended the most recent Congres' Mondial Acadian there. They are people who are just like us and they were so happy to have people from Abbeville visit. When you meet long lost relatives, it is something special. When they roll out the red carpet for a relative, it is special. These are people that very excited to have Abbeville visit them on the 25th anniversary of Congres' Mondial Acadian. They could not have been warmer or friendlier. Luckily, they are bilingual. They remembered very well that on January 16, 2007, their Mayor was here at this table getting this twinning going. They still reminisce about that and they still want to continue the collaboration with the visitation of Tracadie citizens here and Abbeville visiting there. The most common visitor to Louisiana is French speaking Canadians. In 2018, their economic impact was over \$30 million to the state of Louisiana. We want those dollars in Abbeville. We discussed bringing buses of all of them down here for the Great Acadian Awakening to be held on October 3, 2020 through October 11, 2020. Abbeville will be a point of that where they will come to a concert and enjoy our food. This is something that went much more than just proclamations. They really did appreciate the Mayor's proclamation that showed what we mean to each other. They wanted me to come back and give the Mayor this Tracadie flag. They gave us historical books that they want us to display to our citizens that speak French. It is wonderful that they are so proud of their French heritage as we are proud of our French heritage. It was wonderful. We had some economic development meetings. He will be meeting with food vendors in our City to see who wants to do business in Canada. They call themselves the forever Acadians. These are people like us, the original Acadians deported by the British, they are experts in agriculture and fishing. Your family is doing well up there. The Council of Tracadie is Sonnier, Benoit and Robicheaux. In 13 months, they will be down here with us. They hope we will go back again in 2024 for the next Congres' Mondial Acadian which will be in Nova Scotia. Mayor Piazza stated that we really appreciated Councilman Broussard going up there and representing Abbeville so proudly. Councilman Plaisance has made that trip too in the past. This event only comes around every 5 years. He has been there too. It is good that we were represented there.

-03 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to authorize the Mayor to execute the annual Main Street contract between the City of Abbeville and the State of Louisiana. The motion carried unanimously.

-04 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to award the contract for grass cutting and removal of overgrown brush at 1910 East End Street to the only bidder, Tony Landry, in the amount of \$1,250.00. The motion carried unanimously.

Clay Menard, Public Works Director

- *The Event Center parking lot was repaved today and tomorrow they will asphalt the Lafitte Park entrance. The City is paying the materials on both of these and the Police Jury is providing the labor and machinery.*
- *Now may be a good time to try and get something done at the airport parking lot. Mayor Piazza asked Clay to get with Gary and Gene, Jr. regarding this. He added that Mark Poche' needs to pay for at least ½ of the materials. Clay said he would get with Gary to put an estimate together.*
- *Councilman Touchet talked about the ditch that is adjacent to the Armory. Make sure that we can do a ditch going back to the by-pass. Clay said he met with Mr. Gene and he gave him clearance.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor