

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on April 2, 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  
Bill Spearman, Police Chief  
Ike Funderburk, City Attorney  
Clay Menard, Public Works Director  
Stewart Head, Electrical Superintendent  
Richard Sysak, Street Department Foreman  
Tracette Milliman, Municipal Civil Service Personnel Director  
Richard Primeaux, Engineer  
Gene Sellers, Engineer  
Donald Sagrera, Teche-Vermilion Freshwater District  
Ralph Libersat, Vermilion Parish Representative, Teche-Vermilion  
Freshwater District Board.  
Kelli Davis, Christian Service Center  
Arlene Collee, Abbeville RV Park  
John Andrus, Coulee Kinney Drainage Board  
Linda LeBean

*Mayor Piazza asked Reverend Osborne Taylor to lead the assembly in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Mr. Donald Sagrera to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.*

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded Ms. Roslyn White to approve the minutes from the personnel interviews held on March 7, 2019, and March 19, 2019 and the special City Council meeting held on March 7, 2019. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to approve the appointment of Sean LeBlanc to the position of Police Officer with the Abbeville Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

-03 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve the allocation of two part-time employees in the Street Department for a 90-day period beginning April 15, 2019 and ending October 15, 2019, to help with grass cutting during the peak growing season. The motion carried unanimously.

-04 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to deviate from the agenda to move item #11, to grant a variance to Mount Carmel Elementary School to burn debris created during the clearing of a drainage canal, to item #2. 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.

Councilwoman White stated she met with Sister Janet of Mount Carmel Elementary, Mr. Purvis Gaspard with the Police Jury and Mr. John Andrus from the Drainage Board. We are working on the drainage for the elementary school ground. It holds a lot of water and we were looking to see what we could do to assist with this. The drainage board cleaned out the canal that leads to Coulee Kinney as well as the right-of-way. We met with Chief Mire and the piles are too big to burn. It would be a hazard to burn those. Mr. Andrus has offered to get together with the City and reduce the size of the piles. We would like to grant a variance to burn it off, one time, hopefully during the Easter break. It is too much debris for anyone to move off the site. Councilman Plaisance asked Chief Mire if they can control the embers. Chief Mire stated he did look at the piles and they are too big. If the piles are broken up into three or four smaller piles, he will have two trucks on scene. The wind cannot be more than 5-10 miles per hour so we can control it. We will keep the embers and the smoke down. Mr. Andrus stated, by law, they are not required to remove the trees. They are the liability of the landowner. In numerous situations, we have done this to help out. All we can do is supply a machine and an operator. It will take some time to break these piles down and we will need someone to tell us how small the piles need to be. The landowner must ignite the trees. The Fire Department cannot light it and the Drainage Board cannot light it. Councilwoman White asked Chief Mire to meet with Mr. Andrus.

-05 introduced by Ms. Roslyn White and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to grant a variance to Mount Carmel Elementary School to have a one-time burn of debris, on their property located on Old Kaplan Highway, that was created during the clearing of a drainage canal. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Donald Sagrera, with Teche-Vermilion Freshwater District announced the 10-year tax renewal on the May 4, 2019 ballot. It is a millage renewal. He introduced Mr. Ralph Libersat. Mr. Sagrera stated that the district came about as a result of a lot of work by our ancestors. They worked in the 50s and 60s to try to bring relief to the stagnant, polluted, salt-water intrusion things that were going on with the Vermilion River and Bayou Teche. It wasn't easy and they stuck with it and they were able to get the Federal Government to put in this project. The main feature of the project is a pumping station located on the Atchafalaya River, north of Krotz Springs. Whenever there is not adequate rainfall to keep a flow of freshwater in Bayou Teche and the Vermilion River, we can start pumps there that furnish that flow. Without this we would have stagnation, pollution and possibly salt-water intrusion. When the federal government built the project, we had to form this district so we could fund the operation of the project and have sufficient money in reserves to replace the project once it started breaking. The first tax was approved in 1970. It is a 1.5 mill property tax that is renewed every 10 years. It has been renewed every ten years since 1970. It has performed as it was expected to. The freshwater has eliminated the stagnant conditions in the river. It has eliminated salt-water intrusion and has reduced pollution significantly. We monitor 18 sites within the watershed monthly. We are on the ballot for the May 4, 2019 election. Absentee voting begins April 20, 2019. It will also be on the ballot in Iberia, Lafayette and St. Martin Parish. We are visiting with local governments in the district and any civic organizations that we can schedule. We appreciate your support on this renewal. He will stay until the end of the meeting in case anyone has any questions.

Mrs. Kelli Davis with the Christian Service Center discussed the upcoming Spirit Fest and other projects. The mission of the Christian Service Center is to feed the body, mind and spirit with love. The Christian Service Center has been doing that for over 40 years. We have a pantry where we

*provide over 500 families per month with grocery assistance. We have recently started a rapid re-housing program to serve those who are homeless. We work with local landlords to get them a house so that they are not homeless. That is program out of Lafayette called the Outreach Center. We have opened a pregnancy center. Many mothers in the community needed help with baby diapers and wipes, support and parenting skills. We served over 100 women in the last year and we are very grateful for that and how the community has been so generous. We really want to strive to be an ecumenical organization that works with everyone. It is not about being just one church. We want it to be a collaborative effort of many different churches. We can all agree on one this which is service. We want to serve one another. One of the things we came up with is Spirit Fest. This is happening this Saturday. The mission of Spirit Fest is to love people. We will have dancers coming from the Ark of the Covenant and the Knights of Columbus are providing lunch. There will many other activities. We are trying to work hard to work together and to serve our community together. One of the most exciting things is that we are working together with the Vermilion Arts Council to create a community mural. It will be on one wall of the Christian Service Center. The question will be: What is your Dream for Abbeville? Anyone who wants to participate can. The Spirit Fest is from 10:00 AM to 1:00PM.*

*Mrs. Arlene Collee presented an article about the Abbeville RV Park that was published in the Canadian Camping and Caravanning Magazine. It is a publication that has 38,000 copies distributed. Abbeville RV Park did an ad in December of 2017 and with that ad they asked that we send them some information about Abbeville. The article is in French. It is about Abbeville and the quietness of the park and the charm of the City. This magazine goes out to mostly campers and those people in December and January are planning their trips to the South because they have to get out for the winter months. They come down here and they will spend money in the community. It is a big economic boost. She went to Quebec about 15 years ago. They attended the big caravanning show which has probably 50,000 RVers that attend that show to plan their trip. They are looking for places that have a touch of French language. They can come down here and connect. Councilman Broussard recognized Mrs. Arlene Collee for the outstanding job she does in managing the RV Park and for bringing the economic benefits to the City.*

*Ms. Linda LeBean discussed her drainage concerns around her home at 406 Bernadette. Ms. LeBean appreciates the past work done in her area. It has helped but there are still some problems. Her flood insurance has gone up because the new flood maps have put her in a high-risk area. At the end of her street, the water travels at a fast rate on top of the ground. She has been told that she is in a bowl. She is afraid when there is a lot of rain because of the risk of high water. Mr. Richard Primeaux stated in 2004 when Ms. LeBean first came to the Council, he investigated this problem. She is in a depressed area and at the time there was no way for the water that was collected in her area to get out because the drainage system that was going to Maude and other areas, was higher than her property. The water had to build up to be able to get out. It created a retention area. We investigated ways to try to get the water out of there. We started at the downstream. At the end of Maude and John Hardy, there is a coulee. This is a tributary of Young's Coulee. We knew if we could get the water there, it would help her. A three-phase project was developed. The first phase was to get the water from her property into the City's drainage system. From there, we had to get the water from there to John Hardy to the parish's drainage ditch. From there we had to get the water to the coulee. Two Police Juror's put their money together. What we did along John Hardy is we replaced pipes and regraded the slope because you had some pipes that were higher and some that were lower. This made a consistent flow. The Jury was concerned about overloading the downstream and John Hardy Drive. We were limited on the size of the pipe. We also had facilities to go around. We had to negotiate with the railroad company to get an easement to put pipe and a drainage system. That took about a year to get the easement from the railroad company. We were able to get a 24-inch pipe from*

*Bernadette Street to John Hardy. Then we continued that to the coulee outfall. We cleaned out the ditches along Bernadette Street also. Occasionally the ditches silt up so in 2012 we went back in and recleaned them. There are a lot of trees in that area so often the branches fall and flow into the drainage. We have to maintain the area continuously because of this. Another situation that causes problems is a rainfall that comes down so hard that it exceeds what we have there. The pipe is limited to what we can take in. It works as long as everything is clean and we don't have a tremendous amount of water in a short amount of time. Ms. LeBean could have also raised her house and put dirt underneath. She was not able to do that at that time. The new drainage system was put in and it did work. You may be able to look at pumping water from that area to the retention area but this may be very costly. You would have to get the water across the railroad track. Mayor Piazza stated the City does not create the flood maps. The Parish does that. He asked Ms. LeBean if we could get some help from the neighborhood by keeping their ditches clean or by contacting the City when they need cleaning. The City does not have the manpower to make sure all jars and catch basins are clean every day on every street. The debris stops the flow of water. Ms. LeBean stated there is only one open ditch and the homeowners keep their yards maintained. The debris comes from the branches and trees.*

-06 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to table Mr. Ronald Gaspard to discuss youth service programs since he could not be at the meeting tonight. The motion carried unanimously.

-07 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to grant a variance for age to move a mobile home from 813 S. Lamar to 810 S. Lamar. The motion carried unanimously.

-08 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Roslyn White to approve the placement of a four-way stop sign at the corner of S. Lamar and Vernon Street. The motion carried unanimously.

*Councilwoman Broussard would like to see if there are grants available to beautify Martin Luther King Jr. Drive with sidewalks, lighting and other improvements. This would be similar to what was done in New Iberia on Hopkins Street.*

-09 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to request Sellers and Associate, Inc. and Minvielle and Associates, Inc. to research available grants to beautify Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The motion carried unanimously.

*Councilwoman White stated a Destination Downtown event will be happening on Saturday, April 13, 2019 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. It is a project that was started by Vermilion Economic Development. She sits on the board on behalf on the City so she is helping them with this endeavor. They have coordinated with many of the vacant building owners in the immediate walkable downtown area to have an open house for one afternoon. Some of the buildings that have been renovated and repurposed will also open. Chip Cantrell will open his home to walk through. The old Concord will open since they are currently renovating. This will inspire investors and real estate people that come to town that day to look at the available properties. A lot of people are happy that we are posting this. The Vermilion Economic Development district is doing the marketing. They have partnered with Sunrise Realty. They are putting it out on their websites. We are also marketing this on social media.*

*Mayor Piazza read the proclamation aloud for the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary to the National Fair Housing Law. This will be recognized the entire month of April 2019.*

-10 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to approve the proclamation for the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the National Fair Housing Law. The motion carried unanimously.

**Plaisance/T. Broussard**  
**Resolution R19-09**

*A joint resolution of the City of Abbeville and the Vermilion Parish Police Jury to request DOTD to take all necessary actions to keep the Louisiana Highway 14 By-Pass bridge in service and to minimize the times that said bridge is closed for maintenance.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

*Councilwoman Broussard discussed the maintenance and grass cutting of LaFitte Drive-In Park. Mr. Funderburk stated that the current contract will expire today and the contractor has notified us that they do not want to renew it. Mayor Piazza asked Councilman Touchet to see if Tony Meaux can cut the grass. Councilman Touchet stated he did speak with him but he would bushog that. We don't know if that is appropriate for this type of park. Mayor Piazza stated the property is too large for one person to cut with one zero-turn mower. Councilman Plaisance suggested that Don's Lawn Service could do some and Tony Meaux could do other. Councilwoman Broussard stated that she wants Russell Alexis to get that contract. Ike suggested that a small committee of two get together to discuss the options and bring it back to the City Council. Councilman Plaisance stated he chairs the Park Committee and will look at the options along with Councilwoman Broussard. Mayor Piazza stated the park is looking great and it can easily be opened on Saturday's and Sunday's. We have slabs poured and tables coming in. We have water and the dog park is ready. He is ready to open it. Councilwoman White asked about the signage at the park. Mayor Piazza stated there are a lot of signs out there. The only additional sign that he is planning on putting there is where the benches will be. He will put a sign that says "No one beyond this point". We will put that right in front of the levee so that no one goes on the levee. We already have the "No swimming" and "No fishing" signs installed. Mr. Gene Sellers stated that they are in the process of laying the force main for the sewer project. We are re-routing the road of LaFitte Drive-In Park further South before you open the park. We need two weeks to do that.*

-11 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Ms. Terry Broussard to table the discussion and approval of maintenance and grass cutting at LaFitte Drive-In Park and hours of operation. The motion carried unanimously.

-12 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to approve the quotation in the amount of \$36,467.76 from Sol Power Lines for the re-conduct for the By-pass substation. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *There is no one living in the large military tent in Councilwoman White's district. They are using it to develop an apparatus to train dogs.*
- *The left turning signal and lane on John Hardy to the By-pass is working well. He thanked Councilman Touchet for bringing this up.*

Councilwoman Terry Broussard

- *Thanked everyone for attending the meeting tonight and for taking an interest in the City.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *The Vermilion Relay for Life (the people who fight cancer throughout the parish) will begin at 6:00 PM, Saturday in Magdalen Square.*

Councilwoman Roslyn White

- *Wanted to tell Chief Mire that the landscaping and the new gutters on the Hebert Fire Station look great.*

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

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk  
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza  
Mayor