

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
OF THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA,
HELD ON TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024 AT 6:00 P.M.
IN THE TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM, 200 VERNON STEVENS BLVD., VIDALIA,
LOUISIANA**

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana, met, in regular session, in the Town Hall Meeting Room on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

There were present: Mayor Buz Craft, Aldermen Jon Betts, Tommy Probst, Brent Smith, Tron McCoy and Robert Gardner.

There were also present: Piara Wilson, Municipal Clerk; Debra Moak, Municipal Accountant; Jay LaSyone, Municipal Manager; and members of the press.

The meeting was opened by the Mayor and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present, followed by the invocation given by Alderman Betts.

A quorum being present, the Mayor declared the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana, to be duly convened, in regular session, as the governing authority of said municipality, and opened the meeting for the conduct of business.

After being reviewed, the typed minutes of the regular meeting of May 14, 2024, were approved with no changes. The motion for approval of the minutes was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried by all present.

The Mayor then opened the floor for public comments on current agenda items. There being no one who wished to comment on current agenda items, the Mayor noting that fact, closed the floor for public comments on current agenda items. The Mayor recognized Todd Stephens - General Manager with Syrah Technologies and thanked them for the work they are doing in Vidalia.

Agenda Item No. 1 was the presentation of the financial statement for May, 2024. The Mayor called on the Municipal Accountant, Debra Moak, CPA, who presented the financial statement. As customary, she began by explaining the various fund balances, which summaries included a comparison of actual expenses to budget expenses. The summary sheets, previously given to the Aldermen, were reviewed in detail, and she reported on the various positive and negative fund balances and indicated the net changes in the various funds through May 31, 2024. As usual, she reminded the Aldermen that those statements were provided to them in their meeting packet. At the end of her presentation, there being no questions or comments, the Mayor thanked Mrs. Moak for her usual thorough presentation.

Agenda Item No. 2 was Board discussion and vote on approval of occupational license applications. The first application was by Leigh Ann Chafon for "LUXE WELLNESS AND SPA, LLC" at 200 Carter St. There being no comments or requirements, on motion for approval by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman McCoy, and unanimously carried by those present, the application was approved. The second application was for "CHRISTUS TRINITY CLINIC" at 1637 Carter St. There being no comments or questions, on motion for approval by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried by all present, the application was approved. The third application was by Joseph Merrill for "CONCORDIA TIRE MART,

LLC, DBA MISS LOU CARTS” at 1814 Carter St. There being no comments or questions, on motion for approval by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried by those present, the application was approved.

Agenda Item No. 3 was discussion on setting dates for two (2) public hearings to receive public input on proposed projects and possible alternative uses of surplus Hydro revenues. After a short discussion by the Board on when to have those meetings, it was the consensus of the Board, by unanimous vote, to have the meetings on Tuesday and Thursday of the third week in August. Those dates would be Tuesday, August 20th and Thursday, August 22nd, 2024 at 5:00pm.

Agenda Item No. 4 was presentation on current millage issues for Town of Vidalia by Jeannie Archer, Concordia Parish Tax Assessor. Due to being sick, Ms. Archer was not in attendance. The Mayor discussed Ms. Archer’s recommendation setting the tax millages. The Mayor recommended that the rate should stay the same at 3.37 mills, which is the lowest in the State.

Agenda Item No. 5 was Board discussion to set millage being levied for the 2024 tax roll on all property subject to taxation by the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana. There being no discussion by the Board, the Mayor moved to the next Agenda item.

(A COPY OF THE RESOLUTION IS ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF)

Agenda Item No. 6 was Board adoption of millage rate for 2024. The Mayor asked for a motion to adopt the Resolution, as presented at the meeting, to adopt 3.37 mills as the millage rate for 2024. The motion was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 7 was Board discussion vote on Vidalia Police Department personnel:

Craig “Sam” King (Reserve Officer to Full-Time Investigator)
Chris King (Full-Time Patrolman to Reserve Officer)

After announcing the agenda item, the Mayor asked if there were any comments or questions or any Board discussion to be had. There being none, a motion to approve Craig “Sam” King as Full-Time Investigator was made by Alderman Gardner and seconded by Alderman McCoy, and unanimously carried. A motion to approve Chris King as a Reserve Officer was made by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 8 was Board discussion and vote to approve Aldermen travel for LMA Annual Convention in August. During discussion, the Mayor expressed that all Alderman travel for the next 4 years will be approved by the Board. The Mayor asked which Board Members would like to attend. Alderman Gardner stated he would be in attendance, Alderman Probst stated that he could possibly go and Alderman McCoy stated that he may attend the Conference. Motion to approve was made by Aldermen Betts and seconded by Alderman McCoy and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 9 was Board discussion and vote to approve bids for lease purchase on a new Garbage Truck. The Mayor spoke to the Board on the need for a new garbage truck. There being no comments or questions, the Mayor proceeded to open the three bids received. The first bid from Scott Truck, LLC of Monroe, LA., for \$264,758.00 with additional information on a 36 month lease and buy-back; the second bid was by Manuel Shows of Bay Springs, MS., for \$223,091.00 with information for 36 month lease and buy-back; the third bid was also by Manuel Shows, for \$234,771.00 There followed a discussion by the Board over the procedure to follow

since bidding out equipment in these uncertain times for delivery, etc. require additional consideration. After the discussion, it was moved by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman McCoy, and unanimously carried by those present, that the bid would be awarded to Manuel Shows for \$223,091.00 after staff and Mr. Randy Roberts evaluate the bids to include the bid specifications and such other items as delivery dates.

Agenda Item No. 10. was Board discussion on compensation of Municipal Officers. The Mayor discussed the approval of pay increases that were made by the Board during the Budget Meeting, approving all the employees and other officers compensated under Ordinance to receive an increase of 5%. It was also discussed in the Budget Meeting to increase the Aldermen pay to \$1,000 per month subject to attendance. Aldermen will still receive their monthly payment (\$774.31) plus the 5%, however; any Alderman that does not attend a meeting will not receive the difference to make up the \$1,000. Alderman Gardner expressed his concerns for the Ordinance stating that it was unconstitutional and that he did his due diligence by speaking with three attorneys on the matter as well as individuals from LMA. Alderman Probst expressed his concerns stating that there should be some clarity on the stipulations of missed meetings; that some criteria should be put in place. Motion was made by Alderman Smith to approve the Aldermen pay to be increased to \$1,000 subject to attendance and seconded by Aldermen Betts. A roll call vote was called and is as follows: FOR: Aldermen Betts, Smith, McCoy and Probst. NO: Alderman Gardner. The vote was 4 FOR and 1 NO and the motion carried. The Mayor then opened the floor for discussion for compensation for the Municipal Clerk, Police Chief and Mayor. After board discussion, Aldermen McCoy made the motion to increase the Municipal Clerk compensation to \$62,500. The motion was seconded by Alderman Gardner. A roll call vote was called and the roll call vote was as follows: FOR: Aldermen Betts, Smith, McCoy, Gardner and Probst. The motion carried.

Agenda Item No. 11 was Board discussion and vote on appointment Mayor Pro Tempore for the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana. The Mayor, after advising the Board of the purpose of Agenda Item 11, Alderman McCoy, stated that he wanted to nominate Alderman Jon Betts as Mayor Pro Tempore. The motion was seconded by Alderman Smith. A roll call vote was called and the roll call vote was as follows: FOR: Aldermen Betts, Smith, McCoy, Gardner and Probst. The motion carried.

Agenda Item No. 12 was Board discussion and vote on Mayor's recommendations for the following appointments. The Mayor's recommendation for: A. Municipal Clerk is Piara Wilson. Motion was made by Alderman McCoy to approve the Mayor's recommendation of Piara Wilson as Municipal Clerk and seconded by Alderman Gardner. A roll call vote was recorded as follows: YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Gardner, McCoy, Probst and Smith. The motion carried. Before appointing the Municipal Attorney, the Mayor expressed his gratitude to George Murray and his family for the work that George Murray has done for the Town of Vidalia as being the Attorney. B. Municipal Attorney – Smith, Taliaferro & Purvis Law Firm of Jonesville, La. Motion was made by Alderman Probst and seconded by Alderman Betts. A roll call vote was called and is as follows: FOR: Aldermen Betts, McCoy, Probst, and Smith; NO: Alderman Gardner. The motion carried. C. Municipal Prosecutor – Brad Burget. Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman McCoy. A roll call vote was called and is as follows: FOR: Alderman Betts, McCoy, Probst, and Smith. NO: Alderman Gardner. The motion carried. D. Head of Street Department – Randy Roberts. Motion was made by Alderman McCoy and seconded by Alderman Probst. A roll call vote was recorded as follows: YEAS: Aldermen Betts, McCoy, Probst and Smith. NO: Alderman Gardner. Alderman Gardner voted no due to the experience and qualifications of other employees that should have been nominated. The motion carried. The Mayor also recognized the Supervisors for the Street and Sanitation Dept. E. Head of Utility Dept. – Cornell Lewis. Alderman Gardner expressed his concern for the Mayor making such a recommendation as it is not required by law. Motion was made by Alderman McCoy and seconded by Alderman Probst. A roll call vote

was as follows: Alderman Betts, Gardner, McCoy, Probst and Smith. The motion carried. F. Chief of Fire Department – Johnny Evans. Motion made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Gardner. A roll call vote was as follows: YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Gardner, McCoy, Probst and Smith. The motion carried. G. Town Legal Journal – Concordia Sentinel. Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Probst. The motion carried. H. Auditing Firm – Silas Simmons. Motion was made by Alderman Smith and seconded by Alderman Betts. The motion carried.

The Mayor then announced that there being no further business on the agenda, he was asking for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Smith seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried by those present.

The meeting was declared adjourned.

/s/ Piara Wilson
PIARA WILSON, MUNICIPAL CLERK

/s/ Buz Craft
BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION SETTING MILLAGE BEING LEVIED ON THE 2024 TAX ROLL ON ALL PROPERTIES SUBJECT TO TAXATION BY THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA.

MILLAGE

General Alimony

3.37 mills

BE IT RESOLVED that the property administrative officials of the Parish of Concordia, State of Louisiana, be and they are hereby empowered, authorized, and directed to spread said taxes, as hereinabove set forth, upon the assessment roll of said Parish for the year 2024 and that the tax herein levied shall become a permanent lien and privilege on all property subject to taxation as herein set forth, and the collection thereof shall be enforceable in the manner provided by law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the foregoing Resolution was called for a vote on the adoption thereof, and the vote was recorded as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Probst, Smith, Gardner and McCoy.

NAYS: NONE.

ABSTAINING: NONE.

ABSENT: NONE.

And the resolution was declared adopted on this the 9th day of July, 2024.

/s/ Piara Wilson
PIARA WILSON, MUNICIPAL CLERK

/s/ Buz Craft
BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR