

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE  
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
OF THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA,  
HELD ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2023 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, September 12, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

There were present: Mayor Buz Craft, Aldermen Jon Betts, Brent Smith, Robert Gardner, Tommy Probst, and Alderwoman Rosa I. Demby.

There were also present: Piara Wilson, Municipal Clerk; Debra Moak, Municipal Accountant; George C. Murray, Jr., Municipal Attorney; 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 Probst.

A quorum being present, the Mayor declared the 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 town meeting of August 8, 2023, were approved with no changes. The motion for the approval of the minutes was made by Alderwoman Demby, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried.

The Mayor then asked if anyone had comments on current agenda items. Noting that no one had any questions or comments, he advised that he would continue with the formal agenda.

Agenda Item No. 1 was the presentation of the financial statement for July, 2023. The Mayor then called on the Municipal Accountant, Debra Moak, CPA, who presented the financial statement. She began by explaining the various fund balances, which summaries included a comparison of actual expenses to budget expenses. Then, the summary sheets, previously given to the Aldermen, were reviewed in detail, including a report on the positive and negative fund balances and indicated the net changes in the various funds. She then reported on which revenues are under budget and which are over budget at this time. She next brought the Aldermen up to date on several items of interest. Those items included: cash in the bank; investments; total assets and liabilities; combined revenues and expenses, showing a change in net position of a positive \$213,151.00 excess; and she concluded by noting that the adopted annual budget report for 2023-2024 has been finalized and issued to Department Heads and Aldermen. The Mayor then asked if anyone had any questions for Mrs. Moak. There were no questions and he thanked Mrs. Moak for her presentation.

Agenda Item No. 2 was Board discussion and vote on approval of occupational license applications. The first application was by Ibiahim Alnugger for "7 MART 4 INC." at 506 Carter Street. There being no questions or comments, a motion to grant the application was made by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried. The next application was by Piara Brown for "WILSONS SWEETS, LLC", d/b/a "CRAVE WILSONS SWEETS" at 406 Cedar Street. There being no questions or comments, a motion to grant the application was made by Alderwoman Demby, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried. The third application was by Kevin LeBlanc for "The Rusty Bucket" at 400 Carter Street, with an accompanying sign

application. There being no questions or comments, the motion to grant both the occupational license and the sign application was made by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried. The final application was by Alyandra Paz for “Pepe Betos Mexican Kitchen & Cantina” for a Class A beer and liquor permit at 1102 Carter Street. There being no questions or comments, a motion to grant the permit was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 3 was outdoor sign applications. The only application was by Todd Broussard for a 160” wide by 51” lighted sign to advertise “Johnny’s Pizza House” at 1661 Carter Street. There being no questions or comments, a motion was made to grant application, in accordance with the attached picture as installed, was made by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 4 was Board discussion and introduction of an Ordinance supplementing and amending an Ordinance adopted on January 14, 2020, authorizing the issuance of electric utility revenue bonds, Series 2020, of the Town of Vidalia, State of Louisiana; and providing for other matters in connection with. After announcing Agenda Item No. 4, the Mayor reminded the Board that this is not an action item but is the formal introduction of the Ordinance. He did advise that a copy would be available at Town Hall for inspection and would be voted on, after notice and a public hearing, at the next regular Town meeting.

Agenda Item No. 5 was Board discussion and introduction of an Ordinance to ban the use of *Mitragyna Speciosa* Korth (“KRATOM”) within the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana. The Mayor again reminded the Board that this item is not an action item but is the formal introduction of the Ordinance and that a copy will be available at Town Hall for inspection and would be voted on, after a public hearing, at the next regular Town meeting.

Agenda Item No. 6 was Board discussion and vote on approval for Vidalia Police Department. Tiffany Simpson – Administrative Assistant. After announcing the agenda item, there being no questions or comments, a motion to approve the hire of Tiffany Simpson as Administrative Assistant was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 7 was DOTD Sidewalk Grant Presentation (Loran Scott – Town Grant Administrator & Ana-Alicia Gouge – LSU AG Center). After introductory remarks by the Mayor, Ms. Scott addressed the Mayor and Board and those attending, from the podium, and made a Power Point presentation on “Vidalia’s Safe Accessible Streets Project (VSAP). After the very thorough Power Point presentation, she indicated that she had hand-outs on the power point and that the project would be done in 3 phases, the first being North of Carter Street, the second phase being along Carter Street and the third phase being South of Carter Street. She also noted that this will be a several year program. She then introduced Ms. Gouge, who is the LSU AG Center Agent, who spoke on the AG Center’s involvement with the project and on obtaining various planning grants. Following the formal presentation, there was a short question and answer period and, following that, the Mayor made his final remarks and thanked the presenters for an excellent presentation.

Agenda Item No. 8 was Board discussion and approval of bids on Town of Vidalia surplus vehicle. After announcing the agenda item, and explaining the procedure to be followed, the Mayor proceeded to open the 3 bids on the 2006 Dodge Ram pick-up. The first bid was by Danny Merrill in the amount of \$2,156.00; the second bid was by Frankie Carroll for \$987.53; and the third bid was from JJ Merchant for \$2,177.71. Following a short discussion, a resolution was offered by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried to award the bid to JJ Merchant, in the amount of \$2,177.71.

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

Agenda Item No. 9 was Board discussion and approval of a resolution awarding the bid for Vidalia Industrial Park Substation – D. A. Biglane Road to B & B Electrical Utility Contractors. The Mayor then advised the Board that two (2) bids had been received and were opened and read aloud on August 31, 2023, for this project. The bids were as follows: B & B Electrical Utility Contractors in the amount of \$1,136,698.69 and from E. P. Breaux Utility Services in the amount of \$1,349,310.00. Following a short discussion, a Resolution was offered by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Betts, to award the bid to B & B Electrical Utility Contractors in the amount of \$1,136,698.69. The vote thereon was unanimous.  
(A COPY OF THE RESOLUTION IS ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF).

Agenda Item No. 10 was Board discussion and approval on a Resolution authorizing Town of Vidalia to submit a Capital Outlay request for utility system upgrades for 2024-2025. The Mayor explained the need for the Resolution and, following that explanation, a Resolution was offered by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and unanimously carried, authorizing the Town of Vidalia to submit a Capital Outlay request for utility system upgrades, as presented at the meeting.  
(A COPY OF THE RESOLUTION IS ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF).

Agenda Item No. 11 was Board discussion and vote on determination and fixing of the amount of excess Hydroelectric Revenues to be distributed as rebates to the retail utility customers of the Town of Vidalia. The Mayor again explained the procedures to be followed for the Board to determine and fix the amount of excess Hydro Revenues to be distributed as rebates to the retail electric customers of the Town of Vidalia. Following his explanation, there being no questions or comments, a motion to fix the amount of excess Hydroelectric Revenues to be distributed as rebates to the retail utility customers of the Town of Vidalia at the maximum of 50% was made by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 12 was Board discussion of funding from excess Hydroelectric Revenues for Town Projects at public hearings held August 22, 2023, and August 24, 2023. The Mayor then briefly reminded the Board of the procedure that the Hydro Ordinance dictates be followed in funding projects from excess Hydro Revenues. The Mayor told the Board that there are about \$12 Million Dollars in excess funds, but he believes that it would be foolish to spend it all this year. There followed a discussion of the Town's current needs; future needs; and the need to put a limit on the amount of money to be spent this year. Following that discussion, the Mayor recommended that a maximum amount of \$3 Million Dollars be allocated for this year and that the Board meet within the next week or two, one or two at a time, to look at what projects to fund and come up with a list of projects. The Mayor further recommended that there could then be a Special Meeting to unveil their decisions. The Board concurred with the Mayor's recommendations. The Mayor then asked for a motion to fix the maximum amount to be spent this year at \$3 Million Dollars. A motion was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and unanimously carried, to fix the maximum to spend at \$3 Million Dollars.

Agenda Item No. 13 was adjournment. The Mayor noting that there was no further agenda items, asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and unanimously carried.

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**PIARA WILSON, MUNICIPAL CLERK**

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**BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR**

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer*

The following resolution was offered by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst:

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the following bids were opened and read aloud on September 12, 2023, for the sale of the 2006 Dodge Ram pickup:

DANNY MERRILL -- \$ 2,156.00;  
FRANKIE CARROLL --- \$ 987.53 and  
J. J. MERCHANT ----- \$ 2,177.71

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town of Vidalia award the bid to J. J. MERCHANT, in the amount of \$2,177.71.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Mayor is authorized to execute any and all documents necessary in connection with this sale.

**THIS RESOLUTION** adopted this 12th day of September, 2023, with the vote recorded as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Probst, Gardner, Smith and Alderwoman Demby.

NAYS: NONE.

ABSENT: NONE.

AND THE RESOLUTION was adopted this 12<sup>h</sup> day of September, 2023.

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PIARA WILSON, MUNICIPAL CLERK

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BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR

The following resolution was offered by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Probst:

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the following bids were opened and read aloud on August 31, 2023, for VIDALIA INDUSTRIAL PARK SUBSTATION – D. A. BIGLANE ROAD. The bids received were as follows:

B & B ELECTRICAL & UTILITY CONTRACTORS ----- \$1,136,698.69

E. P. BREAUX UTILITY SERVICES ----- \$1,349,310.00.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town of Vidalia awards the project to B&B ELECTRICAL & UTILITY CONTRACTORS, in the amount of \$1,136,698.69.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Mayor is authorized to execute any and all documents including contracts, estimates and change orders between the TOWN OF VIDALIA and B & B ELECTRICAL & UTILITY CONTRACTORS.

**THIS RESOLUTION** adopted this 12th day of September, 2023, with the vote recorded as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Probst, Gardner, Smith and Alderwoman Demby.

NAYS: NONE.

ABSENT: NONE.

AND THE RESOLUTION was adopted this 12<sup>h</sup> day of September, 2023.

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PIARA WILSON, MUNICIPAL CLERK

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BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR

The following resolution was offered by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Probst:

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the following bids were opened and read aloud on August 31, 2023, for VIDALIA INDUSTRIAL PARK SUBSTATION – D. A. BIGLANE ROAD. The bids received were as follows:

B & B ELECTRICAL & UTILITY CONTRACTORS ----- \$1,136,698.69

E. P. BREAUX UTILITY SERVICES ----- \$1,349,310.00.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town of Vidalia awards the project to B&B ELECTRICAL & UTILITY CONTRACTORS, in the amount of \$1,136,698.69.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Mayor is authorized to execute any and all documents including contracts, estimates and change orders between the TOWN OF VIDALIA and B & B ELECTRICAL & UTILITY CONTRACTORS.

**THIS RESOLUTION** adopted this 12th day of September, 2023, with the vote recorded as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Probst, Gardner, Smith and Alderwoman Demby.

NAYS: NONE.

ABSENT: NONE.

AND THE RESOLUTION was adopted this 12<sup>h</sup> day of September, 2023.

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PIARA WILSON, MUNICIPAL CLERK

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BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR

The following Resolution was offered by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderwoman Demby:

## **RESOLUTION**

### 2024 - 2025 Capital Outlay Request Utility System Upgrades

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Vidalia is submitting a Capital Outlay request for utility system upgrades, planning, acquisition, construction and equipment improvements through the assistance of Bryant Hammett & Associates, L.L.C.; and

**WHEREAS**, bond funding, other than state general obligation bond funding, is not available to the Town of Vidalia to fund said project; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Vidalia has exhausted all efforts at local option funding for said project; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Vidalia has no budgeted funds for non-recurring appropriations; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Vidalia has no surplus funding or uncommitted cash available;

**SO THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town of Vidalia does hereby certify to the Commissioner of the Division of Administration that state general obligation bond funding is needed for said project due to the fact that sufficient funding is not otherwise available to the Town of Vidalia.

**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED** by UNANIMOUS vote this 12<sup>TH</sup> day of September, 2023.

Town of Vidalia

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Buz Craft, Mayor

Attest:

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Piara Wilson, Municipal Clerk