

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
OF THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA,
HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2021 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, April 13, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

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

There was absent: NONE.

There were also present: Jay LaSyone, Town Clerk; Debra Moak, Town Accountant; George C. Murray, Jr., Town Attorney and Pam Middleton, Executive Secretary to the Mayor.

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 March 9, 2021, were approved. The motion for approval of those minutes was made by Alderwoman Demby, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried.

The Mayor then opened the floor for public comments on current agenda items. Commenting on Agenda Item 9, one person asked when was the last time the Aldermen got a raise and was told probably in 2014. On the same item, another person asked if there had been any comparisons made with salaries of Aldermen in other towns. The Mayor responded that comparisons can be made but that it is difficult to compare Aldermen's salaries from the different municipalities because of the varying sizes; services provided by the Towns and their budgets. He added that he has made none because the Aldermen themselves set their salaries. He then explained the process for passing an Ordinance to increase Aldermen's salaries. At the conclusion of the comments and questions, the Mayor closed the floor for comments.

Agenda Item No. 1 was the presentation of the financial statement for February, 2021. 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 and she reported on the various positive and negative fund balances and indicated the net changes in the various funds through February 28, 2021. She reminded the Aldermen that those statements were provided to them in their meeting packet. She advised the Board that meetings have been held with the Department Heads concerning budgets and that she believes the budget will be ready to be presented at the May regular meeting. There being no questions, the Mayor thanked Mrs. Moak for her thorough presentation.

Agenda Item No. 2 was Board discussion and vote on approval of occupational license application by Bernice King Gaines for "BK Bookkeeping & Tax Solutions, LLC" at 210 S. Oak

Street. Alderman Gardner asked if this was a home occupation and whether or not the applicant has been told that her utilities will increase. The Mayor advised that it is a home occupation; that he believes she has so been advised of the utilities but that he will make sure she knows about that. There being no further questions or comments, on motion by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and unanimously carried, the application was approved.

Agenda Item No. 3 was Board discussion and vote on approval of Outdoor Sign Application by Adam Scott and Drew Easley for “Vidalia Estates Mobile Home Community”, at 113 Clark Drive, at the intersection of Clark Drive and Texas Street, at the entrance to the mobile home park. There being no discussion or questions, a motion was made by Aldermen Betts, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and unanimously carried, to approve the application for the sign in accordance with the exhibits to the application.

Agenda Item No. 4 was Board discussion and vote on approval of liquor permit for 2021 by Brenda Floyd for “BB’S FISH FRY” at 1100 Carter Street. There being no discussion or questions, a motion to approve the application was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 5 was presentation for Board approval of proposed contract between Town of Vidalia and Air Med Care Network (Air EVAC) for 2021. The Mayor then recognized Ms. Sherry Eidt, Membership Sales Manager for Air EVAC, who had spoken to the Board last month about this matter, who spoke to the Board and answered questions. She reminded the Board of last month’s meeting at which she spoke and explained the proposal for this year. She stated that there are two parts to this issue and that the first part is coverage for residents of the Town. The cost of that would be, as she told them last month, \$19,394.00. She went on to explain about the upgrades. She also reviewed with the Board the number of times that Air EVAC trips were made. Alderman Gardner commented that his family had used the service. Following the presentation, a motion was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, to approve the contract for 2021 as it pertained to all Vidalia residents. Next, she spoke to the Board about the second part which would be adding employees who live outside Vidalia’s City limits. She advised that that would cost a substantial amount of money and that her suggestion is that the Board consider making such coverage an additional benefit of employment rather than under the contract relating to Vidalia residents. Following a short discussion, it was made by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Gardner, that the Town consider the proposal to make the coverage an additional employee benefit and that the Mayor’s office proceed to consider the matter. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 6 was Board discussion and vote on approval of disposition of Town Departments’ surplus equipment & vehicles. The Mayor and Department heads reviewed the list of surplus vehicles/equipment which was in the Alderman’s packets. The Department heads commented on the condition of the vehicles and suggestions for how to proceed and what to bid. Following the discussion between the Department heads and the Board, a motion was made by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried, that all of the surplus vehicles/equipment should be put out for bid and that if there are no bids on anything, then they could be salvaged.

Agenda Item No. 7 was Board discussion and vote on approval of a Resolution on agreement for emergency assistance by and between LEPA Member Cities. The Mayor explained to the Board the need for the Resolution because the Town had acquired assistance from other municipalities to help with the clean up after the ice storm. Following a short discussion, a motion was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried, to approve the Resolution

on agreement for emergency assistance by and between the LEPA Member Cities, as presented at the meeting.

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

Agenda Item No. 8 was Board discussion and vote on awarding of bid for new garbage truck. The Mayor began by explaining the procedure for opening bids which would be accepted subject to the approval of the bid meeting all requiring specifications. Mr. Staggs spoke concerning the need to review the specifications once the bids have been opened and provisionally accepted. The Mayor proceeded to open the bids in the following order:

(1) By Rivercity Hydraulics, purchase -- \$201,819.00 with option for lease for 36 months at \$3,125.22, 2.29%, with \$100,000.00 buy back;

(2) Scott Equipment – purchase ----- \$ 199,187.00, with a 36 month lease for \$3,049.50, 2.29%, with a \$100,000.00 buy back; and

(3) PAC-MAC – purchase ---- \$ 170,249.00, with a 36 month, guaranteed buy back of \$98,214.00, but with NO LEASE TERMS.

Following the opening and reading of the bids, there was a short discussion concerning the fact that the PAC-MAC bid did not appear, on its face, to meet the bid specifications. The Board concluded that it did not meet the specifications and the bid would not be considered. Following that discussion, it was moved by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried, to accept the bid of Scott Equipment, subject to the bid meeting all required specifications.

Agenda Item No. 9 was Board discussion regarding salaries for members of the Board of Aldermen. The Mayor initially advised the Board of the procedures for the Aldermen to increase their salaries during their terms. He stated that an Ordinance would have to be submitted at one meeting and then would be considered, possibly at the next Town meeting, after having a public hearing on its passage. He indicated that it would be appropriate for the Board to discuss the matter. Alderwoman Demby first spoke concerning the salaries. She advise of the current salaries and of the several municipalities that she had compared Vidalia with, many having high salaries and some low salaries, but said that she would propose to increase the salary from approximately \$8,000.00 per year to between \$12,000.00 and \$14,000.00. Following her presentation, Alderman Smith spoke to advise that he did not believe that it would be fair to raise the salaries at this time and that he would not vote to raise them. Alderman Betts next spoke to say that he is satisfied with the salaries as they are at present. Alderman Gardner next spoke in favor of raises and indicated the amount of time which he spends doing Town's work, and feels that raises would be in order. Alderman Probst spoke last to advise that he is okay with the salary as it is and would not vote for a raise. Following the comments by the Board members, Alderwoman Demby advised that since it is apparent that any proposed Ordinance would not pass, that she would not pursue the matter at this time. It was moved by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried, to proceed with the meeting without taking further action.

Agenda Item No. 10 was Board approval to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel matter of Vidalia Police Department. There being no discussion or questions on the matter, a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss the personnel matter was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried. The Mayor and Board then retired from the meeting Chamber to go into Executive Session.

Agenda Item No. 11 was Board approval to exit Executive Session. The Mayor and Board, on returning to the meeting chambers, took their places and a motion to exit Executive Session was

made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried. The Mayor announced that they have exited from Executive Session and have resumed the regular meeting.

Agenda Item No. 12 was Board vote on recommended course of action involving personnel matter of Vidalia Police Department discussed during Executive Session. The Mayor asked for a motion on the recommended course of action. A motion to accept the Police Chief's action taken involving the matter which was the subject of the Executive Session was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried.

There being no additional agenda items, a motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and unanimously carried, and the meeting was declared adjourned.

/s/ Jay LaSyone
JAY LASYONE, TOWN CLERK

/s/ Buz Craft
BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR

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

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Energy and Power Authority (LEPA) has proposed

an AGREEMENT FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE BY AND BETWEEN THE LEPA MEMBER CITIES, which Agreement is made to be effective on the month, date and year set forth on the respective signature pages by and among the Cities to be attached to the Agreement; and which Agreement was signed by LEPA and attached to the original of the Agreement on July 23, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Vidalia, a Member City of LEPA, wishes to avail itself of the benefits as provided by said Agreement, and to become a Requesting and/or Assisting Utility.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Buz Craft, Mayor of the Town of Vidalia, is hereby authorized to sign the signature page accepting and agreeing to the terms of the Agreement for Emergency Assistance by and between the LEPA Member Cities; and to forward same to LEPA to be attached to the original of said Agreement.

This Resolution adopted this 13th day of April, 2021, with the vote recorded as follows:

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

NAYS: NONE.

ABSENT: NONE.

ABSTAINING: NONE.

And the resolution was declared adopted on this the 13th day of April, 2021.

/s/ Jay LaSyone
JAY LASYONE, TOWN CLERK

/s/ Buz Craft
BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR