

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE  
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
OF THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA,  
HELD ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020 AT 6:00 P.M.  
AT VIDALIA CONFERENCE & CONVENTION CENTER, 112 FRONT STREET,  
VIDALIA, LOUISIANA**

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana, met, in regular session, at the Vidalia Conference & Convention Center, 112 Front Street, Vidalia, Louisiana, on Tuesday, August 11, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

There were present: Mayor Buz Craft, Aldermen Jon Betts, Robert Gardner, Brent Smith, Tommy Probst 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, 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 from the regular meeting of July 14, 2020, and the special meeting of July 17, 2020, were approved. The motion for approval for both sets of minutes was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 1, the Mayor called on the Town Accountant, Debra Moak, who presented the financial statement for the month ending June 30, 2020. She, as customary, explained the various fund balances, which summaries included a comparison of actual expenses to budget expenses. She also reviewed the summary sheets, previously given to the Aldermen, and reported on the various positive and negative fund balances and indicated the net changes in the various funds through June 30, 2020. She then specifically reported on the amounts in the various fund balances, and reminded the Aldermen that those statements were provided to them in their meeting packet. Upon the conclusion of Mrs. Moak's presentation, the Mayor thanked her for her usual thorough presentation. Alderman Probst then had questions of the Mayor and Mrs. Moak as to why certain debts which he believes have been owed by several persons for a considerable period of time, have not been paid. He also questioned what processes were in place to recover those funds. Following that discussion, Mrs. Destiny Robb had comments and questions concerning the Agenda item relating to a discussion of the Vidalia-Natchez bridge lighting project. She had concerns over the need to re-light the bridge and what financial stresses would be put on the Town and suggestion for possible monetary savings.

Agenda Item No. 2 was the consideration of occupational license applications. The first application was by JerRees Dangerfield for "All Things Glam" at 1109 Carter Street, Suite 8. There being no questions or comments, it was moved by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, that the application be granted. The second application was by Ursula S. Brooks for "Resuscitate L.L.C.", at 4008 Carter Street. There being no questions or comments, it was moved by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, that the application be granted. The third application was by Angela Goeggle for "Shades Studio Hair Salon" at 2000 Carter Street. There being no questions or comments, it was moved by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and unanimously carried, that the application be granted. The fourth application was by Rhonda Huff for "Southern Grace Consignment" at 1611 Carter Street. There being no comments or questions, it was moved by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Smith and unanimously carried, that the application be granted. The final application was by Bobbi Danielle Nelson for "Bless This Mess" at 1611 Carter Street. There being no questions or

comments, it was moved by Alderwoman Demby, seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried, that the application be granted.

Agenda Item No. 3 was the consideration of outdoor sign applications. The first application was by Brenda Floyd for an unlighted sign advertising B B's Fish Fry to be placed on the pole under the existing sign, as shown on the materials submitted with the application. There being no questions or comments, it was moved by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried, that the application be granted. The second application was by Danielle Nelson for an unlighted sign to be placed on the front of the business at 1611 Carter Street, advertising "Bless This Mess #2", as shown on the materials submitted with the application. There being no questions or comments, it was moved by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried, that the application be granted. The final application was by Southern Grace Consignment for an unlighted sign to be placed on the building at 1611 Carter Street, as shown on the materials submitted with the application. There being no questions or comments, it was moved by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and unanimously carried, that the application be granted.

Agenda Item No. 4 was discussion of Vidalia-Natchez Bridge lighting. The Mayor announced that recently elected Natchez Mayor Dan Gibson had asked to speak at the meeting but was not yet present. He then began to give a history of the project and the fact that he had received many favorable comments about the lighting project and had been in discussion with Natchez officials on re-lighting the bridge. He advised that he understands that the Mississippi Department of Transportation is considering the re-lighting project and funding the cost of replacing the lighting system and had requested that the Town continue to fund the cost of the lights. During his presentation, Natchez Mayor Dan Gibson entered the meeting room and was recognized by the Mayor. Mayor Gibson spoke, enthusiastically, about the project and gave the details of his discussions with the Mississippi Department of Transportation. He also expressed his belief that the project is worthwhile for the area and he had had considerable support to re-light the bridge. Following his presentation, Mayor Gibson left as he had a subsequent engagement. The Mayor then finished his presentation concerning the lighting.

Agenda Item No. 5 was Board discussion and vote on Vidalia Police Department personnel hires. The first request was to hire Mahogany England as a replacement dispatcher. Alderman Gardner commented that he believes that the Police Department has too many employees. There being no further comments or questions, a motion was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and a roll call vote was requested. The vote was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Smith, Betts and Alderwoman Demby.

NAYS: Aldermen Gardner and Probst.

The Clerk announced that the motion carried by a vote of 3 YEAS to 2 NAYS. The second request was for Spencer McAllister to be hired as a replacement for a patrol officer. There being no questions or comments, a motion to approve the hire was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Smith, and the roll call vote was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts and Smith.

NAYS: Aldermen Probst, Gardner and Alderwoman Demby.

The Clerk announced that the motion failed by a vote of 2 YEAS to 3 NAYS.

Agenda Item No. 6 was Board discussion and vote on approval to accept Louisiana DEQ Environmental audit of the Town Waste Water Treatment Plant. The Mayor explained the need for this and asked the Utility Superintendent, Mr. Ricky Roth, to answer any questions. Mr. Roth took the podium but there were no questions or comments. Thereupon, a motion to accept the DEQ Environmental Audit, as presented, was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Demby, and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 7 was Board discussion and vote on approval of Resolution awarding bids for electrical upgrades as follows: A. Alpine Power Systems, Inc. for battery system; B. WESCO Distribution for 115kV Voltage Transformers; and C. ABB/EEC for 15kV Vacuum Circuit Breakers. The Mayor explained the need for those reminding the Board that there has been previous discussion concerning the matter and advised that there were letters in the packet where the bids had

been compared to specifications and recommended that the bid by Alpine Power Systems, Inc. for the battery system be accepted; the bid by WESCO Distribution for the 115kV Transformer be awarded and that the bid for ABB/EEC for the 15kV Vacuum Circuit Breakers be awarded and that the Resolution, as presented be adopted. There being no questions or comments from the Board, it was moved by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried that all three of those bids be awarded and the Resolution, as presented, be signed.

Agenda Item No. 8 was Board discussion and vote on approval of Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between Town of Vidalia and Village of Sicily Island for transfer of ownership of obsolete fire-fighting equipment to Village of Sicily Island. The Mayor explained that the Vidalia Fire Department has numerous items of obsolete fire-fighting equipment, being specifically items of self-contained breathing apparatuses, all as shown on the list attached to the Town of Vidalia Fire Department equipment disposition form which was in the meeting packet. He explained that Sicily Island has a need for the equipment and while obsolete is still in working order. Alderman Gardner then voiced his opinion that the transfer would be a great idea. There being no further questions or comments, a motion was made by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, to approve the transfer.

Agenda Item No. 9 was Board discussion and vote on approval of a Resolution for Ratification and Confirmation of conveyance between Town of Vidalia and Catalyst Old River Hydroelectric Limited Partnership. The Mayor began by explaining to the Board that when the Hydroelectric Project first started, there was a need for a right-of-way from Vidalia to the Hydroelectric Plant and many sections of the right-of-way had to be obtained. That recently, when the ownership of the plant was being revised, the Attorneys for the Town and the Catalyst Partnership had discovered that many of the prior servitudes needed to have corrections made and that there were two rights-of-way, that actually had been granted and recorded but had not been included in the original document and that this document presented would make those corrections and additions. The Mayor then asked the Town Attorney if he would answer any questions that the Board may have about the document. The Town Attorney advised the Board that the Mayor was correct in asserting that it was in the nature of an Act of Correction and that what the Mayor had said was accurate and asked if there were any further questions or comments. There were none. Thereupon, a motion to approve the Resolution, as presented at the meeting was made by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 10 was Board discussion and vote to name Mayor Pro-tempore. The Mayor advised that the naming of a Mayor Pro-tempore is solely a Board function and turned the floor over to the Board. Thereupon, Alderman Smith moved to name Alderman Betts as the Mayor Pro-tempore. It was seconded by Alderman Betts. A roll call vote was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Smith and Betts.

NAYS: Aldermen Probst, Gardner and Alderwoman Demby.

The Clerk advised that the motion failed by a vote of 2 YEAS and 3 NAYS. Thereupon, a motion was made by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderwoman Demby to name Alderman Gardner as the Mayor Pro-tem. The roll call vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Gardner, Probst and Alderwoman Demby.

NAYS: Aldermen Betts and Smith.

The Mayor declared that the motion passed by a vote of 3 YEAS to 2 NAYS. He announced that Alderman Gardner has been named as the Mayor Pro-tempore.

Agenda Item No. 11 was Board discussion vote on Mayor's recommendation for the following appointments: A. Municipal Clerk (Jay LaSyone); B. Municipal Attorney (George C. Murray, Jr.); C. Municipal Prosecutor (Brad Burget); D. Head of Street Department (Lee Staggs); E. Head of Utility Department (Ricky Roth); F. Chief of Fire Department (Johnnie Evans); and G. Town Legal Journal (The Concordia Sentinel). There being no comments or questions, a motion was made by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Gardner, for Jay LaSyone to remain Town Clerk. The roll call vote was as follows:

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

NAYS: NONE.

The Clerk announced that the motion passed.

Next, Alderman Betts made a motion to appoint George C. Murray, Jr. to continue as Municipal Attorney, seconded by Alderman Smith. The roll call vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Alderman Betts, Smith and Alderwoman Demby.

NAYS: Aldermen Probst and Gardner.

The Clerk announced that by a vote of 3 YEAS to 2 NAYS, Mr. Murray would continue as Municipal Attorney.

Next, on motion by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Smith, it was moved that Brad Burget continue as Municipal Prosecutor. The roll call vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Smith and Alderwoman Demby.

NAYS: Aldermen Probst and Gardner.

The Clerk announced that by a vote of 3 YEAS to 2 NAYS, Mr. Brad Burget would continue as Municipal Prosecutor.

Next, it was moved by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Smith, that the Head of the Street Department be Lee Staggs. The roll call vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts and Smith.

NAYS: Aldermen Probst, Gardner and Alderwoman Demby.

The Clerk announced that the motion failed.

Next, it was moved by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Smith, that Ricky Roth would be the Head of the Utility Department. The roll call vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts and Smith.

NAYS: Aldermen Probst, Gardner and Alderwoman Demby.

The Clerk announced that the motion failed.

Next, it was moved by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst, that Johnnie Evans continue to be the Head of the Fire Department. The roll call vote thereon was as follows:

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

NAYS: NONE.

The Clerk announced that the motion passed.

Next, it was moved by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst, that The Concordia Sentinel be the Town Legal Journal. The roll call vote was as follows:

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

NAYS: NONE.

The Clerk announced that the motion passed.

There being no further business on the agenda, a motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Smith, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, and the meeting was declared adjourned.

/s/ Jay LaSyone  
**JAY LASYONE, TOWN CLERK**

/s/ Buz Craft  
**BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR**