

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
OF THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA,  
HELD ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2017 AT 6:00 P.M.  
IN THE TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM**

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana, met, in regular session, in the Town Hall Meeting Room in Vidalia, Louisiana, on Tuesday, September 12, 2017, at 6:00 p.m.

There were present: Mayor Buz Craft, Aldermen Jon Betts, Tommy Probst, Robert Gardner, Tron McCoy, and Alderwoman Sabrina Dore'.

There were absent: NONE.

There were also present: Jay LaSyone, Assistant City Clerk; Debra Moak, City Accountant; City Attorney George C. Murray, Jr.; Executive Secretary to the Mayor, Pam Middleton; Bill Murray, City Manager; Police Chief, Joey Merrill; Johnny Evans, Fire Chief; and representatives of the press.

The meeting was opened by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance, and an invocation was 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 meeting of August 8, 2017, were approved, without changes. The motion for approval was made by Alderwoman Dore', seconded by Alderman McCoy, and unanimously carried.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 1, the Mayor called on City Accountant, Debra Moak, who presented the financial statement, being a summary of the actual revenues over expenditures as of August 31, 2017. She reviewed the summary sheets previously given to the Aldermen and advised that they were available for distribution at the meeting. Following her presentation, she answered several questions concerning fund balances and reported that there continues to be surplus of revenues over expenditures.

Agenda Item No. 2 was the consideration of request for the following:

- (1) Lancaster Dental Lab, LLC at 1848 Carter Street, Suite 1, for an occupational license. Mr. Jeff Lancaster, owner, spoke on behalf of his application. After discussion, motion was made by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, to approve the issuance of the occupational license.
- (2) 605, LLC, d/b/a DK Foodmart at 605 Carter Street, Vidalia, LA, 71373, for an occupational license and for liquor and beer permits. Mrs. Dunyavi Joshi, owner, spoke on behalf of her applications. Following her presentation, and after discussion, a motion was made by Alderwoman Dore', seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, to approve the occupational license and the issuance of the liquor and beer permits by the State.
- (3) Gloria's Hot Tamales at 707 Carter Street, Vidalia, LA, 71373, for an occupational license. Gloria Mason, owner, spoke on behalf of her application. After a brief

discussion, motion by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderwoman Dore', and unanimously carried, the application was approved.

Agenda Item No. 3, the Mayor explained the need for the emergency sewer repair on John Dale Drive and advised that Mr. Keith Capdepon, Jr., with Bryant Hammett & Associates, has given the Town a letter recommending the award of the project to Greenbriar Digging Services, LP, the low bidder. After a brief discussion, on motion by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, the resolution was passed to award the contract to Greenbriar Digging Services, LP.

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

The Mayor then addressed Agenda Item No. 4 and discussed with the Board the need to purchase or lease a new garbage truck. Following a brief discussion, upon motion by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman McCoy, and unanimously carried, the Mayor was authorized to proceed to seek bids for the purchase or lease of a new garbage truck.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 5, the Mayor advised the Board that several departments have vehicles which are no longer needed and went over a list with the Board. Following the discussion, on motion by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, the Mayor was authorized to advertise for bids on those vehicles.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 6, the Mayor reminded the Board of the ongoing problem of attempting to sell the Eleanor Street and John Dale Drive properties. He told the Board that the Ordinance to amend the prior ordinances regarding the sale of the properties, which would delete the requirement that those properties sell at or above appraised value had been prepared; that it was introduced at the August 8, 2017; and that due notice of that introduction was advertised in The Concordia Sentinel on August 16, 2017; and that it was now time to open a public hearing concerning the proposed Ordinance. On motion of Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderwoman Dore', and unanimously carried, the public hearing was opened for discussion. At the conclusion of the discussion, on motion by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderwoman Dore', and unanimously carried, the public hearing was closed. The Board then discussed the matter and decided that the sale of the properties should be by auction and that the bidding for the Eleanor Street property should begin at \$15,000.00 and the bidding for the John Dale Drive property should begin at \$1,500.00. Following the discussion by the Board, the Mayor called the question on the passage of the Ordinance to amend Ordinance No. 666 and 667 as outlined above, and the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Gardner, McCoy and Probst and Alderwoman Dore'

NAYS NONE.

ABSTAINING: NONE.

ABSENT: NONE.

WHEREUPON, the Mayor declared that Ordinance to be duly adopted. Thereafter, on motion by Alderwoman Dore', seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, the Mayor was authorized to proceed to auction the properties, with a minimum starting bid of \$15,000.00 for the Eleanor Street property and \$1,500.00 for the John Dale Drive property.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 7, the Mayor advised the Board that Ms. Hu Cheryl Walker, the Attorney appointed as the hearing officer pursuant to Section 2B(1) of Ordinance No. 664, commonly referred to as the “blighted property ordinance”, has made recommendations for revisions to that Ordinance to bring it into compliance with State law. The Mayor called on City Manager, Bill Murray, to explain those suggestions to the Board. Mr. Murray told the Board that the revisions are in their packet and briefly told the Board what the changes would be. After discussion, on motion by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, the Ordinance to amend Ordinance No. 664 to make the suggested changes was ordered pre-filed and introduced.

Agenda Item No. 8 is a discussion of moving certain signs directing traffic to the Riverfront businesses. The Mayor reported that there is a problem with some of the signs directing visitors to the Riverfront area and that some signs need to be re-positioned in order to adequately direct visitors and citizens to the Riverfront area, especially during this time of the closure of the West bound bridge. After some discussion, on motion by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman McCoy, and unanimously carried, the Mayor was authorized to investigate the matter and obtain input from both the Mississippi Department of Transportation and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and ultimately to have the signs re-positioned as appropriate.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 9, the Mayor explained to the Board that the bank account in which the funds from the 6% Occupancy Tax on the hotel rooms and other facilities within the Vidalia Riverfront Development District are being placed do not comply with the Ordinance authorizing that tax. After some discussion, on motion of Alderman Dore’, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, action on that item was tabled for future discussion.

Agenda Item No. 10 is a discussion of a comprehensive Ordinance for utility and related charges. The Mayor reminded the Board of suggestions from several home businesses for the revision of the utility charges in order that they would not pay what a regular commercial business pays. The Mayor advised the Board that he is in the process of obtaining information from other municipalities in the way they handle that problem and would like to pass the matter at this meeting until he has had a chance to assemble a formal proposal. There were no objections to him doing so.

Agenda Item No. 11 was the consideration by the Board to determine the distribution of the available funds from Hydro royalties in the form of a rebate to utility customers. After a short discussion, on motion by Alderwoman Dore’, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, a Resolution was passed to rebate 100% of the available funds in accordance with the provisions of the Hydro Ordinance. There followed a brief discussion of the bookkeeping issues; a suggested time frame for making rebates, and the problem of how to handle arrearages.

Agenda Item No. 12 was the continued discussion over the contents and changes to the proposed Revised Employee Handbook. The Mayor picked up with a discussion of topics as distributed at a prior meeting and several Aldermen had suggestions for changes or additions or deletions. At the conclusion of the extended discussion, during which the Aldermen gave some specific instructions regarding additions, changes and deletions to the proposal by the Town for the Handbook, it was the consensus that the Handbook would be revised in accordance with the discussions and would be brought back up at a subsequent meeting for approval. The Town Attorney advised the Board that his research indicates that they do not need to adopt the Handbook

by Ordinance but simply by Resolution, which would save considerable money in publication costs, and there were no objections to that procedure.

Agenda Item No. 13 was the introduction (pre-filing) of an Ordinance to set the salaries of the Mayor, Aldermen, Clerk and Chief of Police. After some discussion, on motion by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, the Ordinance to set the salaries of the Mayor, Aldermen, Clerk and Chief of Police, as introduced was ordered pre-filed.

Agenda Item No. 14 is an executive session for personnel related matter. Upon the Mayor advising the Board of the foregoing, upon motion of Alderwoman Dore', seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, the Mayor and Board adjourned into Executive Session.

Upon returning from Executive Session, a motion was made by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Gardner, to return to regular session.

There being no reported action, on motion of Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.

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**CITY CLERK**

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**MAYOR**