

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE  
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
OF THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA,  
HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2020 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, November 10, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

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

There were 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 emergency meeting of October 8, 2020, the regular meeting of October 13, 2020, and the special meeting of October 28, 2020, were approved. The motion for approval of the minutes of the emergency meeting of October 8 was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried; the motion for approval of the minutes of the regular meeting of October 13, 2020, was made by Alderwoman Demby, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried; and the motion for approval of the minutes of the special meeting of October 28, 2020, was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderwoman Demby, and unanimously carried.

The Mayor then opened the floor for public comments on current agenda items. Mr. Hoggatt commented on Agenda Item 6 and suggested that the Chief should receive support in hiring personnel to protect the public. Mr. Friloux then commented that if a Board member intends to oppose something on the agenda, then they should give prior notice of their intention. Mrs. Dore' then commented, on Agenda Item No. 9 to suggest that the playgrounds should not be under lock and key and should be open to the public as she believed that the people of Vidalia need to have access to those facilities. There being no other comments, the Mayor closed the floor for comments.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 1, the Mayor called on the Town Accountant, Debra Moak, who presented the financial statement for the month ending September 30, 2020. She first explained the various fund balances, which summaries included a comparison of actual expenses to budget expenses. She then 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 September 30, 2020. Next, she reported on the amounts in the various balances and reminded the Aldermen that those statements were provided to them in their packets. She then reported that the Hydro Rebate checks should be available in early November. Alderman Probst had a question about the \$25,000.00 budgeted for a building repair. He also had a couple of questions about various items budgeted previously. There being no further questions, the Mayor thanked Mrs. Moak for her thorough presentation.

Agenda Item No. 2 was the consideration of occupational license applications. The first application was by Mexican Brothers, LLC, represented by Courtney Lynn Carlton, for "La Parrilla Fresh Mexican Grill", at 2002 Carter Street. Ms. Carlton spoke on behalf of the application. After several questions from the Aldermen, on motion by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, the application was granted, which

application included an application for a sign advertising the restaurant as presented at the meeting. The second application was by Thomasina Bailey Hill for “Thom Cats” at 1642 Carter Street. Ms. Bailey-Hill spoke in favor of the application. Following brief questions by the Aldermen, on motion of Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, the application was granted. The third application was by Mr. Jeff Couch, for “Point Broadband of Louisiana, LLC” at 101 N. Spruce Street (The Hub). Mr. Couch spoke at some length in favor of the application and explained what they would be doing with broadband service. Following several questions from the Aldermen, on motion of Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Smith, and unanimously carried, the application was granted.

Agenda Item No. 3 was the report on broadband test market for Bill Johnson Drive and Riverbend Drive. The Mayor explained the need to expand broadband service to Vidalia and turned the floor over to Mr. Bobby Paul who explained the procedures for obtaining service to Bill Johnson Drive and Riverbend Drive to test the market. Thereafter, Mr. Jeff Couch, Manager, spoke to the board at some length explaining that his company is a very old company providing communication services in Virginia. He gave the reasons that his company wants to make Vidalia a center for supplying high speed communication services to this area. Following his presentation, the Mayor thanked him for attending and answering questions on the subject.

Agenda Item No. 4 was a report on the status of utility rebate checks. The Mayor gave an update on the status of the hydro rebate checks and indicated that he is waiting on a final report to be updated before the checks can be sent out.

Agenda Item No. 5 was a presentation on upcoming census results and potential re-apportionment. The Mayor introduced the agenda item and called on Mr. Kevin Friloux to make the presentation. Mr. Friloux began by applauding all veterans for their service and told the Aldermen that he appreciates their efforts on behalf of the Town. He then talked about the upcoming census which would take effect in 2024 for such things as re-apportionment and changes in numbers of public servants. During his remarks, he indicated that he was trying to start a conversation about possibly having the Town go from its current districting system to having single member districts. Following his presentation, the Mayor thanked Mr. Friloux for his comments.

Agenda Item No. 6 was Board discussion and vote on approval of replacement hire for VPD-Joshua G. Fitt as full time patrol officer. The Mayor began by advising the Board of the Police Chief’s request and the need to hire a replacement. There being no discussion, a motion was made by Alderman Betts to hire Mr. Fitt as a full time patrol officer, as requested, which motion was seconded by Alderman Smith and the roll call vote was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Smith and Alderwoman Demby.

NAYS: Aldermen Gardner and Probst.

The Clerk announced that by a vote of 3 YEAS and 2 NAYS, the motion to hire Joshua G. Fitt as a full-time patrol officer passed.

Agenda Item No. 7 was Board discussion and vote on approval of Louisiana Compliance questionnaire for audit engagements of government agencies. The Mayor explained that Silas Simmons, LLC, the Town’s CPA firm has prepared the Louisiana Compliance questionnaire, which was provided to the Board in the packet. There being no questions or comments, a motion was

made by Alderman Betts to approve the Louisiana Compliance questionnaire for audit engagements of government agencies, as submitted. The motion was seconded by Alderman Smith and unanimously carried.

Agenda Item No. 8 was report on assignment of lease between Town and Bunge Corp. The Mayor explained the need for the Town to approve the assignment of the lease between the Town and Bunge Corp. He indicated that the lease provides that the Town has to agree to an assignment and also gives the conditions in which the Town might want to not agree. The lease has been reviewed by the Mayor and counsel who found no reason that the Town should not agree to the assignment. Following the Mayor’s explanation, it was moved by Alderwoman

Demby, seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried, to approve the assignment of the lease as requested by the Bunge Corp.

Agenda Item No. 9 was update on Town projects (streets, sewerage, pumping station, playground). The Mayor gave an update on the punch list of items for the sewer projects specifically mentioning not only sewer but progress on the pumping station. He said all problems have been identified and a determination is to be made as to the exact location of the project. Alderman Gardner stated that he has a report by an Engineering firm concerning the project and the Mayor asked if he would be willing to share that report with the Town and Alderman Gardner said he would. When there were no further comments or questions, the Mayor concluded his presentation. 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