

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
OF THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA,
HELD ON TUESDAY, JULY 11, 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, July 11, 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: Vicki Byrnes, City Clerk; 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; Assistant Police Chief, Dennis Cowan; 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 June 13, 2017, were approved, without changes. The motion for approval of the June 13, 2017 meeting was made by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried.

Addressing the first item on the agenda, the Mayor called on City Accountant, Debra Moak, who presented the financial statement, being a summary of the actual revenues over expenditures as of June 30, 2017. She reviewed the summary sheets previously given to the Aldermen and advised that they were available for distribution at the meeting. After answering several questions concerning variances and several of the fund balances, she again reported that there is a surplus of revenues over expenditures at this time.

In addressing the next agenda item, the Mayor advised that the Town has received an engagement letter from Silas Simmons, Accountants, and that they have asked that the Town review the letter and give their approval. A motion was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Dore', and unanimously carried, that this item be added to the agenda. The Mayor then explained the nature of the engagement letter and reviewed it with the Board. On motion of Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, the engagement letter was accepted and the Mayor was authorized to sign the letter and forward to the accountants.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 2, the Mayor advised that there were no bidders on the Eleanor Street or John Dale Drive properties at the time of the scheduled auction and so the properties did not sell. He further explained that the properties could either be re-bid for sale by auction, public sale or private sale, but the requirement that the bids start at appraised value would still exist. He advised

the Board that should they decide not to require that the bids start at the appraised value, there would need to be a new ordinance passed setting forth the requirements of the next sale. The matter was taken under advisement.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 3, the Mayor made an extensive explanation of the situation existing on the Biglane Road whereby the road is in need of repairs and that, after research, it appears that easements were granted to construct the D.A. Biglane Road from its intersection with Highway 131 to the Moose Lodge Road and that the property is not within the City limits. He then summarized his meeting with several persons living in the area with whom he spoke after the May regular town meeting to discuss the problem and stated that he believes that the Town has an obligation in the matter and has started discussions with the State and Department of Transportation in order to find a solution to the problems. He then turned the floor over to Mr. Capdepon who presented a report on estimated cost of doing various repairs from the least to the most expensive. The Mayor also fielded questions from several Board members and from the public after the floor had been opened for public comment. There was further discussion on how much repair should be done and how to fund it. While there were no formal motions, it was a consensus that the Mayor should continue to seek a solution to the problem which would be beneficial to all parties.

In addressing Agenda Item No. 4, Mr. Jeremy Ewing spoke to the Board concerning his occupational license for Ewing Electric, LLC, which operates out of his residence and that he has concerns over the commercial fees he pays for City services. He advises that there are no customers who come to his house and that he believes that the Town Ordinance concerning fees should be changed to make exception for home businesses such as his. Alderwoman Dore' spoke in favor of doing so. Alderman Gardner suggested that the matter be researched and possibly the Ordinance be changed. Alderman McCoy commented that the new IT Center will have the effect of encouraging home businesses. No formal action was taken.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 5, the Mayor advised that MNM Enterprises, LLC, has applied for an occupational license to show the change of ownership for McDonald's Restaurant in Vidalia. After consideration, a motion was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, to grant the requested change of ownership.

Agenda Item No. 6 was the consideration for the outdoor sign at the intersection of Concordia Avenue and Colony Trail for Cypress Pointe Subdivision. After consideration, on motion by Alderman Probst, seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried, the sign application was approved.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 7, the Mayor advised that the Ordinance for the MUNI-CODE implementation of the new Town Code of Ordinances is ready to be pre-filed. The proposed Ordinance was briefly discussed as it was in the packet presented to each Alderman for their consideration. After a brief discussion, on motion by Alderman Dore', seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, the Ordinance for MUNI-CODE implementation, as presented, was ordered pre-filed.

Agenda Item No. 8 was the discussion of the proposed employee handbook. The Mayor announced that he would like to have meetings with all Department Heads within the next month or so, in order to have the employee handbook ready for adoption as soon as possible.

Addressing Agenda Item No. 9, concerning the summer program at Vidalia Junior High School, the Mayor turned the floor over to Mr. Raymond Riley who gave a summary of the history of the program. He discussed the objectives and the favorable outcomes over the last 22 years that he has conducted the program. The Mayor then opened the floor for comments from the Board. Following comments from several Board members, the Mayor advised that he will investigate the matter and let Mr. Riley know concerning the program for next year.

Agenda Item No. 10 was a discussion of the possible transfer of City owned property to the Riverside Baptist Church. The Mayor advised that after researching the matter, it appeared that the Town would not be able to donate, outright, the property and suggested that other avenues be explored on how to dispose of that property. A motion was made by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman McCoy, and unanimously carried, that the Mayor continue to investigate the possibilities for transferring ownership of that property to the Church.

Agenda Item No. 11 was a request by City Marshal Frank Duson that a new bank account be established for his office. The Mayor explained the request by the Marshal and there was some discussion with Marshal Duson answering questions from Alderman Probst, as well as Alderwoman Dore'. A motion was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Gardner, to allow the Marshal to set up a bank account and a discussion was called for. During the discussion, Alderwoman Dore' moved to table the matter until an opinion could be obtained, at which time Alderwoman Dore' was advised there was a Motion on the floor already and the Mayor called the question and the Motion by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Gardner, passed by the following vote:

FOR: Aldermen Betts, Gardner and Probst.

AGAINST: Alderwoman Dore' and Alderman McCoy.

The motion having passed by a 3 to 2 vote, the Mayor declared that the Motion passed and authorized the setting up of the account.

Agenda Item No. 12 was a new vehicle request by the Vidalia Police Department. The Mayor noted that the request was to extend a current lease for new vehicles for the Police Department from a 3 year lease to a 4 year lease. There followed an extended discussion over how many vehicles would be obtained; how the vehicles would be equipped; and what the total cost to the Town would be for the lease extension. Following that discussion, with comments from the floor, during which Alderman Betts proposed that the Town stay with the original deal, it was moved by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Probst, to extend the lease for a year as proposed and the vote thereon was as follows:

FOR: Aldermen Gardner, Probst, McCoy and Alderwoman Dore'.

AGAINST: Alderman Betts.

The motion having passed 4 to 1, the Mayor declared the Motion adopted.

Agenda Item No. 13 was the appointment of a Mayor Pro-Tem and Department assignments for the Board. The Mayor advised that he has made the following Department assignments for the Board:

Alderwoman Dore': Utility and IT Departments;

Alderman McCoy: Streets/Sanitation and Recreation;

Alderman Gardner: Police and Mechanic/Carpenter;

Alderman Betts: Fire and Economic Development; and

Alderman Probst: City Hall and Convention Center.

With regard to the appointment of Mayor Pro-Tem, on Motion by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderwoman Dore', and unanimously carried, Alderman Probst was continued as the Mayor Pro-Tem.

Thereupon, on motion by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR