

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING OF THE
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
OF THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA,
HELD ON FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2020 AT 9:00 A.M.
AT THE VIDALIA TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 200 VERNON STEVENS
BLVD., VIDALIA, LA**

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana, met, in special session, at the Vidalia Town Hall Council Chambers, in Vidalia, Louisiana, on Friday, July 17, 2020, at 9:00 A.M.

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

There were absent: NONE.

There were also present: Jay Lasyone, Town Clerk; George C. Murray, Jr., Town Attorney; and Police Chief Joey Merrill.

The meeting was opened with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance and the 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 special session, as the governing authority of said municipality, and opened the meeting for the conduct of business.

Agenda Item No. 1 was Board approval to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues of VPD. The Mayor welcomed those present and explained to those in attendance that the Mayor and Board and necessary parties would remain in the meeting room to hold the Executive Session and therefore those in attendance would be required to wait in the lobby, or in their cars, and would be notified when it was appropriate to re-enter the meeting room. The Mayor then asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session and a motion was made by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, that they enter into Executive Session. Thereupon, they entered into Executive Session and the Council Chambers were cleared of those in attendance.

Upon conclusion of the discussions in the Executive Session, it was moved by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, to exit the Executive Session and return to the Special Session.

Thereupon, the Mayor announced that the next item of business being Agenda Item No. 2, was Board vote on recommendations for disciplinary actions by Chief Merrill discussed during the Executive Session. He further advised that the first matter to be taken up is that of Dispatcher Cooper. Town Clerk LaSyone then read the Police Chief’s recommendations as being a formal reprimand. A motion was then made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Probst, to accept that recommendation of Police Chief Merrill. The roll call vote was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Gardner, Probst and Alderwoman Dore’.

NAYS: NONE.

ABSTAINING: Alderman McCoy.

Town Clerk LaSyone announced that the motion carried by a vote of 4 YEAS and 1 ABSTAINING.

The Mayor then announced that the second matter to be taken up is that of Officer Cross. Thereupon, a motion was made by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Betts, to accept the Police Chief’s recommendations for discipline in the matter concerning Officer Cross. The Town Clerk then read the Police Chief’s recommendations as being:

- (1) A three (3) day suspension without pay;

- (2) Successful completion of a cultural diversity training program;
- (3) Successful completion of a de-escalation training program;
- (4) Successful completion of a Rules of Force Program.

The roll call vote was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts, McCoy and Probst.

NAYS: Aldermen Gardner and Alderwoman Dore'.

Alderwoman Dore' commented that she thought the suspension should be longer. Town Clerk LaSyone then advised that the motion passed by a vote of 3 YEAS to 2 NAYS.

Agenda Item No. 3 was adjournment, and there being no further agenda items, a motion to adjourn was made by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried.

/s/ Jay LaSyone
JAY LAYSONE, TOWN CLERK

/s/ Buz Craft
BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR