

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING OF THE
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
OF THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA,
HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2020 AT 6:00 P.M.
AT THE VIDALIA CONFERENCE & CONVENTION CENTER, 112 FRONT STREET,
VIDALIA, LA**

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana, met, in special session, at the Vidalia Conference & Convention Center in Vidalia, Louisiana, on Thursday, May 28, 2020, at 6:00 p.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; Debra Moak, Town Accountant; and George C. Murray, Jr., Town Attorney.

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 the presentation of the proposed budget for fiscal year 2020-2021. The Mayor then welcomed those in attendance and thanked them for their patience in dealing with the Corona Virus. He then called on Town Accountant, Debra Moak, to present the budget to the Board. She began with an opening statement concerning the requirements and format and forms for the budget as required by State law. She then explained the process of arriving at the contents of this budget and advised that the Department heads and other employees were actively involved in preparing the budget. She then explained various funds with revenues and expenses with a power point presentation. Upon completion of her presentation, the Mayor thanked her for her diligent work on preparing the budget and her excellent presentation.

Agenda Item No. 2 was the Departmental reports. The Mayor first called upon Mr. Lee Staggs who presented the report for the Street Department. He began by noting his request for a back hoe and an additional two tractors and explained some of his other needs, as set forth in the budget. The Mayor thanked him for his report and called on Mr. Ricky Roth who made the report for the Utility Department. He commented on several pieces of equipment which needs replacing and the cost of those. He talked some about the bleach conversion project which as a precautionary matter as well as some other aspects of his budget. He concluded noting that he is requesting a bull dozer and trailer and discussed how that would save the Town money. After thanking Mr. Roth for his presentation, the Mayor called on Mr. Johnnie Lee Hoffpauir who gave his report on the Recreation Department. He indicated that it is basically the same as last year but that he needs a new Gator ATV. Mr. Hoffpauier’s report was followed by Judge Scott McLemore who reported on the City Court’s situation and indicated that he is requesting a new recording system, as the one presently has been in use for many years. He also made some comments about the need for having mold removed from the Courtroom because of years of the roof leaking. Following Judge McLemore, Police Chief Joey Merrill gave the report for the Police Department. He went through various items on his budget and answered several questions. Next, the Mayor called on Fire Chief Johnny Evans to report on the Fire Department and, while mentioning several issues in his budget, he particularly spoke about needing another portable building for fire training as that is essential to keeping the firemen properly trained. Next, the Mayor called on Mrs. Regina Fleming, Director of

the Convention Center, to report on that entity. Among other things, she spent some time explaining the needs for improvements and new mowing equipment as well as lighting improvements. Finally, the Mayor called on Mr. Bobby Paul to give a report on the IT Department. He particularly mentioned a project for enhancing telecommunications abilities particularly with video teleconferencing. He also made a request for a router which would clean pipes in which the various telecommunication lines are run. Following the Departments reports, the Mayor reported that things are going fairly smoothly and that all Departments are working to reduce costs and increase services. He thanked all those who gave reports.

Agenda Item No. 3 was a public hearing on an Ordinance adopting the operating budget of revenues and expenses for the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana, for the fiscal year 2020-2021. The Mayor began by giving an overview of the reasons for having the public hearing on the proposed Ordinance adopting the budget for the coming year. He reminded the Board of the requirements of the Louisiana Budget Act, and requested a motion to open the public hearing. A motion to open the public hearing was made by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried. The Mayor then declared the public hearing to be open. Following comments from several of those in attendance, including Mrs. Cassandra Lynch who spoke particularly about drainage problems in her area, the Mayor noted there being no further questions or comments, asked for a motion to close the public hearing. The motion was made by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderwoman Dore', and unanimously carried. The Mayor announced that the public hearing was closed.

Agenda Item No. 4 was Board discussion and vote on an Ordinance adopting the operating budget of revenues and expenses for the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana, for the fiscal year 2020-2021. The Mayor began by an explanation of why it is necessary to adopt the operating budget at this time and called on the Board for discussion. There followed a lengthy discussion between the Mayor and Board members concerning various aspects of the proposed budget. The Mayor asked each alderman, in turn, to give their comments on the proposed budget. Alderman Betts was the first to speak and gave an overview of the positive changes made during the last four years. He stated that he supported the budget as presented. Alderwoman Dore' spoke next, and stated that she was disheartened at no projects for the people and that surplus Hydro funds be placed in the budget for special projects. She also indicated that there are buildings in need of repair, such as the break room at the Streets and Sanitation Department and asked that an additional \$25,000.00 be added for those repairs. She also had questions for the Town Accountant over an item of \$20,000.00 increases under administration. Mrs. Moak responded to her question. Alderman Gardner was next to speak and had questions of Mr. Staggs about the need for the additional trucks and machines. He stated that he agreed with Alderwoman Dore' about adding \$25,000.00 for the new building. He asked the Mayor about the status of the pumping station for the slough area and the Mayor explained the project in place. Alderman McCoy spoke next and thanked all for being allowed to be of service to the Town over many years. He thanked all the department heads for their cooperation with him during that time and thanked the Board for their cooperation. Alderman Probst then spoke about the needs for street repairs; the needs for special projects in the budget; the need for the new electric substation; that he didn't think we needed a new bulldozer but, after some discussion, he indicated that he would not oppose it; and he concluded by indicating that the Town needs to continue to use attrition to cut costs. Alderwoman Dore' then said that she wished to place \$150,000.00 in the budget for

recreation projects, and a motion was made by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried, to place \$150,000.00 in the budget for playground equipment on the River Front. And Alderwoman Dore' made a motion for \$25,000.00 for improvements in the street department's break room, which motion was seconded by Alderman McCoy and unanimously carried. Thereafter, Alderwoman Dore' made a motion to add \$200,000.00 to last year's sewer project. The motion was seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried. Next, Alderman Probst made a motion to put \$500,000.00 in the Street repair budget, which was seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried. Alderman Gardner then made a motion to add 1.2 Million Dollars to construct a new pumping station in the slough area. The motion was seconded by Alderman McCoy, and unanimously carried.

There being no further questions or discussions, a motion was made by Alderman Gardner to adopt the fiscal year 2020-2021 budget, as amended by the Board, and the motion was seconded by Alderwoman Dore'. The vote thereon was as follows:

YAYS: Aldermen Betts, Gardner, McCoy, Probst and Alderwoman Dore'.

NAYS: NONE.

The vote being unanimous, the Mayor declared the motion to adopt the budget, as amended, Passes and declared that the Ordinance, previously introduced at the May 12, 2020, Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, and after due public notice and deliberation, with the amendments made this day, the Operating Budget of Revenues and Expenses of the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana, for the fiscal year 2020-2021, is duly adopted.

(A COPY OF ORDINANCE ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF).

Next followed a discussion of the Police Department's need to replace a wrecked vehicle. Alderman Betts moved to add \$35,000.00 to the budget for that purpose. The motion died for a lack of a second. A motion was then made by Alderwoman Dore', seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, to delete the \$8,000.00 item from the budget for the new mower for the Convention Center.

There being no further items on the agenda, on motion by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderwoman Dore', and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.

/s/ Jay LaSyone
JAY LASYONE, TOWN CLERK

/s/ Buz Craft
BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE OPERATING BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES FOR THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021

WHEREAS:

- (1) This proposed ordinance was previously introduced at the May 12, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen;
- (2) Due notice of the introduction of this proposed Ordinance was advertised in the official journal on the 13th day of May, 2020; and
- (3) A public hearing was held by the Board of Aldermen on the 28th day of May, 2020;

NOW THEREFORE:

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Vidalia, Louisiana, in Special Session duly convened as the governing authority of said municipality, that:

SECTION I. The attached detailed estimate of revenues and expenditures by Departments, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, and ending June 30, 2021, be and the same is hereby adopted to serve as "Budget of Revenues and Expenditures" for the Town of Vidalia during the said period.

SECTION II. The adoption of this Operating Budget of Revenues and Expenditures by and the same is declared to operate as an appropriation of the amounts therein set forth with the terms of the budget classifications.

SECTION III. The Mayor is hereby authorized to take all actions necessary and appropriate for the implementation of the Operating Budget of Revenues and Expenditures for the fiscal year 2020-2021. All such actions must be in compliance with La. R.S. 33:321, et seq.

The above and foregoing Ordinance was read and considered, section by section, and then on motion by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderwoman Dore', was submitted to a vote, as a whole, and the vote thereon was as follows:

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

NAYS: NONE.

ABSTAINING: NONE.

ABSENT: NONE.

WHEREUPON, the Mayor declared the foregoing ordinance to be duly adopted this 28th day of May, 2020.

/s/ Jay LaSyone
JAY LASYONE, CLERK

/s/ Buz Craft
BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR