

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
OF THE TOWN OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA,
HELD ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2018 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, January 9, 2018, 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 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 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 both the regular meeting of December 12, 2017, and the special meeting of December 15, 2017, were approved, with no changes. The motion for approval of both sets of minutes was made by Alderwoman Dore', seconded by Alderman Gardner, 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 November 30, 2017. As customary, she reviewed the summary sheets previously given to the Aldermen and advised that they were available for distribution at the meeting. She also reported on the various positive and negative fund balances and concluded with a summary of the results. After answering a couple of questions from the Board, the Mayor thanked her and reported that the Town's position versus expenses to date is in balance.

Agenda Item No. 2 was a report from the City's Accountants, Silas Simmons, LLP, presented by Mr. Wes Gore. Mr. Gore reported that he does not have an audit report to make at this time as he had to obtain an extension at the Legislative Auditor's request and that his report should be ready by the end of January. He further went on to explain the circumstances around the extension having to do with the fact that the Legislative Auditors Report is not yet ready for publication. There being no questions, the Mayor thanked Mr. Gore for his report.

Agenda Item No. 3, was the consideration of the following occupational license requests:

- (1) Concordia FIT. by Joshua Craig for an occupational license at 1814 Carter Street.

After a short discussion, a motion was made by Alderman Dore', seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried, to approve the issuance of the occupational license.

- (2) Royalty Medical Staffing Agency, LLC, for an occupational license at 111 Catherine Circle, Vidalia, LA, by Cynthia Credit. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Alderwoman Dore', seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, to approve the occupational license.

In addressing Agenda Item No. 4, the Mayor announced that there were no outdoor sign applications to consider at this time.

In addressing Agenda Item No. 5, the Mayor announced that he has recently received notice that the City Clerk, Vicki Byrnes, is retiring effective January 31, 2018. He thanked her for her years of service and asked that all offer their prayers during her illness. He then turned to the matter of the need to appoint a City Clerk in her place and he advised the Board that he is recommending the current Assistant City Clerk, Jay LaSyone, for the position. There followed a series of questions concerning the salary to be paid and whether or not the Mayor had advertised the position for employment. The Mayor replied that Mr. LaSyone had agreed to accept his current pay until budget time at the end of the fiscal year at which time his salary would be re-visited and advised that there was no need to advertise as the Clerk is not a salaried employee position. Following further discussion, a motion was made by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Betts, to approve Mr. LaSyone as the successor City Clerk with his current salary. After some further discussion, the vote was called and the vote thereon was as follows:

ALDERMAN BETTS – YES;
ALDERWOMAN DORE' – NO;
ALDERMAN GARDNER – YES;
ALDERMAN PROBST – NO; and
ALDERMAN McCOY – NO.

The Mayor announced that by a vote of 3 to 2, the Motion failed.

In addressing Agenda Item No. 6, the Mayor reminded the Board that it is time to re-apply to the State Bond Commission for the authority to borrow an amount not exceeding \$2,500,000.00 and to introduce the ordinance authorizing the issuance of Certificates of Indebtedness in that amount in connection with that transaction. He stated that his is not a new matter but is merely a necessary procedure as the prior Certificates of Indebtedness were for a limited period of time. Following a short discussion, a motion was made by Alderman Betts, seconded by Alderman Gardner, to pass the Resolution making application to the State Bond Commission as presented at the meeting and, after a short discussion, a voice vote was taken and the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Aldermen Betts, Gardner, Probst, McCoy and Alderwoman Dore'.
NAYS: NONE.
ABSENT: NONE.
NOT VOTING: NONE.

WHEREUPON, the Mayor declared the Resolution having been duly adopted.

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

Addressing Agenda Item No. 7, the Mayor announced the need for Board approval to introduce the Ordinance authorizing the issuance of Certificates of Indebtedness not exceeding \$2,500,000.00. After a brief discussion, it was moved by Alderman Gardner, seconded by Alderman Betts, and unanimously carried, that the Ordinance authorizing the borrowing by the Town of

\$2,500,000.00 and providing for payment thereof, all as presented and introduced at the meeting be formally introduced and a public hearing be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2018, at 6:00 o'clock P.M., with regard to the proposed adoption and that the Clerk file the necessary Notice of Public Hearing and Intent to consider the adoption of said Ordinance at the regular meeting of the Mayor and Board of the Town of Vidalia to be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2018, at 6:00 o'clock P.M.

Agenda Item No. 8, was to consider Board approval for a Resolution to accept the low bid for the barge loading facility. Mr. Wiley Gilfoil reported on the project and thanked the members of the Port Commission, particularly Mr. Steve Weeks, who was in attendance, for their assistance with the project. There being no questions, after a brief discussion, on motion by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, a Resolution was passed to award the contract to the low bidder, Womack & Sons Construction Group, Inc., in the amount of \$8,398,731.00.

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

Agenda Item No. 9 was a request for Board approval of a Resolution to adopt the USDA Language Access Plan as presented at the meeting. The Mayor called on City Manager Bill Murray to explain the need for the Resolution. Mr. Murray explained the process and the need for approval of the language access plan, prepared by the Mayor's Office in November, 2017, copies of which were previously given to the Board members. Following a few questions about the matter, a motion was made by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Gardner, and unanimously carried that the Language Access Plan as presented at the meeting and filed with the City Clerk is adopted by the Mayor and Board of Alderman.

Agenda Item No. 10 was a discussion of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (La. DOTD) traffic study. The Mayor explained the need for the study and asked City Manager, Bill Murray, to explain in more detail. Mr. Murray advised that this study is in the preliminary stages and consists of the area around the Lower Elementary School with traffic coming off the levee and going down Riverside Street; with Concordia Avenue from the levee past the intersection with Texas Street and Carter Street and through the area around Magnolia Street. He also stated that it would consider the Riverside Street from Concordia Avenue intersection down to Wilson Street and then over to Highway 15 going South. He said that the Town will have a series of public hearings concerning the impact of the proposed changes to traffic patterns in the areas.

Agenda Item No. 11 was an economic development report by Heather Malone. Her report consisted of discussions of the Port and Barge Loading Facility; the Tech Center being up and running with its services as an incubator and small business workshop and that there are seminars planned in the future. She further reported that the utility upgrades are proceeding and that fiber optics are being installed. She concluded her presentation with a discussion of the possibility of Interstate 14 from Laurel through Natchez and Vidalia going West into Texas being proposed and the work being done to attempt to provide for that Interstate for this area.

Agenda Item No. 12 was a request for Board approval to hold an executive session to discuss a Vidalia Police Department personnel matter. Upon the Mayor advising the Board of the foregoing, Alderwoman Dore' advised the Mayor that she wished to add an agenda item in order to introduce an

Ordinance to set flat rates for the electric usage. Alderman McCoy made a motion to put the matter on the agenda, seconded by Alderman Probst, and the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Alderman Probst, Alderman McCoy and Alderwoman Dore'.

NAYS: Alderman Betts and Alderman Gardner.

The Mayor then noted that the motion had failed.

The Mayor then took up Agenda Item No. 12, the request for an Executive Session, and on motion by 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 McCoy, seconded by Alderman Betts, to return to regular session.

Upon returning to regular session, a motion was made by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderwoman Dore', to advise Police Chief, Joey Merrill, that the Board supports his decision as discussed in the Executive Session.

The Mayor, noting that there was no further business, on motion by Alderman McCoy, seconded by Alderman Probst, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.

JAY LASYONE, ASST. CITY CLERK

BUZ CRAFT, MAYOR