

City of Ville Platte
Regular Monthly City Council Meeting

126 E. Main Street, Ville Platte, LA
Minutes for June 9, 2020 held at 5:00 PM

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Ville Platte met in a Regular Session in the Council Chamber in City Hall, 126 E. Main St. Ville Platte, LA on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 5:00 PM. The Meeting was conducted through Zoom due to the Coronavirus pandemic and in compliance to the Governor's stay at home orders, the City Council meeting will be held online.

The Regular Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Vidrine.

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Jennifer Vidrine, Councilwoman Faye Lemoine, Councilmen Bryant Riggs, Lionel Anderson, Donald Sam and Jerry Joseph, Mike Perron, and City Clerk Shountilez L. Williams, Police Chief Neal Lartigue, Fire Chief Fabian Poullard, Administrative Secretary Hilda Edwards and City Attorney Eric Lafleur

Following the Invocation and Pledge, roll called by Shountilez L. Williams, City Clerk, and announced that a quorum was present. The Mayor and Board of Alderman of the City of Ville Platte were duly convened as the Governing Authority of the City of Ville Platte.

Mayor Vidrine asked everyone to take a moment of silence for three minutes for Michael Arvie who is battling blood clots. Mayor also asked for everyone to kneel for 8 minutes and 46 seconds for George Floyd.

Attending the meeting in person: Mayor Jennifer Vidrine, Shountilez Williams, Councilwoman Faye Lemoine, Councilmen Donald Sam, Lionel Anderson, Bryant Riggs and Admin. Asst. Hilda Edwards.

Mayor Vidrine requested the approval to add three items to the agenda:

1. Universal Communications
2. Police hiring
3. Curfew

It was moved by Councilman Riggs and seconded by Councilwoman Lemoine to add the requested items to the agenda for approval. All in favor, motion carried

Minutes-Regular Monthly Meeting May 12, 2020

It was moved by Councilman Anderson and seconded by Councilwoman Lemoine to approve the minutes as presented. All in favor, motion carried unanimously

Monthly Report for May 2020 (Budget to Actual)

It was moved by Councilman Sam and seconded by Councilman Anderson to approve the Expense Report for the month of May. Council compared budget to actual as presented, year to date from the monthly report. **All in favor, motion carried unanimously**

Total expenses for the month of April was \$119,466.12, the month of May was \$122,918.57 with an increase for the month of May by \$3,452.45.

LAMP report- The LAMP investment has increased by \$1,191.32.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Vidrine announced that the COVID-19 testing will be moving to the elderly complexes, then back to the Civic Center on Monday. Mayor Vidrine said testing will venture out to other areas; also Mayor Vidrine will be in contact with Chief Lartigue to arrange testing for the inmates. Mayor Vidrine reminded everyone that City Hall is still closed to the public until safety measures can be put in place and services are still being provided to the public.

Council Comments:

Councilwoman Lemoine inquired about using the inmates and the purchase of a backhoe. Ms. Lemoine would like to have the canals cleaned and hire someone trained to operate the backhoe once it's purchased. Mayor Vidrine said some things are on the list to get done, but companies have been put on hold due to the pandemic. Councilwoman Lemoine also said she was contacted by Desperate Dogs of Rural Louisiana who volunteered their time at the dog pound. The rescue group has homed over 90 dogs, some going to other states.

Councilman Sam said that he has been getting calls from the public concerning complaints about the Renaissance Place. Mayor Vidrine advised him to get with the Ville Platte Housing Authority, who is the management company.

Councilman Riggs recommend using Mr. Linton Fontenot as the Compliance Officer for the abandoned houses and the overgrown grass and also supervise the inmates. Mr. Riggs asked for an update on the issue with Dossman St., Mr. Riggs asked when the fence (tree fell on the fence) on Derouen St. near the

canal will be replaced. He also asked when the Street Overlaying Project will start. Mr. Riggs asked Mr. Landreneau for an update on the gas meters replacements.

Public Comments on Agenda Items listed (4 minutes each)—

No public comments

Agenda Items:

1. Fire Chief Report

There were 17 calls made to the Ville Platte Fire Department, which includes the Ville Platte Fire District, which included one automatic aid to St. Landry Fire Dept.#2

2. SMARTACT bill by Senator Cassidy and Menendez-Endorsement

State and Municipal Assistance for Recovery and Transition (SMART)

Mayor Vidrine presented letter to the Council for endorsement of the SMARTACT by Senator Cassidy and Menendez, the program will reimburse the local municipalities directly for loss of revenue during COVID-19. Motion by Councilman Anderson and seconded by Councilman Sam to approve the endorsement. **All in favor, motion carried.**

3. Police Sub-Station at Ville Platte Housing Apts. Knotoe St.

Mayor Vidrine announced there will be a police sub-station located at the Ville Platte Housing Authority. The sub-station is paid and funded by the Ville Platte Housing Authority. The sub-station will be operational in July. It was moved by Councilman Anderson and seconded by Councilman Sam to approve the acceptance of the Ville Platte Housing Authority Station located on Knotoe St. All in favor, motion carried.

3-A Items added to the agenda: Curfew

After some discussion it was moved by Councilman Sam and seconded by Councilman Joseph to change the curfew hours from 9:00 PM to 6:00 AM to 11:00 PM to 6:00 AM for adults and businesses and 8:00 PM to 6:00 AM for youths. All in favor, Motion carried.

3-B Universal Communication

It was moved by Councilman Joseph and seconded by Councilwoman Lemoine to approve the contract agreement with City of Ville Platte and Universal Communication as a third internet provider in the City. They will pay the City a fee of \$200.00 per tower for the use of three towers at a cost of \$600.00 a month. All in favor, motion carried.

3-C Police Hiring

Chief Lartigue requested the hiring of three new police officers. Bryan Wiles and Stewart Brady is P.O.S.T. Certified and Brandon Fontenot will attend the academy in January. Mayor Vidrine inquired about the procedures of conducting a back ground check for new police officers. Chief Lartigue said that he conducts several screening processes before the officers are hired. Mayor requested that once COVID-19 is over and City Hall is reopened to the public she would like to have the police officers attend a meeting so everyone can meet them. She would like the officers to walk around the neighborhoods and introduce themselves.

It was moved by Councilman Riggs and seconded by Councilwoman Lemoine to approve the hiring of the three police officers as recommended by Police Chief Lartigue providing they meet all of the city's requirements and proper vetting has been conducted. All in favor, motion carried. Mayor informed the public that before the officers are hired a psychological test is conducted, which is required by the insurance company. Body cameras are required to be worn at all times.

4. City Budget for 2020-2021

Mayor Vidrine presented the City Budget for 20-21

The new fiscal year budget was proposed. The ending fund balance for the 2019-2020 fiscal year is \$14,609,791. The new budget for 20-21 is \$13,498,258. The fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 ended with a surplus of \$317, 292.00 which includes the following: General Funds surplus of \$116,348.00, 75' Sales Tax \$3,050, 84' Sales Tax \$114, 200.00, City Court had a loss and the Utility had a surplus of \$98, 477.00. Mayor Vidrine also applied for state and federal grants. There was an increase in the Municipal Fire and Police Retirement and Health insurance.

The Police Department ending budget for June 30, 2020 was \$1,665, 787.00. The departments spent \$1,433,200, which was \$220,000 less than what was budgeted. The Police Department will see a significant increase in their budget, which will provide for 16 officers (14 patrolmen and two detectives). Also included in this budget is an Officer Training Consultant, who will train other officers. The police department saw an increase of \$338,827 in the department. This will give the Police Department a budget of \$1,815,112.00 with line items, which will give the Chief complete control of the budget.

Capital Outlay Budget Request is \$2,241,182 for the following:

- Jail air conditioner, fire truck, sidewalk improvements, street improvements, street infrastructure, street security cameras, trash cans, backhoe and track hoe and parks project.

Mayor Vidrine reminded everyone that the Police and Fire Tax Renewal will be on the July 11 ballot. This will provide \$140,000 in revenue and will help the Fire and Police Department.

Mayor Vidrine reported that every department had a surplus, with the exception of City Court and the Water Department. City Court had a loss of 41,863.00 for 2020 with a surplus of \$3,800.00 for 2021.

Mayor Vidrine announced that the budget will be in City Hall for the next 10 days for review. A Public Hearing and a Special Meeting will be held on June 26, 2020 at 12:00 PM to approve the 20-21 Budget.

5. Rev. Lawrence Dick- requesting to close street for Church Service in parking lot; they will close Alton Locks from MLK to Rev. E.D. Alfred Street & close Rev. E.D. Alfred from Alton Locks to end of parking lot for two hours. July 5, 2020; 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. He is requesting this every Sunday until the city and state opens.

It was moved by Councilman Sam and seconded by Councilman Anderson to approve the closure of the streets as requested. **All in favor, motion carried.**

Abandoned Property/Blighted/Overgrown Properties

Mayor announced that we will be sending letters out for overgrown grass and blighted property.

The City Marshal will be serving property owners with Letters of Compliance for abandoned houses and overgrown grass.

Resolutions:

Ordinance:

Proclamations

Permits

Reports

Chief of Police's Report-Neal Lartigue

There were a total of 102 complaints in the month of May-2020 of which 82 required reports. There were 27 citations issued 26 arrests of which 13 were felony arrest and there were 24 accidents reported.

City Engineer's Report-Ronnie Landreneau-

The City Engineer will conduct a survey to determine the property line for the removal of the tree on N. Soileau. As a result of the high percentage of gas loss it was recommended by Mr. Landreneau to purchase 100 gas meters to conduct random gas meter testing, at the cost of approximately \$9,500.00, which would be used to remove and replace the gas meters. It was moved by Councilman Perron and seconded by Councilman Riggs to authorize the purchase of 100 gas meters.

All in favor, motion carried

Mayor Vidrine authorized Mr. Landreneau to survey the property line on N. Soileau St.

Mayor's Report:

The Martin Luther King Center and the Civic Center is currently not available during Phase II because of the State Fire Marshal orders.

Mayor Vidrine will submit invoices for any COVID-19 related expenses through the CARES ACT Program. These are two sources of income that will be added to the budget.

Adjournment

With there being no other business, Mayor Vidrine called for a motion to adjourn. A motion by Councilman Anderson and seconded by Councilwoman Lemoine to adjourn.

All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:53

Approved By:

Jennifer Vidrine, Mayor

Attest By:

Shountilez L. Williams, City Clerk

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