

**Ville Platte City Council Minutes for December 13, 2022**  
**Meeting held at 5:00 PM**  
**City of Ville Platte**  
**126 E. Main Street, Ville Platte, LA**

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, December 13, 2022 5:00 PM.

*The Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Jennifer Vidrine.*

**ATTENDANCE:** Councilwoman Faye Lemoine, Councilmen Jerry Joseph, Mike Perron, Jordan Anderson, Councilwoman Christina Sam, Councilman Bryant Riggs, City Clerk Hilda Edwards and Fire Chief Chris Soileau. And Police Chief Neil Lartigue.

Absent was: City Attorney Eric Lafleur.

Following the Invocation and Pledge, roll called by Hilda Edwards, City Clerk and Mayor Vidrine 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.

The Mayor asked for a motion to add an Item No. 10 to the agenda to discuss the potential purchase of land at the corner of Dr. Carver, Cotton and Rozas Streets. A motion to do so was made by Councilman Joseph, Seconded by Councilman Anderson, and unanimously adopted.

**1. Minutes-Regular Meeting of November 7, 2022**

It was moved by Councilman Perron and seconded by Councilwoman Sam to approve the minutes of November 7, 2022 meeting as presented. All in favor, motion carried unanimously

**2. Monthly Report for October/November 2022 (Budget to Actual)**

The expenses for the month of October 2022 were \$138,299.37 and the expenses for the month of November were \$106,308.43. The expenses were \$31,990.94 less in the month of November than in the month of October. The mayor advised that there were no annual expenses during that month.

It was moved by Councilman Riggs and seconded by Councilwoman Sam to approve the November monthly report. All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

**Mayor's Comments:**

Mayor Vidrine commented on the LAMP report citing a balance of \$3,576,914.89. She also commented on the \$400,000.00 grant that has been approved through the Love Louisiana Outdoors Program. She advised that the city had put out a Request For Proposals(RFP) to clean the city's canals and asked for a motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the expenditure of ARPA funds not to exceed \$250,000.00 to accommodate the RFP to clean the city's canals. Motion was offered by Councilwoman Sam, seconded by Councilman Perron and adopted without opposition.

**Council Comments:**

**Lemoine:** Councilwoman Lemoine had no comments.

**Sam:** Thanked the council and mayor for serving with her.

**Joseph:** Thanked everyone for serving with him.

**Anderson:** Thanked everyone for serving with him.

**Perron:** Councilman Perron had no comments.

**Riggs:** Councilman Riggs discuss the need for camaraderie between the government and the citizens. He discussed the need for citizens to not be afraid to come forth with evidence to help solve crimes. He discusses the efforts of the last four years with regard to the drainage canals and the expense associated with cleaning the drainage canals. And he concluded by discussing the fake news that's disseminating Facebook.

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

The mayor then call for public comments on agenda items. Mr. Rufus Serialle rose to explain that he had filled out the paperwork to be able to speak tonight and he said the clerk called him....

Mayor Vidrine insisted that Mr. Serialle wasn't speaking on something that was not pertaining to the agender and that he could not speak unless it was relative to an agenda item. Mr. Serialle then said he wanted to speak on the Parks. Mayor Vidrine said there was no agenda item regarding the parks. Mayor Vidrine then asked that security to remove Mr. Serialle from the room.

The mayor then called for any other public comments which there were none.

#### **Agenda Items:**

The mayor then proceeded with the Agenda Items:

- 1. Atakapa Services, Storm Drain/Drainage Presentation - Mr. Kenny Ferracci.** – The Mayor said Mr. Kenny Ferracci would be talking about storm drains and drainage. The mayor said this company will address and assess problems with storm drains and what causes the problems with drainage. She said they will make an assessment and advise the city how to fix the problems that exist. And she said that she was getting with the state this week so that the state could reimburse us for any corrections that need to be done on the state roads. Mr. Kenny Ferracci with Atakapa Services then address to Council. Paraphrasing, he said we are a sewage and storage drain cleaning company. He said we do not clean canals or open ditches. We are a close system drainage company only which means catch basins and drainage and sewage pipes. He reiterated their services were sewer and storm drain cleaning. GPS location, smoke testing, die testing, wet wall cleaning, lift station cleaning, finding hill filtration points, sinkholes, finding the cause of sinkholes through die testing, we are also licensed engineers. We provide rehabilitation recommendations to your engineers and estimated cost to fix the issues. Mr. Ferracci noted that they were located in Baton Rouge and that they run six crews across the state Louisiana right now with offices in Lake Charles and Bossier City. And they were running a New Orleans crew, a Baton Rouge crew, a Bossier City crew and a Lake Charles crew and potentially starting a Monroe crew in the next couple of weeks. Then using a PowerPoint presentation he showed the council a picture of the vacuum truck that they use to clean the systems, showed how the trucks dump and how the system cleans out the pipes. He also showed them what they call an easement machine which makes it easy to get into catch basins and structures that are located in peoples' backyards without damaging their yards. He then presented a quick video that shows the nozzle equipment in action, cleaning a culvert under the roadway. The video demonstrated the amount of pressure used in cleaning an obstruction. The mayor then asked about the cameras that they put in the storm drain to observe obstructions and Mr. Ferracci said yes he was going to show them that

next. He showed a picture of a typical root ball in pipes and how in 8 miles create blockages and showed how that high pressure nozzle completely takes out the root ball. He showed before and after pictures of the root ball situation. He discussed other obstructions that typically caused drainage problems in municipal systems. He explained for safety purposes they use cameras to review all situations before blindly sending a nozzle down a pipe. He said they could do anything between a 72 inch and a 6 inch pipe. He showed more video of different obstructions anywhere from cypress knees to general sentiment. He showed videos of footage where they found sinkholes. After mapping the entire city they will actually provide the city with GPS and PDF files depicting areas of concern. The files will be color-coded for easy recognition of problem areas. He discussed the need to review drainage pipes and catch basins prior to an overlay being done. He concluded the presentation by showing a few slides/videos of the nozzle in action. He did say that once they complete the review and video of the lines they would make recommendations to the engineer on how to proceed with recommended corrective action. They also would provide a cost estimate for those actions. He did say the company does not do the actual design work. They let the cities engineer take care of that. The mayor then said that she had asked him to go while he was in town and look at some specific areas and she asked him to elaborate on that. He advised he had gone to Shady Acres Subdivision, to Scenic Drive area and he said basically what he saw was a lotta ditches in swells and sludge and sentiment settling in. Mayor Vidrine reiterated that in the past people just did what they wanted, now the engineers are consulted on every job before culverts are laid to ensure that they are being put in level and in the right sizes. Mayor Vidrine also emphasized that Atakapa Services is a state of the art company. She said the company has been vetted Mary and highly highly highly highly highly recommended with regard to what they do. And she said this company is ready to move right away. She said he has done an assessment and although it was limited the little that he could see he can see where the problems are. So she is asking tonight to approve this professional service to be paid with the ARPA funds so this company can get started in the next two weeks and those two weeks he'll have ample time to really assess what's going on in the storm drains. Mr. Ferracci said yes that's correct and he explain, you want to be able to come in and not just attack a line segment, because one line segment is tied to another line segment and another line segment so you want to start at the outfall of the system and work your way back so that you're not just cleaning just the middle of the system. Councilman Mike Perron interjected that a lot of problems over the years has been how things always gather at LaSalle and the railroad track and Main Street at Chataignier where all the state drainage systems are. Mr. Ferracci said a lot of cities are partnering with the state and doing a call share and in fact sometimes being reimbursed by DOTD for the cleaning of the storm drains at the state highways. Councilman Riggs then ask Mr. Ferracci "can you identify on Main Street and Lasalle Street where some of the catch basins are at? Because catch basins are where the water is going to flow at. That's what it's there for. So when you go down LaSalle and I know that's where you get, what is this road right here Southeast railroad? This is a hill. But when you get to a block away there's no hill. And I think the way they designed LaSalle, I think it's a bad way. Can you see where the water flows at on both sides of the hill, that's where the water tends to go, so that would be one of the first places y'all would clean, where the catch basin's at? Mr. Ferracci then said, yes that's where you going to lower the system, into the catch basin, to get the camera nozzle and you're popping the catch basin, so that you can view what's going on in the pipe, if that answers your question. Councilman Riggs then went on, so the GIS technology, which I'm familiar with, that's a pretty good system, y'all can mark off where y'all stopped at, right? Mr. Ferracci said, that's correct. Councilman Riggs said, and then when y'all are done, y'all can provide the city, because this will probably be done in phases, it's very expensive, I know it is, so it'll probably be done, You know whatever we can afford, we'll do this right now, come back six months later and do this, once a year, so y'all will keep that map? Mr. Ferracci responded yep, so we'll maintain the map, The shape files and the GIS database, but we also provided it to the city as well. So, change of people change of employees, things always getting

misplaced, we'll always have a master copy to give you. Through a dropbox. Councilman Riggs said that he just wanted people to understand that this was not gonna happen overnight. Mr. Ferracci said no, yes you're correct this is a multi-year plan. Mr. Ferracci said it's generally done in phases as money will allow. And they do maintain the files in the records and what's been done so if there's a different individual three years later they can say we've already been in this area. Mr. Riggs concluded that by them maintaining the Maps and the achievements, this was already going to be some cost savings. Mayor Vidrine then ask for a motion for a two week start up and suggested that by that time Mr. Ferracci could make a report on the progress. Mr. Ferracci said instead of showing up with their equipment he would suggest meeting with everyone, either a point person or each one of the council members to have a game plan and demonstrate in what areas they have real concerns and where we need to make some progress. The mayor reiterated what Mr. Ferracci had just said, and motion was made by Councilwoman Lemoine seconded by Councilman Joseph and motion carried unanimously.

2. **Canal Cleaning Proposal-** The Mayor announced that the city had put out an RFP for Canal cleaning and that the proposals would be due back September 22 at 4 PM.
3. **Fireman's Salary Increase** –The Mayor advised that she would like to propose a 4% salary increase beginning at the next payroll period for fireman. Councilman Perron made the motion seconded by councilman Joseph and it was approved unanimously.
4. **Police Salary Increase** – The mayor announced it would be effective in the next pay period at \$17.50 per hour. Move by Councilman Joseph second by councilman Anderson approved unanimously.

After the vote, the mayor that the only reason we were able to do this is because a 3 months ago we became a debt-free city.

5. **Police Training Budget-** The mayor explained the effort was to add \$5000 to a training budget for the police department to provide better and proper training. Motion was made by Councilman Joseph second by Council woman Sam without objection it was approved unanimously.
6. **Police Vehicle** – The mayor said the Police Department needed an additional truck and the city had one to spare. Motion was made by Councilman Sam, second by Councilman Perron and passed without opposition.
7. **Fire Chief Report-** Fire Chief Chris Soileau expressed well wishes to the Mayor and Council Members that were moving on. His monthly report was as follows: For the month of November 25 incidents, no structure fires in the City, 2 structure fires in the fire district, one vehicle accident in the fire district, 1 grass fire, nine alarm activations and 1 fatality in motor vehicle accident, total of 15 incidents in the city and 10 incidents in the fire district.
8. **Engineer's Report** – Mr. Ronnie Landreneau. Toby Landreneau addressed the council on behalf of Landreneau and Associates. Mr. Landreneau began by recommending a resolution for the substantial completion for the capital outlay construction improvement, i.e. streets project, We've come to a point I think the paperwork is ready to be signed so I'd like to recommend that, Mayor Vidrine interrupted "I had a question on that paperwork, the way I interpreted it, were those things already done or was that things to be done? I did not want to sign it if those things that are not done and if they have to come back and complete those things and" Landreneau said no you're holding back all the funds for the things that have not been complete. The mayor asked if that is dress-up work and Mr. Landreneau said yeah that's pretty much what it is. Basically

explain how Prairie construction keeps track of everything that needs to be done, but until after the 45 days that are allowed after a substantial completion. He explained that typically 45 days that they have to do the correct work is why we hold back the funds which is 18,000+ retainage which is 5% of the entire contract as a lien retainage. Councilwoman Lemoine then asked who was responsible for striping Mr. Landreneau just said that this project did not call for any striping. Landreneau then said this particular project is substantially complete. Councilwoman Sam then said she had a few streets in her district that needed attention. Mr. Landreneau then said work on any other streets would have to be on a separate project. Mr. Landreneau then address the Reed St., Jefferson Street drainage flooding project in which he said we are waiting on permits from the Department of Transportation Development to proceed. Mr. Landreneau then said that concluded his remarks. Mr. Arthur Sampson then asked about the edge of the overlay on Magnolia Street, the sharp edge which cars are challenged with when they go from the lower streets onto Magnolia. Mr. Landreneau said he would look into it.

9. **Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire-** Approval of the annual compliance questionnaire for the auditor. It was moved by Councilman Anderson second by councilman Joseph and approved without opposition.
10. **Retired Councilman/Employee presentation** – Mrs. Donna Guillory was there as a retiree and so the city presented her with a plaque. She graciously accepted. Mayor Vidrine then called on our retiring councilman Mike Perron and gave him a plaque as well. Mayor Vidrine then took a personal privilege and presented to councilman elect Chris Roy and his brother Willy Roy a picture of the presentation that they made at their fathers grave the last time the City of Ville Platte went to Washington DC.
11. **Dwan Jack – Pool Hall**– Mr. Jack briefly discussed his plans to open a pool hall at 142 West Main Street. He was advised that the city would submit their usual inquiry to Louisiana State Police and schedule approval for the January meeting.
12. **Land Purchase** - The land at the corner of Dr. Carve, Cotton and Rozas Streets has been offered to the city for a price of \$35,000. Mayor Vidrine said it can be used for a Pocket Park and also for storage of large vehicles. She said this was a vision of Councilwoman Sam. Councilwoman Sam said she just really wanted to see it happen and not drag on. Mayor Vidrine said the owner was getting the paperwork done and it would be done soon. Councilwoman Lemoine asked who would be responsible for the demolition of the building on the property and Mayor Vidrine said the city would be responsible for that. It was moved by Councilman Sam second by Councilman Jordan and it was approved without opposition.

#### **Abandoned Property/Blighted/Overgrown Properties**

The mayor advised that with regard to blighted properties the city was continuing to work on the list that had previously been discussed.

#### **Resolutions:**

None

#### **Ordinances:**

None

#### **Proclamations:**

None

**Permits:**

Sharon Fontenot, 17<sup>th</sup> Swamp Pop Annual Reunion Dance – Mrs. Fontenot made a small presentation regarding the Swamp Pop Museum and then advised they were seeking permission to use the Ville Platte Civic Center and Permits to sell alcohol on February 20, 2023 for the annual reunion dance. Motion was made by Councilwoman Lemoine and seconded by Councilman Perron and without objection, permit was approved.

**New Business**

None

**Reports****Chief of Police's Report-Neal Lartigue**

Chief Lartigue reported there were a total of 896 calls for assistance in the month of November 2022---56 citations, 19 misdemeanor arrests, 1 felony arrests, officers responded to 4 automobile accidents with 1 fatality.

**Mayor's Report –**

The mayor then took a moment of privilege during her “Mayors Report” to thank Trooper Willie Williams for everything he’s done to help with the issues with the justice department and the police department.

Mr. Williams then took a moment to thank the council and the mayor and the chief for working with him. He explained the justice department had listed seven items lacking in the police department, 1- fourth amendment Miranda rights, 2- vehicle stops, 3- field interviews, 4- arrests, 5- context interviews, 6- investigative stops, and 7- fair and impartial police. Since I’ve been here working with chief Lartigue and the department of justice we have been able to create policy and procedures for all seven of those items. We’ve also been able to create training and PowerPoint presentations for all of those items and not only that but prepping police officers, every policeman has been trained regarding all 7 items. He that all of the department’s officers and detectives that are there now are properly and professionally trained police officers and they do the job. He went on to say that the main problem now is a shortage of police officers. He did say that he thought the salary increase will go a long way in attracting new police officers and he concluded his remarks by wishing everybody a great new year.

The mayor then said she wanted everybody to know that there was money in the police budget for 16 officers. Including training. She explained that she was now continuing with her final mayors report and she just a soon start off by making note that when she got there the policeman were making eight dollars an hour and She was so happy to have the increases for the police department and the fire department. She said she urges the council and the new council members to keep things going Ville Platte is on the mend she said she is so proud to be from Ville Platte because we are one of maybe two cities in the state of Louisiana where we are a debt free and the city gets the money that we save from that and it goes back into the community, we don’t have to have vehicles being held together with duct tape we bought 17 new trucks that are on the road and they are paid for in full, debt free all, on your lawn equipment paid for them, debt-free, canals are going to get clean, staffs receive salary increases, when she got there they were making \$7.25 an hour, we didn’t wait for the nation to go up a minimum wage we did it ourselves we increased all of the technology and City Hall you can pay them online you can go through the drive-through she said she is very happy she can leave here and all is well with her soul. She just urged the people coming in to care about the people, don’t worry about the pal don’t worry about authority it’s about the people make their problems your problems, don’t get it because you have a title and you want to get 30 seconds on channel 3 or you want to be seen and recognized in a football game, it’s about the people, be accessible she said one of her main missions was to make sure people knew where Ville Platte was. She then went on to think of all of the council members who served with her over the years. She then

went on to discuss some of she and the councils accomplishments and she begged the council to not go back on the projects that they had committed to she insisted that if they did especially with regard to the sewer plant the city of Ville Platte would be in big trouble. She talked about the new Pocket Park's, the new sewer pump stations and she ended by saying no she's never built a house in Carencro, she does not live in Carencro, she will be right here in Ville Platte. And she concluded by wishing Ville Platte well.

Mike Perron said he had a question about sandbags and stuff with the bad weather, the mayor said she would be monitoring the weather conditions throughout the night but that sand bags were available at the Girls-Boys Place.

**Adjournment**

With there being no other business, Mayor Vidrine called for a motion to adjourn. A motion by Councilwoman Sam and seconded by Councilman Perron to adjourn.  
All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

**Meeting was adjourned at 6:52 PM**

**Approved By:**

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**Ryan Leday Williams, Mayor**

**Attest By:**

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**Donald Bergeron, City Clerk**