

City of Ville Platte
Regular Monthly City Council Meeting

126 E. Main Street, Ville Platte, LA
Minutes for September 13, 2022 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, September 13, 2022 5:00 PM. The *The Regular Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Vidrine.*

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

Absent were: City Attorney Eric Lafleur

Following the Invocation and Pledge, roll called by Hilda Edwards, 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.

1. Minutes-Regular Meeting of August 9, 2022

It was moved by Councilman Perron and seconded by Councilwoman Sam to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2022 meeting as presented. All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

2. Minutes-Special Meeting of August 30, 2022

It was moved by Councilman Perron and seconded by Councilman Anderson to approve the minutes of the August 30, 2022 meeting as presented. All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

3. Monthly Report for March/April 2022 (Budget to Actual)

The expenses for the month of July 2022 paid in August were \$247,321.00 and the expenses for the month of August 2022 paid in September 2022 were \$258,065.78. The expenses were \$10,744.00 more in the month of August than in the month of July. The city did have one-time expenses including an installment on the body camera contract with the police department and one-time expenses of 10,000 something dollars to Bush Control Services for the long grass, \$16,000.00 for regulators for meters for the gas department and \$44,950.00 for repairs for Operations regarding our water wells. The Budget to Actuals for all departments was discussed as well.

Councilwoman Lemoine at this time made note that the minutes for the August 30th meeting indicated she was not in attendance when she actually was. Mayor Vidrine ordered staff to make the correction.

It was moved by Councilman Joseph and seconded by Councilman Anderson to approve the July monthly report. All in favor, motion carried.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Vidrine referenced photos included in each council members meeting folder and advised that the newly over-layer streets had been vandalized. She advised that Chief of Police Lartigue had been made aware of the complaint and that he assured that he had assigned a detective to investigate the matter. She advised that on September 21 at 6:00 PM at the Martin Luther King center she will be bringing the Louisiana Housing Roadshow and USDA to educate the public regarding all programs they have regarding housing. She ask all present to please share that

information with everyone in the community. Mayor Vidrine took a moment to congratulate the Sacred Heart Trojans on becoming the 2022 T-Cotton Bowl Champions. She concluded her comments by reminding everyone about Dog Day Tuesday at the Girls-Boys Place to benefit the Bulldog Athletic Committee.

Council Comments:

Lemoine: Councilwoman Lemoine focused on drainage and insisted its time to clean the drainage canals. Mayor Vidrine advised that she had finally found a company that would be coming to do a demonstration on cleaning the drainage canals and she would advise the council when the demonstration would be taking place. Mayor Vidrine also advised that she has a company that will be coming to do a demonstration on cleaning storm drains and she mentioned the culverts as well. Lemoine concluded by insisting it's time to act. She did make note that she would be asking the engineer something regarding Marie Street. She also asked to add Mr. Sean McCurry to the agenda to discuss water meters and made a motion to do so. The motion was seconded by Councilman Perron and without opposition Mr. McCurry was added to the agenda as item No. 7.

Sam: Councilwoman Sam again asked about speed bumps. The mayor called on Street Commissioner Don White to update the council regarding same. Mr. White advised that the speed bumps had been delivered and that he was simply waiting on staff to finish another job. He insisted as soon as they were available and he had the proper drill bits he would have the speed bumps installed. Councilwoman Sam did ask that the speed bumps be installed as soon as possible, citing a recent traffic accident. She then asked about dilapidated properties and Mayor Vidrine advised that 27 properties had been identified for the abandoned property program and they would be discussed when that agenda item came up later this evening. Councilwoman Sam then insisted that the Freddie Dunn Road Bridge was old and almost too narrow and asked for consideration as such. Mayor Vidrine advised the bridge was on the list to be submitted for funding consideration from the "new infrastructure funds".

Joseph: Councilman Joseph had no comments.

Anderson: Suggested police watch for kids at night with backpacks as possibly responsible for street vandalism.

Perron: Questioned the delay in the acquisition of new heavy equipment budgeted in capital outlay. Mayor advised she is constantly checking and equipment is still hard to find. Mayor advised if needs become more urgent staff will look into renting necessary equipment in the meantime.

Public Comments on Agenda Items listed (4 minutes each) – Mayor Vidrine called for public comments on agenda items. Mr. Rufus Serialle arose to discuss the pavilions at Hargrove Park. He was advised that this was not related to an item on the agenda and advised to contact the clerk for possible answers.

Agenda Items:

The mayor then proceeded with the Agenda Items:

1. **Fire Chief Report-** Fire Chief Chris Soileau made the following report for August – 27 calls for the Ville Platte area, including 3 structure fire call, 1 vehicle fire call, 3 grass fire calls, 9 alarm activation calls, 1 hazardous condition call and 6 service calls and 1 fatality. He advised that they have completed annual fire hydrant inspections and gave a general report about the legislature and carbon monoxide detection. He also briefly talked about the annual Fire Prevention Week set for October 9 thru October 15.

2. **Lisa Derouen – Council on Aging.** Mr. Derouen advised that it was time once again to renew the annual sponsorship of the Council on Aging’s public transit system by the city. The mayor asked for a motion to approve the city’s sponsorship as such; It was moved by Councilwoman Sam, seconded by Councilman Perron, and without opposition, it was approved.
3. **Arthur Sampson – Concerns about bridge on Freddie Dunn.**

Mr. Sampson reemphasized the need to upgrade the bridge on Freddie Dunn Road as soon as possible and make it a priority. He also discussed the hazards that exist at the intersection of Dr. Carver and Cotton Streets and suggested the city take whatever action necessary to prevent an accident. Finally he issued a complaint against housing developers for failing to properly maintain the properties after the construction of the development is complete.
4. **Approve the 2023 Fair Market Rent** – After an explanation by City Clerk Hilda Edwards regarding the Fair Market Rent Rated for HUD housing. it moved by councilman Sam and seconded by Councilman Riggs, All in favor, motion carried.
5. **Engineer’s report – Ronnie Landreneau.** Mr. Landreneau began with streets and advised that the contractor would be continuing the street project sometime next week. He advised that a sub-contractor had begun the new construction of St. Marie St. Councilwoman Lemoine asked if that would include proper drainage for St. Marie St. and Mr. Landreneau assured her that it would include proper drainage. Mr. Landreneau advised the he and his associate, Mr. Toby Landreneau, at the request of the contractor would like to get together with the Mayor at her earliest convenience in order to prioritize the remaining streets in the project so the contractor can plan accordingly to complete the project as soon as possible. He advised the completion phase should last 4 to 6 weeks. Mayor Vidrine asked that Mr. Landreneau review the vandalized section of roadway and advice the city accordingly. Mr. Landreneau agreed. Councilwoman Lemoine then commented (inaudible). With respect to the parks project, Mr. Landreneau advised the his associate, Mr. Todd Deville, had met with Councilwoman Sam and Councilman Riggs and indicated that he should have everything ready for Mayor Vidrine to review before submitting it to Baton Rouge sometime next week. He advised that the project recently received final approval on the cooperative endeavor agreement to assure funding at 100%. He advised that the L-GAP and Water enrichment grant applications are due in November. He advised resolutions would be prepared to be approved at the October meeting. He advised that he had met with the fire chief regarding structural issues he has concerning the concrete driveways at the Lincoln Road fire station that he would like the council to consider addressing.
6. **Dog Pound – Committee Update.** Sonia _____ advised the advisory committee had met and wanted to suggest that the adoption fee be increased for \$10.00 to \$100.00. She advised these monies would be used to spade, neuter and vaccinate the animals before they could leave the pound. She advised that the sewer system needs attention. The Animal Control Officer, Mr. Aaron Baughman, advised that the construction of the plumbing is not proper for drainage. Councilman Perron suggested that they consult the city plumbing inspector, Mr. Robert Perron, and they agreed. The committee also advised that architect Jill Stevens was waiting on the third bid for a new pound. They also advised that repairs previously discussed were in the process of being completed. Mayor Vidrine asked for a motion to increase the adoption fee from \$10.00 to \$100.00 to generate funds to be used to vaccinate, spay and neuter animals prior to adoption. The motion was offered by Councilwoman Lemoine and seconded by Councilman Perron and adopted without opposition. Mayor Vidrine then asked for a motion to make the change effective October The motion was offered by Councilman Anderson and seconded by Councilwoman Sam and adopted without opposition.

The committee also advised that Fire Chief Chris Soileau may be able to provide them with fencing. Councilman Perron asked if the welding program at the technical college had been contacted and Mr. Baughman assured him that they had and they indicated they would do the welding if the city supplied the materials. Mayor Vidrine instructed Mr. Baughman to compile a list of the materials needed and Mr. Baughman assured the council that he would work with Mrs. Stevens to do so. Councilman Riggs asked for a reiteration as to where fencing may come from and Mr. Baughman reiterated it was from Fire Chief Chris Soileau.

7. **Sean McCurry** – Water Meters (item added earlier in the meeting). After 4 minutes of explanation of his concerns Mayor Vidrine assured Mr. McCurry that she would personally look into the matter and she would schedule a sit down meeting with him and the utility department to attempt to resolve the issue.

Abandoned Property/Blighted/Overgrown

Mayor Vidrine advised the council that the following properties had been included in a list compiled of properties (Abandoned or neglected) that need to be removed or cleaned:

707 West Oak, 120 East Washington, 112 East Long, 135 West Main, E. Hickory, 619 Young, 521 and 607 Edward Knotoe, 508 Southwest Railroad, 1937 East Main, 510 Northwest Railroad, 119 East Long, 728 Rozas, 607 North Coreil, 219 East Wilson, 1002 West Lincoln, Young St, 606 Calcasieu, Vacant Lot on Coreil Street, several lots on East Cotton, 415 North Soileau, 1515 and 1505 Blake, 412 and 414 North Chataignier, Fontenot Street, 234 E. Wilson, 116 East Jackson, and 207.

Mayor Vidrine advised that the property owners have been notified and will be given a deadline to remedy the situation and otherwise the city will remedy the situation at the owners' expense to be added to their annual property tax bill.

Councilwoman Sam asked that neglected properties on E.D Alfred Street just west of Allen Street be added and the mayor ordered staff to add same to the list. Arthur Sampson asked for lots he previously complained about on Owen Street to be added to the list and the Mayor ordered staff to do so. Mr. Sampson also complained about the apartment complexes not being properly maintained and the mayor advised that would be addressed in the proposed land use ordinance. Mrs. Joycie Thomas asked about the property on East Hickory just east of South Chataignier Road and Mayor Vidrine took the opportunity to call on Mr. Gilbert Fontenot Jr. who had been asked to come to the meeting to address the condition of his property. Mr. Fontenot responded to questions and after lengthy discussion Mayor Vidrine advised Mr. Fontenot that he has 30 days to clean up his property. Mayor Vidrine then asked for a motion to proceed against the properties previously recognized as have been compiled for notice of demolition or cleanup. Motion was offered by Councilwoman Sam and seconded by Councilwoman Lemoine and without opposition motioned was adopted.

Resolutions

None

Ordinances:

None

Proclamations:

None

Permits:

Ortego's Auto Cove – Retail Liquor Permit

Mayor Vidrine advised that this item would be tabled pending additional information.

Sip & Savor Restaurant – Retail Beer Permit

Mayor Vidrine advised that this item would be tabled pending additional information.

Mayor Vidrine then asked for a motion to table these 2 items pending additional information. Motion was so ordered by Councilman Anderson and seconded by Councilwoman Lemoine and without opposition the motion was adopted.

New Business

None

Reports

Chief of Police's Report-Neal Lartigue

There were a total of 688 calls for assistance in the month of August 2022---9 citations, 6 misdemeanor arrests, 6 felony arrests, officers responded to 12 automobile accidents with 0 fatalities. Calls were up 30, citations up 4, misdemeanor arrests were up 2; felony arrests were up 4, automobile accidents down 2.

Adjournment

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

All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:16 PM

Approved By:

Jennifer Vidrine, Mayor

Attest By:

Hilda Edwards, City Clerk