

City of Ville Platte
Regular Monthly City Council Meeting

126 E. Main Street, Ville Platte, LA
Minutes for February 9, 2021 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, February 9, 2021 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.

Public Hearing

An ordinance providing for the levy within The City of Ville Platte, parish of Evangeline, State of Louisiana, effective 2024, of one (1) ad Valorem property tax (the "tax"), more Specifically a 10 year/4.0 mill property tax Renewal, in said city, levying and providing For the assessment, collection, payment and Dedication of the proceeds of such tax may be Expended, such tax having been authorized at a special election held in the city on July 11, 2020. To be held on February 9, 2021 at 4:45 p.m. The ordinance will be adopted at the regular meeting at 5:00 P.M.

The Public Hearing was closed at 5:00 PM with no one in attendance.

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, Jerry Joseph and Mike Perron, and City Clerk Shountilez L. Williams, Police Chief Neal Lartigue, Fire Chief Chris Soileau, City Attorney ,Eric Lafleur, Administrative Secretary, Hilda Edward and Dirk Deville, Chief Administrative Officer. .

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.

Attending in person: Mayor Jennifer Vidrine, City Clerk Shountilez Williams, Councilmen Bryant Riggs, Lionel Anderson and Mike Perron, Donald Sam, Councilwoman Faye Lemoine, Admin. Asst. Hilda Edwards, Fire Chief Neal Lartigue. Dirk Deville, Chief Administrative Officer and Eric Lafleur,

At the request of Mayor Vidrine one item was added to the agenda. Approve the purchase of a vehicle for the fire department. It was moved by Councilwoman Lemoine and seconded by Councilman Sam to add the agenda item. All in favor motion carried.

- **Minutes-Regular Monthly Meeting January 12, 2021**

It was moved by Councilman Anderson and seconded by Councilman Perron to approve the minutes of January 12, 2021 as presented. All in favor, motion carried unanimously

- **Monthly Report for January 12, 2021 (Budget to Actual)**

Due to the weather and personal issues the Monthly Reports for January and February will be provided at the March meeting.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Vidrine reminded everyone COVID-19 testing is still going on every Tuesday and Thursday at the clinic on Lincoln Road. There are pharmacies that are administering the shot. The Mayor is still working on getting shots administered at the Civic Center.

The Backhoe has been ordered and currently waiting for delivery.

City Hall will be closed Monday for President's Day and Tuesday for Mardi Gras.

The City's building across from City Hall will be repaired; the City Barn and the Annex building will be getting a new roof.

Council Comments:

Councilman Riggs inquired about the old City Hall building located at 342 W. Main St.

Councilman Riggs presented a new sanitizer dispenser, he asked that the Mayor look into purchasing some for the city's use. . Mr. Riggs also asked for the Mayor and Council to consider looking into getting a loan to purchase all of the large equipment that is needed at once. He thinks with the purchase, the City could do the demolition of abandoned houses and would not

have to contract out. Mr. Riggs also asked about the street sweeper, Mayor Vidrine said that the operator is still training on the operation.

Mayor Vidrine responded that there is more to the process of demolition of abandoned houses. He asked about the fence on Derouen, Mayor Vidrine responded that she is still waiting on the third bid. Councilman Riggs requested the list of city employees that will be working in each district be provided to each Council. Ms. Lemoine asked Chief Lartigue if he could provide trustees to help with cleaning the streets.

Public Comments on Agenda Items listed (4 minutes each)—No public comments

Agenda Items:

1. Fire Chief Report

There were 26 calls made in the month of January to the Ville Platte Fire Department, which includes 13 for Fire District #2 and 13 for the Ville Platte Fire District.

- **Item added to the agenda: The purchase of a vehicle for the Fire Dept.**

It was moved by Councilman Perron and seconded by Councilwoman Lemoine to allow the Fire Chief to purchase the 2014 Tahoe for the fire department at a cost of \$17,500.00. All in favor, motion carried.

2. Casey Ardoin-Audit Ending June 30, 2020

Mr. Ardoin with the Audit firm appeared before the Mayor and Council to present the audit report for the year July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Mr. Ardoin announced that the city has a Surplus of total governmental funds in the amount of \$1.5 million dollars. Compared to the previous fiscal year, where the city saw a deficit of \$240,000. Part of the turnaround was from the city taking in \$6.7 million in total revenue which was around \$800 thousand dollar increase from the previous year. The also saw a \$ 5.2 million in total expenditures, which was a decrease of one million dollars. Also contributing to the turnaround is the fact that the city received \$480 thousand in COVID related funds. **Utility Funds** and Section 8 Housing Funds were combined. Utility Funds had an increase in funds 1.4 million (cash and accounts receivable) that represent an increase of \$630, 000 from the June 30, 2019 year. Total for Utility Funds and Section Fund has an ending balance of \$21.2 million at the end of the year. Liability Funds (Current and non-current) –Total Liability \$11.8 million, total fund balance for Utility Funds and Section 8 Housing Funds is 9.7 million.

Mr. Ardoin notice that collection efforts were being made and policies were put in place to make sure cost cutting were always front and center. Budget-- it is required that the city stay within 5% of its budget, the city stayed within its, budget with finding.

3. Cajun Broadband

The Council heard from representatives of Cajun Broadband. The internet provider purchased Universal Communications and requested to provide service to the Ville Platte and surrounding areas. Cajun Broadband equipment will be mounted on top of the city's water towers, same as Universal Communication. Residential packages range from *light* which offers five megabytes per second to *Ultimate* which offers 15 megabytes per second. Also available are commercial packages and digital telephone service.

It was moved by Councilwoman Lemoine and seconded by Councilman Anderson to approve the contract with Cajun Broadband as the new internet service for Ville Platte and the surrounding Communities. All in favor, Motion carried.

4. Artist Thaddeus Arvie-Art-work on the outside of the MLK Center and the basketball courts.

Mr. Arvie appeared through ZOOM to speak to the Mayor and Council on the proposed project for the MLK Center and the basketball courts. The cost for the project is \$8,500.00. After some discussion Mayor Vidrine pledged \$1,000.00, Councilman Riggs pledge \$500.00 and City Attorney Eric Lafleur and his law partners pledged \$7,000.00. It was moved by Councilman Sam and seconded by Councilman Perrom to approve the "Power Forward" Project which will include; The Martin Luther King Center, Romeo Hargrove Park on the Southside of Ville Platte, Hope Park and the Northside Park. All in favor, motion carried.

Abandoned Property/Blighted/Overgrown Properties

In the past months, several properties have been cleaned and demolished by the City for non-compliance of the City's Blighted Property Ordinance. Properties scheduled for demolition are, the trailer on the corner of Jefferson and Laran St. and the property on NE Railroad.

The following was introduced by Councilman Lionel Anderson on January 12, 2021 and after a public hearing held on February 9, 2021 it was moved for adoption by Councilman Bryant Riggs and said motion was seconded by Councilman Donald Sam of the Ville Platte City Council:

ORDINANCE NO. 0209-21-01

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY WITHIN THE CITY OF VILLE PLATTE, PARISH OF EVANGELINE, STATE OF LOUISIANA, EFFECTIVE 2024, OF ONE (1) AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAX (THE "TAX"), MORE SPECIFICALLY A 10 YEAR/4.0 MILL PROPERTY TAX RENEWAL, IN SAID CITY, LEVYING AND PROVIDING FOR THE ASSESSMENT, COLLECTION, PAYMENT AND DEDICATION OF THE PROCEEDS OF SUCH TAX MAY BE EXPENDED, SUCH TAX HAVING BEEN AUTHORIZED AT A SPECIAL ELECTION HELD IN THE CITY ON JULY 11, 2020.

WHEREAS, under the provisions of Article VI, Section 27 (Municipal Ad Valorem Tax), of the Constitution of the State of Louisiana of 1974, and other constitutional and statutory authority and an election held on **July 11, 2020**, the City of Ville Platte, Parish of Evangeline, State of Louisiana (the "**City**"), acting through the Ville Platte City Council, as its governing authority (the "**Governing Authority**"), is authorized to levy and collect within the City one (1) ad valorem property tax (the "Tax"), more specifically a 10 Year/4.00 Mill Property Tax Renewal, from and after January 1, 2024 from owners of immovable and/or real property within the "City" as provided by law, pursuant to the following proposition which was approved at said election held on **July 11, 2020**:

**CITY OF VILLE PLATTE
PARISH OF EVANGELINE, STATE OF LOUISIANA
PROPOSITION 1
(TAX RENEWAL)**

Shall the City of Ville Platte, State of Louisiana (the "City"), be authorized to renew the levy of a 4.0 mills tax on all the property subject to taxation in the City (an estimated \$159,180 reasonably expected at this time to be collected from the levy of the tax for an entire year) for a period of ten (10) years, beginning with the year 2024 and ending with the year 2033, for the purpose of the maintenance and operation of the City's police department and fire department, including the acquisition of necessary equipment, and to pay salaries, benefits and related expenses?

WHEREAS, in compliance with Article VI, Section 27 of the Constitution of the State of Louisiana of 1974, the aforementioned statutory authority and said special election of **July 11, 2020**, this Governing Authority desires to provide for the levy and collection of the Tax, the distribution of the proceeds of the Tax and for other matters in connection therewith as provided in this Ordinance;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Ville Platte City Council, acting as the governing authority (the "**Governing Authority**") of the City of Ville Platte of the Parish of Evangeline, State of Louisiana (the "**City**") that:

SECTION 1. Imposition. Pursuant to the authority granted by the voters in that special election held in the City on **July 11, 2020**, the Tax is hereby levied upon all owners of immovable and/or real property in the City as defined by law. The City shall apply in the assessment, collection, administration and enforcement of the Tax, the provisions of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

SECTION 2. Rate. The City shall levy the Tax for ten (10) years at a rate of four (4.0) mills on all the property subject to taxation in the City.

SECTION 3. Term. The Tax shall be effective on January 1, 2024 and end on December 31, 2033.

SECTION 4. Purposes. The proceeds of the Tax shall be used for the purposes set forth in the proposition approved by the voters in the special election held in the City of Ville Platte on July 11, 2020, which proposition is set forth in the preamble hereto.

SECTION 5. Limits on Interest, Penalty and Attorney Fees. Should the interest,

penalties or attorney fees herein, or the combined interest, penalties and attorney fees be declared to be in excess of limits provided by other law, including relevant jurisprudence, then the maximum interest, penalties and attorney fees allowed by such other law shall apply.

SECTION 6. Collector. The Tax levied by this Ordinance is authorized to be collected by a "Collector" which term shall mean the City of Ville Platte, Parish of Evangeline, State of Louisiana.

SECTION 7. Powers of Collector. The Collector is hereby authorized, empowered and directed to carry into effect the provisions of this Ordinance to appoint deputies, assistants or agents to assist it in the performance of its duties, and in pursuance thereof to make and enforce such rules as it may deem necessary.

SECTION 8. Revenues of Tax. All taxes, revenues, funds, assessments, moneys, penalties, fees or other income which may be collected or come into the possession of the Collector under any provision or provisions of this Ordinance relating to the Tax shall be promptly deposited by the Collector for the account of the City in a special fund heretofore established and maintained for the deposit of such proceeds, which fund shall be a separate bank account established and maintained with the regularly designated fiscal agent of the City; provided, however, any amount which is paid under protest or which is subject to litigation may be transferred to a separate account established by the Collector with said fiscal agent pending the final determination of the protest or litigation.

SECTION 9. Administrative Fee. In compliance with the said special election of July 11, 2020, authorizing the Tax, after all reasonable and necessary costs and expenses of collecting and administration of the Tax has been paid as provided for above, the remaining balance in such said special fund shall be available for appropriation and expenditures by the Governing Authority solely for the purposes designated in the proposition authorizing the levy of the Tax.

SECTION 10. Severability. If any or more of the provisions of this Ordinance shall for any reason be held to be illegal or invalid, such illegality or invalidity shall not affect any other provision of this Ordinance, but this Ordinance shall be construed and enforced as if such illegal or invalid provisions had not been contained herein. Any constitutional or statutory provision enacted after the date of this Ordinance which validates or makes legal any provision of this Ordinance which would not otherwise be valid or legal, shall be deemed to apply to this Ordinance.

SECTION 11. Publication and Recordation. This Ordinance shall be published in one issue of the official journal of this Governing Authority as soon as is reasonably possible. A certified copy of this Ordinance shall be recorded in the mortgage records of the Parish of Evangeline, State of Louisiana.

BE IT ALSO FURTHER ORDAINED that the proper administrative officials of the Parish of Evangeline, State of Louisiana, be and they are hereby empowered, authorized, directed to spread said taxes, as hereinabove set forth, upon the assessment roll of said Parish beginning for the year 2024, and all subsequent years until expiration of the aforementioned term(s), and to make the collection of the taxes imposed for and on behalf of the taxing authority, according to law, and that the taxes herein levied shall become a permanent lien and privilege on all property subject to taxation as herein set forth, and collection thereof shall be enforceable in the manner provided by law.

BE IT ALSO FURTHER ORDAINED this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its adoption and approval.

This having been submitted to a vote and adopted by the Governing Authority with the votes on the recorded as follows:

VILLE PLATTE CITY COUNCIL	YEAS	NAYS	ABSENT	ABSTAINED
BRYANT RIGGS	X			
FAYE LEMOINE	X			

LIONEL ANDERSON	X			
JERRY JOSEPH	X			
MIKE PERRON	X			
DONALD SAM	X			

The Ordinance to Continue Levying Tax Millage was declared adopted on the **9th day of February, 2021.**

**VILLE PLATTE CITY COUNCIL
PARISH OF EVANGELINE, STATE OF LOUISIANA
JENNIFER VIDRINE, MAYOR**

SHOUNTILEZ LAFLEUR-WILLIAMS, CLERK

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

STATE OF LOUISIANA

PARISH OF EVANGELINE

I, the undersigned Clerk of the Ville Platte City Council, the governing authority of the City of Ville Platte (the "**Governing Authority**") of the Parish of Evangeline, State of Louisiana(the "City") do hereby certify that the foregoing four (4) pages constitute a true and correct copy of the proceedings taken by the Governing Authority on February 9, 2021, to-wit:

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY WITHIN THE CITY OF VILLE PLATTE, PARISH OF EVANGELINE, STATE OF LOUISIANA, EFFECTIVE 2024, OF ONE (1) AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAX (THE "TAX"), MORE SPECIFICALLY A 10 YEAR/4.0 MILL PROPERTY TAX RENEWAL, IN SAID CITY, LEVYING AND PROVIDING FOR THE ASSESSMENT, COLLECTION, PAYMENT AND DEDICATION OF THE PROCEEDS OF SUCH TAX MAY BE EXPENDED, SUCH TAX HAVING BEEN AUTHORIZED AT A SPECIAL ELECTION HELD IN THE CITY ON JULY 11, 2020.

IN FAITH WHEREOF, witness my official signature and the impress of the official seal of said City of Ville Platte, Parish of Evangeline, State of Louisiana, on this **9th day of February, 2021.**

**VILLE PLATTE CITY COUNCIL
PARISH OF EVANGELINE, STATE OF LOUISIANA**

JENNIFER VIDRINE, MAYOR

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**VILLE PLATTE CITY COUNCIL
PARISH OF EVANGELINE, STATE OF LOUISIANA**

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**VILLE PLATTE CITY COUNCIL
PARISH OF EVANGELINE, STATE OF LOUISIANA**

JENNIFER VIDRINE, MAYOR

SHOUNTILEZ LAFLEUR WILLIAMS, CLERK

Proclamations
Permits--None
Reports

Chief of Police's Report-Neal Lartigue

There were a total of 588 complaints for assistance in the month of January 2021---22 citations, 24 arrests of which 12 were felony arrest. Officers responded to 30 automobile accidents.

City Engineer's Report-Ronnie Landreneau- Todd Deville

Mr. Deville reported that his office is currently working on the street project and is set to start in April.

Mayor's Report:

Adjournment

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

All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:34

Approved By:

Jennifer Vidrine, Mayor

Attest By:

Shountilez L. Williams, City Clerk

Approved 03/09/2021