

Ville Platte City Council Minutes for August 9, 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, August 9, 2022 5:00 PM.

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

ATTENDANCE: Councilmen Jerry Joseph, Mike Perron, Jordan Anderson, Councilwoman Christina Sam, Councilman Bryant Riggs, City Accountant Jennifer Manuel sitting in for City Clerk Hilda Edwards, Fire Chief Chris Soileau and Police Chief Neil Lartigue.

Absent was: City Attorney Eric Lafleur and City Clerk Hilda Edwards.

Following the Invocation and Pledge, roll called by Jennifer Manuel, City Accountant, 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.

1. Minutes-Regular Meeting of July 12, 2022

It was moved by Councilman Perron and seconded by Councilwoman Sam to approve the minutes of July 12, 2022 meeting as presented. All in favor, motion carried unanimously

2. Monthly Report for June/July 2022 (Budget to Actual)

The expenses for the month of June 2022 were \$224,769.96 and the expenses for the month of July were \$247,321.00. The expenses were \$22,551.04 more in the month of July than in the month of June. The mayor announced that the overage was due to expenses of \$16,841.24 for new pumps for multiple lift stations for our sewer department, \$8,750.00 for equipment for the gas department, and \$10,815.00 for new pumps at the wells. She announced that these were one time expenditures that needed to be done right a way and that they were not reoccurring.

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

Items added to the Agenda:

Mayor Vidrine then announced that she needed a motion to add to items to the agenda. She announced those items would be recognized as item No. 3 Animal Control Committee and Item No. 4 Resolution for Fire Department.

It was moved by Councilman Joseph and seconded by Councilman Anderson to approve the adding said items to the agenda. All in favor, motion carried.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Vidrine advised "gave out over 500 backpacks yesterday to students and parents" and she emphasized it was not city money; she asked for prayers for Dr. Tim and advised there would be a prayer vigil held for him at Sacred Heart the following evening at 7PM; she said while engineers would give report, she wanted to advise that street projects remained ongoing in spite of the rain, she advised that we would finish the 25 slated for repairs and afterwards we have another 28 that will be addressed; she advise that signs ordered were still on boat off California

coast as well as 25 street cameras that remain on order; she advised that the mural on the City Hall building had been nominated for a community achievement award and had been recognized via honorable mention and that lighting to highlight the mural at night had been ordered. She right to offer more comments later during the meeting.

Council Comments:

Sam: Councilwoman Sam again expressed concern regarding the traffic situation at James Stephens Elementary School. Discussion resulted in Chief Iartigue asking who would do it when his officers were busy and Councilman Perron mentioned asking the Marshal to help out and so it was suggested that perhaps city police and city marshal could tag team the issue. Councilwoman Sam asked about replacing speed bumps that were in place before the road project began and mayor called on engineers who advised that this would need to be added to project, Mayor Vidrine interjected that Street Commissioner Don White had been looking into temporary speed bumps that may be able to be used, which resulted in Don White saying they were waiting for input from the Fires and Police Departments, which brought comment from Fire Chief Chris Soileau that as long as it was speed “humps” and not “bumps” it would be okay. Don White assured it would be “humps”. Mayor asked engineers to prepare report on cost and measures to accommodate same and ordered staff to expedite.

Joseph: Councilman Joseph had no comments.

Anderson: Councilman Anderson asked about the City’s social media efforts. Mayor Vidrine advised that the city maintains a website and she mentioned her “Mayor Jennifer Vidrine Facebook Page” and mentioned she had started an Instagram page.

Perron: Councilman Perron asked about the heavy equipment the city has been suppose to order: Mayor Vidrine said it’s still on a boat in California. She advised that the city is constantly checking on the status and that it’s like “3 to 4 to 6 months out”. She said it’s on order and we are waiting on the manufacturers and they are saying “2 to 4 to 6 months out”.

Riggs: Councilman Riggs commented that with regard to social media, plenty of people talking on social media about the city. Councilman Riggs seriously added that the company he works for is having trouble getting trucks as well. He also commented on Mayor Jennifer Vidrine’s installation ceremony as President of the Louisiana Municipal Association and the significance as such.

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

There were no Public Comments on agenda items.

Agenda Items:

The mayor then proceeded with the Agenda Items:

- 1. Tribute to Mr. Charlie Manuel & Mr. Jim Soileau** – Mayor presented proclamations to families of both gentlemen.
- 2. Fire Chief Report-** After explaining that the State of Louisiana passed an Act his year doling out surplus monies from the 2% that is collected on fire insurance policies for fire departments, resulting in a \$30,000 bonus for the Ville Platte Fire Department, Fire Chief Chris Soileau made the following report for July – 16 calls for the Ville Platte area, including 3 structure fire calls, 0

vehicle fire calls, 2 grass fire calls, 7 alarm activation calls, 1 medical assistance call and 2 service calls.

3. **Linda Sue Fontenot – Economic Growth through Entrepreneurship** – addressed the council regarding the need to educate our citizens, especially our youth, regarding entrepreneurship.
4. **Linda Primeaux – Speeding on Street** – addressed the council regarding speeding in the Bois de Soileau Subdivision. Afterwards Mayor Vidrine suggested additional signage as well as possible speed humps. Chief Lartigue said he was probably unavailable when Mrs. Primeaux had visited the police department by advised that he would be happy to meet and said he would beef up patrols in the neighborhood.
5. **Le Grand Hoorah – Gilbert Aucoin** – Mr. Aucoin was not present but Mayor Vidrine announced that he had informed the city that Le Grande Hoorah would be held this year at Lake View Park just north of Eunice, LA on the weekend of September 24 & 25. She further advised that Mr. Aucoin wanted to mention the importance of contributions and that same could be made payable to Prairie Heritage, Inc. and mailed to 719 W. Magnolia Street, Ville Platte, LA 70586.
6. **Sonya Christopher/Dog Pound** – She advised that their advisory committee had questions from their last meeting. she asked for a status regarding the new shelter, the location, and bids? She advised that Councilman Riggs was in possession of the plans for a new shelter designed by architect Jill Stephens. She advised that she recently visited the pound and it was housing 8 dogs with only 6 cages. She advised the dogs were already chewing through the recently repaired cages. She asked about the status of electrical work to be done in preparation for the winter? Aaron Baughman, Ville Platte Animal Control Officer, then approached and advised repairs of the new holes were in the works. He further advised that the Public Works Director was sending an electrician tomorrow to begin electrical work. He advised that regarding the cold winter months they have been relying on a kerosene heater along with tarp wraps. He encouraged public donations of electrical heaters. Mayor Vidrine instructed Mr. Baughman to get quotes for new cages as soon as possible. Councilman Riggs advised that volunteer help should be sought. He advised the advisory committee that the council was serious about a new shelter but that it would take time and he asked Mr. Baughman to do whatever needs to be done to make repairs. Karen Perron with the advisory committee asked about the budget for repairs and Mayor Vidrine informed them that \$20,000.00 had been budgeted. The mayor concluded by asking the advisory committee to check with the Humane Society for a list of volunteers available in the area.
7. **Engineer’s Report – Toby Landreneau. Street project**, Mr. Landreneau advised that we are waiting on the contractor to mobilize back into the city. He advised that rain has been problematic but he will return as soon as possible to complete the project. **Gas Boring Project for Union Tank Car**, Mr. Landreneau advised that the state permits have been received and the project has been approved. He advised that they were waiting on utilities to be marked. Mayor Vidrine instructed Public Works Director Don White to have utilities marked the following day. **Parks Projects**, Mr. Landreneau advised that Councilwoman Sam would be meeting with engineers on August 11 at 1 pm to lock down splash pads criteria. **Water Sector Grants**, Mr. Landreneau advised that the \$5,000,000.00 construction cost grant for water and the \$5,000,000.00 construction cost grant for sewer were being prepared and would be submitted accordingly. Mayor Vidrine interjected and verified that the engineers would be prepared to meet the application deadline of August 31. Mr. Landreneau affirmed same. Mayor Vidrine interjected that the city was also preparing to apply for DEQ Revolving Grant funding which she stressed would be allocated in the first quarter of 2023. She also advised the Love Louisiana Outdoors \$400,000.00 grant application through the state Division of Administration had just been revised.

Abandoned Property/Blighted/Overgrown Properties

Councilman Mike Perron advised that City Fire Inspector Ted Demourelle asked what the city could do about the old Miller Sign building which was destroyed by fire some time ago. Mayor Vidrine advised that she had checked into same and that until the legal issues are resolved the city is limited. She advised that a certified letter had been sent to the owner asking that he seek remedies, such as recording and documenting to allow for cleanup. Attorneys are arguing that preserving evidence might be necessary.

Resolutions:

None

Ordinances:

None

Proclamations:

None

Permits:

Kellie Buller – LA Cotton Festival
Permit to sell alcohol Tuesday, October 11 and Friday, October 14 and close road next to Civic Center. Motion was offered by Councilman Perron, seconded by Councilman Joseph, unanimously approved.

New Business

Pat Doureselle, Director of the Evangeline Parish Solid Waste Commission addressed the council regarding litter control.

Reports

Chief of Police’s Report-Neal Lartigue

There were a total of 658 calls for assistance in the month of July 2022---5 citations, 6 misdemeanor arrests, 2 felony arrests, officers responded to 14 automobile accidents with 0 fatalities. Calls were down 4, citations down 23, misdemeanor arrests were down 4, felony arrests were down 3, accidents down 12.

Mayor’s Report –

Mayor Jennifer Vidrine concluded the meeting by announcing that an individual would be coming in the near future to conduct a demonstration for cleaning the canals.

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 6:23 PM

Approved By:

Jennifer Vidrine, Mayor

Attest By:

Hilda Edwards, City Clerk