

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN TAKEN AT A REGULAR TOWN MEETING HELD ON MAY 19, 2020 AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE ARNAUVILLE MEETING ROOM, 107 RUE DE JAUSIERS, ARNAUVILLE, LOUISIANA 70512

Present: Mayor, Todd Meche

Aldermen: Jamie Huval, Debbie Kidder, Kevin Robin, Cynthia Stelly, Suzanne Stelly

Town Clerk: Dolores R. Quebedeaux

Town Attorney: Kay Theunissen (Absent)

Town Engineer: Kenny Boagni

Police Chief: Eddy LeCompte

Utility Superintendent: Todd Abshire (Absent)

Parks and Recreations: Zelma Jackson (Absent)

Called to Order: Mayor, Todd Meche

Prayer: Suzanne Stelly

Pledge: All

Mayor asked the Council to amend the agenda to add project up-dates, Jamie Huval moved to add project up-dates to the agenda second by Cynthia Stelly, unanimously carried.

Approve April 21, 2020 Regular Town Meeting Minutes—Mayor

Jamie Huval moved to accept the April 21, 2020 Regular Town Meeting Minutes seconded by Suzanne Stelly, unanimously carried.

Approve April 2020 Expenses—Mayor

Jamie Huval moved to accept the April 2020 Expenses seconded by Kevin Robin, unanimously carried.

Utility Report—Todd Abshire (Absent)

A report was given to the Mayor and Board Members per Todd Abshire.

Water The fence at the water well has been moved and the new fence is up. The monthly Safe Drinking Water Act daily chlorine residual logs were verified by Todd Abshire and are on file in the utility office filing cabinet as required by law.

Wastewater Guidry's Fresh Cuts monthly analytical report has been sent to Todd Abshire and the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) level was 110 mg/L. That is below the 200 mg/L level that they have strived for each month. Thanks to Guidry's for working to lower this level. The monthly flow records were faxed to HoPak Laboratories to verify flow in accordance with the discharge permit, as well as all analytical results being examined, reported and filed in the appropriate filing cabinet in the utility department files.

Gas The gas system is operating near 40 pounds of inlet pressure at the Cypress Station and 40psi at the Koch Station.

The utility crew continues to operate and maintain all municipal facilities during the COVID-19 crisis.

They are using all safety precautions necessary and will continue to do the duties as directed by the Mayor and in compliance with all federal, state and local regulations.

Police Report—Chief Eddy LeCompte

The Etouffee Festival did not go off as planned due to the COVID-19 pandemic, needless to say that it was quite a disappointment to many, including himself. The Arnaudville Police Department has, for the past 4 years, been involved in the Etouffee Festival Car Show on the last day of the festival and was at a loss as to how to be of assistance to the community this year. An opportunity presented itself when he was approached by St. Landry-Evangeline United Way and Second Harvest Food Bank about a month ago to consider having a "Disaster Distribution for Food" for the Town and surrounding area. The Arnaudville Police Department will be conducting this food drop on Friday, May 29, 2020 to distribute food for families in need. Social distancing and masks will be required of all participants, and a no

contact policy in place between volunteers and the public. Those seeking assistance must be in a vehicle, no walk ups are allowed. Volunteers will place the items in the open trunk or bed of the recipient's car or truck. He has arranged for the use of the Community Center to be the distribution point. Ms. Melanie of Russell's Food Store has kindly donated grocery bags to be used to place the commodities. St. Landry/Evangeline United Way will provide some volunteers and will be on site to assist coordination. They will need approximately 15 volunteers (more is better). To have your name placed on the volunteer list, please call the Police Station or call the United Way Office at 337-942-7815. The beginning of the distribution to those requesting will start at approximately 1 PM.

The employee evaluations are currently being made, with the intent that those with at least six months of service will be evaluated before the end of the month. An email will be sent to the Mayor and Council members when the evaluations have been completed. The unusual circumstances of the past few months were instrumental in the delay.

The 2020-2021 Budget is completed and he awaits confirmation on when the upcoming budget workshop will be held in order for the Council's approval. In the meantime should any Council member wish to discuss what he included in the Police Department Budget they are welcome to meet with the chief at their convenience.

Patrol Officer Jacob Russo is nearing completion of the POST Academy in St. Martin Parish. His graduation date is scheduled for June 9, 2020 and will be closed to the public. He requested to the Council to approve and increase in pay to \$13.09 (Grade 2 Step 26) per hour for POST certified Patrol Officer Russo effective June 10, 2020.

He requested the Council to approve the hiring of Ms. Reagan Forras to the position of provisional Dispatcher at a starting pay of \$9.02 (Grade 1 Step 33). Ms. Forras has been vetted and approved by the senior dispatchers as a suitable candidate for the position.

Chief also requested that the Council discuss and then consider approving the hiring of Mr. Jake Meche to the position of provisional Patrol Officer at a starting pay of \$10.58 per hour (Grade 2 Step 7), under a special circumstances situation. Mr. Meche has served another law enforcement agency that apparently waived the requirements for a high school diploma or GED. Mr. Meche came with excellent recommendations, and has a higher than average grasp of the law, patrol duties and police work. Additionally two members of the Council joined him in an interview with Mr. Meche, and had no material concerns aside from the educational criteria. He was asked if he would be disqualified for not having the GED, and at the time, Chief said no, but it is required by the state before he can attend the academy. Having not found any official policy or Ordinance stating otherwise, Chief was also placing a strict requirement that he pass the GED within 180 days of hire.

Upon further research into the matter of education requirements, he did find conflicting policies. With full disclosure, he brings this to the Council for input and Resolution. Chief checked the Arnaudville Code of Ordinances and the Arnaudville Police Policy Manual and could not find any reference to hiring qualifications for Dispatchers or Patrol Officers. He came across a fourteen year old policy written by Mike Duplechain, and a "standard" hiring policy on the current APD website-both consistent with requirements of a high school diploma or GED.

Two questions he brought to the Council:

1. Given the fact that Mr. Meche has already been engaged as a police officer with a reputable law enforcement agency (That apparently waived education requirements), has experience and comes with highly favorable references; and given that he has agreed to comply with an education criteria of a GED within 180 days of hire; and given the need for experienced officers, do we make exceptions?
2. Since there is no consistent policy, can chief invite a representative from the council to work with him to review best practices for hiring, develop and official hiring policy going forward, as a department-level policy?

If the first issue cannot be worked out then he will disqualify Mr. Meche at that time.

Statistics for the month of April were: 4 Arrest, 11 Citations, 1 MIC issued, and no FIC' and 84 calls for service.

Jamie Huval moved to accept the pay increase for Jacob Russo to \$13.09 on June 10, 2020 (Grade 2 Step 26) once he completes the academy seconded by Cynthia Stelly and Suzanne Stelly, motion carried.

Cynthia Stelly motioned to accept the hiring of Reagan Forras to the position of a provisional dispatcher at the starting pay of \$9.02 (Grade 1 Step 33) second by Jamie Huval, motion carried.

Jamie Huval motioned to accept the hiring of Jake Meche at the starting pay of \$10.58 (Grade 2 Step 7) Seconded by Debbie Kidder, motion carried.

Chief stated that Mr. Meche has to complete his GED or will not be able to stay with the department. A discussion was held with the chief and the Council. Council Member Kevin Robin thanked the officers for visiting the businesses, he stressed the importance of community policing.

Mayor asked Kenny Boagni if he had anything to discuss about the Utility Department. Kenny stated that the drainage project is complete just a little touching up is left to do.

There is a pay request for \$35,000 for the water project. A discussion was held about different projects that will take place in the coming fiscal year.

Parks and Recreation—Zelma Jackson (Absent)

There is nothing going on at the park due to the COVIE-19.

Project Up-Dates—Mayor

The floors at the Community Center have been re-done.

Mayor explained that he met with the architect the contractor did come by to visit the project, he turned in a bid, and the proposal is a little more than what was brought to the council. A curb has to be added so no one hits the building and also electrical work plus shipping charges for the window. Mayor asked for a motion to proceed with the drive thru window, Suzanne Stelly motioned to proceed with the Drive thru second by Cynthia Stelly, motion passed.

Introduce Ordinance 01-2020- An Ordinance amending the operating budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020—Mayor

Jamie Huval introduced Ordinance 01-2020 second by Suzanne Stelly, motion carried.

Introduce Ordinance 02-2020—An Ordinance adopting the operating budget of revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021—Mayor

Jamie Huval introduced Ordinance 02-2020 second by Debbie Kidder and Suzanne Stelly, motion carried.

Introduce amending Utility Rate Ordinance 03-2020—Mayor

Kevin Robin introduced Ordinance 03-2020 second by Debbie Kidder and Cynthia Stelly, motion carried.

Re-Schedule Regular Town Meeting from June 16, 2020 to June 25, 2020—Mayor

Jamie motioned to re-schedule the Regular Town Meeting from June 16, 2020 to June 29, 2020 second by Suzanne Stelly, motion carried.

Schedule a Public Hearing for June 29, 2020 at 5:15 P.M. for Utility Rates—Mayor

Suzanne Stelly motioned to schedule a Public Hearing for June 29, 2020 at 5:15 P.M. for the Utility Rates seconded by Debbie Kidder, motion carried.

Schedule a Public Hearing for June 29, 2020 at 5:30 P.M. for the amended budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020 and also the operating budget of revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021—Mayor

Jamie Huval motioned to schedule a Public Hearing at 5:30 P.M. second by Cynthia Stelly, motion carried.

Mayor Meche said that he spoke with Karen Wyble with St. Martin Hospital there will be a community testing for the Covid-19 there will be a testing site in Breaux Bridge, Cecilia, Arnaudville (Community Center) Catahoula and Stephenville. The dates for Arnaudville will be June 11 through June 17, 2020 from 8 AM to 4 PM.

Citizens' Concerns

Adjourn

Jamie Huval moved to adjourn the May 19, 2020 Regular Town Meeting second by Cynthia Stelly, motion carried.

Attest:

Dolores R. Quebedeaux, Town Clerk

Todd Meche, Mayor