

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD ALDERMEN TAKEN AT A REGULAR TOWN MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 21, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE ARNAUDVILLE MEETING ROOM, 107 RUE DE JAUSIERS, ARNAUDVILLE, LA 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

Town Engineer—Kenny Boagni

Police Chief—Eddy LeCompte

Utility Superintendent—Todd Abshire (Absent)

Parks and Recreation Director—Zelma Jackson (Absent)

Called to Order—Mayor Meche

Prayer—Suzanne Stelly

Pledge—All

Accept November 16, 2021 Public Hearing Minutes (Canvas Election)—Mayor Meche

Jamie Huval motioned to accept the November 16, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes seconded by Debbie Kidder, motion carried.

Accept November 16, 2021 Regular Town Meeting Minutes—Mayor Meche

Kevin Robin motioned to accept the November 16, 2021 Regular Town Meeting Minutes seconded by Suzanne Stelly, motion carried.

Accept December 9, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes (Police)—Mayor Meche

Kevin Robin motioned to accept the December 9, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes seconded by Jamie Huval, motioned carried.

Accept November 2021 Expenses—Mayor Meche

Jamie Huval motioned to accept the November 2021 Expenses seconded by Kevin Robin, motion carried.

Utility Report—Todd Abshire (Absent)

A Report was handed out to the Mayor and Board Members per Todd Abshire.

Water

Well #1 has been disconnected and capped from the water system. The new well, Well #3, is on-line and producing water for the town's water customers. LDH

Sanitary Survey deficiencies have been corrected and a letter has been sent to the LDH office with pictures of repairs. 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

They are still waiting on parts for APT control to repair the SBR #1 decanter pump. 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 40 psi at the Koch Station.

Police Report—Chief Eddy LeCompte

Chief is currently in the process of interviewing with the intent of hiring three entry level Patrol Officers. As the Council members are aware, and individual considered must first complete and pass a psychological evaluation and be approved by RMI for insurance coverage prior to any offer being made. As of tonight he had 3 applicants take the psychological exam since the last Council meeting. Unfortunately, one of the applicants did score well enough to be considered; however, RMI would not approve his being insured for the position while the other two have not had their evaluations returned from the testing facility for consideration yet. He does not expect that he will receive other applications until after the first of the year, when the holidays are completed. As the Council can see, the Department is understaffed with regards to Patrol Officers. It is difficult to attract people for these positions for a number of reasons. He said he has no problem with letting each of the Board members review the applications of the individuals seeking employment; however, the final decision on hiring should rest with him based on need, experience, and the willingness of the applicant to learn; not based on gossip or their prior actions. You are encouraged to make recommendations regarding the hiring or dismissal of an individual, but rest assured he will rely on his two decades of experience and knowledge in deciding if or how those individuals align with the needs of the Department or town. Some people are more community-oriented as opposed to others, but that doesn't mean they are not suited for a particular position. Some may have excellent credentials but fall short when they are on the job. And these are easily weeded out. Still others may not appear friendly and outgoing, but are

excellent at performing their duties and those individuals are advised on ways to improve their personal relationship skills. Make no mistake; these individuals are also eliminated in due course, most often of their own accord, even though their performance in protecting the citizens is outstanding. The bottom line is the fact that he alone is familiar with the requirements of the Arnaudville Police Department and will do everything to meet those requirements in order to maintain a top notch operation, even recognizing the turnovers will be high. For the record, and to his great disappointment, another municipal game of confusion played out recently, which not only further crippled his efforts, but soured a qualified candidate from keeping his name up for consideration, Richard Mizzi, whom all members know, and who is a qualified post-certified officer, applied for a position with the department, preferably working the night shift. During a Special Meeting with the Council, Chief inquired if this individual might be considered for employment should he be recommended. Chief knew he had an unfavorable history with at least one council member, but despite that, he was assured that he would receive favorable votes. Based on those commitments, Chief informed Mr. Mizzi that by all accounts, it appeared as if he would be approved by a majority vote at the December meeting. Chief received a phone call from Alderman Huval who informed him that every Council member would "refuse" to approve his hiring. Chief said that he was shocked at this sudden contradiction, but wanted it on the record and intended to bring it to a vote anyway. Chief called Mr. Mizzi and shared this new information with him, apologizing for what now appeared to be a "no" vote and a reversal of the previous commitment from the majority of the council. Out of the frustration, he asked to be removed from consideration, likely what Mr. Huval was seeking. The next day, he received a call from Alderwoman Kidder who had discovered what Mr. Huval had done, and was extremely upset that he had presumed and falsely conveyed her intention, as well as at least two council members' intentions to him. Since this drama unfolded, he had conversations with council members who indicated that they would have indeed voted to hire Mr. Mizzi. He has no avail, tried to convince him to reconsider, assuring him that he would not be interfacing or interacting on a daily basis with Mr. Huval, who seems to be the source of this confusion and his frustration. Chief expressed his own frustration and disappointment regarding this incident, but first he admitted his own falling. He regrets that he didn't immediately call each council member upon hearing what Mr. Huval stated to him, assuming his words were reliable. That was a lesson he will take from this going forward.

Second, the council knows better than most the time and effort they all spend on discussing, strategizing and providing this community and police protection. Significant time and effort is spent on bringing in qualified and post-certified and experienced officers. Chief said the department had on willing and capable, experienced and knowledgeable—one who lives here, is familiar with the layout, the citizens and businesses. He wanted to work the night shift, would be available at the moment's notice for backup or filling gaps. He won't presume to tell this council or any of its members how, or at what level and scope they should interject themselves into the preliminary process he goes through to recruit, select or retain employees of the Arnaudville Police Department, but he can now add to the challenges he faces, this behind-the-scenes meddling, gossiping and sabotaging attempt that prevents or prohibits this process.

Chief was called by another Council member who informed him that since the Council had not received a copy of Mr. Mizzi's application, any recommendation made by him would be tabled for future discussion. He had Dispatcher Jolivette make packets for the three individuals who might be considered for hiring. Of the three one, although having a fairly good review, was not given approval for insurance coverage, one had not had his results sent to him for review, and the final application was not sent to the Council due to an oversight on his part. With that being said, he finds this quiet baffling since Mr. Mizzi is well known by the Council and viewing his application seems a bit irrelevant.

Statistics for the Arnaudville Police Department for the month of November were: 1 Citation, 11 FIC's, 10 MIN's, 1 Arrest and 41 calls for Service, routine town patrols accounted for approximately 58% of the time the Officers spent on duty. This does not include time worked by St. Landry Sheriff's Deputies.

Jamie Huval told the Chief that was not the conversation they had over the phone, he said he did not say the entire board was against hiring Mr. Mizzi. Chief said that was bull. Jamie said that when he called Chief on the phone, he told Chief that he had discussed this with 2 council members; he said that he did not tell chief that the entire board was against hiring Mr. Mizzi. Chief said that is what was said.

Parks and Recreation—Zelma Jackson (Absent)

Mayor explained that Basketball is fixing to start up; everything is going well as far as the park is concerned.

In regards to the police department a discussion was held.

Kevin Robin disagrees with the report that was given by the chief.

Jamie said he did not call the chief of police and tell him that the entire council was against hiring Richard Mizzi. Kevin said they never received an application to review to hire Mr. Mizzi.

Jamie stated that he is not hiring anyone on the recommendations of the Chief because the Chief told Kevin and Jamie that he does not call for references when hiring, so Jamie calls for references.

Up-Dates—Mayor Meche

Mayor explained that he and Jaime attended a School Board meeting. Different views were discussed.

Citizens Concerns'

Jamie Huval mentioned that a Bon Fire is being discussed to help defray expenses for new bleachers for Arnaudville Elementary School. Dates are being discussed.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Kevin Robin and Jamie Huval seconded by Debbie Kidder, motion carried.

Dolores R. Quebedeaux, Town Clerk

Todd Meche, Mayor

