

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN TAKEN AT A REGULAR TOWN MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 17, 2020 AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE ARNAUVILLE MEETING ROOM, 107 RUE DE JAUSIERS, ARNAUVILLE, 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 (Absent)

Town Engineer: Kenny Boagni

Utility Superintendent: Todd Abshire (Absent)

Police Chief: Eddy LeCompte

Parks and Recreation Director: Zelma Jackson (Absent)

Called to Order: Mayor Meche

Prayer: Suzanne Stelly

Pledge: All

Mayor Meche asked the Board to amend the agenda to add Resolution 7-2020 A Resolution to Approve the System Survey and Compliance Questionnaire, Jamie Huval moved to amend the agenda seconded by Debbie Kidder and Cynthia Stelly, motion passed.

Accept October 20, 2020 Public Hearing Minutes (Ordinance 04-2020)—Mayor

Jamie Huval moved to accept the Public Hearing Minutes seconded by Debbie Kidder and Suzanne Stelly, motion carried.

Accept October 20, 2020 Regular Town Meeting Minutes—Mayor

Debbie Kidder and Cynthia Stelly moved to accept the Regular Town Minutes for October 20, 2020 seconded by Jamie Huval, motion carried.

Accept October 2020 Expenses—Mayor

Jamie Huval and Kevin Robin moved to accept the October 2020 Expenses seconded by Debbie Kidder, motion carried.

Utility Report—Todd Abshire (Absent)

Mayor explained that there was some damage at the sewer plant during the storm but has been repaired.

Police Report—Chief Eddy LeCompte

On Saturday, October 31, 2020, the streets of Arnaudville were filled with all manner of creatures bartering for treats. Some areas of Town especially Quebedeaux, Swamp and Washington had the most traffic; however, all went well. As expected, there were fewer children out and about as well as a fair number of houses that were dark. None the less, the event was successful.

Patrol Officer Curtis Chavis abruptly resigned his position effective Thursday, November 5, 2020. Mr. Chavis was courted away from the Department with the promise of better pay and benefits. Chief wished Mr. Chavis the best in his new endeavor. There is a critical shortage of applicants to fill Police Officer positions across the country. This is why it is crucial that this council weigh heavily the recommendations he makes, when a qualified candidate ready and able to start. The department is like so many others, scrambling to hire personnel. The larger agencies have no qualms, and see nothing ethically wrong with poaching (stealing) from less- resourced smaller Departments. And that is what is happening. If council members continue to judge qualified candidates by their own jaded opinions instead of the factual and proven skills and knowledge of the candidate, you will be held accountable by the citizens who just want protection and coverage.

On Tuesday, November 24, 2020, Patrol Officer Shamar Smith is scheduled to graduate from the POST Academy at the St. Martin Police Academy. The time spent for the Academy this year has been especially lengthy due to the hurricanes and the COVID pandemic. Since Patrol Officer Smith will graduate between the date of this meeting and the one scheduled for December, Chief petitioned the Town Council to approve his promotion of Provisional to the position of POST Certified Patrol Officer at the pay rate of Grade 2, Step 26 (\$13.09 per hour) effective the date after his completion of the Academy.

He also petitioned the Council to approve the hourly wage increase for Dispatcher Reagan Forras to \$9.58 per hour (Grade 1, Step 39) based on completion of six (6) months of satisfactory service. Chief continues the conducting of interviews to fill positions vacated for Patrol Officers in the future. As I mentioned at a prior Council meeting, finding qualified candidates has been difficult, of course this is a problem nationwide. One thing going for the Department is the proficiency in training any new recruits he gets which; unfortunately as he stated earlier, has also served to attract other law enforcement agencies who pay more or have better benefits to pursue the trained officers, and woo them away from the department.

The Council should be aware that the Arnaudville Police Department is a recruiting facility and as such he will always, as do other small agencies, be short of qualified officers.

Chief said he is waiting on the approval of the Council to implement the "COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT FOR POLICE SERVICES", a copy of which chief gave at the last Council Meeting. He cannot make any move, for or against, until he has been informed of the decision.

Chief is conducting a bicycle give-away for town lucky kids in Arnaudville. Parents need to come by the office and register for a drawing that will take place sometime in December. Details will be put on Facebook. Statistics for the Department for the month of October were: 5 Citations, 5 FIC's, 26 MIC's, 2 Arrests, 63 calls for service.

Jamie Huval moved to increase Shamar Smith's salary to \$13.09 per hour seconded by Cynthia Stelly, motion carried.

Suzanne Stelly moved to increase Regan Forras' salary to \$9.58 per hour seconded by Debbie Kidder, motion passed.

Jamie Huval stated that he received several complaints about loud music, and he is asking that the police department monitor this situation.

A discussion was held about the "COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT FOR POLICE SERVICES", different opinions were discussed.

Parks and Recreation—Zelma Jackson (Absent)

Mayor explained that Zelma did get a bid for the cement for the seating areas and also to cement the dug outs, she also gathered some volunteers to put together the playground equipment and that is what is in the making for the park.

Resolution 06-2020 A Resolution Requesting Financial Assistance From the State of Louisiana Under the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Local Government Assistance Program and Community Water Enrichment Fund Program—Mayor

Jamie Huval moved to accept Resolution 06-2020 seconded by Cynthia Stelly, motion passed.

Resolution 7-2020 A Resolution to approve the System Survey and Compliance Questionnaire—Mayor

Jamie Huval moved to accept Resolution 7-2020 seconded by Debbie Kidder and Kevin Robin, motion carried.

Roll Call: Kevin Robin, yes, Cynthia Stelly, yes, Jamie Huval, yes, Debbie Kidder, yes, Suzanne Stelly, yes.

Water Well Project—Mayor

An email was sent to all of the Board Members with the final numbers for the water well project. Prices have sky rocketed due to COVID-19 \$56,094.00 over budget. The original budget was \$345, 265 the total after everything was added up is \$401, 359.00. Kenny stated that \$10,000 more on the electrical

than estimated, also a check valve has to be changed, which is approximately \$8000 the well is a straight 12 with a 12" screen which is approximately \$10,000 more in cost, as well as the contingency.

Kevin Robin moved to amend the budget in the amount \$56, 094.00 seconded by Cynthia Stelly, motion carried.

Mayor asked for a motion to proceed with the water well project, Jamie Huval moved to proceed with the project seconded by Debbie Kidder and Kevin Robin, motion carried.

Up-Dates—Mayor

The road project will be in the making soon, the water tower project is completed.

Citizens' Concerns

Suzanne asked about the Christmas decorations for the town. Kelly Meche has things lined up along with volunteers assisting.

Adjourn

Jamie Huval motioned to adjourn the November 2020 regular town meeting seconded by Debbie Kidder, motion carried.

Dolores R. Quebedeaux, Town Clerk

Todd Meche, Mayor