

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMAN TAKEN AT A REGULAR TOWN MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 19, 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:** Zelma Jackson (Absent)

**Called to Order:** Mayor Meche

**Prayer:** Suzanne Stelly

**Pledge:** All

Mayor Meche asked the Board to amend the agenda to allow School Board Members Josh Boudreau and Kyle Boss to the agenda, motion was made by Jamie Huval and seconded by Debbie Kidder and Cynthia Stelly, motion carried.

**Approve December 15, 2020 Regular Town Meeting Minutes—Mayor Meche**

Jamie Huval moved to accept the December 15, 2020 Regular Town Meeting minutes seconded by Suzanne Stelly, motion passed.

**Approve January 13, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes—Mayor Meche**

Cynthia Stelly moved to accept the January 13, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes seconded by Jamie Huval, motion carried.

**Approve November 2020 Expenses—Mayor Meche**

Jamie Huval moved to accept the November 2020 Expenses seconded by Debbie Kidder, motion passed.

**Approve December 2020 Expenses—Mayor Meche**

Cynthia Stelly moved to accept the December 2020 Expenses seconded by Jamie Huval and Suzanne Stelly, motion passed.

**Utility Report—Todd Abshire (Absent)**

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

**Water**—Amy Drilling has chlorinated well #1, as per the maintenance contract. The LDH samples have cleared and well #1 is back in service it was noted that the well is not producing the volume of water to adequately support the customer base, Todd Abshire received a quote from Amy Drilling on \$27,200 to fully cross-wash well #1 and restore its production capacity. Currently, the town is getting its water supply from Well #2, but there is no backup if that well malfunctions. He strongly recommends and requests that they move forward with this cross-wash project as soon as possible to mitigate any potential issues with the water system. 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**—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 Mayor and Todd Abshire agreed that the Town’s gas consultants should be changed back to R & R Gas effective immediately. Pipeline integrity has been the gas consultants for the past 2 years. However, prior to them, R & R Gas had been the consultants since 1974. The change was made to Pipeline Integrity Partners, due to Mr. Richard Hebert and Mr. Robert Champagne deciding to retire. Since that decision, both gentlemen decided to come out of retirement, and Todd Abshire is happy to welcome them back as consultants. The gas system is operating near 40 pounds of inlet pressure at the Cypress Station and 40 psi at the Koch Station.

Mayor Meche asked for a motion to allow M. E. Amy Drilling to cross wash well #1 in the amount of \$27,200, Debbie Kidder motioned to proceed with the cross washing of well #1 in the amount of \$27, 200 seconded by Kevin Robin, motion carried.

**Police Report—Chief Eddy LeCompte**

Patrol Officer Angelique Stelly began attending the St. Martin POST Academy on Monday, January 11, 2021. She will be in training for the next approximately fourteen weeks. Chief wishes her well.

Chief is also preparing for the upcoming Etouffee Festival to be held on April 23, 24 and 25, 2021. He will be reviewing what was done in the past to see if improvements can be made. Right now there is no indication that the Festival will be cancelled, although with the current situation as it stands it looks like this year’s festivities may suffer the same fate as the one scheduled for last year. He will keep the council posted.

It is his decision to place Patrol Officer Shamar Smith in the position of Acting Sergeant in the Arnaudville Police Department. In this position Patrol Officer Smith shall assume command of the Department in his absence. Since this is an “acting” position, no increase in compensation will be given; however, after a sufficient and satisfactory probationary period of four to six months the Council will be asked to make the “acting” status a permanent one with the accompanying hourly pay increase to be determined.

Chief thanked the Council on the approval to hire Mr. Christopher Ortego to the position of Provisional Patrol Officer at a starting salary of \$10.58 per hour (Grade 2 Step 7). After completion of a probationary period of six months, depending on acceptable performance, the hourly pay rate will increase to \$11.64 per hour (Grade 2 Step 15). He will petition the Council on that increase when the time comes.

**Action Required**, chief petitioned the Council to approve the transfer of Ms. Reagan Furras from the position of Dispatcher to that of Provisional Patrol Officer. This transfer is conditional upon the hiring of a suitable candidate that Ms. Furras would train to assume her current responsibilities. He is currently in the process of interviewing applicants for the Dispatcher position and will seek approval for hiring when one meets the requirements. Chief is hopeful that he can find a replacement within the next couple of weeks. Once Ms. Furras has completed the required training of her replacement, which will hopefully take no longer than four to six weeks, she will begin her new assignment, if approved, a pay rate of \$10.58 per hour (Grade 2 Step 7).

**Action Required**, chief petitioned the Council to approve his recommendation to reinstate Mr. Barry Ard to the position of Reserve Officer for the Arnaudville Police Department. This request is being made at the suggestion of the Town Attorney. His reasoning is based on a number of factors. It is his sworn duty to serve and protect the community with the best he has to offer, and every asset at his disposal. Placement of qualified personnel is essential to that end, and seizing every opportunity to increase skill level, efficiency and effectiveness is his priority. Mr. Ard has consistently made himself available during some challenging situations at the department. As a POST certified Patrol Officer with more experience of law enforcement than all of his officers combined, and particularly of Department procedures, Mr. Ard could step in and immediately offer assistance. Mr. Ard's training experience and ability would be a great asset in helping the young Patrol Officers; he could conduct field training with new officers, ultimately reducing errors. Errors, as they could not only jeopardize protection and service to the community, but can expose the town to certain liabilities. Mr. Ard played a significant role in upgrading/updating the Policy and Procedures manual, and thus would be able to review any questions posed by new Patrol Officers with regard to such. Finally, the service provided by Mr. Ard would be free; his travel to and from Arnaudville, his transportation while here, his lodging and his time spent on duty would be at no cost to the Town of Arnaudville.

**Action Required** Chief would like the Council to approve that the drug screens and physicals be conducted prior to asking for approval to hire in order to shorten the "wait time" for a new hire to report to duty. As the council is aware before approval to hire has been requested, a Patrol Officer candidate must pass four hour psychological exam, be approved for insurance by Risk Management, and have a background check done during this pre-employment phase then the candidate could begin working as soon as approval is made to hire them. The only delay that might be caused is if the candidate must give their current employer notice before leaving or if they need to qualify with their firearm.

Statistics from the department for the month of December were: 30 Citations, 31 FIC's 22 MIC's, 2 arrests and 105 calls for service.

Two individuals were chosen as Employees of the year for 2019, Dispatcher Sable Jolivette and Patrol Officer Shamar Smith.

Town Attorney, Ms. Kay Theunissen clarified what chief suggested on Mr. Ard, Ms. Theunissen said she spoke to Danny Landry; Mr. Ard's Attorney, the conversation was only about the procedures to follow on getting this matter before the Council. Chief said that it was only a suggestion.

Suzanne Stelly motioned to transfer Reagan Forras from dispatcher to patrol officer seconded by Jamie Huval and Cynthia Stelly, motion passed.

Kevin Robin along with the board members had a discussion with the chief about the probationary period for the police department.

Chief explained that the probation period is for the pay raises.

The coat drive will be January 30, 2021 at the Community Center ending at 12:00 noon.

#### **Parks and Recreation—Zelma Jackson (Absent)**

Cement work has started for the sitting areas in the park. Work is taking place in the park.

#### **School Board Members—Josh Boudreau and Kyle Boss**

Mr. Boudreau discussed with the Mayor and Board Members different views of having a tax for the school districts.

Motion was made by Jamie Huval seconded by Debbie Kidder and Suzanne Stelly to open the meeting to the public, motion passed.

A discussion took place.

Motion was made by Kevin Robin and Suzanne Stelly to close the meeting to the public seconded by Debbie Kidder, motion passed.

**Up Dates—Mayor**

Catch Basins are being installed so road overlay can begin.

Back Flow preventer at St. Luke hospital needed to be repaired.

**Citizens' Concerns**

Ginger LeCompte inquired about the hiring of Barry Ard and asked why the council is not giving reason for not hiring Barry Ard. Mayor Meche said that if the chief wants to know why he needs to meet with the Council Members individually in his office, Mr. Ard does have an attorney and there should be no discussion without him being present. Jamie Huval said he spoke to chief and gave him his reason.

**Adjourn**

Motion was made by Kevin Robin and Suzanne Stelly to adjourn the Regular Town Meeting seconded by Debbie Kidder, motion passed.

**Attest**

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Dolores R. Quebedeaux, Town Clerk

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Todd Meche, Mayor