

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN TAKEN AT A REGULAR TOWN MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2020 AT 6:00 P.M. HELD AT THE ARNAUVILLE MEETING ROOM, 107 RUE DE JAUSIERS, ARNAUVILLE, LA 70512

Present: Mayor, Todd Meche

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

Absent: Cynthia Stelly

Town Clerk: Dolores R. Quebedeaux

Town Attorney: Kay Theunissen

Town Engineer: Kenny Boagni (Absent)

Utility Superintendent: Todd Abshire (Absent)

Police Chief: Eddy LeCompte

Parks and Recreation: Zelma Jackson (Absent)

Called to Order—Mayor Todd Meche

Prayer—Suzanne Stelly

Pledge—All

Approve August 18, 2020 Public Hearing Minutes (Millage)—Mayor Meche

Jamie Huval motioned to accept the August 18, 2020 Public Hearing Minutes second by Suzanne Stelly, motion carried.

Approve August 18, 2020 Regular Town Meeting Minutes—Mayor Meche

Jamie Huval motioned to accept the August 18, 2020 Regular Town Meeting Minutes second by Kevin Robin, motion carried.

Approve August 2020 Expenses—Mayor Meche

Jamie Huval motioned to accept the August 2020 Expenses second by Suzanne Stelly, motion carried.

Police Report—Chief Eddy LeCompte

Sergeant Jacob Russo is resigning from the Department effective Sunday, September 20, 2020. According to Sergeant Russo the primary reason for his leaving is the cost of Medical Insurance. Over the past month Chief has received approximately 30 online applications for the Patrol Office position. Each applicant was instructed to come in and fill out a hard copy of the application, with 2 being POST certified. One applicant failed to come in for an interview and is scheduled to take the psychological examination later this week; Chief is awaiting information for one applicant from a prior employer. Of the two POST certified applicants, one was not approved for insurance coverage while the second has decided to remove his name from consideration because of the cost of medical insurance benefits. In the meantime he continues to look for suitable candidates.

It is not the duty of the Council to pick and choose candidates, or to assess any recommended candidate's qualifications. As Chief, he has respectfully invited the Council limited participation in the interview process-not to ultimately decide if a candidate is acceptable, but to provide transparency and to receive input, as a courtesy. This spirit of cooperation is not a requirement of the Lawrason Act, but was meant to be a bridge of communication between the Council and himself. As Chief, he knows better than any Council member the needs of the Department and the skills and knowledge required to serve and protect the citizens' of Arnaudville. In other words, approving recommendations by the Chief is a formal demonstration of trust and respect for his office and capacity as Chief. If, after approval, the candidate proves to be less than qualified, demonstrates incompatibility with other officers or the citizens, or commits offenses requiring discipline or termination, it will ultimately reveal itself. It is then that the Council will be consulted for discipline and / or termination recommendations. Until then, the Council should give him the benefit of the doubt to hiring recommendations before them. Due to the

above information APD is in need of immediate assistance of a Patrol Officer. I request the Council to immediately approve the hiring of Mr. Bradley Tate to position of POST Certified Patrol Officer at an hourly rate of \$13.09 (Grade 2 Step 26). Mr. Tate was highly recommended by the Chiefs of Port Barre and Church Point. Please understand that should the Council reverse its decision of hiring Mr. Tate he will still have to pass his physical and drug screen before he could assume patrol activities. Since Mr., Tate is POST certified the only training he would need would be to ride along with Sergeant Russo for a few days to familiarize him with the Town limits.

It is very difficult to find qualified candidates for the position of Patrol Officer. Without these the Department is compelled to either contract services from other law enforcement agencies at a premium cost, or assign overtime to current officers. Data shows that productivity, alertness and response is decreased when officers are tasked to perform after 12 hours or after long duty stretches. The Council should be concerned with the liability and costs, both financially as well as productivity. Related to additional costs, it should be considered that when the Chief has to put in a full day of administrative duty then have to take on a shift to patrol, additional compensation may be in order, either on an as-performed basis or through an increase in salary. Chief stated that he never requested either, but it should at least be recognized by the Council as a matter of consideration going forward if we continue to meet with the necessity to double up on schedules.

Patrol Officer Shamar Smith is in the fourth week of POST training at the St. Martin Training Academy. So far he has passed all the required written tests and is currently going through the firearms training. Statistics for the Arnaudville Police Department for the month of August were: 17 Citations, 25 FIC's, 33 MIC's, 8 Arrests and 122 calls for service.

Jamie Huval made a motion to hire Bradley Tate second by Suzanne Stelly, Jamie Huval, Yes, Suzanne Stelly, Yes, Kevin Robin, Nay, Debbie Kidder, No, motion did not pass.

Suzanne Stelly asked if a tie breaker should take place and Mayor Meche said that he was not voting. Debbie Kidder asked chief if was aware of an accident that happened on August 6, 2020 and chief said that he was. The officer had gone into the ditch and there were no injuries and no property damage. Mayor Meche said that an accident report should be made and drug testing should take place when an accident occurs.

Utility Report—Todd Abshire (Absent)

Mayor explained that the utility department had no major break downs and that the utility workers are keeping up with everything.

Parks and Recreation—Zelma Jackson (Absent)

The park is basically shut down; they are maintaining the repairs and keeping up with the grass. Hopefully everything will get back to normal.

Introduce Re-Codification Ordinances—Mayor

Debbie Kidder introduced the Re-Codification Ordinance second by Kevin Robin, motion carried.

Schedule a Public Hearing for October 20, 2020 at 5:45 P.M.—Mayor Meche

Debbie Kidder moved to schedule a Public Hearing on October 20, 2020 at 5:45 P.M. second by Kevin Robin, motion passed.

Candidate for District Judge—Natalie Broussard

Natalie Broussard thanked the Mayor and Board members for allowing her to speak. Mrs. Broussard introduced herself and explained what her plans will be once elected for District Judge.

Candidate for District Attorney—Charles Cravins

Mr. Cravins introduced himself and gave everyone his cell phone number. Mr. Cravins explained some of the changes he has made in the DA's office. Mr. Cravins explained what he plans to do once he is elected for District Attorney.

Candidate for District Judge—Tony Saleme

Mr. Saleme introduced himself and explained his goals once elected for District Judge.

Up-Date—Mayor Meche

A letter was given to the board members for the canoe and kayak launch per Mr. Chester Cedars. Once this project is completed Mr. Cedars is asking for the town’s assistance in keeping the grass cut.

Mayor Meche will meet with Mr. Cedars to finalize the plans.

The Drive Thru window is opened and is working well.

Bids will be accepted on the road project on September 24, 2020, a special meeting can be called to allow Mayor Meche to accept the low bid.

The water well project, bids will be opened on October 20, 2020, at 10:00 A.M.

Kevin Robin inquired about the status on the utility worker, Mayor stated that applications are being accepted and the deadline is Sept. 24, 2020.

Kevin Robin motioned to allow the Mayor to accept the lowest bid second by Debbie Kidder, motion passed.

Citizens’ Concerns

Adjourn

Jamie Huval moved to adjourn the September 15, 2020 Regular Town Meeting second by Debbie Kidder, motion passed.

Attest:

Dolores R. Quebedeaux, Town Clerk

Todd Meche, Mayor