

CITY OF OPELOUSAS
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 9, 2014

The Council of the City of Opelousas, Parish of St. Landry, State of Louisiana, convened in a regular session on this 9th day of September 2014 at 5:00 p.m.

With Mayor Donald R. Cravins, Sr. presiding, the meeting was called to order.

The Mayor requested the City Clerk to call the roll and the following Council members were PRESENT: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum and Jacqueline Martin. ABSENT: None.

A moment of silent meditation was observed. Alderman Blair Briggs led the Pledge of Allegiance.

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum, seconded by Alderman Louis Butler, Jr., and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on 08/12/2014.

On a motion by Alderman Louis Butler, Jr., seconded by Alderman Julius Alsandor and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the following Corrections of minutes:

05/13/2014 Regular Meeting: On a motion by Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderman Joseph Charles, it was resolved to approve the recommendation by Chief Perry Gallow for suspension of Police Officer First Class Christopher Kimble for twenty (20) hours without pay for violation of the Opelousas Police Department Rules and Regulations (Insubordination). "*Insubordination*" should read "*Unauthorized Use of Force*".

06/10/2014 Regular Meeting: On a motion by Aldermen Reginald Tatum and Joseph Charles and seconded by Alderman Louis Butler, Jr., it was resolved to approve the recommendation by Chief Perry Gallow for approval of a new hire as Police Officer to fill a vacancy cause by resignations, effective 06/22/2014: Amber Sylvester. "*Police Officer*" should read "*Police Officer Recruit*".

On a motion by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, seconded by Alderman Blair Briggs and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adopt the agenda, with the following changes: *adding under the CONSENTS Section, Item No. 23*, "Approve the request to hire three (3) police officers, effective 09/28/2014, pending satisfaction of prerequisites"; *adding under the PRESENTATIONS Section, Item No. 14-A*, "Discuss renewal of contract for Mobile Concession Stand at South City Park".

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation for recognition of the Employee of the Month. The Employee of the Month for August 2014 is Mrs. Lakeisha Roberts. Mrs. Roberts has been employed with the Parks & Recreation Department for over a year. The Employee of the Month for September 2014 is Mrs. Cheryl Ortego. Mrs. Ortego has been employed with City Court for 14 years as Front Office Cashier. She is the legal guardian of her four-year old granddaughter.

Presentation by Mr. Hubert White regarding the J.S. Clark Alumni Association Memorial. Mr. White, along with Mr. Charles Renaud and Mr. Albert Guidry, presented pictures to the Council showing the beginnings of the J. S. Clark Memorial Walkway. Mr. Renaud stated that there was an electrical conduit that was running right beneath the site so they had to change that site. After having to change the site position, they had to add a 65-foot sidewalk to the original plans. Mr. White stated that the Alumni Association is asking for an additional \$6,500.00 to complete the project. Mrs. Laviolette suggested that they increase the Tourism budget by that amount since the project is in Le Vieux Village. On a motion by Alderman Louis Butler, Jr., and seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to increase the Tourism budget in the amount of \$6,500.00 to complete the sidewalk for the J. S. Clark Memorial Walkway. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Presentation by Ms. Gerri Belton regarding the Marcel Goudeau Veterans Center which will be located at 1131 S. Railroad Avenue. This item will be handled at next month's meeting.

Presentation by Mr. Clarence Watson, Parks Director, regarding the formation of a Youth Boxing Team. Mayor Cravins stated that a young man in the audience that came to see him a while back and said he wished the City could do something for some of these young men that are hanging around in the streets. He suggested that one of the ways would be to start a boxing team. Mayor Cravins stated that he spoke to his staff about it and he called Mr. Bobby Dupre who is a member of the Louisiana Boxing Commission for input on this matter. Mr. Dupre agreed to get some information on this project and see if they might be able to get something done. Mayor Cravins stated that today he was introduced to another young man who came to see him. This young man and his brother were both boxers and his brother went to the Olympics. Mr.

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Clarence Watson stated that he had done some research on a boxing program and discovered that it has kept a lot of young people out of jail. Mr. Watson stated that the City would need to make sure they are in compliance with the Louisiana Boxing Commission and have the proper insurance for this type of program and that they need a building for this. Mr. Germon Morgan stated that the community needs to know the importance of this program and know that it will help the citizens of Opelousas turn a bad name into a positive one. He pointed out that a lot of kids don't have anything to do and boxing will teach discipline. Mr. Morgan would also like to incorporate a mentoring program into the boxing program. He also pointed out that a boxing program can help build a better community and can stop the bullying in schools. Marshal Paul Mouton stated that he thinks this is a very good idea and if the City were to adopt it, then he would furnish the security for the program free of charge. Alderman Reginald Tatum pointed out that Mr. Jeff Anderson also has boxing experience. Mr. Anderson stated that instead of fighting in the street, the kids can go fight in the ring. He stated that the principal at Opelousas Junior High School said that he would let them put the ring at the school. Alderman Louis Butler, Jr., wanted to know if they had a place for females in the boxing club also. Mr. Watson said that the females would be included also. Mr. Darrell Wheeler stated that he grew up in Lawtell and everyday he would get into a fight at school. He stated that when he was ten years old, his father put him in boxing but told him if he wanted to continue in boxing he would have to stop fighting at school. In 1989 he and his brother were inducted into the Navy. In 1992 he lost out in the Olympic tryouts but his brother made it and went to the Olympics in Barcelona, Spain to represent the United States. He pointed out that this boxing program will help the kids out a great deal. He and his brother are willing to be trainers for the program. Mr. Bobby Dupre talked about the proposed site for the Opelousas Boxing Club. He stated that it was the old Charter Cable building on Cherry Street. He stated that the building is relatively very clean and very inexpensive to put into operation. The height of the ceiling could be a problem and they may have to do some adjustments with the building. They do need boxing gloves. They won't need trunks right away for the team because they have to be coached first to be good enough to go against at least three teams in Lafayette, Carencro, and Rayne and there is a team forming up in Abbeville. Mr. Watson stated that the cost to start up including equipment and insurance is about \$15,000.00. On a motion by Aldermen Reginald Tatum and Joseph Charles and seconded by Aldermen Blair Briggs and Louis Butler, Jr., it was resolved to approve the formation of a Youth Boxing Team with the initial start-up cost of \$15,000.00 to come from the Fund Balance to increase the Parks & Recreation Department budget. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Discuss request by Mrs. Melanie Lee-Lebouef to hire a part-time employee for Tourism Department. Mrs. Lebouef stated that the issue has gone before the Civil Service Board because it is a Civil Service position. It will not affect her budget—the funds are already there. The existing full-time employee has to decrease her hours due to some personal family matters. The new employee will work the decreased hours. On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderman Joseph Charles, it was resolved to approve the request to hire a part-time employee for Tourism Department. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Discuss request by Mrs. Melanie Lee-Lebouef to amend Tourism Department 2014-15 budget line item 54560-3397 (Promotions) to include a \$6,000.00 grant received from Union Pacific. On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs and seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to approve the request to amend the Tourism Department 2014-15 budget line item 54560-3397 (Promotions) to include a \$6,000.00 grant received from Union Pacific. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

At this time, Mrs. Lebouef announced that they are gearing up for Music & Market. She also reminded everyone that tomorrow night the Veterans Memorial which was started in 2004 will be unveiled at LeVieux Village at 6:00 p.m. Music & Market will start on September 26, 2014. The guest will be C.J. Chenier, who is the son of Clifton Chenier—king of Zydeco. The City will be presenting Mr. C.J. Chenier with a key and a special recognition. It will be held downtown at Courthouse Square at 6:00 p.m.

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Discuss request by Chief Lee Cahanin to transfer \$12,000.00 from the Fire Department FY 2013-2014 Budget to the FY 2014-2015 Budget into account 54220-4231 (Repairs and Tires) for Ladder 1 Repairs. Assistant Fire Chief Charles Mason stated that this was approved last year but they could not take the ladder truck out of commission at that time. They are now ready to do the work and need the funds moved to the 2014-2015 budget. On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs and seconded by Aldermen Julius Alsandor and Reginald Tatum, it was resolved to approve the request to transfer \$12,000.00 from the Fire Department FY 2013-2014 Budget to the FY 2014-2015 Budget for Ladder 1 Repairs. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Discuss request for approval of the plat being submitted for the RE-SUBDIVISION of property located at 1732 S. Washington Street (Community Directions, Inc.). A Public Hearing regarding this matter was held by the Planning Commission on 09/08/2014. The Commission approved the request. On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs, seconded by Alderman Louis Butler, Jr., and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the request for approval of the plat being submitted for the RE-SUBDIVISION of property located at 1732 S. Washington Street (Community Directions, Inc.).

Discuss request for final approval of the plat being submitted for the EXTENSION of three (3) lots located on Champagne Drive in Clois Du Bois Subdivision (Michael Richard). A Public Hearing regarding this matter was held by the Planning Commission on 09/08/2014. The Commission approved the request. On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs, seconded by Alderman Reginald Tatum and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the request for final approval of the plat being submitted for the EXTENSION of three (3) lots located on Champagne Drive in Clois Du Bois Subdivision (Michael Richard).

Discussion regarding Bids for South Park Concession Stand. Mrs. Laviolette stated that the current contract expires at the end of October 2014. She stated that she has had someone to inquire if the City was going to put it up for bids at that time. Mrs. Laviolette stated that they can put it up for bids but it is up to the Board of Aldermen. Mayor Cravins stated that it appears the consensus of the Council is that it be put up for bids. On a motion by Aldermen Blair Briggs and Reginald Tatum and unanimously seconded and carried, it was resolved to grant authority to advertise for Bids for Mobile Concession Stand at South City Park with a minimum bid of \$150.00 per month.

Presentation by City Attorney. Attorney Garrett Duplechain stated that he had no business to discuss.

Engineers Monthly Report. Mr. William Jarrell stated that he was asked to look into a water line on Walnut Street. He stated that he was just given a copy of the railroad permit recently and it looks like the work that was bid was not in accordance with what the permit requirements stated for the railroad company. They are in the process of verifying this with the railroad company. The original requisition was in the neighborhood of \$31,000.00 and they are estimating it will be about another \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00 more expensive than that original amount. On a motion by Alderman Julius Alsandor and seconded by Alderman Louis Butler, Jr., it was resolved to approve the additional work on the Walnut Street water line repair for an additional amount of \$15,000.00 - \$20,000.00, pending verification of the cost findings and dry board work. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

RESOLUTIONS

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS EXPRESSING THE SUPPORT OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 3 (ACT 871 OF THE 2014 REGULAR SESSION OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE) AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 10 (ACT 436 OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE), CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO ASSIST MUNICIPALITIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BLIGHTED PROPERTY. On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs and seconded by Alderman Julius Alsandor, the following Resolution was offered for adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 11 OF 2014

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS EXPRESSING THE SUPPORT OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 3 (ACT 871 OF THE 2014 REGULAR SESSION OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE) AND CONSTITUTIONAL

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AMENDMENT 10 (ACT 436 OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE), CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO ASSIST MUNICIPALITIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BLIGHTED PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the City of Opelousas relies on various sources of revenue to fund services to its citizens, including an annual property tax millage assessed to owners of real property located within the municipal limits and;

WHEREAS, the sale of adjudicated property and other aspects of a tax sale is a very complicated process in which many municipalities do not have the staff nor the necessary resources to ensure the compliance with the requirements to ensure the constitutional protections of the property owners and the public entity and;

WHEREAS, currently over 40 public bodies have opted to use cooperative endeavor agreements with private third parties to assist in the tax sale process and;

WHEREAS, on January 28, 2014, Louisiana State Supreme Court in the matter of *Jackson et al v. City of New Orleans 2012-CA-2742, 2012-CA-2743, January 28, 2014* which in summary, stated the City of New Orleans ordinance authorizing a cooperative endeavor agreement with a third party was unconstitutional based on the provisions of Article 7 Section 25 of the Louisiana Constitution to provide that only the tax collector or their employees may perform the functions of a tax sale and;

WHEREAS, the decision in *Jackson et al v. City of New Orleans* could jeopardize existing cooperative endeavor agreements and in response to the decision, the Louisiana Municipal Association supported HB 488 by Representative Johnny Berthelot which seeks to clarify that public bodies have the authority under the Louisiana State Constitution should the body opt to enter into such a contract and;

WHEREAS, the ability to enter into a cooperative endeavor agreement with a third party for the purposes of assisting municipalities with the tax sale process has many positive aspects including the ability to protect the constitutional rights of property owners, create a more efficient and less costly process for local governments, and also to ensure that property owners fulfill their obligations as taxpayers; and;

WHEREAS, on June 23, 2014, HB 488 became Act 871 and will be placed on the November 4, 2014 election ballot as Constitutional Amendment 3 for the voters of the State of Louisiana to consider whether an authorized agent of a tax collector can assist in the sales tax process and any fees charged may be included in the cost; and

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2013, HB 256 became Act 436 of the 2013 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, a measure in which the Louisiana Municipal Association gave its full support and will appear on the November 4, 2014 election ballot as Constitutional Amendment 10 and;

WHEREAS, Act 436 seeks to provide for an 18-month redemption period in any parish other than Orleans, for vacant property sold at a tax sale which is considered blighted or abandoned and;

LET IT HEREBY BE RESOLVED that the City of Opelousas supports the passage of both Constitutional Amendment 3 and Constitutional Amendment 10 on November 4, 2014 as both constitutional amendments will provide valuable tools for municipalities and parishes to address the blighted property issues throughout the state in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of their citizens.

The above Resolution having been read in full and a vote taken was adopted as follows on this 9th day of September 2014.

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

MAYOR

At this time, Mayor Cravins called up Mr. Chad Broussard who had just walked in. Mr. Broussard serves as a role model and is one of the most prolific boxers that came from this area. Mr. Broussard stated that ever since he was a small kid, his dream has always to become a world champion. He started boxing when he was nine years old. Because of boxing, he has been all over the world. He stated that for him, growing up as a kid, boxing was like a family. He won a world title late in his career in Lafayette, Louisiana, which was actually his dream—to win a world title at home. He stated that those are going to lead this are serious about this, it is a phenomenal idea because kids need to be loved and validated. Mr. Broussard pointed out that because of boxing, it made him who he is today—a successful person, an over comer—and he is willing to do whatever he can do to help the program.

CONSENTS

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to award contract for Elevated Water Storage Tank Rehabilitation (South City Park) Project, MGA Project W#250, to BLASTCO Texas, Inc., in the amount of \$588,000.00 and authorize the Mayor to sign any and all documents pertaining to this project.

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On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to grant authority to advertise for Bids for Sewer Pump Parts.

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to grant authority to advertise for Bids for North Park Pavillion.

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to approve payment to Stuart Young for one hundred twenty (120) hours of unused annual leave. Mr. Young has resigned from the Opelousas Fire Department, effective 08/11/2014. **The request by Stuart Young for payment of an additional eight (8) hours of bonus time was DENIED because the City of Opelousas' policy does not pay for bonus days that are not used ("Use It or Lose It" rule).**

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to approve the hiring of the following in the Fire Department, effective 09/14/2014, pending application approval from Fire and Police Civil Service: (a) Tanzy Brown; (b) Ryeland Papillion; and (c) Brian St. Cyr.

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to approve the hiring of the following in the Police Department, effective 09/28/2014, pending satisfaction of prerequisites: (a) Forest Robinson; (b) John Malveaux; and (c) James Stephens.

A roll call vote of the Consents Section was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Joseph Charles, Julius Alsandor, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The St. Landry Parish 1st Annual BBQ Festival will be held next weekend at the Yambilee Building.

Mayor Cravins announced that Mr. Cyrus Auzenne, through the cooperation of the Solid Waste Commission, just donated a propane/methane pickup truck to the City of Opelousas Public Works Office.

Mr. Albert Guidry and Mr. Hubert White with the J.S. Clark Alumni Association stated that they have submitted a suggestion for a commemorative stamp for Mr. Rodney Milburn. Mr. Guidry read the criteria for getting a commemorative stamp processed. He asked that the Council take the necessary steps to get the stamp recognizing Mr. Rodney Milburn. This item will be placed on the October agenda for adoption of a Resolution to follow through with the paperwork for this project.

There being nothing further to come before the Council, on a motion by Alderman Joseph Charles, seconded by Louis Butler, Jr., and unanimously carried, it was resolved that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

MAYOR