

**CITY OF OPELOUSAS
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 25, 2015**

The Council of the City of Opelousas, Parish of St. Landry, State of Louisiana, convened in a special session on this 25th day of August 2015, at 5:00 p.m.

With Mayor Reginald Tatum presiding, the meeting was called to order.

The Mayor requested the City Clerk to call the roll and the following Council members were PRESENT: Marvin Richard, Julius Alsandor, J. Tyrone Glover, Blair Briggs, Sherell Roberts and Jacqueline Martin. ABSENT: None.

A moment of silent meditation was observed. Alderman J. Tyrone Glover led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mayor Reginald Tatum led the Prayer.

On a motion by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved to adopt the agenda. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, Julius Alsandor, J. Tyrone Glover, Blair Briggs, Sherell Roberts, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation by City Attorney: Ron Turner case. This item will be handled at end of meeting in Executive Session.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS OPERATING BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2014 AND ENDING AUGUST 31, 2015. Pursuant to an advertisement in the Daily World, A PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS OPERATING BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2014 AND ENDING AUGUST 31, 2015 was opened at 5:02 p.m. Mayor Tatum asked if there were any questions. No questions were asked. The public hearing was closed at 5:03 p.m. On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved to ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS OPERATING BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2014 AND ENDING AUGUST 31, 2015. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, Blair Briggs, and Sherell Roberts.

NAYS: Julius Alsandor, J. Tyrone Glover, and Jacqueline Martin.

ABSENT: None.

THE MOTION FAILS.

Mayor Tatum asked if there was any reason why they wouldn't amend the budget from last year. Alderwoman Martin stated that the fund balance had gone down to \$765,000 in a week. Alderman Briggs and Mayor Tatum stated that it was the proposed budget she was talking about and not the amended budget. She also stated that they were presented with two different budgets from the Budget Committee meeting to now. Mrs. Dana Quebedeaux, auditor, pointed out that in the original budget, the City was previously not budgeting its transfers into its Internal Service Funds to pay worker's compensation liabilities, health insurance liabilities, and lawsuits, although the City was actually transferring money each month. Mayor Tatum asked Ms. Mary Harris, Payroll and Insurance Clerk, if this was something that was always done every year. Ms. Harris confirmed that this was true. Mayor Tatum stated that the only difference is that the previous administration never put it in the budget—in other words, they were showing the money was still in the budget even though it was actually being moved. He stated that we are actually being more transparent by showing the actual numbers and not trying to hide it. Mayor Tatum asked Mrs. Quebedeaux what would happen if the City did not amend this budget by August 31st. She stated that if it is not amended and expenditures in the General Fund and each major fund were off unfavorably by more than 5 percent then the City would be in noncompliance with State law. Alderwoman Roberts asked what was the difference in how much the budget went up from last year to this year. Mrs. Quebedeaux stated that the amended budget showed that the City collected, as a whole, 1.1 percent more than it originally anticipated and they spent 1.4 percent more than what was anticipated. In total the City went over budget by 0.3 percent. Mrs. Quebedeaux also pointed out that it is very hard to budget the Internal Service Funds because it is hard to predict what these claims will be for the next year and she guesses that is why it was not budgeted in the past. She pointed out that Sales Tax Revenues are favorable but sales Tax Expenditures are unfavorable 4.5 percent so they would be cutting it close. Alderman Alsandor pointed out that it was stated that the previous administration did not highlight these things and not let them be seen in the budget. He asked Mrs. Quebedeaux if this was something that should be cited by the auditors to the Council. She stated that it could be a suggestion to the Board but not necessary unless, for instance, they went over budget and were cited for noncompliance with the law if they went over by 5 percent. Alderman Alsandor emphasized that this did not occur. Mrs. Quebedeaux replied that she was not sure and asked if there had been a finding last year. Alderman Alsandor responded not unless someone brings it up to him now. He pointed out that when the Council made their decisions over all those years, they were within their rights to pass and adopt those budgets—according to what she said. He stated that they are the gatekeepers—

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they decide if the budget needs to be amended; they decide if a proposed budget needs to be passed—they are held accountable if there is something they've been cited for by the auditors. Mayor Tatum asked Mr. Quebedeaux if there was any downside to them not amending the budget. She stated that if they went within 5 percent then they would have a noncompliance finding. Mrs. Quebedeaux stated that a budget is just that—a budget—it is virtually impossible to make a budget come out exactly penny for penny unless it is done the day before and that's just impossible. Mayor Tatum asked Mrs. Quebedeaux if he, as the Mayor, and the Department Heads were within their rights to do transfers and then present it to the Budget Committee who then sent it to the Council for approval. She stated yes. Alderman Briggs asked if they should adopt the proposed budget being that they did not amend the budget. Mrs. Quebedeaux stated that they need to adopt the proposed budget. She pointed out that they can operate on half of the remaining budget for 6 months but if no budget is ever adopted then it is an automatic noncompliance with State law. Alderman Alsandor stated that as long as the proposed budget is adopted before the 6 month time frame is over, then they are still in compliance because they are operating on 6 months of the previous fiscal year's budget. Mrs. Quebedeaux stated that she believes they are still not in actual compliance because the law specifically states that it has to be adopted before year's end—law states that they can operate on the remaining budget for 6 months but it states that they are to "adopt" a budget before year end. Alderman Alsandor stated that if they do not agree with the numbers that are being presented by the Mayor then they have the right not to propose or adopt that budget and within 6 months if those numbers are adjusted and it is acceptable by them, they can amend that budget prior to that 6 month expiration date—he stated that this Council and this City has previously done that—so if they don't adopt it tonight and these numbers are reconfigured to where that fund balance shows a little bit more money and those numbers are put back before them, they can adopt that budget and go forward like this never occurred. No other comments were made.

A PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS OPERATING BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2015 AND ENDING AUGUST 31, 2016. Pursuant to an advertisement in the Daily World, A PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS OPERATING BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2015 AND ENDING AUGUST 31, 2016 was opened at 5:23 p.m. Mayor Tatum stated that he thinks it is an affront not only to the Department Heads but to the Budget Committee as well, that Mr. Alsandor finds fault with the numbers, being that Mayor, the City Clerk, the Accountant, the Auditor, and all of the Department Heads worked hard to make sure these numbers were correct and right—there is nothing wrong with these numbers. Mayor Tatum stated that they simply took what was spent last fiscal year, added a 2.5 percent pay raise for all employees, and then added a little bit more based on, for example, telephone and other line items that had gone over. He also pointed out that there were line items that were not budgeted last year but money was taken out of those line items; but rather than go over budget again, they figured they would have a true number. For instance, the Police Department went under budget—they took that number and added a 2.5 percent increase for employees and added the cost of the bullet-proof vests and gloves and the rental for their building. Mayor Tatum stated that they did the same for all the departments. He commended all of the Department Heads. He stated that this is transparency and these are real numbers and nothing is going to change. Mayor Tatum addressed the Council and Mr. Alsandor that he is not going to budge on this—"this is what it is and this is what it is going to be." Mrs. Quebedeaux stated that for the proposed budget for the City as a whole, the revenues have actually gone up 1.1 percent and the total expenditures from the original budget have gone down by approximately \$3,000. In total, the budget went down. Also, there are some bonds that will be paid off in this fiscal year that will not have to be paid in the next fiscal year—the debt service obligation has gone down by sixty percent. Alderman Briggs stated that during the budget committee meeting, they made several recommendations for a handful of cuts that were important and the department heads compromised and made these few cuts and that he was satisfied with those cuts that were made. Alderman Alsandor state that if memory serves him correctly, the vote was 3 to 3 and it seems that every meeting they come in there and "Mr. Alsandor" is being singled out for everything. "Mr. Alsandor" so it implied that he is telling the other 2 colleagues of his to vote the way they did. He stated that the numbers that were presents and there are options and things they need to look at—the rental increase—the City owns facilities that can be looked at—the City is about to start paying \$18,000 a year for a building that is possibly modernly equipped for the detectives of OPD—"we own buildings." The asking cost is \$200,000+ for the building. Alderman Alsandor suggested that they do the wise thing and put us in a building that would cost us three quarters of what this one will. He also pointed out that there are a substantial amount of raises for one department that does not equate to the cost of living raise that will apply to all the City employees. There are some numbers that can be cut and saved. He stated that he still does not understand the amount of money they have paid for the upgrade computer system and we are adding more money to our budget for more computers. Ms. Anderson addressed the computer issues—she stated that the previous \$30,000 computer costs were due to an upgrade to the water billing software and equipment and the new charges are for the upgrade of computers and software for all computers and their maintenance agreements. Alderman Alsandor then asked about Community Development and whether or not they amended that budget's bottom line. Ms. Anderson state that they did line item transfers in that budget. Alderman Alsandor stated that by law they have the come before the Council to approve bottom line changes. He stated that the bottom dollar amount did change. Ms. Anderson stated that the Community Development falls under the Executive Department and several expenditures that were for Community Development were paid for by the Executive Department. She pointed out that she had consulted with the Auditor prior to transferring funds between the two departments and she was given the okay to transfer the funds. Alderwoman Roberts asked if they could refer this matter back to the Budget Committee to review it again. Mayor Tatum stated that basically the budget did not even change—it actually went

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down. The overall expenditures are still the same except for the transfers with only a \$3,000 difference. Mayor Tatum then addressed the comment that Alderman Alsandor made about being singled out—he asked Alderman Alsandor if he went to each City Councilman and brought them a particular document. Alderman Alsandor responded no, he had not. Mayor Tatum then asked him if he brought it to some of them, with the exception of Alderman Richard. Alderman Alsandor stated that that was a true statement. Mayor Tatum stated that when Alderman Alsandor asked him why he singled him out, it was because Alderman Alsandor was going out of his way to jaundice or influence these other Council members so that was why he was addressed but he also had stated “to all of the Council *and* Councilman Alsandor.” Alderman Richard stated that it was okay that the Councilman didn’t bring him that paper because he believes that all of our department heads did a great job. He stated that they will move the City forward and it hurts him to see this because they can’t move forward like this. Alderman Alsandor stated that he is not trying to influence his colleagues—they asked him for his input. He has some concerns about what they are proposing and what we could do differently. If his colleagues chose not to vote for a budget, that is entirely up to them. Alderwoman Martin state that Mr. Alsandor is not influencing anyone—they just want clarity for what they are doing and to be careful with the amounts they are seeing here. She stated that they should take baby steps with this administration—do a little bit at a time. Mayor Tatum asked her why she didn’t say she had questions during the budget committee meeting. Alderwoman Martin stated that she had talked to some of the Department Heads. Alderman Glover asked can the employees still bet their 2.5 percent raises if they don’t adopt the budget. Mrs. Quebedeaux stated that they could not. She stated that they cannot retroactively pay employees—that is against State law—it would have to start from the day the budget is adopted. Alderman Glover stated that some things he was unclear on were made clear this afternoon. He stated that he is not against the City, any City employees, this Council, the Mayor, or anyone but he was just unsure about some numbers. At this time, Mayor Tatum asked the attorney if they were in order for reconsideration of the first motion. Attorney Claiborne stated that it would have to be one of the members who voted no to bring it up for reconsideration. Alderman Alsandor disagreed and stated that it has to be the person that made the motion to amend the budget. Alderwoman Roberts stated that she would bring it up for reconsideration. Mrs. Quebedeaux stated that Mrs. Tankersley had a financial report from the General Fund but she would read it for her. Ms. Anderson provided the Mayor and Council with the report. Mrs. Quebedeaux explained that this report shows that the revenues are okay. The transfers out were not previously budgeted but this report shows what was actually transferred out to date and that the year-to-date actual does show a profit of \$249,000. The Public Hearing was closed at 5:58 p.m.

Mayor Tatum recommended that Alderwoman Roberts rescind her first motion to amend the budget.

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, it was resolved to rescind the initial motion to amend the budget. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, Blair Briggs, Sherell Roberts, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: Julius Alsandor and J. Tyrone Glover.

ABSENT: None.

THE MOTION PASSES.

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, the following Ordinance was offered for adoption:

**ORDINANCE NO. 08 OF 2015
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE OPERATING BUDGET OF
REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR
BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2014 AND ENDING AUGUST 31, 2015**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Aldermen, of the City of Opelousas, Louisiana in general session convened that:

SECTION I. The attached detailed budget of Revenues for Fiscal Year beginning September 1, 2014 and ending August 31, 2015, has been and the same was hereby amended to serve as an Operating Budget of Revenues for the City of Opelousas, Louisiana, during the same period.

SECTION II. The attached budget of Expenditures by departments for the Fiscal Year beginning September 1, 2014 and ending August 31, 2015, has been and the same was hereby amended to serve as a budget of expenditures for the City during the said period.

SECTION III. The amending of this Operating Budget of Expenditures has been and the same was hereby declared to operate as an appropriation of the amount therein set forth within the terms of the budget classification.

SECTION IV. Amounts were available for expenditures only to the extent included with the 2014-2015 budget.

Said Ordinance having been introduced on July 14, 2015, by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, notice of public hearings having been published, said public hearings having been held, the title having been read and the Ordinance considered, a record vote was taken and the following results were had:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, J. Tyrone Glover, Blair Briggs, Sherell Roberts, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: Julius Alsandor.

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ABSENT: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

The Ordinance was declared adopted on this 25th day of August 2015.

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

MAYOR

On a motion by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard, the following Ordinance was offered for adoption:

ORDINANCE NO. 09 OF 2015

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE OPERATING BUDGET OF
REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2015 AND ENDING AUGUST 31, 2016

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Aldermen, of the City of Opelousas, Louisiana in general session convened that:

SECTION I. The attached detailed estimate of Revenues for Fiscal Year beginning September 1, 2015 and ending August 31, 2016, be and the same is hereby adopted to serve as an Operating Budget of Revenues for the City of Opelousas, Louisiana, during the same period.

SECTION II. The attached estimate of Expenditures by departments for the Fiscal Year beginning September 1, 2015 and ending August 31, 2016, be and the same is hereby adopted to serve as a budget of expenditures for the City during the said period.

SECTION III. The adoption of this Operating Budget of Expenditures be and the same is hereby declared to operate as an appropriation of the amount therein set forth within the terms of the budget classification.

SECTION IV. Amounts are available for expenditures only to the extent included with the 2015-2016 budget.

Said Ordinance having been introduced on July 14, 2015, by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts, notice of public hearings having been published, said public hearings having been held, the title having been read and the Ordinance considered, a record vote was taken and the following results were had:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, J. Tyrone Glover, Blair Briggs, Sherell Roberts, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: Julius Alsandor.

ABSENT: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

The Ordinance was declared adopted on this 25th day of August 2015.

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

MAYOR

On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs, seconded by Alderman Marvin Richard and unanimously carried, it was resolved to go into Executive Session at 6:03 p.m. to discuss the Ron Turner matter.

On a motion by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, seconded by Alderwoman Sherell Roberts and unanimously carried, it was resolved to return to Regular Session at 6:35 p.m.

On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs and seconded by Alderman J. Tyrone Glover and Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, it was resolved to discontinue litigation on the Ron Tuner matter and have the City Attorney file all necessary paperwork to terminate the lawsuit. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

YEAS: Marvin Richard, Julius Alsandor, J. Tyrone Glover, Blair Briggs, Sherell Roberts, and Jacqueline Martin.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being nothing further to come before the Council, on a motion by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin and unanimously seconded and carried, it was resolved that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

MAYOR