

Town of Lockport
Lockport, Louisiana

Minutes of Regular Meeting March 20, 2012

The Mayor and Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, March 20, 2012, at 7:00PM, at the Lockport Town Hall Complex.

A. Call to Order, B. Opening Prayer, C. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Champagne called the meeting to order. The opening prayer was offered by Town Clerk Gerard Leonard, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Champagne.

D. Roll Call

The roll was called with the following present: Mayor Champagne, Councilmen Donovan Barker, Paul Champagne, Rodney Hartman, Craig Rogers, and Weldon Triche. Also present were Police Chief Warren Vedros and Town Attorney Mitch Theriot.

E. Approval of Minutes

Mayor Champagne asked if there were any corrections or comments concerning the minutes of the February 15, 2012, meeting that were distributed to all Councilmen. Councilman Rogers made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilman Barker seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Approval of Financial Statements for the month ending February 29, 2012

Mayor Champagne asked if there were any questions or comments concerning the financial statements for the month ending February 29, 2012, that were distributed to the Councilmen. Mr. Leonard noted that in addition to the normal financial statements, a reconciliation of the Comeaux Drive and Lower Catherine Pump Station project was included. Councilman Rogers moved and Councilman Barker seconded a motion to approve the financial statements as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Councilman Hartman mentioned that the Finance Committee will be meeting with Mr. Leonard in the next couple of weeks to work on the budget.

G. Police Report

Mayor Champagne called on Police Chief Warren Vedros to report on his department's activities. Chief Vedros distributed copies of the monthly activity report. Chief Vedros announced that a bid of \$1000.00 for the 2003 Crown Victoria that was declared surplus was accepted. Chief Vedros also announced that he received a phone call from Representative Gisclair regarding House Bill 37. The bill will go before the committee on Thursday (March 22, 2012) morning and Chief Vedros' presence was requested. Councilman Rogers moved and Councilman Champagne seconded the motion to accept the police report as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

H. GSE Report

Mayor Champagne called upon Mr. Clay Breaud of GSE, who gave the monthly engineering status report as follows:

1. Wind Hardening of Town Hall Complex:

The "Notice to Proceed" was issued on January 23, 2012 to D.L. Daigle and Company. The project should be substantially complete by June 1, 2012. The contractor is waiting for materials to come in.

2. Elliot St. Sewer Lift Station Generator:

The Town received a \$35,000.00 grant for this project. The generator has been installed. Ellender Backhoe and Dozer Service poured the foundation. Kyle Loupe Electric installed the generator. Start-up is being scheduled.

3. LGAP Grant:

The Town has applied for sewer rehab work on Vacherie Street.

4. LCDBG Street Improvements:

GSE prepared estimated construction costs and a probable project budget for a street program through South Central Planning and LCDBG.

Councilman Rogers stated that after reviewing the scope of work for the School Street project, the cost is greater than he mentioned at the last meeting. Councilman Rogers recommended addressing the project from the back and progress forward, which would alleviate some of the drainage problems. Councilman Rogers went on to explain the scope of the project. Councilman Rogers recommended adopting an ordinance for the drainage plan to ensure culverts are installed at the correct elevation and size. Mayor Champagne said the Town will go along with the plan, so long as the Council agrees, keeping in mind other projects that are going on. Councilman Champagne requested a list of the jobs currently in progress. Councilman Rogers asked that Administration prioritize the list. Mr. Leonard explained that the Town crew has taken on additional work regarding the trustees. The Town now has to provide the equipment and sometimes transport it for the trustees. Mayor Champagne added that he has communicated with the Sheriff, who was unaware that the Sheriff's Department was providing the equipment used by the trustees. The Town has purchased two industrial weed-eaters since the trustees began using Town's equipment. Mr. Leonard added that the Town's only riding lawnmower is being used significantly. Councilman Champagne said to buy a new lawnmower.

I. Ellender Backhoe & Dozer Service- Lower Catherine Pump Station culvert repairs

Mayor Champagne called on Jamie Ellender to report his findings at the Lower Catherine Pump Station. Mr. Ellender recommended having the Parish pump the water down so he could video the culvert to see how far the damage goes. Mr. Leonard reported that the Parish has agreed to pump out the water, given a few days notice. Mayor Champagne asked if the Town should wait before repairing the 10' section that was voted on last month until the Town knows the full extent of needed repairs. Mr. Breaud and Mr. Ellender agreed that it is best to wait. Councilman Rogers asked how far Mr. Ellender would video. Mr. Ellender reported that he would probably video 100' in both directions. Councilman Rogers asked Mr. Ellender if Administration needed to coordinate with the Water District. Mr. Ellender answered that he would coordinate with the Water District. Mr. Ellender noted that there are fences and a shed along the right-of-way. Councilman Rogers said that the Town has a drainage servitude, so the fences can be removed. The Town has to cover the ditches after the job is complete, but he is unsure if the Town has to put the fences back up. Councilman Rogers said he believes it would be the responsibility of the property owner to put their fence back up. Councilman Rogers asked if the Town attorney has right-of-way for the property. Mr. Leonard replied that he does (at 308 Comeaux Drive).

J. Proclamation for Fair Housing Month

Mayor Champagne introduced a Proclamation declaring the month of April, 2012, as Fair Housing Month. Councilman Hartman moved and Councilman Champagne seconded the motion to adopt the Proclamation. The motion carried unanimously.

K. Remembering Lockport- Mike Toups

Mayor Champagne called on Mr. Mike Toups, a representative for the Facebook group "Remembering Lockport." Mr. Toups described the social network group to the Council. The group is planning a reunion for Saturday, April 28, 2012, from 10am to 4pm at the American Legion Hall in Lockport. The group invited the Mayor and Council and asked the Mayor to officially welcome the group at the event. Mr. Toups said that the event may occur annually, depending on the outcome. A motion was made by Councilman Champagne to declare the month of April "Remembering Lockport Month." There was a unanimous second and the motion carried. Town Attorney Mitch Theriot will prepare the Proclamation.

L. Lockport Volunteer Fire Company Centennial- Carl Plaisance

Mr. Carl Plaisance announced that the Centennial Celebration will take place May 19, 2012. Mr. Plaisance reviewed the agenda for the celebration. Mr. Plaisance asked for the Town's assistance in paying for the fireworks display. The total cost for the fireworks display is \$10,000.00. Councilman Triche asked how much time the Town had before the money is needed. Mr. Plaisance answered that half the money is due when the contract is signed and the other half is due on the day of performance. Mr. Armand Autin added that the event is free and open to the public. Mr. Autin also stated that the fire department is a 100% volunteer organization and has never asked for financial assistance from the Town. Mr. Theriot said that public funds cannot fund a private event. If the Town hires the pyrotechnics, a public hearing and ordinance must be done before the budget can be amended. Mr. Autin said if the Town cannot sponsor the Fire Department, then they (LVFD) will get the funds on their own. Councilman Rogers made a motion to call for a public hearing regarding financing of the May 19, 2012 fireworks display for the Lockport Volunteer Fire Department. The motion was seconded by Councilman Triche and it carried unanimously. Councilman Champagne made a motion to grant the Lockport Volunteer Fire Department a Special Event Permit for May 19, 2012. Councilman Rogers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

M. Request to rent property for coin operated Ice Vending Machine- Johnny Guidry

Mr. Johnny Guidry addressed the Mayor and Council with his proposition of leasing a small piece of property from the Town, near Bayou Side Park, to put an ice vending machine on the Town's property near the Bayou Side Park. Mr. Guidry is aware that no water or electricity is available at the site, but said he would be responsible for acquiring those services. Councilman Rogers requested Mr. Guidry to submit a drawing of the proposed property. Councilman Triche suggested Mr. Guidry survey the site with the Town Crew.

N. Resolutions: Lease Renewals

- 1. Town of Lockport and Lafourche Parish Assessor's Office**
Mayor Champagne informed the Council that the Assessor is currently paying \$10.19 per square foot for rent. His recommendation is to leave the rate as is.
- 2. Town of Lockport and Halifax Theatre**
Mayor Champagne recommends no change.
- 3. Town of Lockport and Friends of Traditional Louisiana Boat Building**
Mayor Champagne recommends no change.
- 4. Town of Lockport and Lafourche Clerk of Court's Office**
Mayor Champagne's recommendation is to increase the rent from \$9.24 per square foot to \$10.00 per square foot, resulting in \$2,250.00 of annual lease revenue.
- 5. Town of Lockport and Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office**
Mayor Champagne recommends increasing the rent from \$8.75 per square foot to \$9.00 per square foot, resulting in \$21,852.00 of annual lease revenue.

Mayor Champagne asked for the Council's permission to continue with the negotiations and if any changes are made, he will bring them to the Council's attention. Mayor Champagne said he would like all leases to end on the same day. Mr. Theriot said that a question arose about the issue of whether a Resolution or an Ordinance was needed. An Ordinance is needed to renew the leases, so a public hearing must be held. Councilman Champagne agreed with the Mayor's philosophy regarding the Halifax Theatre and the Boat Building, but would like to see the expenses incurred by the Town on their behalf versus the rent. Councilman Triche expressed his belief that the Halifax Theatre and the Boat Building should pay \$1,000 monthly for rent. Councilman Rogers was disappointed that he called for a public hearing at last month's meeting, which passed unanimously, and the public hearing was never advertised. Councilman Rogers asked who made the decision not to advertise for the public hearing. Mayor Champagne answered that it was his decision, because there was uncertainty on whether a resolution or an ordinance was needed. Mayor Champagne added that the reason a public hearing was not called for was not to defy the Council, but simply because a mistake was made in deciding whether or not a public hearing was needed due to information previously presented by the Town Attorney. Councilman Hartman and Town Attorney Mitch Theriot agreed with Councilman Rogers that if the Council calls for a public hearing, it should be put on the agenda. Mr. Theriot suggested Administration provide the Council with a comparison of revenues and expenditures for the Town's rental property and let the Council call for a public hearing at the next meeting. Councilman Champagne agreed.

O. Open topics

1. Smoke testing report

Mr. Leonard informed the Council that 4 leaks were repaired and 7 leaks remained. Councilman Champagne made a motion authorizing the Town Attorney to send letters to property owners who have not repaired their sewer leaks. Councilman Rogers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

2. Clear trees from main drainage ditch from Crescent Ave to First Street

Mr. Theriot reported that he has the first half of right-of-ways and he is waiting on the second half.

3. Committee for Expansion of Lockport

No report.

4. Street Repairs

No report.

5. Restrooms at Bayou-Side Park

Mayor Champagne reported that he received a letter from Parish President Charlotte Randolph advising him that the Parish will set aside \$50,000.00 in their budget to assist the Town in paying for the restrooms at the park. Councilman Triche reported that in his original plans, the cost of the restrooms was around \$50,000.00. The Town then started looking into other companies that manufactured restrooms and the price rose. He would like to go back to his original plans, meet with a contractor, and see how much the restrooms would cost today. Councilman Rogers said the \$50,000.00 could be used to get the site ready and get sewerage to the park.

6. Municode

Councilman Champagne has asked all Councilmen to review Municode and be prepared to submit their findings at the next meeting.

7. Disposition of police car

Discussed during Agenda Item G. This can be removed from the open topics list.

8. House located at Vacherie and Eighth Streets and 9. Conoco Gas Station

Two groups of letters were sent to owners of dilapidated/blighted property. The first batch of letters asked property owners to appear at the April Town Council meeting. The second batch of letters were sent today and asked property owners to appear at the May Town Council meeting.

10. School Street Drainage-GSE prepared scope of work

Discussed under Agenda Item H.

11. Culverts along Barrilleaux Street

Mr. Leonard reported that there are concrete culverts with spaces between some of them. Mr. Leonard asked if the Town should remove the culverts and leave an open ditch or if the Town should replace the culverts. Councilman Triche said the culverts should be removed. Councilmen Champagne and Rogers agreed.

P. Bayou Side Park Restrooms

Discussed during Open Topics.

Reports

1. Council

- **Councilman Champagne-** Councilman Champagne asked how nCourt was working out. Mr. Leonard answered that 4 or 5 citation payments have been made using nCourt. Mr. Leonard added that there was one problem where nCourt notified the Town of a payment, but did not send the payment until after the Town followed up, citing they overlooked the payment.
 - **Councilman Hartman-** No report.
 - **Councilman Barker-** No report.
 - **Councilman Rogers-** Councilman Rogers asked if the report nCourt sends with payments shows if the person is out of Town or local. Mr. Leonard answered that he is unsure whether or not the report provides that information, but Administration can easily determine so by looking up the citation. Councilman Rogers added that he mainly wanted nCourt for people who live out of Town.
 - **Councilman Triche-** Councilman Triche reported on the condition of the sidewalk at 321 Barataria Street. He said the bricks are in very good condition, but need mortar or grout work done before they cave into the ditch. Councilman Triche asked that the Town Crew look into the sidewalk.
- 2. Mayor-** Mayor Champagne reported that he submitted his recommendations (three names) for appointment to the North Lafourche Levee District.

S. Citizens Comments

- Citizen Ralph Sapia thinks the ice machine in the park is a good idea. Mr. Sapia noted that several inches of rain are expected and he hopes the pumps are working.
- Citizen Floyd Cretini reported on the success of the Bayou Lafourche cleanup project. Mr. Cretini is going to try to get someone from the Lake Fields Commission to address the Council at next month's meeting.
- Mr. Armand Autin announced that on Saturday, March 31, 2012, he is the Captain of the crew that will clean from Company Canal to the Intercoastal. Volunteers are needed. Councilman Champagne asked that the information be put on the Town's website.
- Ms. Charlene Rodriguez asked the Council to support a resolution against the Governor's Office of Elderly affairs going under the Department of Health and Hospitals.

T. Adjourn

The next scheduled regular Town meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 17, 2012. There being no further business to come before the Council, a motion by Councilman Triche to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Councilman Hartman and carried unanimously at 9:00PM.

Town of Lockport



Richard P. Champagne, Mayor



Gerard Leonard, Town Clerk



Town of Lockport

Proclamation

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Open Housing Act (Louisiana R.S. 51:2601-2614) prohibits discrimination on housing because of race or color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or handicap; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Lockport has dedicated itself to bettering efforts to realize Fair Housing for the citizens of Lockport; and

WHEREAS, the Lockport Town Council desires to increase the public's awareness regarding Fair Housing and the Louisiana Open Housing Act;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Richard P. Champagne, Mayor of the Town of Lockport, do hereby proclaim the month of April, 2012, as

FAIR HOUSING MONTH

in the Town of Lockport, State of Louisiana.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Official Seal of the Town of Lockport, Louisiana, at the Town Hall, in the Town of Lockport, on this the 20th day of March, A.D. 2012.

Richard P. Champagne

Richard P. Champagne, Mayor

Attest by

Gerard Leonard

Gerard Leonard, Town Clerk