

GENERAL MEETING
TOWN OF MAURICE MINUTES
Wednesday, January 17, 2024

The general meeting of the officials of the Town of Maurice was opened by Mayor Neil Arsement at 6:00 p.m. at the Maurice Municipal Building, 405 Lastie Ave., Maurice, Louisiana

Mayor Arsement led the assembly in Prayer and Alderman Troy Catalon led the Pledge of Allegiance

Roll call of officers

Present: Mayor Neil Arsement; Alderwoman Megan Landry- Lalande; Alderman Troy Catalon; Alderman Jonathan Schlicher; Alderman Matthew Trahan, Alderman Scott Trahan

Absent: None

Also present: Melanie Denais; Nichole Bonin; Claire Meche; Shakyla Brailey; Joan Methvin; Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates; Chief Guy Nerren; Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor; Wayne Theriot; Shaun Hearn, Abbeville Meridional; Kim Touchet, PTA; Michael Roy, John S. Dowling & Co; John Sonnier

Approval General Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2023

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Schlicher moved, seconded and carried to dispense with the reading and accept the December 20, 2023 General Meeting Minutes as submitted. Yay-All Present

Public comment period on agenda items listed: move item 6-a. and 6-b. and place under Ricky Lafleur as item 2-a. and 2-b.

Motion: Schlicher/Catalon moved, seconded, and carried to accept the agenda as amended. Yay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan; Nay- None

Michael Roy- John S Dowling & Co.- Mr. Roy presented the audit report of the Town of Maurice financials for fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. He discussed expenditures and revenues associated with each fund as well as their auditing notes on the report, advised of current changes in the Legislative Auditors agreed upon procedures, and offered to assist Municipal Clerk Melanie Denais in implementing best practice procedures to comply with the Legislative Auditor's changes in the Town's daily/monthly functions. Mr. Roy asked Council members to call him with any questions or concerns. Discussion was held

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded, and carried to accept the Town of Maurice Audit Report of Financials for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan; Nay- None

J. Ricky Lafleur- Ordinance Amending the Building Code Ordinance 11-1- Mr. Lafleur introduced an ordinance amending the Building Code Ordinance 11-1.

Motion: M. Trahan/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to introduce an Ordinance Amending the Building Code Ordinance 11-1 and set for Public Hearing at 6:00pm Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at the Town of Maurice Municipal Building located at 405 Lastie Avenue, Maurice LA 70555 Yay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan; Nay- None

Sign Ordinance to Amend or Replace Ordinance 18-2B Regulating Existing and Proposed Advertising- Mr. Lafleur introduced an ordinance to amend or replace Ordinance 18-2B Regulating Existing and Proposed Advertising to be set for Public Hearing at the February 21, 2024 General Meeting. Catalon had some questions regarding the ordinance which Kim Touchet addressed. Arsement advised more questions can be discussed next month and asked Mr. Lafleur to look at the wording on repairing or replacing existing signs that incur damages. Discussion was held

Motion: M. Trahan/Schlicher moved, seconded and carried to introduce an Ordinance to Amend or Replace Ordinance 18-2B Regulating Existing and Proposed Advertising and set for Public Hearing at 6:00pm Wednesday February 21, 2024 at the Town of Maurice Municipal Building located at 405 Lastie Avenue, Maurice LA 70555. Yay- Catalon, Schlicher M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande; Nay- None

Mayor Arsement advised he sent Mr. Lafleur an email regarding Town Occupational Licenses and asked they discuss the email contents at a later time.

Arsement asked when business owners file for their licenses and Nichole Bonin advised most businesses have until the last day of February to file. Lafleur informed Council members there were two residents not paying their property taxes. Legal letters were sent out and one resident has paid in full. The other's mortgage company was contacted and Nichole Bonin advised the mortgage company will bring everything current and handle paying future year taxes.

Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates- Mr. Sonnier advised Council members, he and Mayor Arsement met with DOTD and a No Left Turn can be placed outside of the DOTD right-of-way from Rita Street onto US Hwy 167. Anything inside of DOTD's right-of-way requires a traffic study be performed. Sonnier also advised he requested DOTD perform a traffic study on behalf of the Town for a No Left Turn from US Hwy 167 onto Rita Street. DOTD will make a determination on the request based on the study analysis. Wayne Theriot suggested DOTD repaint the markings on state highways passing through Town so arrows and lines can be more visible to motorists traveling. Mayor Arsement will have Mr. Sonnier look at the right-of-way to determine if placement of a no left turn sign from Rita Street onto US Hwy 167 would be beneficial. If not, then the Town can request a traffic study for this area. Discussion was held

Chief Guy Nerren- Updates- Nerren advised City Bar is hosting fundraisers on April 13th & 14th. Owners have requested Opta Street be closed off during the events and Nerren had no objection but wanted to inform Council members of his decision to place barricades and close Opta Street on each day between 8am and 5pm. Nerren also advised part-time Officer Frankie Brooks has decided to move to full-time with the department. Since Officer Brooks has been working for Maurice Police Department roughly 2 years, Nerren requested Council members waive the 90-day probation period so Officer Brooks can begin receiving insurance allowance benefits immediately. The department is still looking to hire another full-time officer. Discussion was held

Motion: Schlicher/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to waive the 90-day probation period and allow Officer Frankie Brooks to immediately begin receiving insurance benefits. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan; Nay- None

Chief Nerren asked about the Vermilion Parish Mayor's Intergovernmental Agreement. Legal Ricky Lafleur clarified once completely executed, the agreement would not be specific to one area and will cover all assistant requests between participating entities. Lafleur will check into which governmental entities are participating and report back. Discussion was held

Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor- December 2023- 7,961,000 gallons of water produced; 6,965,551 gallons of water sold; 995,449 gallons of water unmetered; 12%. Meche advised maintenance is addressing a couple more leaks in Town. One of which was a major 6-inch line. He asked if residents are aware of a leak, they please contact City Hall or contact him directly on his cell phone at 337-652-1372 so maintenance can fix the leak immediately. Residents have been reporting leaks to contractors building houses in Town or posting about leaks on their Social Media pages which is not the appropriate way to report these types of issues. The Town's water system did well in the recent freezing temperatures and Mech advised he was selling water to Vermilion Waterworks because their system was not doing so well. Discussion was held

Purchase Excavator- Meche advised he received 3 quotes for consideration on the purchase of a larger excavator. The quotes received did not contain comparable warranties so Meche suggested Council members approve the quote that came in \$130 higher than the lowest quote received since it contained a warranty that was significantly better than the lowest quote warranty. Catalon asked if leasing would be an option and Mayor Arsement stated he would not be in favor of leasing since these types of machines last for years. Arsement advised the purchase of the larger excavator would be an asset and the Town has \$14,000 in LGAP grant funding left over which could be applied to the overall purchase. He feels the Town should purchase the machine outright instead of financing. Funds can be pulled from multiple funds since the machine will have multi-department use. Lafleur suggested tabling the item to allow time for a review of bid laws to ensure the Town Council handles the purchase within the correct legal parameters. Discussion was held

Motion: Catalon/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to table the purchase of a new excavator to allow time for Legal Lafleur to review bid laws. Yay- M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher; Nay- None

Updates- Schlicher asked about pink water and was advised there was an issue with a chemical pump. Meche is working to get the issue resolved. Wayne Theriot complimented the maintenance crew for working hard to keep the Town Water System running in the freeze. Catalon asked if the pump station issues were resolved in Hudson Yards. Meche advised the Developer had larger pumps installed in the previous week and everything seems to be operating well. Schlicher asked if staff had issues with people trying to pay with a credit card but are on Vermilion Waterworks system. Claire Meche advised residents need both their customer and location numbers to access their Town of Maurice utility account for online credit card payments. Meche advised he received phone calls from customers with Vermilion Water Works and had to direct them to their correct utility company. Discussion was held

Mayor Neil Arsement- Speed Bumps- Arsement advised Travis Bodin could not make the meeting but would still like an update on the matter. Nick Sonnier gave information to Council members on sample policies and procedures for residents requesting consideration of speed bump installation. The process would involve filling out an application, paying application fees, cultivating a placement plan, and complete a study of the area effected by the placement of any traffic calming measures. Mr. Sonnier advised the area of study would more than likely extend outside of just the resident address or subdivision making the installation request. The Town Council would set the percentage of residents in favor needed to proceed. Sonnier suggested the set percentage of residents would need to sign a petition in favor or against placing speed calming measures. Council members wanted to continue reviewing the matter. Alderman Scott Trahan moved to place temporary barricades between Victoria Manor and Picard Farms until a decision could be made on the installation of speed bumps. Schlicher disagreed with Alderman Scott Trahan's solution and moved to ban speed bumps within the Town of Maurice altogether. Schlicher's motion was not addressed due to another motion being open on the floor for discussion. Discussion was held.

Motion: S. Trahan/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to place temporary barricades on Romain Picard Drive until the roads in Picard Farms Phases 4 & 5 are complete. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, M. Trahan; Nay- Schlicher

Motion: Schlicher moved to ban speed bumps within the Town of Maurice. Motion died for lack of second.

Lafleur advised if Council members want to go forward with installing traffic calming measures, an ordinance outlining details would need to be presented. Schlicher expressed concerns with delays in emergency response due to the temporary placement of barricades on Romain Picard. Discussion was held

Sales Tax Report- November 2023 sales tax is \$110,469.50 which is up 24.9% from last year. Arsement advised sales tax collections are great. He asked residents continue supporting local businesses or shop online and is looking forward to new commercial establishments coming into Town.

Updates- Arsement advised the topsoil at Maurice Park has been installed but is not quite complete. The recent weather conditions have caused delays. More updates will be given as work progresses.

Council Concerns: Catalon asked if Nichole Bonin could send commercial permits via email to Council members. Bonin will send Commercial Permits to Council members once issued. Landry-Lalande suggested inviting new business owners to monthly general meetings so owners can introduce themselves to the community. Landry-Lalande also complimented Mayor Arsement on the Christmas Social held in Town last month stating it was very nice.

Citizen Concerns: None

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to adjourn at 7:49pm. Yay- All; Nay- None