

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

The general meeting of the officials of the Town of Maurice was opened by Mayor Neil Arsement at 6:01 p.m.  
at the Maurice Municipal Building, 405 Lastie Ave., Maurice, Louisiana

Mayor Arsement led the assembly in Prayer and Alderman Matthew Trahan 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; Joan Methvin; Claire Meche; Shakyla Cormier; Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates; Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor; Captain John Sonnier; David Landry, Fire Chief; J. Ricky Lafleur, Legal Advisor; Anthony Koppie; Jasen Berry; Wayne Theriot; Tradd Trahan; Sarah Drake, Senator Kennedy's Office

**Approval General Meeting Minutes of June 12, 2024**

**Motion:** Landry-Lalande/M Trahan moved, seconded and carried to dispense with the reading and accept the General Meeting minutes of June 12, 2024 as presented. Yay-All Present

**Public comment period on agenda items listed-** Add Fire Chief David Landry, Knox Box; Add- 4.a-1. Salvage Ford F-150; add 4.a-2. Purchase New Truck  
**Motion:** Landry-Lalande/Schlicher moved, seconded and carried to accept the agenda as amended. Yay- All Present

**David Landry- Fire Chief- Knox Box-** Landry asked that new commercial businesses building in Town be required to have a Knox Box when submitting for permits. Commercial establishments would contact the Knox Box company to get set up under the Maurice Volunteer Fire Department code. Chief Landry and the Assistant Fire Chief would have keys to access businesses in the event of an emergency. Arsement asked for an explanation on why requiring a Knox Box is important. Matthew Trahan advised during emergencies, responders often have to wait sometimes an hour for owners or key holders to unlock doors to gain access. If there is a fire in an establishment that contains a Knox Box, responders can often enter and contain a situation without breaking windows or causing unnecessary damages. If passed, requirements would be implemented in the Town's Building Code Ordinance. Older businesses could participate if they choose to do so. Nick Sonnier asked about options for residential Knox Boxes. Matthew Trahan advised residential options were available by request if nothing has changed. Chief Landry can check into residential options but wanted to start with businesses. Wayne Theriot asked if installing residentially would affect insurance. Landry will inquire if insurance rates would be affected. Landry will be approaching members of Vermilion Parish as well to implement a commercial requirement throughout the parish. Landry-Lalande asked for Chief Landry to provide information on the Knox Box company, costs for installation, insurance information, and sample ordinances from Abbeville or surrounding areas to Council members before considering for vote.

**J. Ricky Lafleur- Entergy Franchise Fee Update-** Lafleur advised Mayor Arsement reached out to Entergy to obtain documentation regarding franchise fees being collected. Lafleur advised fee collections had not increased with added homes and no documentation is provided with quarterly franchise payments which is why Arsement began investigating. Lafleur was asked to set up a meeting with outside council to determine how to obtain documentation regarding the franchise payments and how to proceed once documents have been received. The goal is to get documentation supporting previous payments received and to continue getting supporting documents with future quarterly payments. Arsement advised he has been getting phone calls from residents who have received letters from Entergy regarding franchise fees erroneously not being charged on their utility bills. Schlicher asked if the recent city limit expansion was submitted and was advised Entergy does have the information.

**Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates- Hudson Yards Phase 3 Preliminary Plat Extension Approval-** Sonnier advised the developer asked for a 12-month extension on their preliminary plat approval which was first presented in March of 2023. Construction plans were submitted and approved in July of 2023 allowing a 12-month period for construction. The developer is close to beginning construction and felt they could complete construction if the 12-month extension was granted. The developer was willing to modify the previous variances to meet the current Town of Maurice subdivision requirements but would like approval for lot 224 to keep the 20 ft front, 5 ft side, and 10 ft rear. Schlicher asked if the garage could be at 25 ft and was advised they tried to fit different models of homes on the lot but nothing fits the current set-back requirements. Discussion was held

**Motion:** Schlicher/S. Trahan moved, seconded, and failed to approve the Hudson Yards Phase 3 Preliminary Plat Extension. Nay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan

**Motion:** Landry-Lalande/Schlicher moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Hudson Yards Phase 3 Preliminary Plat Extension and grant a variance to lot 224 only with setbacks of 20 ft front, 5 ft side, and 10 ft rear. Yay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan; Nay- None

**Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates- Picard Farms Phase 4 & 5 Preliminary Plat Extension Approval-** Sonnier advised the developer asked for a 12-month extension and changed set-backs to meet current requirements. Discussion was held

**Motion:** Schlicher/Catalon moved, seconded, and carried to approve a 12-month extension for Picard Farms Phase 4 & 5 Preliminary Plat. Yay- Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande; Nay- None

Schlicher asked for an update on the possibility of annexing Hwy 92 East to the Parish line and Hwy 167 to Hwy 699. Sonnier advised owners of property along Hwy 92 East and Hwy 167 own to the center of the road way and it appears to be common for property owners in Vermilion Parish own to the center of the roadways. Arsement advised he and Sonnier are having discussions with property owners about giving the right-of-way along Hwy 92 East and Hwy 167 to the Town. Matthew Trahan and Wayne Theriot confirmed they each owned property and had to allow the state a right-of-way for road and drainage maintenance. Discussion was held

**Captain John Sonnier- Updates-** Sonnier advised Chief Nerren was at a conference. He also advised no one in Vermilion Parish is interested in the Chevy Impala; however, Sterlington Police Department is interested in the vehicle. Arsement would like to discuss the donation details at next months General Meeting and present for a vote at that time. Discussion was held

**Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor- Salvage Ford F-150-** Meche advised the motor on the 2014 Ford F-150 seized up and is no longer operational. The motor replacement cost is \$11,000 but Meche and Arsement felt the Town should salvage or bid out the vehicle. Discussion was held

**Motion:** Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded, and failed to auction off the Ford F-150 with a minimum bid of \$5,000. Nay- Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon

Ricky Lafleur advised to first surplus the vehicle and then set a minimum bid requirement.

**Motion:** Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded, and carried to declare the 2014 Ford F-150 as surplus property and auction it off, as is, to the highest bidder with a minimum bid of \$5,000. Yay- M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher

**Purchase New Ford F-150-** Meche presented cost of a new truck under the state contract price held by Courtesy Ford and also obtained 2 additional bids from Mendoza Ford and Hub City Ford. Mendoza Ford came in at \$36,175 which was lower than the state contract price. All bids are for a 2024 Ford F-150. Landry-Lalande and Schlicher had concerns about total fees not being listed on the bids. Lafleur suggested getting basic specs for the type of truck desired and then getting bids from dealerships. Wayne Theriot suggested not naming a specific make of the truck when requesting bids so different makes such as Ford, Chevy, or Dodge can participate. Council members suggested tabling the vote so more detailed information could be presented. Discussion was held

**Motion:** Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded, and carried to table the vehicle purchase until the August General Meeting. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan

Schlicher told Meche to get bids on a half-ton truck containing specs only. Arsement and Meche will work on getting new bids with fee calculations.

**Water Production/Loss Report-** June 2024- 8,771,000 gallons of water produced; 7,844,628 gallons of water sold; 926,372 gallons of water Unmetered;10% Some of the playground equipment was installed and will continue once grass cutting is caught up. One of the maintenance workers was involved in a hit and run accident in the Town Jeep. The employee was not hurt and Maurice Police Department located the driver responsible. After further investigation, it was discovered there was a lapse in the driver's vehicle insurance. Captain Sonnier advised the driver was cited for hit and run and is scheduled for Court. A claim was filed under the Town's insurance to repair the Jeep's damages and Meche is waiting on their response. Council members asked about pursuing damages in small claims court. Arsement was unsure about the responsible party's ability to pay for damages. Scott Trahan asked about smoke testing repairs. Meche advised there are about 4 repairs left to make. DSLD assisted with most repairs in Vincent Trace and Meche is working on a couple repairs for the Town.

**Mayor Arsement- Millage Rate Roll Forward-** Mayor Arsement presented the millage rates for a roll forward. He advised Council members the original millage rate established in the 70's and voted on by the public was around 7 mills. Over the years a roll forward had not been done so the millage rate eventually dropped to the current 2.41 mills rate. He asked Council members to consider having a public hearing to discuss rolling the millage rate forward to consider the maximum levied millage which would remain at 2.41 mills instead of decreasing to 2.22 mills. Schlicher asked why the Town had not previously rolled forward and was advised the timeline to publicize, hold a public hearing, adopt, and submit documentation was not feasible by the time the rates were received from the Legislative Auditor. Arsement and Melanie Denais met with the Vermilion Assessor who granted a deadline extension. Discussion was held

**Motion:** Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to set a Public Hearing to present and discuss the Town of Maurice Millage Rate Roll Forward to be held during the August 21, 2024 General Meeting beginning at 6pm in the Town of Maurice Meeting Room located at 405 Lastie Avenue, Maurice LA 70555. Yay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan; Nay- None; Abstained- None

**Park Update-** Arsement expressed excitement and thanked Senator Bob Hensgens for helping the Town secure \$450,000 in funding for the Maurice Park. The funding paperwork needs to be amended to allow for the use of funds on improvements such as lighting, walking trail upgrades, equipment, and possibly the purchase of additional park property instead of just drainage improvements. Sellers and Associates is assisting with the paperwork amendment submittal. Arsement is waiting on final details to move forward on building a restroom facility. Denais questioned the need for state approval to build at the park and Arsement advised the Town does not need approval. He has a meeting with Senator Cassidy to discuss further.

**City Hall Update-** Arsement thanked Jeremy Hidalgo for working to get the Town \$600,000 of P-5 funding moved into P-1 funding. The Town currently has immediate access to \$765,000 to move forward with building a New City Hall. Arsement thanked Representative Troy Hebert and House Ways, Julie Emerson, for helping the Town secure an extra \$300,000 for the project. Arsement presented a portion of property behind Gulf Coast Bank he is interested in buying. An informal layout of the New City Hall and how it would sit on the property was also presented and he advised Council members of his intent to make a proposal to the property owner. Lafleur advised a motion would be needed for vote once property details are finalized. Discussion was held

**Sales Tax Update-** May 2024 sales tax is \$108,522.95 which is up 9.7% from last year. Arsement asked residents continue supporting local businesses.

**Updates-** The LED program is transitioning to new leadership but the Town's paperwork was submitted. Utility Clerk, Claire Meche put in her resignation. Arsement thanked her for her service with the Town. Shakyla Cormier is training to fill the position. City Hall will be accepting applications for employment.

**Council Concerns:** Schlicher asked about the Drug Task Force funds. Arsement would like to allocate the funds to the Fire Department. Matthew Trahan asked Chief Landry to discuss how funds would be used. Landry advised if funds are allocated, the department would hire someone part-time Monday-Friday. Landry is hoping to use City of Broussard's old ladder truck through an intergovernmental agreement. These items would lower fire insurance rates. Catalon advised of traffic obstruction on the corner of Andre Ave & Baudoin Rd. Landry-Lalande inquired about blighted property and a Town welcome sign. Arsement is handling blighted property issues a little at a time and he asked Landry-Lalande look into the welcome sign. Discussion was held

**Citizen Concerns:** John Sonnier asked about Chief H Fred connecting to a future road for a new City Hall. Arsement advised plans are only preliminary.

**Motion:** Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to adjourn at 7:56pm. Yay- All Present