

GENERAL MEETING
TOWN OF MAURICE MINUTES
Wednesday, September 18, 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 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; Nichole Bonin; Shakyla Cormier; Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates; Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor; Chief Guy Nerren; David Landry, Fire Chief; Shaun Hearns, Abbeville Meridional; Warren Rost; Wayne Theriot; John Sonnier; Sonia Dupre; Anthony Koppie; Louis Trahan; Tradd Trahan; Tana Werkmeister; Scott Werkmeister; Troy Hebert, Louisiana State Representative

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded, and carried to enter into the Public Hearing.

Public Hearing for the Purpose of:

An Ordinance to Amend the Commercial Building Code Ordinance to Include Knox Boxes for Commercial Construction- Lafleur presented and read the proposed Ordinance which if adopted would amend Ordinances 11-1, 12-2, and 08-02B. Catalon asked why storage companies and apartment complex are excluded. Chief Landry advised the department has a plan in place to access these types of facilities if necessary. No other comments were made by Council members and no public comments were made.

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded, and carried to close the Public Hearing and enter into the General Meeting.

Approval General Meeting Minutes of August 21, 2024

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to dispense with the reading and accept the minutes of the August 21, 2024 General Meeting as submitted. Yay-All Present

Agenda Approval-

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to add item 3-d. Capital Outlay Resolution to the agenda. Yay- All Present

Motion: Schlicher/S. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to accept the agenda as amended. Yay- All Present

Troy Hebert- State Representative- Mr. Hebert introduced himself as the State Representative serving District 31 and advised he has been going to the different municipalities in the district to address the needs they have. He advised he and Mayor Arsement have a good relationship and they have been working together closely to obtain funding for the Town. Hebert also advised he is on a committee working with the Insurance Commissioner to try and bring more insurance companies into Louisiana to write policies for Louisiana homeowners and is working on getting money to match Federal funding for the J-Turn installation along US Hwy 167 between Maurice and Abbeville. Hebert asked citizens and local officials reach out with concerns. Discussion was held

J. Ricky Lafleur- Presented an Ordinance to Amend the Commercial Building Code Ordinance to Include Knox Boxes for Commercial Construction-

Motion: S. Trahan/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded and carried to Adopt the Ordinance Amending the Commercial Building Code to Include Section 919 of Chapter 9 of the IBC regarding Knox Box Installation for new Commercial Construction- Yay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan; Nay- None

Lafleur informed Council members September 10, 2024 Mayors Court was postponed due to the threat of Hurricane Francine. He also advised a letter was sent by the law firm working on the Entergy Franchise issue.

Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates- Cottage Cove Phase 1 Construction Improvements Approval- Sonnier presented the Cottage Cove construction improvements for approval contingent upon the Developer addressing comments made by Sellers & Associates. Discussion was held. No public comment

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to approve Cottage Cove Phase 1 Construction Plan Improvements Contingent upon the Developer addressing comments made by Sellers & Associates. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher. M. Trahan; Nay- None

Cottage Cove Phase 1 Final Plat Approval- Sonnier presented the Final Plat for Cottage Cove Phase 1. Arsement advised \$6,000 for the sewer lift station converter should be noted on the Final Plat prior to recording. The amount agreed upon by the developer & the Town should be placed in an escrow account for later use in the event the lift station converter fails. Catalon asked about the number of lots and was advised there are a total of 141 lots. Landry-Lalande asked if a builder has been chosen and was advised the builder that advertised backed out of building in Louisiana. Discussion was held. No public comment

Motion: Landry-Lalande/S. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Cottage Cove Phase 1 Final Plat contingent upon the developer noting the agreed upon dollar amount of \$6,000 for the replacement of the sewer lift station converter on the final plat prior to recording. Yay- Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon; Nay- None

Water Sector- Water Systems Improvements- Authorization to Advertise for Bids- Sonnier advised authorization is needed to advertise for bids for Water System Improvements which include the water line on Etienne and Beau Road and the New Water Tower in that area. Arsement advised LDH has approved the work and Sonnier advised the Town has 2 years to start the project from LDH approval. Discussion was held. No public comment

Motion: M. Trahan/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded, and carried authorizing Sellers & Associates to advertise for bids for the Water Sector/Water System Improvements. Yay- M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher; Nay- None

Capital Outlay Resolution Requesting Financial Assistance- Arsement explained a resolution requesting assistance from the Capital Outlay Financial Assistance Program must be adopted each year in order for the Town to continue participating. The resolution presented covers the 2025-2026 fiscal year, authorizes Mayor Arsement to sign necessary documents, and authorizes Sellers and Associates to submit the necessary documents on behalf of the Town. The anticipated use of funds would benefit the Town's Sewer Expansion. Applications are due November 1, 2024. Discussion was held. No public comment

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to adopt the Capital Outlay Resolution Requesting Financial Assistance for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 authorizing Mayor Arsement to sign necessary documents and Sellers and Associates to submit the necessary documents on behalf of the Town. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan; Nay- None

Schlicher asked if there is a fire code for the distances between the houses being built and was advised the distance is typically 10 feet between the eaves of the homes. He advised the distances between the eaves two new home in Hudson Yards is closer than the allowed distance. Arsement will reach out to discuss this with the Town's Building Official. Scott Trahan asked when the Town should consider having a traffic study performed when building new subdivisions. Tradd Trahan advised he has seen a traffic study requirement on subdivisions with more than 125 homes. Arsement will have Jeremy Hidalgo look up standards for other municipalities. Discussion was held

Chief Nerren, Police Chief- Updates- Nerren advised Council members the department is still operating short-handed. Nerren asked Council members to consider setting the number of full-time and part-time officers allowed by the department so he does

not have to wait for approval to hire qualified applicants. He advised he'd like to have 8 full-time and 3 part-time officers on staff. Arsement was concerned the budget may not always allow for a set number of employees and cuts in any department could potentially be made if the Town's finances are not doing well. Council members asked about the dollar amount initially invested in a new hire to get them on staff. Nerren advised the dollar amount could be between \$3,000 and \$4,000. Nerren passed out information on community policing to Mayor Arsement and Council members so they could better understand the implemented duty. Nerren also advised that one of his full-time officers is out on medical leave and may not be able to return. Mayor Arsement and Council members agreed that consideration for hiring another officer should be made for public safety purposes. Legal Lafleur advised consideration for hiring an officer would need to be established as an agenda item for next month's General Meeting. Schlicher asked for a full compilation and breakdown of costs associated with hiring and keeping an officer on staff. Warren Rost advised Council members to consider the number of hours in a day, the number of hours a full-time officer works, and the number of officers available on staff to cover shifts to calculate how many employees are needed to provide public safety for the Town. Arsement asked if Nerren had spoken with the Vermilion Sheriff to provide assistance to the department until the hiring of personnel could be sorted out. Nerren will reach out to the current Sheriff. Discussion was held

Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor- August 2024- 9,724,000 gallons of water produced; 7,548,739 gallons of water sold; 2,175,261 gallons of water unmetered; 22%. Meche advised large amount of the unmetered water was due to hydrant testing which can't be metered because water flow can't be restricted during the testing. Discussion was held

Discussion- 2017 Dodge Truck- the oil pressure is still reading low when tested by the dealership. The dealership concluded a new motor would be needed. Meche tested the oil pressure with a mechanical gauge which shows a good reading. The truck is running for now and Meche advised Council members the department would continue to run the truck until it is no longer operational since engine replacement would be too costly. Discussion was held

2014 Ford Truck Bid- Meche advised Council members only one bid was received in the amount of \$1,700. The minimum bid was set and advertised at \$5,000 so the bid received could not be legally accepted. Arsement suggested re-advertising the truck and lowering the minimum bid requirement. Scott Trahan suggested possibly donating the truck to the Vermilion Parish Trade School that has a mechanics program if the Town is unable to have the minimum bid requirement met. Discussion was held. No public comment

Motion: Catalon/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to re-advertise for the sale of the 2017 Dodge Truck and set the minimum bid requirement at \$2,000. Yay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan; Nay- None

Updates- Meche advised the restrooms to be built at the Maurice Park are getting close. One slide still needs to be installed and should be completed soon.

Mayor Arsement- Mastercard Bill for Approval- Mayor Arsement presented Mastercard Bill to Council members for approval to pay and explained the expected reoccurring monthly charge for Microsoft 365 and new employee emails. Discussion was held. No public comment

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to approve the payment of the current Mastercard charge in the amount of \$275.60 Yay- Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande

Sales Tax Update- August 2024 sales tax is \$106,929.23 which is up 5.9% from last year. Arsement asked residents continue supporting local businesses or shop online and thanked everyone for continuing to support local community businesses.

Updates- Arsement advised the appraisal for the 2.5 acres of property came back within the range suggested and agreed upon for purchase. He advised Council members the purchase price would be the previously discussed amount of \$175,000. The electrician performing work for the Maurice Park bathrooms will be providing his services at no cost to the Town. Arsement is waiting on prices from Fred's Plumbing for stainless steel toilets and sinks for the facility. He feels the use of stainless toilets would be a better option and hopes the option will be cost effective. Arsement advised Council members the mailbox for Santa letters from children in the community will be put out at City Hall and would like for them to be thinking about when the announcement should be made so children have time to get their letters to Santa in time for Christmas. Arsement also reminded Council members the General Meeting for November has been moved to November 13, 2024 due to a schedule conflict.

Council Concerns: Schlicher advised the Golf Cart Ordinance is still being worked on so everyone can express concerns and all liability issues can be covered. The hope is to have everything in place so the Ordinance presented covers everything and only has to be presented once.

Citizen Concerns: None

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to adjourn at 7:40pm. Yay- All Present