

GENERAL MEETING
TOWN OF MAURICE MINUTES
Wednesday, October 16, 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; Joan Methvin; Nichole Bonin; Shakyla Cormier; Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates; Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor; J. Ricky Lafleur, Legal Advisor; Shaun Hearren, Abbeville Meridional; John Sonnier

Approval General Meeting Minutes of September 18, 2024- No Council nor public comments were made.

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande/ moved, seconded and carried to accept the General Meeting minutes of September 18, 2024, as is and unread.
Yay-All Present; Nay- None

Agenda Approval- No Council nor public comments made on the addition and agenda amendment approval.

Motion: S. Trahan/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to add item 5-d. credit card bill approval to the agenda. Yay- All Present; Nay- None

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded and carried to approve the agenda as amended. Yay- All Present; Nay None

J. Ricky Lafleur- Lafleur advised Mayor's Court went well and he commended the Maurice Staff on their work. Lafleur is still working on the Entergy issue.

Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates- Introduce Water System Rate Ordinance- Sonnier advised the Town was awarded funding from the Water Sector Commission to install the water line extension on W. Etienne and Beau Rd and the elevated water tower at the South Sewer Plant. The Town was mandated to do a water rate study which was performed by LRWA to ensure the Town's financial sustainability. It was discovered that the Town's water rates were not in-line with the recommended rates needed to secure the funding awarded. LRWA provided a sample ordinance for the Council to consider for Public Hearing at the next General Meeting. Rates established in the ordinance would leave the current 2,000-gallon minimum usage rate of \$21 and proposes an increase in the rate for water consumption over 2,000-gallons by adding \$1.50 to the current \$5.35 rate per 1,000-gallons consumed. A proposed increase of 2% per year was also included in the recent rate study so the Town can keep up with rising inflation costs. Mayor Arsement advised Council members if the proposed rate increases are not adopted; the Town would lose the grant funding awarded for the necessary upgrades to the water system. Mayor Arsement advised the original recommended flat rates for the first 2,000 gallons was \$23 and the per 1,000 gallons over rate was over \$7 per thousand which was higher than the final agreed upon recommendation. Sonnier advised new regulations for grant funding also mandates a 15% sustainability factor annually and reserve accounts to be set up with monthly deposits for major asset replacement. The long-term trend of the Consumer Price Index showed an increase of 2% per year which is why the 2% annual rate increase was built into the proposed ordinance recommendation. Matthew Trahan advised if system upgrades are needed and not made, the fire insurance rating for residents and businesses within the Town of Maurice would be negatively affected. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: M. Trahan/Catalon moved, seconded, and carried to Set for Public Hearing and Introduce a Water System Rate Ordinance at 6pm on November 13, 2024 in the Town of Maurice Meeting Room located at 405 Lastie Avenue, Maurice, LA 70555. Yay- Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon; Nay- None

Arsement advised LRWA will also be conducting a Sewer Rate Study in about 6 months at which time a sewer rate recommendation will be made.

Guy Nerren- Police Chief- Hiring of a Police Officer- Nerren presented Council members with financial details regarding the hiring of new officers in the He also presented them with population calculations used by other departments to determine the number of full-time officers needed on staff to maintain community safety. Arsement was comfortable with allowing Nerren to have a minimum of 6 full-time officers on staff with the Town's population of approximately 3,000 residents. Nerren advised he has a potential candidate for employment, but he still has a full-time officer out and 1 part-time officer is dealing with family issues that may affect his work schedule. Lafleur asked for clarification on the motion. Schlicher was advised Council members would still approve any new hire but having a staffing plan would allow Nerren to begin the hiring process. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded, and carried, to provide a staffing plan for Chief Nerren to employ 6- full-time officers on staff and subject to individual approval by Council members. Yay- M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher; Nay- None

Donate Unit# 107 (2012 Dodge Charger VIN# 4997) to LA K-9- Nerren advised Council members that LA K-9 wanted the decommissioned unit# 107 for training purposes. Discussion was held. No public comments were made

Motion: M. Trahan/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded, and carried to donate unit# 107, the 2012 Dodge Charger Vin# 4997 to LA K-9. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan; Nay- None

Updates- Chief Nerren announced Trick-or-Treat for Halloween would be held on Thursday, October 31, 2024, from 6pm to 8pm. Nerren advised the homecoming parade was a success but there were complaints about other homecoming festivities resulting in vandalism. Catalon commented that items such as toilet paper used during festivities should be cleaned up by homeowners the next day to avoid having items ending up in neighboring yards, pools, etc. Discussion was held

Water Production/Loss Report- September 2024 water production/loss report contained an error. Utility Clerk Shakyla Cormier and Meche were working with the programming I.T. department to have corrected for next month. Meche wasn't aware of any major issues with the system. Discussion was held
2014 Ford Truck Bid- Meche advised J.J. Merchant was the only bidder for the 2014 Ford Truck. The bid came in at \$2,177.77 which exceeded the minimum bid requirement of \$2,000. Arsement will contact J.J. Merchant to notify them of the award and arrange for payment and pick-up. The new truck from Mendoza Ford should arrive in a few weeks.

Updates- Meche thanked Chief Nerren and the Vermilion Parish Sheriff for their help with clean-up after North Vermilion's Homecoming Parade. He advised that no students showed up to assist with clean-up and town maintenance workers appreciated the extra help that was received. Maintenance workers are edging sidewalks and trimming trees around town as grass cutting slows down. Catalon asked who cleaned up the ditch between Hudson Yards and Kohen Estates. Arsement advised the clean-up would have been done by the Drainage Board. The only piece of Maurice Park equipment that wasn't reinstalled was the monkey bars because they were in bad shape. Arsement advised he is meeting with different people to get ideas and prices on additional park upgrades. Discussion was held

Mayor Arsement- Golf Cart Ordinance- Arsement turned the floor over to Alderman Schlicher to explain some of the updates made to a possible golf cart ordinance based on comments previously discussed. Schlicher went through changes made to the proposed ordinance based on the comments and concerns received from Council members. Arsement asked if he needed to contact DOTD for a speed limit change on Etienne Road and was advised, since it's not a state roadway, the Town does not need DOTD permission to make a change. Municipal Clerk Melanie Denais advised speed limit changes to Town roadways can be done by a Resolution. Details, concerns, and suggestions regarding the proposed Golf Cart Ordinance, including roadway limitations, permitting, times, etc. can be applied prior to presenting the ordinance for public hearing and adoption consideration. Lafleur and Schlicher touched on fines, penalties, and permit revocation details for those violating the proposed ordinance. Lafleur also suggested limiting golf carts to subdivision roads only as a trial run to the allowance of golf carts on public roadways. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: Schlicher/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to set a Public Hearing to Introduce a Golf Cart Ordinance at 6pm on November 13, 2024, in the Town of Maurice Meeting Room located at 405 Lastie Avenue, Maurice, LA 70555. Yay- Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan; Nay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon

Sales Tax Update- August 2024 sales tax is \$99,312.89 which is up 2.4% from last year. Arsement asked residents to continue supporting local businesses and shop online.

Updates- Arsement informed Council members the new Town emails have been set up and asked they get with Jeremy Hidalgo to complete each of their email set-ups. Arsement advised there are still some issues being worked through with the email changes for employees. Arsement was in Baton Rouge trying to advocate for Capital Improvement funding for the new City Hall, Beau Rd. Sewer Plant upgrades, Maurice Park upgrades, and a new Fire Department. Kyle Ardoin informed Arsement the Town was awarded \$500,000 after Nick Sonnier prepared and submitted the application with Acadiana Planning for the Delta Regional Grant. The grant can be used as match funding in place of ARPA funds. Discussion was held

Credit Card Bill- Arsement presented the Mastercard bill for payment approval. Schlicher asked why the bill was being presented for approval every month and was advised monthly Council approval was a part of the credit card policy created and approved. Matthew Trahan suggested making changes to the credit card policy and assign the approval responsibility to one or two Council members to expedite the processing of monthly payments. Catalon suggested the Mayor Pro Temp approve monthly statements. Landry-Lalande suggested utilizing email correspondence as an approval method. Arsement will make credit card policy changes and present for approval next month. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to approve to pay the balance of \$311.60 on the Town's Mastercard Account.
Yay- Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande; Nay- None

Council Updates: M. Trahan thanked Richard Meche for asking a resident not to throw grass cuttings onto the sidewalks. He advised the resident is now filling the ditches with grass clippings.

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded and carried to adjourn at 7:33pm. Yay- All Present