

GENERAL MEETING
TOWN OF MAURICE MINUTES
Wednesday, November 13, 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 Alderwoman Megan Landry-Lalande 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; Erica Arceneaux; Todd Vincent, Sellers & Associates; Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor; Chief Guy Nerren; Shaun Hearen, Abbeville Meridional; John Sonnier; Alesha and Shane Henry; Anthonie Koppie

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

Public Hearing for the Purpose of:

An Ordinance to Amend the Water Use Ordinances to Increase the Water Rates- Lafleur presented and read the proposed Ordinance. The proposed amendment would increase the per 1,000-gallon water usage fees. The flat fee for the minimum water usage fee would remain the same. Mayor Arsement advised the increase in fees was recommended by LRWA in a recent rate study for the Town to keep the recently awarded Water Sector Grant to build a new elevated water tower on Beau Road and extend the water line on West Etienne Road. Catalon asked if a rate study on the Town's Sewer System was done and was advised there is a plan to have a sewer rate study done in about 6 months. No public comments were made.

An Ordinance to Allow the Use of Golf Carts and Slow-Moving Vehicles- Lafleur presented and read the proposed Ordinance which if adopted would allow the use of golf carts in the Town of Maurice. Schlicher advised of changes made to the proposed Ordinance based on previous comments by officials. Changes included limiting golf carts to streets 20 mph and under, E. Lafayette now reads W. Lafayette, windshields now required, responsibility of Chief of Police or designee for inspection requirements for permits, and penalties for violation and revocation of permits. Lafleur pointed out a correction to the listed statute for slow moving vehicle. Arsement had questions about 4-wheelers and side by side vehicles. Schlicher advised they are not legal according to the ordinance. Scott Trahan questioned if golf cart speeds would be tested and checked for modifications. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: M. Trahan/Schlicher moved, seconded, and carried to close the Public Hearing and enter the General Meeting.

Approval General Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2024- No Council nor public comments were made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to dispense with the reading and accept the minutes of the October 16, 2024, General Meeting as submitted. Yay-All Present

Agenda Approval- Schlicher added item 6-a. LGAP and CWF Financial Assistance Resolution. No public comments were made

Motion: Schlicher/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to add a Resolution Requesting Assistance from the State of LA for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year Local Government Assistance Program and the Community Water Enrichment Program. Yay- Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon; Nay- None

Arsement advised Items 3-a. and 3-b. would not be discussed because there are documents still being prepared for presentation. Item 6-c. would also not be discussed because the bill was not received. No public comments were made.

Motion: Schlicher/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to remove items 3-a., 3-b., and 6-c. from the agenda. Yay- All Present

J. Ricky Lafleur- An Ordinance to Amend the Water Use Ordinances to Increase the Water Rates- Lafleur presented the rates presented in the Ordinance. Residential and Multi-Family Housing Facility rates for the first 2,000-gallons was \$21 and rates for each 1,000-gallons afterward was \$6.85. Commercial, Nursing Home, Assisted Living, Industrial rates for the first 2,000-gallons was \$21 and rates for each 1,000-gallons was \$7.00. Council members expressed regret about raising rates for usage but expressed the importance of the Water Sector Grant to the Town. No public comments were made.

Motion: S. Trahan/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded and carried to Adopt the Ordinance to Amend the Water Use Ordinances to Increase the Water Rates - Yay- M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher; Nay- None

An Ordinance to Allow the Use of Golf Carts and Slow-Moving Vehicles- Lafleur presented the ordinance and discussed the changes that were made with Council members. Schlicher asked if there was a State Statute not allowing golf carts to be on roadways after dark. Chief Nerren and Lafleur were not aware of any statute that limits after dark driving if the golf cart has headlights and taillights. Scott Trahan asked how insurance verification would be handled with a 2-year permit. Arsement advised proof of insurance would be presented at the time of permit issuance and suggested a yearly permit. Landry-Lalande commented on the insurance expiration date and asked about flagging permits to reverify insurance upon expiration. Lafleur suggested keeping a log of insurance expiration dates and having a reverification process. Nerren will follow up with Office of Motor Vehicles to check if a registered golf cart is flagged for no insurance. Arsement advised if Town employees are responsible for collecting new insurance information after permit issuance, fees for the permits must be increased. Landry-Lalande questioned the definition of slow-moving vehicles. A comment was made about changing verbiage on golf cart definition to include gas and electric-powered. John Sonnier asked if dirt bikes and minibikes are considered slow-moving vehicles and was advised those types of vehicles are not permitted under this ordinance. Aldermen Matthew Trahan and Scott Trahan felt they were not prepared to vote on the ordinance currently. Landry-Lalande wanted a timeline representing the ordinance. Lafleur suggested tabling the ordinance for now. No other public comments were made.

Motion: S. Trahan/M. Trahan moved, seconded to postpone An Ordinance to Allow the Use of Golf Carts and Slow-Moving Vehicles. No vote was taken since an amended motion and second was made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to not postpone the Ordinance to Allow the Use of Golf Carts and Slow-Moving Vehicles. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Schlicher, Catalon, M. Trahan; Nay- None

No other comments were made by Council members nor the public.

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded and failed to adopt An Ordinance to Allow the Use of Golf Carts and Slow-Moving Vehicles with the Proposed Amendments. Yay- Schlicher; Nay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, M. Trahan, S. Trahan

Alesha Henry, Mendoza Ford- Fireworks Variance for December 21, 2024- Council members decided to vote on the item during Mrs. Henry's absence on behalf of Mendoza Ford. The fireworks display will begin at 9pm. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: M. Trahan/Schlicher moved, seconded and carried to allow a Fireworks Variance for Mendoza Ford on December 21, 2024, pending approval from the State Fire Marshal and Maurice's Fire Chief. Yay- Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande; Nay- None

Todd Vincent, Sellers & Associates- Mr. Vincent represented Sellers and Associates due to Nick Sonnier having a conflict of schedule. He had nothing to present to Council members. Arsement thanked Mr. Vincent for his attendance and for providing a drainage map showing the flow of water at the intersection of US Hwy 167 and La Hwy 92. The issue with the amount of water on the roadway was due to intense rainfall in a short amount of time. Bids will be received November 22, 2024, for the Elevated Water Tank. Discussion was held

Chief Nerren, Police Chief- Updates- Nerren advised Council members he started the hiring process for a new officer. The applicant is post-certified and has passed his physical and psychological examinations. Officer Jason Geans has 13 years in law enforcement and starts employment on November 16, 2024. Nerren will be sending Samantha Irvin to the Academy in January 2025. The department received complaints on roaming livestock, and he is trying to locate the owner who does not live in Town. Arsement advised the issue is with pigs and fears a larger issue if they escape and reproduce. Arsement thanked the department for handling the vandalism at Maurice Park.

Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor- October 2024- 8,828,000 gallons of water produced; 7,856,723 gallons of water sold; 971,277 gallons of water Unmetered; 11%. Meche thanked Alderman Matthew Trahan for pointing out a leak that should be repaired within a couple days. Some of the Town's sewer System is having trouble especially with heavy rainfall. LRWA was able to use a camera on one of the roads in Vincent Trace and no issues were found. One area where water was running straight into the ground was discovered which indicated a line break in the sewer system. A repair for the line will be made as soon as possible. The new maintenance truck has been delivered. Arsement and Meche advised of an issue with the meter that calculates water usage between the Town and Vermilion Water Works. The replacement cost is around \$8,800. Vermilion Waterworks would split the cost of the replacement with the Town. Arsement advised this is why he is adamant about keeping up with rising costs. Arsement advised he will hold off on purchasing the spare motor for the water plant. Schlicher asked about fire hydrants on Andre Avenue. Meche advised the hydrants have not had any problems since they have a 3-ft standpipe. Some other hydrants have issues with being set too low. Repairs to correct issues will be done soon. Discussion was held

Mayor Arsement- LGAP and CWF Financial Assistance Resolution- Mayor Arsement presented a Resolution Requesting Assistance from the State of LA for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year Local Government Assistance Program and the Community Water Enrichment Program. The Town applies each fiscal year for funding. The resolution is necessary to apply for funding. Arsement explained how beneficial award of these funds are to the Town. He also advised amounts from each program is \$35,000 but doesn't know how the Town will utilize the LGAP funds yet. The Town will probably by water meters with CWF funds. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: Schlicher/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to Adopt a Resolution Requesting Assistance from the State of LA for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year Local Government Assistance Program and the Community Water Enrichment Fund Program. Yay- Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon; Nay- None

Fire Department Donation- Arsement advised he would like to give Maurice Fire Department the \$8,000 previously given to the Task Force. Chief Landry would use the funds to hire a part-time firefighter to be at the Fire Department during weekdays. A person on staff would help the fire rating for Maurice residents. Arsement asked Maurice Council to approve giving the additional \$8,000 to Maurice Fire Department. Schlicher clarified the department currently gets \$8,000 per year from the Town. Approval of the additional \$8,000 would bring the total yearly donation to \$16,000. Volunteers would still assist with calls. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to give an additional donation to Maurice Fire Department in the amount of \$8,000. Yay- M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher; Nay- None

Updates to the Town of Maurice Policy and Procedures- Arsement presented updates to the Town's policy and procedures approving the Town's Mastercard bill. Issues have occurred with receiving the bill prior to meetings. No Council nor public comments were made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/S. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to approve the updates made to the Town of Maurice Policy and Procedures. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan; Nay- None

Sales Tax Update- September 2024 sales tax is \$121,269.96 which is up 18.7% 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 2025 Maurice Court, General Meeting, and Holiday schedules are set and introduced City Hall employee, Erica Arceneaux.

Council Concerns: Schlicher questioned and asked for a review of increasing speed limits on some Town streets. Catalon advised the ditch between Kohen and Hudson Yards has not been cut. Discussion was held.

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded and carried to adjourn at 7:32pm. Yay- All Present