

GENERAL MEETING
TOWN OF MAURICE MINUTES
Wednesday, February 19, 2025

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 Scott Trahan led the Pledge of Allegiance

Roll call of officers

Present: Mayor Neil Arsement; Alderman Troy Catalon; Alderman Jonathan Schlicher; Alderman Matthew Trahan; Alderman Scott Trahan

Absent: Alderwoman Megan Landry- Lalande

Also present: Melanie Denais; Joan Methvin; Shakyla Cormier; Erica Arceneaux; Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates; Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor; Chief Guy Nerren; John Sonnier

Motion: Catalon/S. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to open the Public Hearing. Yay- All Present

Public Hearing for the Purpose of:

An Ordinance to Amend the Mayor's Salary Ordinance to Include a Monthly Motor Vehicle Allowance of \$800- Lafleur presented and read the proposed Ordinance which consolidated all previous ordinances to repeal older ordinances. Arsement advised he is looking to repeal and replace older ordinances as they are revised or updated to make it easier for everyone to find the most current ordinance information. Catalon asked when Mayor became a full-time position and was advised the change was made in 2021. Schlicher questioned retirement benefits being included. Lafleur advised retirement benefits were included in the previously adopted ordinance. Catalon expressed wanting the vehicle compensation to be comparable to the Federal allowance of \$.70 per mile for Arsement without overburdening the Town and thought proving mileage being turned in would be difficult. Schlicher and Catalon expressed concerns about the vehicle compensation being included in the salary ordinance due to possible changes in future administration. Lafleur viewed the compensation as more of a reimbursement than an actual part of the Mayor's salary since Arsement is using his personal vehicle for Town business and suggested council members review compensation in the future based on circumstances at that time. Schlicher felt Arsement should keep a mileage log or use the Jeep the previous administration drove. Arsement advised the Jeep is being used by the Utility Department and felt the flat compensation rate would be cleaner and keep him out of the "hot seat" when going through audits or public records requests since no one else would be able to verify his mileage log. He also advised riding throughout the Town once per day was roughly 19 miles and he does this at least twice per day. Scott Trahan thought keeping a log would be more of a burden on Arsement as well as any person seeking the Mayor's position in the future and thought the compensation being asked for was fair. Matthew Trahan felt like Arsement would not come out ahead with the requested compensation due to his personal vehicle maintenance and insurance cost. Further discussions were held. No public comments were made

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

Approval General Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2025- No Council nor public comments were made.

Motion: Schlicher/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to accept the minutes of the January 15, 2025, General Meeting as presented and unread. Yay-All Present

Agenda Approval- No Council comment. John Sonnier advised the minutes year on the agenda reads 2024. Minutes were accepted with the correct year.

Motion: Schlicher/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to accept the agenda as presented. Yay- All Present

J. Ricky Lafleur- An Ordinance to Amend the Mayor's Salary Ordinance to Include a Monthly Motor Vehicle Allowance of \$800.00- Lafleur presented the Ordinance. No Council nor public comments were made.

Motion: Schlicher/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to Adopt the Ordinance to Amend the Mayor's Salary Ordinance to Include a Monthly Motor Vehicle Allowance of \$800. Yay- Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, S. Trahan; Nay- Catalon; Absent- Landry-Lalande

Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates- US 167 Access Connection Professional Services Agreement- Mr. Sonnier presented the basic engineering contract to perform the engineering, topographic survey, and inspection for designing a j-turn and deceleration lane South of Nunu's. The j-turn and deceleration lane is required by DOTD. Arsement advised a requirement to apply for certain grants to fund the project requires having the design for the construction of the j-turn and deceleration lane already prepared. The design is a lengthy process which could cause potential grant funding to expire before the project completion. Arsement advised he'd like to get ahead on the design portion of the project to continue growing the commercial businesses in that area. The estimated engineering contract cost would be approximately \$90,000. Sonnier advised approvals from DOTD for this type of project goes through a lengthy 7-step process. Catalon asked who would perform the construction on the project and was advised Town of Maurice would put the project out for bid. Scott Trahan asked if Vermilion Parish Police Jury would consider assisting with the design cost. Arsement advised he did not think the Police Jury would assist because the area is located within the Town's corporate limits, and they have limited funding. Sonnier advised the Town could still try and request reimbursement from the Police Jury later. Arsement advised the traffic in the area gets backed up and believed the j-turn and deceleration lane would help alleviate some of the congestion. Schlicher asked about a red light and Arsement advised DOTD previously refused installing a red light because their traffic studies do not show a need for one. Sonnier advised DOTD has a program that could potentially allow the Town of Maurice to take over the portion of US 167 that is located within the Town's corporate limits. Sonnier will look more into the DOTD program. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: Catalon/Schlicher moved, seconded and carried to allow the Mayor to Sign and Enter into the US 167 Access Connection Improvements Professional Services Agreement with Sellers & Associates. Yay- Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Catalon; Nay- None; Absent- Landry-Lalande

Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Sign Documents under the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program through Restore LA: FEMA Public Assistance: Non- Federal Match Program for 4277 Severe Flooding- Sonnier advised the authorization document would change the authorization to sign documents from previous Mayor Wayne Theriot to Current Mayor Neil Arsement. Discussion was held. No public comments were made

Motion: M. Trahan/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to accept the Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Sign Documents under the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program through Restore LA: FEMA Public Assistance: Non- Federal Match Program for 4277 Severe Flooding. Yay- M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Catalon, Schlicher; Nay- None; Absent- Landry-Lalande

Schlicher asked about the main roadway in Hudson Yards connecting to US 167. He was advised this is not currently in the plan. Discussion was held

Chief Nerren, Police Chief- Updates- Nerren advised Council members Officer Irvin did not pass through the academy so she can no longer remain employed. Nerren hired another female officer who is already Post Certified and has about 3 years of experience but is still 1 officer short. Most of the officers have completed the yearly requalification with their handguns. Nerren and Mayor Arsement reviewed the budget, and the financial numbers are good enough to order the previously approved police department vehicle. Nerren will order the unit, but it will still be about 4 months before it comes in. Discussion was held

Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor- Purchase Man Lift- Meche went over the quotes in Council member packets. He showed a comparison between several used machines and one new machine. Meche advised he is looking at purchasing a used man-lift at a cost of \$20,000. The other quotes for a used man-lift came in at \$31,5000, \$32,900, and \$40,300. All have close to the same amount of hours of usage on them. A new man-lift is approximately \$87,000. Arsement advised there is \$14,000 of LGAP money to use towards the purchase. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: M. Trahan/Schlicher moved, seconded and carried to approve the purchase of the used man-lift from United Rentals at a cost of \$20,000. Yay- S. Trahan, Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan; Nay- None; Absent- Landry-Lalande

Updates- January 2025- 8,759,000 gallons of water produced; inaccurate gallons of water sold; inaccurate gallons of water Unmetered. Meche advised the Beacon Utility System did not generate the correct report to give accurate numbers of water sold and unmetered. He is working on getting the glitch resolved. The interconnection meter between Vermillion Waterworks and Town of Maurice was installed. The total cost of the meter installed is \$8,888.32. The Town's portion of the cost is \$4,444.16. Meche started looking at all the ordinances pertaining to after hour charges, charges for damaged meters and parts, etc. He advised all the older ordinances have been pulled and he and Jeremy Hidalgo are working to consolidate, repeal, & replace older ordinances. Once all information has been gone through; a packet will be put together for Council review so the revised ordinance can go to public hearing for adoption consideration. Catalon asked if the electrical contractors installing lines throughout the town will be responsible for damages to roadways from their stabilizers and clean-up limestone and other items now in the ditches. Meche advised the contractor will take care of damages and clean-up once the job is complete. Meche will go through the Town and let them know all items that need to be addressed once the project is complete. Arsement is working on getting the old poles moved out of Town. Schlicher asked about sewer line smoke testing. Meche advised they did find some problematic areas that have been repaired. He is back on the list for LRWA to get another smoke test done on service lines. Schlicher advised contractors told him it is against code to install the sewer cleanouts below ground. Meche will talk with the Town's Building Official. Discussion was held

Mayor Arsement- Park-Drainage/Parking Lot- Arsement reminded Council members the paperwork for the \$450,000 funding for improvements and drainage at the park has been corrected. Sonnier presented a preliminary design for park improvements. Arsement asked for the Council's blessing to move forward with starting on the new parking lot design. Discussion was held. No public comments were made

Motion: M. Trahan/Schlicher moved, seconded, and carried to allow Mayor Arsement to begin construction on the Maurice Park Drainage and Parking Lot. Yay- Catalon, Schlicher, M. Trahan, S. Trahan; Nay- None; Absent- Landry-Lalande

Sales Tax Update- December 2024 sales tax is \$134,558.85 which is up 19.3% from the previous year. Arsement asked residents continue supporting local businesses or shop online and thanked everyone for continued support.

Updates- Arsement advised he met with the contractors regarding the Maurice Park restrooms to stake out the area. They were having a hard time getting the area square so Maurice's Building Official, Kim Touchet, used his GPS equipment to survey the area. Boring to install power will begin within a couple of weeks. Arsement will begin construction on the slab for the building and asked Chief Nerren to barricade the area during construction. Discussion was held. Arsement thanked Richard Meche for helping keep the Town's Water Plant running during freezing temperatures.

Council Concerns: Matthew Trahan wanted to find out who is responsible for the rotten trees along Chief H Fred because about every month large branches fall into the roadway. Legal Lafleur advised that even if the trees belong to the property owner, the town can cut if over roadway. Discussion was held. Arsement advised an area of concrete poured over the Town's water line in a residential driveway had to be cut out to repair a water leak. He asked Legal Lafleur if the Town had to replace the concrete or if just placing limestone would be sufficient. Lafleur advised if the concrete for the driveway was poured in the Town's right-of-way, then just placing limestone would be sufficient.

Motion: Schlicher/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to adjourn at 7:43pm. Yay- All Present

s/Nichole Bonin
Nichole G Bonin, Assistant Clerk

s/Neil Arsement
Neil Arsement, Mayor