

GENERAL MEETING
TOWN OF MAURICE MINUTES
Wednesday, April 16, 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 the Pledge of Allegiance

Roll call of officers

Present: Mayor Neil Arsement; Alderwoman Megan Landry-Lalande; Alderman Troy Catalon; Alderman Jonathan Schlicher; Alderman Scott Trahan

Absent: Alderman Matthew Trahan

Also present: Melanie Denais; Joan Methvin; Nichole Bonin; Erica Arceneaux; Shakyla Cormier; Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates; Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor; Chief Guy Nerren; Ricky Lafleur, Legal Advisor; John Sonnier; Shaun Hearen, Abbeville Meridional; Sahni Brailey; Becket Arceneaux; Jeremy Hidalgo; Stephain Cormier; Dominic Listi

Mayor Arsement asked Council members and Chief Nerren to recognize budget to actual financial statements included in their monthly binders Approval General Meeting Minutes of March 19, 2025- No Council nor public comments were made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to accept the March 19, 2025, General Meeting Minutes as presented and unread.
Yay-All Present

Agenda Approval- Scott Trahan asked to add item 2-e. Fair Housing Resolution Proclaiming April as Fair Housing Month. No public comments were made

Motion: S. Trahan/Catalon moved, seconded and carried out to amend the agenda to include item 2-e. Fair Housing Resolution and approve as amended. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher; Absent- M. Trahan

J. Ricky Lafleur- Proposed Ordinance Authorizing Mayor to List and Sell Immovable Property- Lafleur advised Mayor Arsement would like to list the 1.980 acres of property acquired in the previous administration. A Public Hearing needs to be set, to consider the Ordinance for Adoption. Arsement advised he wants to list the property with a realtor or put out to bid to the highest bidder. The highest bid would have to meet the current market value minimum prior to acceptance. Landry-Lalande wanted to try and sell the property outright before listing with a realtor. Legal Lafleur advised council members could list the property either way. The property would be put out to bid. Council members wanted to see a timeline to receive bids. Arsement advised several buyers are already interested in purchasing the property. Discussion was held. No public comments were made

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to Set for Public Hearing a Proposed Ordinance Authorizing Mayor Arsement to List and Sell Immovable Property with a Realtor or at His Discretion Advertising and Selling to the Highest Bidder, May 21, 2025, at 6pm in the Meeting Room, located at 405 Lastie Avenue, Maurice LA 70555. Yay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, S. Trahan; Absent- M. Trahan

Mayor Arsement advised LUS stated they follow state laws regarding franchise agreements and don't think they need an agreement with the Town. Legal Lafleur will check the state law requirements and felt an agreement would be necessary. Discussion was held

Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates- Little Flowers DDS Properties Preliminary Plat- Sonnier presented the Plat which shows a subdivision of property North of the Prairie Cove entrance. He informed Council members DOTD would likely not grant driveway access to the property being considered for development. Dominic Listi represented Little Flowers DDS Properties and questioned the recommended easement granting access to the Northern half of the property. Arsement advised DOTD had not recently been in favor of access along US Hwy 167. Listi expressed disappointment in bearing the expense of the access foundation and loss of property footage. He planned to meet with DOTD. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/S. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to approve the Preliminary Plat for Little Flowers DDS Properties contingent upon the Developer Addressing Comments made by Sellers & Associates. Yay- Catalon, Schlicher, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande; Absent- M. Trahan

Professional Services Agreement for City Park Improvements- Mr. Sonnier presented a contract for Maurice Park Improvements between the Town of Maurice and Sellers & Associates to submit to Facility Planning & Control. The contract allows Sellers & Associates to bill based on hourly work rather than the normal fee curve authorized for Capital Outlay Projects. Discussion was held. No public comments were made

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded and carried to Authorize Mayor Arsement to sign the Professional Services Agreement for City Park Improvements with Sellers & Associates. Yay- Schlicher, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon; Absent- M. Trahan

Authorization to Advertise for Bids for City Park Improvements- Sonnier advised FP&C requires 3 quotes or bidding for the Maurice Park Improvements. Arsement advised he is looking at having an asphalt parking lot instead of limestone and discussed further plans for culverts and drainage. Due to the cost of the overall project, the Town must receive bids to move forward. Council members had questions regarding the total project cost, fees, foundation work, and drainage plans for the parking area prior to laying the asphalt. Arsement went over some of the details. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: S. Trahan/Schlicher moved, seconded and carried Authorizing Sellers & Associates to advertise for bids for the Maurice Park Improvements.
Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher; Absent- M. Trahan

CDBG Clearance Program- Blighted Properties- Sonnier and Mayor Arsement discussed demolishing blighted structures throughout The Town. Sonnier advised of the CDBG Clearance Program which is Federally funded through HUD. He explained the point system used for applicants to qualify and recommended the condemnation process in classifying properties as blighted. Sonnier advised owners of included properties would not bear any cost for the demolition of structures and they would keep their property. There is a minimum grant amount of \$150,000 for demolition work. The Town would submit the number of homes and cost estimate for demolition with the application which is due in December 2025. Catalon asked if the Town could potentially go through the process of condemning homes and paying for demolition if the Town doesn't have enough blighted homes to meet the minimum grant amount. Lafleur advised this could be done if blighted homes were legally condemned. Arsement wasn't in favor of using public funds to demolish homes but thought this may have to be considered later if the Town does not meet the grant requirements.

Fair Housing Month Resolution- Sonnier advised HUD requires the Town proclaim April as Fair Housing month. The resolution is required prior to applying for CDBG Clearance Program Funding. Arsement explained this was the reason for amending the agenda to add the item otherwise, the Town would have to wait to make the proclamation and will not take effect until next April. Sonnier advised CDBG will perform compliance monitoring and would look for the proclamation and adopted Resolution. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/S. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to Proclaim April as Fair Housing Month and Adopt the Corresponding Resolution.
Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher; Absent- M. Trahan

Chief Nerren, Police Chief- Leave Pay for an Officer- Nerren advised his policy states officers must use leave time, but due to staff shortages, Officer Christian Touchet was unable to use his leave time. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded and carried to Authorize Leave Pay of 28 hours for Officer Christian Touchet. Yay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher, S. Trahan; Absent- M. Trahan

Nerren asked Council members to change his policy to allow officer's leave pay at his discretion. Arsement advised the item would need to be placed on the agenda for next month.

Updates- The female officer just hired is no longer with the department. Schlicher asked if expenses for her hire could be re-couped. Nerren advised, the only expense to the department was for her physical and psychological evaluation. The employee collected her last check and didn't return. The department is looking to employ additional officers. Discussion was held

Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor- Updates- March 2025- 7,845,000 gallons of water produced; 7,177,547 gallons of water sold; 667,453 gallons of water Unmetered; 8%. Next month unmetered water will be higher since the water loop line on Beau Road had to be flushed. Meche advised the concrete was poured at Maurice Park. The maintenance crew will begin re-painting curbs throughout Town. Landry-Lalande asked about cleaning up around the light pole near Hollier's Physical Therapy Office. Arsement asked Meche to take care of the clean-up. Landry-Lalande also asked about the bench near Patriot Inn. The bench has advertisements on it and is not for the Town. Schlicher informed Meche some playground equipment wasn't functioning. Discussion was held

Mayor Arsement- Adopt Resolution Adopting the Millage Rate of 2.41 Mills for the Tax Year 2025- Arsement advised the yearly resolution adopting the millage rate of 2.41 mills is due. Schlicher asked if the current rate could roll up. Arsement advised the only way to increase the rate would be by voter approval but if Council members do not roll forward during a reassessment year, it could drop. Discussion was held. No public comments were made

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded and carried to Adopt the Resolution Adopting the Millage Rate of 2.41 mills for the Tax Year 2025.
Yay- T. Catalon, Schlicher, S. Trahan, Landry Lalande; Nay- None; Absent- Matthew Trahan; Abstained- None

Occupational License Tax Contract- Arsement advised Council members the Town currently has an Occupational License Contract with Avenu Insights & Analytics and explained some of the contract details. He also advised the Town has had several issues with the company including communication with Town Staff, follow-ups with businesses, release and holding of licenses of licenses, renewals, and checks & balances. Arsement did not want to renew the contract and recommended Council members consider Jeremy Hidalgo of Parish Strategy Group which would allow a more local company to assist businesses with their licensing needs. Hidalgo presented a contract and offered to buy a program and take over licensing for the Town and informed Council members this would be something that he has never done before but felt once a program was built to the Town's needs, he would be able to provide the service. Council members had questions about both contracts. Hidalgo would collect 30% for every dollar Parish collects on behalf of the Town. This service would include all administrative fees, renewals, mailouts, and auditing of business financials. Avenu collects 13.50 per renewal mailout, auditing services are billed hourly, and takes 50% of all money collected after 180 days delinquent. Landry-Lalande wanted to change the Parish contract to commence on July 1, 2025. Arsement advised he had 90 days to cancel the current contract. He also spoke with LMA who advised they are no longer recommending Avenu to municipalities and advised there are no other companies that provide this type of service. Schlicher questioned the software licensing and providers. Hidalgo is leaning toward a software provider called IWORK. Discussion was held. No public comments were made

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded and failed to accept the Contract with Parish Strategy Group for Occupational License Services with an Amendment for the 2025 Services to Begin on July 1, 2025. Nay- Schlicher, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon; Absent- M. Trahan

Legal Lafleur recommended to include authorizing Arsement to cancel the Avenu contract. Discussion was held. No public comments were made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded and carried Authorizing Mayor Arsement to Cancel the Current Occupational License Contract with Avenu Insights & Analytics per the 90-day requirement and enter Contract with Parish Strategy Group for Occupational License Services with an Amendment for the 2025 Services to Begin on July 1, 2025. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, Schlicher; Absent- M. Trahan

Sales Tax Report- February 2025 sales tax is \$109,176.54 which is up 3.7% from the previous year. Arsement asked residents to shop locally or online.

Updates- The walls for Maurice Park bathrooms should begin to go up next week. Arsement asked Council members to help choose a color for the bathroom roof. Council members suggested having the same color as the planned pavilion or white. A citizen suggested a 3-way stop instead of curbs in Rue Des Cannes and asked Council members to consider the options. Arsement advised a Special Meeting was necessary to award the Architect for the New City Hall. Council members agreed on a meeting date for April 22, 2025, at 5pm. Discussion was held

Council Updates: Catalon asked about striping the tennis court for pickle ball. Arsement advised he does not want to permanently stripe the tennis court since there are plans to add 3 pickle ball courts in the Park improvements.

Motion: Schlicher/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded and carried to adjourn at 7:59pm. Yay- All Present