

Town of Abita Springs, La.

TOWN CLERK
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FINANCIAL CLERK
NIKI MENDOW

COUNCIL CLERK
LEANNE SCHAEFER

ATTORNEY
EDWARD DEANO

CERTIFIED BUILDING OFFICIAL
DAVID CHATELAIN

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
JOHNNY CLAY



MAYOR
GREG LEMONS

ALDERMEN
PATRICIA FLAD EDMISTON
(MAYOR PRO-TEM)

PATRICK BERRIGAN
GINA KILPATRICK HARPER
PAT PATTERSON
LESLIE BLITCH WELLIVER

UTILITY MANAGER
DEBRA MACLEAN

UTILITY CLERK II
LINDA MEEKER

PLANNING & ZONING DIRECTOR
CINDY CHATELAIN

TOWN MARSHALL
JOE CANDILORA

The following minutes were taken from the regular monthly meetings of the Public Committees on August 5, 2014.

Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston called the Public Committee meeting to order. Alderman Berrigan led the Pledge of Allegiance. Alderman Blitch Welliver was absent.

Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston made a motion to move the Finance Committee meeting to the beginning of the meeting seconded by Alderman Patterson.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston moved to open the Finance Committee and directed attention to the Finance Clerk, Ms. Niki Mendow for her presentation of changes to the Town's Financial Report and presentation of the 2014 Second Quarter Financial Report. Ms. Mendow covered topics including the New Look, Key Numbers, the Process, and Goals. Ms. Mendow summarized her presentation by stating that she hopes the new reports consistently provide timely, transparent, and accurate information that can be used to obtain a complete picture of the Town's financial status adding that the in-house report will result in an annual savings of approximately \$15,000.00.

Alderman Patterson expressed concern regarding discussions related to the possible replacement of Laporte as the Town's auditor. Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston responded that it is normal accounting practice to change auditors every five years. Mayor Lemons advised that one of the things that came from the Inspector General Task Force was a recommendation that auditors be replaced every three to five years. Ms. Mendow stated that the Town is in the early stages of researching the possibility of a new auditor and that details will be reported to the Board when the research is complete.

Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston moved to close the Finance Committee meeting, seconded by Alderman Kilpatrick-Harper.

GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE: Alderman Berrigan opened the Governmental Committee meeting and moved to accept the June 2014 Governmental Committee Meeting minutes. Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston offered a change to the accepted May 2014 minutes wherein it was noted that a piece of property was donated to the Town by the Gouzy family when it was the Mandle family that made the donation. Alderman Berrigan seconded the motion.

Alderman Berrigan opened discussion of a franchise agreement with Washington St. Tammany Electric Cooperative (WST) yielding the floor to Mr. Charles Hill of WST. Mr. Hill stated WST is looking for the same contract agreement as secured by their competitor. He advised that he brought with him a representative, Ms. Jennifer Vosburg from WST's power supplier Louisiana Generating, LLC, a subsidiary of NRG Energy. Ms. Vosburg presented information related to the size and economic health of NRG, their fuel mix throughout the nation and locally, and their reliability as a fuel provider. She pointed out the company's connection to Louisiana noting several key employees reside in the state and that their regional headquarters is located in New Roads. She reported that WST and NRG have entered into a new contract with an eleven year term expiring on March 31, 2025 and that environmental compliance is a shared responsibility handled in the most economical way possible.

Mayor Lemons asked if he understood Ms. Vosburg correctly in that she said environmental costs would not be passed on to the rate payers. Ms. Vosburg answered that was not correct but that the amount would be considerably less than speculated. Mr. Raul Travieso of NRG added the cost would be spread out over the life of the asset at approximately \$3.00 per 1000 kilowatt hours. Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston asked why an eleven year term was agreed upon between WSTE and NRG. Ms. Vosburg responded the term lines up with the expiration of the other co-op agreements. Alderman Berrigan commented that all utility companies will have to comply with new EPA requirements. Alderman Kilpatrick-Harper broke down components of WST billing and asked if a fuel charge would be reflected in future billing as it is with Cleco. Mr. Hill stated that the bill will fluctuate month to month based on the cost of fuel. Alderman Kilpatrick-Harper asked Mr. Hill about reports from some that the service that WST was able to provide during emergency situations was not equal to that of their competitors. Mr. Hill answered saying that lessons were learned after Katrina and that he felt some of that perception might have resulted from media communication issues. Mayor Lemons stated that as a member of the EOC after Hurricane Katrina he found WST was slower in restoring power to critical services. Mayor Lemons then directed attention toward the terms of the contract at hand, specifically the opt-out clause and the twenty-five year term. The Mayor asked WST representatives if they would be agreeable to the opt-out clause with an adjustment to the specific term and questioned WST's expectation that the Town enter into a twenty-five year agreement when they themselves were only willing to offer NRG an eleven year contract. Mr. Hill again offered the example of their competitor's contract with the Town along with the utility provider's need to prepare. Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston and Alderman Berrigan expressed that they did not support inclusion of the opt-out clause in the contract. Town Attorney, Edward Deano asked if the NRG-WST contract is available for review. The reply was that a redacted version is available as part of the public record. Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston moved to favorably recommend introduction of the ordinance with the removal of the opt-out clause and a change in the length of the term to twenty two years, seconded by Alderman Berrigan. Mayor Lemons expressed his opposition to changes in the contract.

Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston opened discussion of Mr. Ed Peters' request to include a portion of his property which extends beyond the 150' depth recommended for a change to Residential Commercial Overlay Zoning by Planning & Zoning. Alderman Berrigan explained that he would consider looking at the issue as it relates to all properties rather than as an individual exception. Mayor Lemons noted that a variance is not an option and said that if it is decided that the ordinance should be amended to accommodate Mr. Peters' request it will open the door for any others with similar circumstances to expect the same consideration. Alderman Kilpatrick-Harper, Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston, and Alderman Patterson expressed similar thoughts. The Mayor suggested the introduced ordinance be adopted with necessary amendments and Mr. Deano suggested that it include instructions to Planning & Zoning to review properties with similar issues. Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston moved to favorably recommend adoption of the introduced ordinance with amendments clarifying the legal description and to include instructions to Planning & Zoning to research similar zoning issues applying to the Residential Commercial Overlay Zoning in all corridors and then to make a recommendation to the Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Flad Edmiston moved to close the Governmental Committee meeting, seconded by Alderman Berrigan.

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE: Alderman Patterson moved to open the Infrastructure Committee meeting and accept the June 2014 Infrastructure Committee meeting minutes, seconded by Alderman Kilpatrick-Harper.

Alderman Patterson moved to close the Infrastructure Committee meeting, seconded by Alderman Kilpatrick-Harper.

MEETING ADJOURNED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 5th DAY OF AUGUST, 2014.

Kathy Armand, Town Clerk

Greg Lemons, Mayor