

City Hall  
Westwego, Louisiana  
Regular Session  
Monday, July 8, 2019

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Westwego met in Regular Session at 6:00 p.m., Monday, July 8, 2019, in the Council Room at City Hall, 1100 Fourth Street, Westwego, Louisiana.

There were present:

Mayor Joe Peoples  
District 1 Council Member Glenn Green, Sr.  
District 2 Council Member Johnny S. Nobles, Jr.  
District 3 Council Member Lisa H. Valence  
District 4 Council Member Matthew J. Rivere  
District 5 Council Member Johnnie Lynn Thibodeaux  
Police Chief Dwayne J. Munch, Sr.  
City Clerk Lisa Tapia

#### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Peoples called the meeting to order and asked everyone to stand for the invocation.

#### INVOCATION AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Peoples led the assembly in prayer, followed by a moment of silence in memory of the members of our community who died since our last meeting.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Valence led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### PRESENTATIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

##### (JP) MO SALEH – SEWER PLANT

Mo Saleh addressed the City Council to discuss the Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project.

A discussion followed.

Mr. Saleh recommended that the City Council reject all bids received for the Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements and re-advertise the project with the amended specifications discussed tonight.

MOVED, and seconded, by All Council Members, to reject all bids received for the Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

MOVED, and seconded, by All Council Members, to advertise for bids using the amended specifications discussed tonight.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

##### (JP) WESTWEGO ROTARY CLUB CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mayor Peoples announced that Janet Bouvier was named Citizen of the Year by the Westwego Rotary Club.

#### HISTORIC SIGN

Council Member Valence announced that the new historic sign for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, located at the corner of Avenue A and Fourth Street, will be blessed at 7:00 p.m., Friday, July 19, 2019, and invited everyone to attend.

#### LETTER OF APPRECIATION

Mayor Peoples read aloud a letter of appreciation from residents who were affected by a major accident that occurred at the corner of Eighth Street and Avenue C for the outstanding way that the Westwego Fire and Police Departments handled the situation.

## OATH OF OFFICE – BRAD USEA

The City Attorney administered the Oath of Office to newly appointed Westwego Historic District Commissioner Brad Usea.

## ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL

### WESTWEGO HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN BETTY G. LANDRY

Westwego Historic District Commission Chairman Betty G. Landry addressed the City Council to present her quarterly report.

A discussion followed.

### MARGARET HARRISON

Margaret Harrison addressed the City Council to ask why a Police Department salary increase could not be funded with a sales tax.

A discussion followed.

## HEAR ALL REPORTS

Chief of Police Dwayne J. Munch, Sr., Chief Building Inspector Leslie “Skip” Lombas, Jr., Mechanical Inspector Tommy Baxter, EMS Director Joseph J. Aldor, Jr., Senior Center Coordinator Brant Fonseca, Farmers Market Coordinator Keith Bouvier, and Code Enforcement Officer Perry Talamo submitted their written reports.

Fire Chief Ryan P. Guidroz was not present; Assistant Chief Corey Cannata submitted the Chief’s written report.

Plumbing Inspector Walter “Bubba” Choquette, Jr. and Electrical Inspector Doyle Guidroz were not present; their reports were submitted earlier.

City CPA Jim Butler addressed the City Council to discuss the Budget.

A discussion followed.

## APPROVE THE MINUTES

MOVED by Council Member Green, and seconded by Council Member Thibodeaux, to approve the minutes of the Regular Session of Monday, June 10, 2019.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

## RESOLUTIONS FOR ADOPTION

The City Clerk read aloud the following resolutions for adoption:

Offered by All Council Members:

### RESOLUTION 2019-07(A)

A resolution ordering and calling a special election to be held in the City of Westwego, State of Louisiana, to authorize the levy of a special tax therein; making application to the State Bond Commission in connection therewith; and providing for other matters in connection therewith.

MOVED, and seconded, by All Council Members, to adopt Resolution 2019-07(A).

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

Offered by Council Member Valence:

### RESOLUTION 2019-07(B)

A resolution granting a 2% increase in the hourly wage of the City Clerk.

A discussion followed.

MOVED by Council Member Valence, and seconded by Council Member Green, to adopt Resolution 2019-07(B).

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

Offered by Council Member Rivere:

RESOLUTION 2019-07(C)

A resolution rescheduling the September 2019 and November 2019 City Meetings.

A discussion followed.

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Green, to adopt Resolution 2019-07(C).

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Nays: Valence

ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

The City Clerk read aloud the following ordinance for introduction:

Offered by Council Member Valence:

An ordinance prohibiting the erection of billboards within the city limits of the City of Westwego.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that the Mayor and Council will hold a regular meeting on Monday, August 12, 2019, at the Westwego City Hall, 1100 Fourth Street, Westwego, Louisiana, at six o'clock (6:00) p.m., at which time there will be a public hearing prior to consideration of the adoption of the aforesaid ordinance.

ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

The City Clerk read aloud the following ordinance for adoption:

Offered by Council Member Nobles:

ORDINANCE 1575

An ordinance amending and reenacting in its entirety Section 8-114 of the Westwego Code of Ordinances to provide for the definition of cruelty to animal.

MOVED, and seconded, by All Council Members, to open a public hearing for this ordinance.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

Mayor Peoples entertained public comment.

Johnny Shaddinger spoke in favor of the ordinance; no one spoke in opposition.

MOVED, and seconded, by All Council Members, to close the public hearing.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to adopt Ordinance 1575.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

OLD BUSINESS

1. (GG) Christian Jones Playground

Council Member Green reported that the water fountain at Christian-Jones Playground is not working, and that there is no restroom facility on the playground.

Mayor Peoples stated that he would have the fountain looked at right away but that we will have to look at the money we have left in Recreation once we have completed the existing projects and go from there for the restroom. He also discussed the sign for the playground.

2. (GG) Avenue A & Fourth Street Railroad Track – Update

Council Member Green stated that this item is actually about the rail crossing on Sala Avenue. He stated that the crossing is in really bad condition and asked that the City Attorney be directed to send a letter to the appropriate rail system asking them to please come in and repair it.

Mayor Peoples stated that he has had great difficulty finding the right person at Union Pacific Railroad to talk to about this but that he will send another letter and call again.

Council Member Nobles stated that the railroad is parking tank cars behind Cedre Drive again.

Mayor Peoples stated that he has discussed this with the railroad and that the tank cars will be moved within a few days.

3. (JSN) Wharf – Update

Mayor Peoples discussed the status of the WHARF Project. He stated that the South Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – West has acknowledged our permit request to cross the levee with a water line and that our planning has gone as far as it can go until the funding is in place.

A discussion followed.

4. (JP) Update Martin House

Mayor Peoples discussed the status of the Martin House. He reported that the roof really came out nice and asked the three remaining Council Members to tour the structure with him so that planning for the use of the structure may continue.

A discussion followed.

5. (JP) Update Westwego Arts Center

Mayor Peoples discussed the status of the Westwego Art Center. He reported that all of the windows and the glass door in the front have been replaced, and that the next steps will be sealing the bricks and getting the elevator working again so that repairs to the interior can proceed.

6. (JP) Update Farmers Market

Mayor Peoples discussed the Westwego Farmers and Fisheries Market. He reported that the garage door and sound system have been installed, and the wood repairs are complete. He stated that the next step will be pouring the slab for the walk-in cooler and walk-in freezer that were purchased and installing the water lines on the south side of the Market.

7. (JP) Update Parks

Mayor Peoples discussed the status of the Park Improvements. He stated that City crews have cleaned up the site and made it safer until the problem with the contractor is solved. He then discussed staffing changes in the Recreation Department.

A discussion followed.

8. (JP) Update Avenue A

Mayor Peoples discussed the status of Avenue A. He reported that the blacktop and walkways are all complete and work has started repairing sidewalks and driveways that had to be torn up. After that, all of the drains will be cleaned out with the Vac-Con and a door-to-door canvass will take place to ask each resident if they have any issues in front of their house to make sure that everybody is satisfied on the street.

A discussion followed.

9. (JP) Utility Billing Adjustment

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Green, to approve the Utility Billing Adjustments as recommended.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

NEW BUSINESS

1. (LHV) Billboards

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

2. (JP) Equipment Purchase

Mayor Peoples discussed purchasing a T770 tracked Bobcat with a loader and a grinder for \$81,882.00.

A discussion followed.

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to purchase a T770 tracked Bobcat with loader and grinder for \$81,882.00 using the Mayor's discretionary funds.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

Mayor Peoples then discussed the truck he is outfitting with a pump, fittings, and tools for the Streets Crew.

3. (JP) Police Officer Insurance

Mayor Peoples discussed providing health insurance to Police Officers at a reduced cost. He stated that this could be done at a cost of about \$34,000.00 for the rest of this year, and for a little less than \$75,000.00 a year after that. He asked the City Council to take the \$34,000.00 out of general funds for the remainder of this year, which would allow time to discuss how to fund it for the future. He stated that this, together with the wage increases if the millage passes, would help us to stop losing Police Officers to other departments in the area.

A discussion followed.

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Green, to allocate \$34,000.00 of general funds for the remainder of 2019 in order to provide health insurance to Police Officers at a reduced cost.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

4. (JP) Multi-Family Housing

Mayor Peoples discussed non-conforming uses such as multi-family housing in single family zones. He stated that the ordinance governing non-conforming uses is confusing and should be re-written.

A discussion followed.

Mayor Peoples stated that he will meet with the Council Members to discuss re-writing the ordinance.

5. (JP) Water Flush Valves

Mayor Peoples announced that the red boxes on some of the fire hydrants are automated flush valves that are needed to stay in compliance with DHH regulations. He stated that the flush valves will be located at 1116 Chipley Street, on Celotex Park near Fourth Street, 1211 Fourth Street across from City Hall, at the Museum on Sala Avenue, and on River Road at Klein Street; and that one may be needed at 1525 West Drive and possibly another in the Klein Street area.

A discussion followed.

Mayor Peoples discussed the water bills mailed in June 2019. He stated that some bills were unusually high because it took longer to read the meters due to one of our meter readers being out sick.

AMEND THE AGENDA

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to amend the agenda.

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Thibodeaux, to amend the agenda to discuss the following items:

1. (JSN) 1347 Westbank Expressway – Occupational License Request
2. (JP) Avenue F at Fourth Street
3. (JP) Sala Avenue Street Lights
4. (JP) Crisis Action Team

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

AMENDED ITEMS

1. (JSN) 1347 Westbank Expressway – Occupational License Request

Jefferson Parish Housing Authority Program Director Michele Livingston addressed the City Council to request an Occupational License for Nan McKay and Associates, Inc., the contractor administering the HCV Program (Section 8) for the Housing Authority of Jefferson Parish, to operate at 1347 Westbank Expressway, Suite D.

A discussion followed.

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Green, to grant an Occupational License to Nan McKay and Associates, Inc. to operate at 1347 Westbank Expressway, Suite D.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

2. (JP) Avenue F at Fourth Street

Mayor Peoples discussed the recent extensive street repairs performed on Avenue F at Fourth Street.

A discussion followed.

3. (JP) Sala Avenue Street Lights

Mayor Peoples discussed street lights to replace the existing street lights on Sala Avenue. He stated that he is waiting for confirmation that the lights are LED and asked the City Council and the Westwego Historic District Commission to let him know what they think.

4. (JP) Crisis Action Team

Mayor Peoples discussed the Crisis Action Team, which is composed of the Mayor, Police Chief Dwayne Munch, Fire Chief Ryan Guidroz, EMS Director Joseph J. "TJ" Aldor, Jr., Council Members Nobles and Rivere, Assistant Police Chief Jason DiMarco, Bobby Utley, Assistant Fire Chief Robert Hebert, and Mayor's Assistant Georgia Cox.

Council Member Green asked about the Emergency Operations Center.

Mayor Peoples stated that the Legislature has added \$600,000.00 in Priority 1 for the EOC in House Bill 2 but cautioned that this is not guaranteed until we get the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement.

He briefly discussed other funding in House Bill 2.

Council Member Valence asked about the ditches along Lapalco Boulevard.

Mayor Peoples stated that he would look into having the ditches cut.

ADJOURN

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adjourn.

MOVED, and seconded, by All Council Members, to adjourn at 7:46 p.m.

APPROVED. Yeas: Green, Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux

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Joe Peoples, Mayor

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Lisa Tapia, City Clerk

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