

City Hall
Westwego, Louisiana
Regular Session
Monday, June 8, 2020

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Westwego met in Regular Session at 6:00 p.m., Monday, June 8, 2020 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 for the members of our community who have passed since our last meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Police Chief Munch led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENTATIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(LVH) Westwego Beautification Commission

Council Member Valence thanked Brenda Rogers and the Westwego Beautification Commission for setting out flags in the different gardens. The Mayor and the Council Members are purchasing flags for the Westbank Expressway within the next week to celebrate 4th of July.

(LVH) Baseball in the Park

Council Member Valence announced baseball registration will continue in the park this summer for boys and girls until June 15th and will follow the parishes schedule.

(JP) Safewise

Mayor Peoples read out loud an award presented from Safewise to the City of Westwego as it ranked the 10th safest city in Louisiana and thanked Police Chief Munch for all the hard work.

Mayor Peoples recognized the city's EMS Services for receiving American Heart Association Commission Lifeline EMS Gold Plus award for implementing quality and improvement measures to the treatment of patients who with stand severe heart attacks. Mayor Peoples thanked Director T.J. Aldor and all of the EMS staff for all the hard work and dedication.

ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL

NATHANIEL VEAL

Nathaniel Veal addressed the City Council to request an Occupational License to move and operate a barber shop from 123 Westbank Expressway to 1000 West Drive.

A discussion followed.

MOVED by Council Member Valence, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to approve an Occupational License tentative that all inspections are met to operate a barber shop located at 1000 West Drive, subject to all requirements for such.

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

JOSHUA WINGERTER

Joshua Wingerter addressed the City Council to request an Occupational License to operate an Art Gallery located 401 Sala Avenue, Westwego Art Center.

A discussion followed.

Tentative upon agreement of the lease between the City and Mr. Wingerter.

MOVED by Council Member Green, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to approve an Occupational License tentative upon agreement of the lease between the City and Mr. Wingerter to operate an Art Gallery located at 401 Sala Avenue, subject to all requirements for such.

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

A discussion followed.

DWAYNE MELANCON

Dwayne Melancon addressed the City Council to request two Occupational License, one to operate a snowball stand and second to operate a carwash located at 1000 Central Avenue.

Mayor Peoples handed Mr. Melancon a packet with the regulations and guidelines that would have to be followed to operate a carwash.

MOVED by Council Member Valence, and seconded by Council Member Rivere, to open for discussion.

A discussion followed.

MOVED by Council Member Valence, and seconded by Council Member Rivere, to approve an Occupational License to operate a snowball stand and tentative that all regulations and guidelines are met to operate the carwash with one-month extension located at 1000 West Drive, subject to all requirements for such.

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

HEAR ALL REPORTS

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

Fire Chief Ryan P. Guidroz, Plumbing Inspector Chuck Poore and Electrical Inspector Doyle Guidroz, were not present; their written reports were submitted earlier.

Mayor Peoples entertained questions about the Financial Report/Budget vs. Actual. There were none.

APPROVE THE MINUTES

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Thibodeaux, to approve the minutes of the Regular Session of Monday, May 11, 2020.

Council Member Rivere requested to have more information under updates on the minutes.

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

RESOLUTIONS FOR ADOPTION

Mayor Peoples read aloud the following resolution for adoption:

RESOLUTION 2020-06(A)

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

MOVED, and seconded, by All Council Members, to adopt Resolution 2020-06(A) granting a 2% increase in the hourly wage of the City Clerk

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

ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

Mayor Peoples read aloud the following ordinance for introduction:

Offered by Council Member Valence:

An ordinance setting rules and regulations for Airbnb and Short-Term Rentals.

ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

Offered by Council Member Nobles:

ORDINANCE 1585

An ordinance authorizing the City of Westwego to dispose of, in accordance with Louisiana law, certain property that is no longer needed for public use.

MOVED by Council Member Green, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to open a public hearing for this ordinance.

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

Mayor Peoples entertained public comment; there was none.

MOVED by Council Member Green, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to close the public hearing.

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

MOVED by Council Member Green, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to adopt Ordinance 1585.

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

Offered by Council Member Rivere:

An ordinance regulating the placement of political signs, including the size of signs, the number of signs, the period before an election that signs can be put out and the period of time after an election that the signs must be picked up.

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to Table the ordinance regulating the placement of political signs, including the size of signs, the number of signs, the period before an election that signs can be put out and the period of time after an election that the signs must be picked up.

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

OLD BUSINESS

1. (LVH) Sewer Plant Update

Council Member Valence asked for an update on the Sewer Plant and also asked for a copy of the report.

Mayor Peoples reported that the contractor has installed the concrete piles for the static screen and placed the slab on the foundation to place the sludge pumps, sludge tanks and the belt press system and is expecting to start in the next two weeks. After the belt press is installed then the demolition of the digester will take place and the contractors will replace the P5 and P6 pumps. In the next two weeks the contractors will form and pour an elevated slab.

Mayor Peoples stated he will email the report to all the Council Members.

A discussion followed.

2. (JP) Utility Billing Adjustments

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

3. (JP) Bid Louis Marrero Play Set

Mayor Peoples reported the lowest bid for Louis Marrero Playset was Professional Builders at \$122,900.00.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to accept the lowest bid and to award the notice to proceed after the approval of Facility Planning.

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to accept the lowest bid and to award the notice to proceed after the approval of Facility Planning.

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

Mayor Peoples stated all of the old playset has been removed.

4. (JP) Bid Street Resurfacing Project

Mayor Peoples reported the lowest bid for the street resurfacing project was Barrere Construction at \$357,777.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to accept the lowest bid and to award the notice to proceed after the approval of Facility Planning.

MOVED by Council Member Green, and seconded by Council Member Rivere, to accept the lowest bid and to award the notice to proceed after the approval of Facility Planning.

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

5. (JP) Boat Launch

Mayor Peoples stated the no parking signs came in that were requested and will be posted along the boat launch.

6. (JP) Update Sala Avenue

Mayor Peoples stated all the streetlights are working. The lights were replaced with LED and all of the materials were through a grant and did not cost the city anything. The only cost the city will incur will be the labor to replace the old lights with the new lights.

Farmers Market Coordinator Keith Bouvier asked Mayor Peoples if he has seen the old icehouse on Sala Avenue falling apart.

Mayor Peoples stated he has spoken with Code Enforcement Perry Talamo and that Mr. Talamo has contacted the owners of the property and advised them of the situation.

Council Member Green stated the shed at 406 Sala Avenue is in terrible shape and needs to come down.

Mayor Peoples asked Code Enforcement Perry Talamo to put that on his list so they can go out and inspect it.

Mayor Peoples stated Ramj Construction will give us an estimate cost to fix the sewer and street drainage that are connected to each other on Sala Avenue.

7. (JP) Update Fire Hydrant

Mayor Peoples stated Phase II of fire hydrant repairs is to raise and straighten the low and leaning fire hydrants. A couple of fire hydrants have been relocated because they were too close to the residence driveways. Some fire hydrants have been added for the safety of residence living in apartment buildings due to the fact that hydrants were spread out too far from each other. We ordered some more fire hydrants and will change out two of them on Debbie Drive and one on Fern.

A discussion followed.

8. (JP) Update WHARF

Mayor Peoples stated he hired a company to clean the front of the canal and to remove tires, trash, etc. that has been thrown in there throughout the years. The berm was opened and now all the lilies are gone. Aptim Engineering sent in a proposal to do the roadway that will go across the water which will be the entrance way to the WHARF project. This project will come out of the five million dollars that the State has awarded the city for this project.

Mayor Peoples stated we are still waiting on the Army Corps. Of Engineers to approve the permit to cross the water line over the levee. Once the permit is approved then the project will be ready for bids.

Mayor Peoples stated the CPRA design is 50% completed and the new cost estimate came in with the changes that were requested in the past meetings that was held with the Council Members.

Council Member Valence asked for a copy of the scope.

9. (JP) Update Canal Along Vic-A-Pitre

Mayor Peoples stated the two bridges that crossed over Avenue H and next to the Sewer Plant have been removed along with the pilings and structure due to public health hazard.

A discussion followed.

10. (JP) Update EOC

Mayor Peoples reported the hurricane part of the roof is on, the steel metal deck is completed, and the first pour of slab will be next week. The contractors are expecting to be completed by the end of November which would be two months earlier than they anticipated.

11. (JP) Update Catfish Bourgeois

Mayor Peoples reported the slab has been poured and the masonry blocks will start next week for the new restrooms near the walking track. The expected completion date will be at the end of September.

A discussion followed.

12. (JP) Update Calvin Galiano Park

Mayor Peoples stated he is waiting for Facility Planning to approve the engineer's proposal. The drawings will include a new metal fence around the park, walking track and a couple of pavilions and a little parking area on the south side of the park.

13. (JP) Update Drainage and Sidewalk Repairs

Mayor Peoples stated there is a lot of repairs going on in the city with drainage and sidewalks and asking residence to be patient with the barricades and the drums.

A discussion followed.

14. (JP) Update Senior Center

Mayor Peoples stated the inside of the Senior Center has been painted and the floors are completed. Waiting for Governor to announce when the Senior Centers can open. Meanwhile the staff is still working doing wellness checks and delivering food on Wednesday's that was provided by the Optimus Club. Mayor Peoples thanked the staff and Chad Usea for all the hard work they have provided by helping the seniors anyway they can.

15. (JP) Update Tanglewood Drive

Mayor Peoples stated the west side of Tanglewood Drive has been completed except the one spot he added, and the right side is dug up and they ran into a drainage problem right passed Joe's Café that was causing the street to cave in which is being repaired.

16. (JP) Update Farmers Market

Mayor Peoples reported the coolers are installed, plumbing is completed and now the contractors are finishing with the electrical work. Once the electrical work is completed then the concrete contractor will complete the sidewalks around it. It's a nice addition to the Farmer's Market and will make it easier on Keith Bouvier and the workers. Next phase will be the ceiling fans under the pavilion. The Gazebo plans are completed and is ready to be submitted to Facility Planning.

A discussion followed.

17. (JP) Update Avenue A at River Road Property

Mayor Peoples stated there was a site 1 environmental assessment back in 2013 and it is not acceptable with the new regulations. Mayor Peoples asked Aptim Engineering for an estimate on the cost to do a site 1 environmental assessment and the cost came back at thirty-nine hundred and twelve dollars. In order to purchase the property, we need a current site 1 environmental assessment and two appraisals which DOTD requires for funding.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to sign the purchase agreement offering seven hundred thousand dollars based upon the site 1 environmental assessment coming back in our favor. And predicated upon the appraisal coming in at or the above offer.

Mayor Peoples spoke with Rebecca Ott with Brownsfield and she strongly suggested that a site 1 environmental assessment be done, and the reason is in case we purchase the property and we decide we want to build on it other than a walkway and environmental work needs to be done, then we may be eligible for Brownsfield funding.

A discussion followed.

MOVED by Council Member Green, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to move forward to sign the purchase agreement based upon the site 1 environmental assessment coming back in our favor and make an offer of seven hundred thousand dollars predicated upon the appraisal being that or more.

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

18. (JP) Update Louis Marrero Gym

Mayor Peoples stated he was notified by the attorney handling the case and was told the bonding company is not willing to work with us and the current problem is with the defective floor. The representative from the manufacture of the floors came to the Louis Marrero Gym to inspect the problem and we were told the floors were not installed properly because the wrong glue was used. Purque Flooring which installed the floors offered fifty thousand dollars of their money back to the bonding company to do the job and the bond company is refusing to do it and refusing to pay any liquidated damages.

A discussion followed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. (JSN) Resurfacing 900 Block of Central Avenue

Council Member Nobles stated the bids for the road resurfacing came in lower than anticipated and with the remaining money that was left over I would like to get two or three bids to resurface Central Avenue from Westbank Expressway, in front of CVS all the way through to Maple Street and through that intersection of Central and Maple and to make it wider.

Mayor Peoples stated he did speak with Facility Planning and they stated we are not allowed to do a change order because this is not a part of the scope of work that was submitted but we can rebid and use some of that money for that. If there is any money left from that then I would like to resurface the bad area on the south side of the Westbank Expressway on Central Avenue.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to use the remaining money to resurface the 900 block of Central Avenue including the intersection of Maple Street and any other funds use it on 1000 and 1100 block of Central Avenue.

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to use the remaining money to resurface the 900 block of Central Avenue including the intersection of Maple Street and any other funds use it on 1000 and 1100 block of Central Avenue.

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

2. (JSN) Renewal of Contract for ARC on Sala Avenue

Council Member Nobles stated they met with the members of the ARC and did a walk through and determined some essential repairs are needed and advised them we will extend their contract for three months until they do the necessary repairs then we will look into the three-year contract.

A discussion followed.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to extend their contract for three-months to do the necessary repairs.

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to extend their contract for three-months to do the necessary repairs.

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

3. (JP) WAC

Mayor Peoples stated him, and Council Member Valence would like to have the same contract with the ARC and change some wording that would benefit the WAC. The City of Westwego will collect a fee for rent after the first three months and tenant would be responsible for the utilities. After the first three months are up the monthly lease agreement will be five hundred dollars per month along with the utilities and insurance. Tenant will not be held responsible for any repairs to the elevator.

Mayor Peoples stated the city will have the air conditioner serviced before the building is leased and the tenant will be responsible for the upkeep of the filters.

MOVED by Council Member Green, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to go into a lease agreement with the understanding the City of Westwego will collect a fee for rent after the first three months. After the first three months are up the monthly lease agreement will be five hundred dollars per month along with the utilities and insurance. Tenant will not be held responsible for any repairs to the elevator.

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

4. (JP) Hurricane Preparedness

Mayor Peoples stated we are already in hurricane season and kept the action crises team on standby and added a couple more names to the list.

Mayor Peoples asked for a resolution authorizing Chief Munch to use up to one hundred thousand dollars for the use of emergency funding and this would come out of his discretionary.

MOVED, and seconded, by All Council Members, to authorize Chief Munch to use up to one hundred thousand dollars for the use of emergency funding and this would come out of his discretionary.

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

5. (JP) Grapple Truck

Mayor Peoples explained the problems that we run into with residence putting out bulk trash and tree limbs. Mayor peoples would like to offer the service of picking up the bulk trash and tree limbs by purchasing a grapple truck.

Mayor Peoples proposed to pay for half of the cost for the grapple truck through discretionary funds and is asking the Council Members to dedicate from there discretionary to make up the difference or find another funding source that can be used.

A discussion followed.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to put the grapple truck out for bid.

MOVED by Council Member Green, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to put the grapple truck out for bid.

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

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to amend the agenda.

MOVED by Council Member Valence, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to amend the agenda to discuss the following items at the end of business:

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

Amend Agenda

1. (JN) Resolution

A resolution accepting the project known as Improvements to Westwego Wastewater Treatment Plant Sodium Hypochlorite System contracted between the City of Westwego and Industrial & Mechanical Contractors, Inc. on October 21, 2019 as Substantially Completed.

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Green, to adopt a resolution accepting the project known as Improvements to Westwego Wastewater Treatment Plant Sodium Hypochlorite System contracted between the City of Westwego and Industrial & Mechanical Contractors, Inc. on October 21, 2019 as Substantially Completed.

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

2. (JP) American Contractors Indemnity Company

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to specify in the bid contract for projects that the City of Westwego does not accept American Contractors Indemnity Company as a bonding company.

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Green, to specify in the bid contract for projects that the City of Westwego does not accept American Contractors Indemnity Company as a bonding company.

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

ADJOURN

MOVED, and seconded, by All Council Members, to adjourn at 7:44 p.m.

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

Joe Peoples, Mayor

Lisa Tapia, City Clerk

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Westwego will meet in Regular Session at 6:00 p.m., Monday, July 13, 2020, in the Council Room at City Hall, 1100 Fourth Street, Westwego, Louisiana.
