

City Hall
Westwego, Louisiana
Regular Session
Monday, July 10, 2017

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Westwego met in Regular Session at 6:00 p.m., Monday, July 10, 2017, in the Council Room at City Hall, 1100 Fourth Street, Westwego, Louisiana.

There were present:

Mayor Joe Peoples
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

District 1 Council Member Glenn Green, Sr. was unable to attend due to illness.

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 deceased members of our community.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Rivere led the assembly in the pledge of allegiance.

REAPPOINT CITY OFFICIALS AND REHIRE CITY EMPLOYEES

(JP) REAPPOINTMENT OF APPOINTED OFFICIALS AND REHIRING OF EMPLOYEES

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to appoint the following:

Judge Gerald Arceneaux
City Attorney Joel Levy
City CPA Jim Butler
Fire Chief Ryan Guidroz
Chief Building Inspector Leslie "Skip" Lombas
Mechanical Inspector Tommy Baxter
Plumbing Inspector Walter "Bubba" Choquette, Jr.
Electrical Inspector Doyle Guidroz
EMS Director Joseph Aldor, Jr.
Senior Center Coordinator Brant Fonseca
Farmers Market Coordinator Keith Bouvier
City Clerk Lisa Tapia

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

Mayor Peoples asked the City Council to appoint a Mayor Pro Tempore.

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Councilman Nobles, to appoint Council Member Lisa H. Valence Mayor Pro Tempore.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

Mayor Peoples asked the City Council to appoint a Mayor Pro Tempore-Pro Tempore.

MOVED by Council Member Valence, and seconded by Councilman Rivere, to appoint Council Member Johnny S. Nobles, Jr. as Mayor Pro Tempore-Pro Tempore.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

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. She also discussed Garbage Collection.

ANGELA M. LAVIGNE

Angela M. Lavigne addressed the City Council to request an Occupational License to operate a Thrift Store at 1091 Avenue H, Unit AA.

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to grant an Occupational License to Angela M. Lavigne to operate a Thrift Store at 1091 Avenue A, Unit AA.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

SHAY GUILBEAU

Shay Guilbeau addressed the City Council to request an Occupational License to operate a Cake Shop and Small Events Location at 166 Sala Avenue.

MOVED by Council Member Thibodeaux, and seconded by Council Member Rivere, to grant tentative approval for an Occupational License for Shay Guilbeau to operate a Cake Shop and Small Events Location at 166 Sala Avenue predicated upon the approval of the Westwego Historic District Commission.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

ADONIS WHITE-PRICE

Adonis White-Price addressed the City Council to request an Occupational License to operate a Graphic Design & Vinyl Business with Consulting at 138 Westbank Expressway, Suite C.

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to grant an Occupational License to Adonis White-Price to operate a Graphic Design & Vinyl Business with Consulting at 138 Westbank Expressway, Suite C.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

PRESENTATIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City Clerk read aloud the following announcement:

PUBLIC HEARING – 6:00 P.M. AUGUST 15, 2017 – 2017 MILLAGES

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Article 7, Section 23(C) of the Louisiana Constitution and R.S. 47:1705(B) that a Public Hearing of the City of Westwego, Louisiana will be held at its regular meeting place in the Council Room at 1100 Fourth Street, Westwego, Louisiana at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 15, 2017, to consider levying additional or increased millage rates without further voter approval or adopting the adjusted millage rates after reassessment and rolling forward to rates not to exceed the prior year's maximum. The estimated amount of tax revenues to be collected in the next year from the increased millage is \$1,829,978.32, and the amount of increase in taxes attributable to the millage increase is \$40,353.67.

City CPA Jim Butler discussed the 2017 Millages.

AMEND THE AGENDA

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to take item 2 under Old Business at this time.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

OFFICIAL JOURNAL

City CPA Jim Butler opened the sealed bids from the New Orleans Advocate and the Times-Picayune for Official Journal. The bids were as follows: New Orleans Advocate \$1.20 per column inch, Time-Picayune \$0.85 per column inch.

A discussion followed.

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to appoint the Times-Picayune as the Official Journal of the City of Westwego.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

HEAR ALL REPORTS

Chief of Police Dwayne J. Munch, Sr., Fire Chief Ryan P. Guidroz, Chief Building Inspector Leslie "Skip" Lombas, Jr., Mechanical Inspector Tommy Baxter, Plumbing Inspector Walter "Bubba" Choquette, Jr., EMS Director Joseph J. Aldor, Jr., and Senior Center Coordinator Brant Fonseca submitted their written reports.

Farmers Market Coordinator Keith Bouvier presented his report and discussed coming events at the Market.

Electrical Inspector Doyle Guidroz was not present due to a prior commitment.

APPROVE THE MINUTES

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Rivere, to approve the minutes of the Regular Session of Monday, June 12, 2017.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

RESOLUTIONS FOR ADOPTION

The City Clerk read aloud the following resolutions for adoption:

Offered by Council Member Valence:

RESOLUTION 2017-07(A)

A resolution establishing the compensation for the City Clerk.

MOVED by Council Member Valence, and seconded by Council Member Thibodeaux, to adopt Resolution 2017-07(A).

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

Offered by Council Member Rivere:

RESOLUTION 2017-07(B)

A resolution designating Hebert Brothers and Richard's Automotive & Towing as the Official Towing Service Providers for the City of Westwego.

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to adopt Resolution 2017-07(B).

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

Offered by Council Member Valence:

RESOLUTION 2017-07(C)

A resolution designating Capital One Bank as an authorized depository of the City of Westwego and providing for related matters.

MOVED by Council Member Valence, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to adopt Resolution 2017-07(C).

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

Offered by Councilman Nobles:

RESOLUTION 2017-07(D)

A resolution accepting the Westwego Water Facility Improvements – Water Storage Tank, A/E Project No. 20-1301, as Substantially Complete.

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to adopt Resolution 2017-07(D).

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

The City Clerk read aloud the following ordinances for introduction:

Offered by Council Member Valence:

An ordinance adopting the 2017 Legislative Calendar for the City of Westwego.

Offered by Council Member Thibodeaux:

An ordinance approving the plan of survey and resubdivision of a of ground situated in the City of Westwego, Parish of Jefferson, State of Louisiana, in the part of thereof known as Lots 30, 31, 32 and part of Lot 29, Square 44. Whitehouse Subdivision, into Lots 30A and 32A, Square 44, Whitehouse Subdivision, and is more full shown on a plan by Dufrene Surveying & Engineering, Inc., dated March 8, 2017.

ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

The City Clerk read aloud the following ordinance for adoption:

Offered by Council Member Thibodeaux:

ORDINANCE 1538

An Ordinance amending Chapter 26 – Article VI – Electronic Enforcement – Division 3. Vehicle Speed – Sec. 26-223 Imposition of Civil Penalty for Violation Enforced By A Photographic Vehicle Speed Enforcement System – Subsection B and Sec. 26-228 Traffic Safety Fund.

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

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

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

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to close the public hearing.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

A discussion followed.

MOVED by Council Member Thibodeaux, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to adopt Ordinance 1538.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

Mayor Peoples introduced Secretary to the Mayor Georgia Cox, Accounts Payable Clerk Christi Vercher, and Office Clerk Beth Aymami, and thanked Michelle Norris-Levy for helping out with the transition to the new administration. He also noted that he would not be replacing the outgoing superintendents.

OLD BUSINESS

1. (JP) Utility Bill Adjustments

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Thibodeaux, to approve the Utility Bill Adjustments as recommended.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

2. (JSN) Bids Received for Official Journal

This matter was addressed earlier.

NEW BUSINESS

1. (JP) Civil Service – Governing Authority Board Member

Mayor Peoples reported that the term of one of the Civil Service Board members is expiring. He stated that he would speak to the member and let the City Council know if he would like to be reappointed or if they will have to appoint someone new.

2. (LHV) Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with Westwego Civic Association

Council Member Valence discussed a cooperative endeavor between the City of Westwego and the Westwego Civic Association that would allow the City to use of the Civic Association Hall in return for maintaining the grass. She stated that she would meet with the Mayor and the City Attorney to develop an agreement for further discussion next month.

Mayor Peoples stated that there is a similar situation near the Farmers Market that should also be addressed with an agreement.

3. (MJR) Retirees

Council Member Rivere offered a motion to recognize the recent retirement of Superintendent Paul Bernard after thirty one years of dedicated service to the City of Westwego with a plaque to be presented to Mr. Bernard at the next City Council meeting.

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to recognize the recent retirement of Superintendent Paul Bernard after thirty one years of dedicated service to the City of Westwego with a plaque to be presented to Mr. Bernard at the next City Council meeting.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

Council Member Rivere offered a motion to recognize the recent retirement of City Superintendent Robert Utley after thirty seven years of dedicated service to the City of Westwego with a plaque to be presented to Mr. Utley at the next City Council meeting.

MOVED by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to recognize the recent retirement of City Superintendent Robert Utley after thirty seven years of dedicated service to the City of Westwego with a plaque to be presented to Mr. Utley at the next City Council meeting.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

Mayor Peoples stated that Mr. Utley has volunteered to help locate and mark valves throughout the City, and that Mr. Bernard has volunteered to help with Sewer and Water Plant issues until someone can be trained. He stated that they both have the use of City trucks while serving the City in their volunteer capacity, and thanked them both for their valued service to the City.

4. (MJR) Boat Launch

Council Member Rivere tabled the matter of the Boat Launch until the August meeting.

5. (JLT) Code Enforcement

Council Member Thibodeaux tabled the matter of Code Enforcement until the August meeting.

Mayor Peoples stated that Code Enforcement is implementing a “Firm but Fair” policy of Code Enforcement, and that he and a group of volunteers are helping people throughout the City who are willing to let them help clean up. He stated that they will help anyone who needs help cleaning up.

6. (JP) Asphalt Plant – Building Permit

Mayor Peoples discussed the Asphalt Plant that is being planned for construction on the river. He stated that it appears that it will be a first class operation and that it will be required to meet all requirements of the City Code of Ordinances, which are actually more stringent than the state and federal requirements.

7. (JP) Vic A. Pitre Canal

Mayor Peoples stated that Parish Council Member Paul Johnston will be working with the City to renovate the Vic A. Pitre Canal, including the removal of the three bridges, installation of a new grating to protect the pumps, and shoring of the banks with sheet pilings and possibly slope paving or box culverts.

Council Member River thanked Mayor Peoples for working with the Parish on this important matter of public safety.

8. (JP) Property Addresses – Visibility

Mayor Peoples discussed establishing a program to help residents to properly post their property addresses.

Council Member Valence stated that there is an ordinance requiring the proper posting of addresses.

The City Attorney cited Section 34-105 et seq. of the City Code of Ordinances.

9. (JP) DEQ Fine – WHARF Project

Mayor Peoples discussed the ongoing situation regarding the satisfaction of DEQ fines for violations at the Sewer Plant with a beneficial project at the site of the WHARF Project. He asked the City Council to meet with Engineer Hamid Alizadeh to provide their input on the project, which at this time consists of a fishing pier, possibly a floating one that can be moved as need be as the WHARF Project progresses.

A discussion followed.

10. (JP) Park Rental Fees

Mayor Peoples discussed establishing rental fees for the use of the parks by Travel Ball teams.

A discussion followed.

11. (JP) Laptop Computers & Cell Phones

Mayor Peoples discussed laptop computers and cell phones for the City Council Members.

A discussion followed.

The City Attorney stated that he would look into matters of public record and privacy for devices provided by the City versus providing a stipend for the City Council to provide their own and provide an opinion for further consideration by the Mayor and City Council.

12. (JP) City Vehicles – No Smoking – Sticker Packages

Mayor Peoples stated that he has established a no smoking policy in all City vehicles, in keeping with the existing no smoking policy in all City buildings, and asked the City Attorney to determine how far that policy can be extended outside of the buildings. He also stated that he will be having all City vehicles serviced and repaired in preparation for applying sticker packages in furtherance of consistent branding to give Westwego a better appearance.

Council Member Valence stated that there is an ordinance forbidding smoking around children in City parks, but that the signs that were posted are no longer there.

Mayor Peoples stated that he would have that taken care of.

13. (JP) Complaint Hotline

Mayor Peoples stated that he is establishing a confidential Complain Hotline to give the citizens a way to communicate problems of all kinds in the City.

14. (JP) Performing Arts Center

Mayor Peoples discussed the ongoing problem with water intrusion at the Performing Arts Center. He stated he will do an evaluation and invited the City Council to participate so they can find where the water is coming from and fix it.

Council Member Valence announced that a play is being held this weekend at Theatro Wego.

15. (JP) Demolition of Old City Hall

Mayor Peoples stated that the City will have to advertise a request for qualifications in order to choose an engineer to plan for the demolition of the old City Hall building (419 Avenue A). He then presented a short video of the old City Hall and showing the condition the past administration left the building. He stated that he will be moving the remaining contents of the building, including records and furnishings, into containers to preserve them until final disposition can be determined.

16. (JP) Sewer Plant / City Infrastructure – Water Valves

Mayor Peoples discussed the condition of the sewer plant, water lines, and other City infrastructure. He stated that he is looking into low-interest loans and other methods of funding to be able to start replacing the aged, failing infrastructure.

17. (JP) Garbage Contract (Vendor)

Mayor Peoples discussed garbage collection. He stated that he is soliciting proposals from other providers, and that he is also looking into purchasing a claw truck to be able to provide better trash service for our citizens.

18. (JP) Water Plant – Working with Parish on Price

Mayor Peoples stated that the current contract for the purchase of water from Jefferson Parish has expired and that they will be working with the Parish to establish a new schedule of rates with stepped increases from the current 54¢ per 1000 gallons to 94¢ per 1000 gallons as we make repairs to our distribution system, which currently has a 30% loss rate.

A discussion followed.

19. (JP) Back Gym (Doors, Fire Code)

Mayor Peoples discussed Fire Code violations at the Gym and asked the City Council to authorize him to make immediate repairs.

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Thibodeaux, to authorize Mayor Peoples to make immediate repairs at the Gym to eliminate the Fire Code violations.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

20. (JP) Employee Handbook – Adding Social Media

Mayor Peoples stated that he will be presenting to the City Council for addition to the Employee Handbook, a policy prohibiting City employees from using social media while working and setting a standard of behavior for employees.

21. (JP) City Owned Property – Sale

Mayor Peoples discussed City-owned properties that he feels should be declared surplus and sold, with the proceeds dedicated to infrastructure.

A discussion followed.

Mayor Peoples stated that he would provide the City Council with a list of properties.

AMEND THE AGENDA

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Valence, to amend the agenda to discuss the Train Tracks at the end of business.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

MOVE by Council Member Rivere, and seconded by Council Member Nobles, to amend the agenda to discuss Recreation and District 4.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

22. (JP) City Mechanic – Helper

Mayor Peoples stated that he and Chief Munch have agreed to split the cost of the Mechanic and to add a Mechanic's Helper, likewise splitting the cost, so that all vehicles can be placed on a maintenance program with service and repairs being charged against the department that uses the vehicle. He also stated that he is looking into instituting a co-payment policy for employees who damage or neglect their vehicles.

A discussion followed.

(JSN) TRAIN TRACKS

Council Member Nobles discussed railroad cars containing dangerous chemicals that are being parked on a continuing basis on the tracks along Cedre Drive. He asked Mayor Peoples to contact the Railroad to move the dangerous chemicals away.

A discussion followed.

Mayor Peoples stated that he will contact the Railroad regarding the railroad cars.

(MJR) RECREATION

Council Member Rivere announced that the 9 & 10 year-old Boys are the Dixie Youth Softball Champions and that they will be attending a tournament in Ruston with most of the All Star teams throughout Louisiana. He stated that this is the first time that Westwego has ever sent a team to this tournament and at least fifteen years since any Jefferson Parish team has been able to play in this tournament. He stated that our 11 & 12 year-old Boys are Dizzy Dean National Champions and our 11 & 12 year-old girls are runners-up. He announced that the Awards Ceremony will be held at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, July 13, 2017, at the Westwego Civic Association Hall on Avenue H, and asked everyone to attend.

Chief Munch announced that he arranged private funding for the 9 & 10 year-old Boys to attend the Tournament in Ruston.

(MJR) DISTRICT 4 MEETING

Council Member Rivere stated that he is honored to serve Council District 4 for the next four years and then announced that he will be holding a District Meeting soon to discuss his plans to keep District 4 informed.

Mayor Peoples announced that the City has received the Fire Insurance Rebate check.

FIRE INSURANCE REBATE

MOVED by Council Member Nobles, and seconded by Council Member Rivere, to transfer the \$55,808.80 Fire Insurance Rebate to the Westwego Volunteer Fire Company.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

Chief Munch stated that he sent a text to the head of security at the Railroad and that he is going to check on the railcars, which he believes should be stored in the yard outside of the City.

Mayor Peoples stated that he feels that everyone is on the same page regarding the branding of our City and the fixing of our infrastructure and asked everyone to "Please Come In and Be a Part of the Solution."

ADJOURN

MOVED, and seconded, by All Council Members Present, to adjourn at 7:57 p.m., Monday, July 12, 2017.

APPROVED: Yeas: Nobles, Valence, Rivere, Thibodeaux; Absent: Green

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, August 14, 2017, in the Council Room at City Hall, 1100 Fourth Street, Westwego, Louisiana.
