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Town of Jonesboro

Mayor Leslie Thompson P.O. Box 610

Ph: 318-259-2385 128 Allen Avenue

Fax: 318-259-4177 Jonesboro, Louisiana 71251

**Town of Jonesboro**

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**

**Date: August 9, 2022 Time: 6:00 p.m.**

**Place: Charles Garrett Community Center, 182 Industrial Dr., Jonesboro, LA 71251**

**MINUTES**

Call to order by Mayor Leslie Thompson

Roll Call – James Ginn, Robbie Siadek, Aaron Stringer, Devin Flowers, Nia Johnson was present establishing a quorum.

Invocation-Flowers

Pledge of Allegiance -Ginn

Public Comments - none

Approval of Agenda – The following addendums/changes were made to the agenda: Add Continental Drilling at item 10A; add Gin Street repairs as item 10B and move #15 pay raise for street to number 7A. A motion to approve by Stringer, second Siadek, carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of July 12, 2022, regular meeting – motion by Flowers, second by Johnson, unanimously carried.

Stringer vs Town of Jonesboro settlement proposal – (motion to go into executive session by Stringer, second by Johnson) A Settlement Conference will be held on August 26. Following this, EPA will have 45 days to object to any offer. If settlement is not reached, the judge will set a speedy trial. Brad Graff, Town’s Engineer, serving as litigation consultant, and Calvin Wortham as Public Works Director were in the executive session. Stringer made motion to end executive session, second by Johnson with no action taken.

The council authorized Mayor Thompson and Attorney Mayeaux to offer a settlement during the settlement conference up to and including the amount in the attorney/client privilege letter from Attorney Mayeaux dated July 21, 2022. Motion by Siadek, second by Johnson. Vote was as follows: Yeas: Siadek, Flowers, Johnson; Nays: Stringer, Ginn Motion carried 3 to 2 in favor.

Councilman James Ginn exited the meeting at this point.

Approval of July bills paid – motion by Flowers, second by Johnson, unanimously carried.

Approval of July financials – motion by Flowers, second by Johnson, unanimously carried.

Compliance Officer report – still responding to citizens’ complaints regarding abandoned houses and tall grass. Encouraged anyone with a compliance complaint to contact him directly.

Pay raise for Street and Water Department employees – Johnson indicated this item was placed on the agenda as it had been indicated that incentive pay could not be given from the balance remaining in the ARPA funds. We are awaiting the second tranche of ARPA funds from which a stipend could be awarded to employees once received. She questioned how pay increases are awarded. Mayor enlightened the attendees with the fact that every employee has been given a pay increase since he took office. The town currently is not able to sustain pay increases across the board. While we have been removed from the non-compliance list, we are still struggling financially to meet the obligations of the town. Revenues have not kept up with inflation. Ten years ago, the town’s budget was 3 million dollars.

Currently, revenues are 2.9 million dollars. There has been no increase in revenues. The increase in sales taxes have helped to keep up with inflation to some degree. However, at this time, the town is not in a position to award across the board pay increases.

Continental Drilling had overages of $22,485.14 in the emergency repair for well #5. The request before council is to pay this amount with ARPA funds. The mayor requested that the council approve this expense. Johnson moved to approve, second by Siadek, unanimously carried.

Gin Street runs on the side of Sonic. Siadek asked that the road be improved. B. Brown indicated that the part owned by the town is in good repair. The part in disrepair belongs to a private citizen and repairs would be their responsibility.

Police Department employment status change from part-time to full time for Israel Smith and Sirena Jackson – Siadek moved to approve, second by Johnson, unanimously approved.

Compliance Officer report – still responding to citizens’ complaints regarding abandoned houses and tall grass. Encouraged anyone with a compliance complaint to contact him directly.

The name of Janice Simmons was submitted by Mayor Thompson to fill position of Town Clerk. Ms. Simmons has been performing duties of the clerk since the last clerk left. Flowers moved to appoint Janice Simmons to the Town Clerk’s position, second by Stringer. The vote was as follows: Yeas: Flowers, Stringer, Johnson; Nays: Siadek. Motion carried in favor of appointing Janice Simmons to the position of Town Clerk.

Department head reports (reports submitted to council in packets) – Stringer moved to accept reports, second by siadek, unanimously approved.

Mayor’s comments – some good questions were asked regarding availability of money for pay raises. He pushes hard for employees and if possible, would gladly award pay raises to employees. He is always in favor of compensating employees as much as possible. He will not attempt to appease employees or anyone else at the expense of hurting the town. The Legislative Auditor’s letter indicates we ae off of the non-compliance list but are still financially unstable.

Council’s comments – thanked people for coming. Flowers moved to adjourn.

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Janice M Simmons, Town Clerk Leslie C. Thompson, Mayor­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­