 September 11, 2018

The following minutes were taken at a special meeting of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen on August 6, 2018 at the Town Hall in Pearl River.

Mayor McQueen called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

Town Clerk gave the invocation; the pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor McQueen.

**ROLL CALL:**

Mayor McQueen called roll and Alderman Walsh, Bennett, Phillips, Cutrer, McGregor, Attorney Tim Mathison, Attorney Matt Daigle, and Town Clerk, Madeline Campbell were all present.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

Mayor McQueen opens with Discussion of Ordinance #174A Sewer & Water Rates. He reminds everyone about Mr. Tim Lemoine’s presentation. The presentation was given by Louisiana Rural Water Association’s president with data collected nationally over many years; therefore, Mayor McQueen feels the recommendations made by Mr. Lemoine for us to set our rates by are valid, and trustworthy figures to use. Mayor opens the floor to any person with a question or comment. Be sure to sign in with name and address, then take around 3 minutes, please.

1. A Town resident, Miss Delores King, comes to the podium. She asks if we could clarify the proposed charges for gallons used over the ceiling. We had reported to her that $3.00 will be prorated based on how much of the 1,000 gallon tier was used. Attorney Daigle answered that we are using a ¼ prorating increment; a use between 0 and 250 gallons will be charged $.75, a use between 251 and 500 gallons will be charged $1.50, a use between 501 and 750 gallons will be charged $2.25, and a use between 751 and 1,000 gallons will be charged the full $3.00 additional and so forth.
2. Another Town resident, Mr. Joe Lee, comes to the podium. He asks about the meters, and if we have a procedure for when someone wants to verify/question their meter reading for accuracy. Mayor McQueen answered yes, and explained more how he has approached the meter reading process and to allow for bad meters and errors so residents will not be penalized for such situations. Damage to a meter will be assessed for cause and billed to resident if damage caused by resident.
3. A resident from floor asks about billing under the ceiling amount; she is interested in the split for Sewer versus Water. Mayor McQueen explained that the flat rate charge for both is currently separated and that only the water portion will change, sewer will remain the same for now. The separation was required for the new WWTP loan. Funds for S&W operation are supposed to come only from fees charged, and the fees charged are only supposed to fund S&W operations. The rate increases are long overdue.
4. Alderman Cutrer asks if we have informed residents when the charge by meters will begin. Bills have gone out three times with the notice; ads in the paper have been run; town Facebook page and website have had the public hearing meetings announced. Attorney Daigle reports on the approach being proposed: for Sept – Nov, the metering would be on-line, but charges would stay at the flat rate. This way a resident can see the gallon usage and charges they would incur to be ready in December when the metering usage becomes the charge for each resident.
5. A resident from the floor asks about whether the brown water and boil water advisories will be less frequent due to the rate increases. Mayor McQueen explained how and why water systems experience these situations: brown water is part of all water systems; flushing the system is the only way to clear it. We will have to make this part of our policies and procedures to account for residents’ flushing to clear brown water so metered usage will not include these gallons used for flushing.
6. Alderman Phillips brings up the metering allowance for emergency Fire Department usage.
7. Gus Baldwin of Twin Oaks Mobile Home Park comes to podium. His concern is about commercial water rates, and how to fairly charge his business since he maintains the system in the park. Discussion continues about his specific situation.
8. Another resident from the floor asks about his property’s clean out by the street, depending upon where it ties into the town’s system. (less than 50 feet will be different)

Mayor McQueen asks if there are any more comments, questions, or discussions. None. He closes the public hearing.

Mayor McQueen turns to the council for their wishes. Alderman McGregor makes a motion to accept the ordinance as presented with the ceiling set at 2,000 gallons. Alderman Bennett seconds the motion. She asks for a stipulation that a senior citizen, low income program be set up before metering begins. Attorney Mathison mentions he is preparing one and asks the council to send in their comments and desires for this program. Alderman Bennett motions to set the metering process to begin on December 1st, 2018 and Alderman Phillips seconds the motion to begin metering on December 1st, 2018. All in favor: Alderman Walsh, Bennett, Phillips, and McGregor. All opposed: Alderman Cutrer.

Attorney Daigle asks the council about section 3 relating to the Fire Department’s water fees. Alderman Phillips makes a motion to include in the ordinance section 3 language that allows an exemption for the Fire Department for emergency water usage. Alderman Bennett seconds the motion. All in favor: Alderman Walsh, Bennett, Phillips, and McGregor. All opposed: Alderman Cutrer. So moved to accept the amendment to exempt Fire Department emergency water usage from metering charges.

Attorney Mathison directs back to the vote to accept Ordinance 174A as amended. (to recap, Alderman McGregor made a motion to accept as amended, Alderman Bennett seconds the motion.) Alderman Walsh asks for a roll call vote: Walsh – Yay, Bennett – Yay, Phillips – Nay, Cutrer – Nay, McGregor – Yay. Ordinance 174A Set Sewer & Water metering and rates as amended **is Passed.**

Alderman Bennett motions to take off the floor Annexation of the Hwy 41 Church of the Nazarene property, Alderman Phillips seconds this motion. All in favor, Aye. **So moved.**

Alderman Bennett motions to take off the floor Subdividing Hwy 41 Spur Matt & Yvette Carrasco property, Alderman Walsh seconds the motion. All in favor, Aye. **So moved.**

From the floor, Ms. Lola Monroe of Planning & Zoning Board:

1. Property applications, Subdividing Hwy 41 Spur Matt & Yvette Carrasco. Presentation of the Resolution to Subdivide Carrasco property. All in favor, Aye. **So moved.**
2. Property applications, Annexation Hwy 41 Church of the Nazarene. Introduction of the Ordinance to Annex Hwy 41 Church of the Nazarene. All in favor, Aye. **So moved.**

Alderman Walsh, Phillips request to adjourn the meeting, Mayor McQueen closes.

MEETING ADJOURNED

AT 7:24 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 10TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2018

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Madeline B Campbell, Town Clerk Clarence D McQueen, Mayor