

**Minutes of the Town of Jonesboro
Regular Council Meeting – 6:00 P.M.**

**Jonesboro, Louisiana
April 9th, 2019**

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Leslie Thompson. Present were the following Council Members: Nia Johnson, James Ginn, Aaron Stringer, and Devin Flowers. Council Members Absent: Robbie Siadek. A quorum was present.

The **Invocation** was conducted by: Stringer
The **Pledge of Allegiance** was led by: Johnson

Agenda Amendments: Stringer motioned to add 'Ordinance Book' as item 13a. Johnson seconded. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes: Flowers motioned to accept Minutes of the regular meeting held March 12, 2019. Stringer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments: A citizen discussed his opposition to "a club operating in the community" and his belief that a certain alderman he believes has broken the law "should be dealt with for his actions."

Mayor's Address: Mayor Thompson advised the public that water meters hadn't been read for the past 4 years, that it'd be approx. 30-60 more days to do so again, and current bills may go up or down depending on actual usage.

Said the newly passed alcohol ordinance allowing sales 7 days per week is going to generate much needed revenue, and that according to Town Attorney's research, there's no ordinance on record prohibiting high or low content alcohol within the Town limits, also confirmed by the Jackson Parish Police Jury: "as of this day the Town is wet."

Mayor discussed pending lawsuit pertaining to a spillage on 6th St. and his recent visit to Baton Rouge for ways to resolve the Town's water and sewer issues, and the possibility of receiving a forgivable loan.

Regarding the night club issue, Mayor said he would not deny a license to anyone who rightfully qualifies for one, or legislate morality, and if violations of law occur that the police should be notified.

Mayor said the Town is working on 7 items the Legislative Auditors are concerned about that were occurring before he was elected: meter fund deposits, customer refunds properly reflected, billing procedures, non-compliance to the state's budget act, that Mr. Folden is updating the Town's system to provide financial statement next month.

An amendment to the current fiscal year budget and preparation for the next fiscal year are scheduled. The failure of Meeting Minutes being published regularly has been addressed. The failure in multiple elements of internal controls is also being addressed.

Mayor said, he's seeking specificity regarding these multiple elements, that segregation of duties is being addressed, and that complying with governmental law is priority.

Ordinance 2019-002 (Cross Connection Control): Stringer motioned to set public hearing date of this previously introduced ordinance for 5:30 p.m. May 14th 2019 (City Hall Community Rm). Johnson seconded. Motion carried.

Renewal of Sales Tax Election: Mayor stated, for the Town to continue present level of services, that the **renewal** of this tax is paramount. These tax revenues produce approx. 1/3 of the Town's total budget, without such the Town is in trouble. Mayor asked for the public and aldermen to encourage all residents to please be sure and **vote to renew the present sales tax on Election Day: May 4th 2019.** (No action by Council on this item.)

Cooperative Endeavor Agreement – Veterans Affairs: Stringer motioned for Mayor to be authorized to sign said agreement on behalf of the Town, and for monies to be paid from a designated General Fund line item. Flowers seconded. Motion carried.

Department Head Reports:

Police: Chief Harris said, he spoke with Mr. Folden and decided there's no need for a separate bank account for tickets and fines (Item 12c omitted). Chief reported \$10,805.50 having been collected and that his dept. had 273 service calls.

Stringer motioned to introduce Ordinance 2019-003 (Police Chief Salary), and for the public hearing date of such to be held at for 5:30 p.m. May 14th 2019 (City Hall Community Rm)

Fire: Chief Brandon Brown discussed controlled burns of dilapidated houses taking place and, according to DEQ there are no problems with asbestos.

Public Works: Director Calvin Wortham provided details of items provided in Council's packet, including a monthly activity report, mission statement and vision statement for the dept., and a proposed letter to be published re: engineering selection process for a LCDBG grant project. Stringer inquired about a drainage problem, and PWD said the drainage issues are being addressed.

Ginn stated his objections to spending \$15,000 on Morrow St. without having addressed other pertinent issues, Mayor recommended making this an agenda item for the next meeting when better financial numbers are available.

Ginn stated his opposition to renewing a system known to be unreliable, that he greatly prefers manual reads on water meters, that he doesn't trust the current software system and wants a new system.

Stringer motioned to accept all dept. head reports. Flowers seconded. Motion carried.

Resolution 2019-009 (Engineer's Qualification Statements – LCDBG): Johnson motioned to adopt. Stringer seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2019-010 (Signatory Authority): Stringer motioned to adopt a resolution authorizing Mayor Thompson to sign checks for Sabine Bank. Flowers seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance Book: Mayor said that a proposed sample draft of the ordinance book is at City Hall, that a budget item for it would be created for the next fiscal year (July 2019).

Mayor's Recommendation to Appoint Clerk (Vivian McCarden): Ginn inquired about entering executive session. Attorney Stokes outlined the procedure. Johnson recommended having a special called meeting to discuss the matter. Stringer motioned to table.

Fire Chief Salary – Executive Session: Ginn motioned to enter into executive session to discuss the character, professional competence and compensation of Fire Chief Brandon Brown. Johnson seconded the motion. Chief Brown expressed he did not object to the item being discussed during executive session. Motion carried unanimously.

Upon terminating, Stringer motioned to end the executive session. Flowers seconded. Motion carried. Stringer announced there was no action taken by Council during executive session.

Johnson motioned to make the Fire Chief's annual salary \$53,000 effective immediately, and to be such until the end of the current fiscal year (June 30th 2019). Flowers seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council Comments: Johnson thanked everyone for attending, and encouraged continued support for the Mayor and Council.

Ginn said this Jonesboro has cash flow, but that stewardship has been poor since the year 2000 wasting money on meters, and spending hundreds of thousands on fiscal administrators.

Said the Baton Rouge meeting Mayor recently attended pertained to an EPA threat to the entire state of Louisiana due to Jonesboro's lack of response to lawsuits, and

requested Mayor to provide more detailed information to Council in a consistent manner.

Stringer abstained from commenting. **Flowers** also thanked everyone for coming out, asked for continued prayers for the Town, said he also would like more information from the Mayor.

Mayor's Closing Comments: Mayor Thompson thanked all for attending, said the Town would be working hard to resolve the water revenue problems, as the Water Dept. should be sustaining itself. Mayor invited the Aldermen to discuss issues at his office when ready.

Adjournment: Flowers motioned to adjourn. Johnson seconded. Motion carried.

Deputy Clerk, David J. Dill

Leslie Thompson, Mayor

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