Minutes -April 2, 2024

Council Meeting

City of Patterson, Louisiana

The Mayor and Council of the City of Patterson, Louisiana meeting was held on Tuesday,

April 2, 2024. The meeting was held at 1314 Main Street in the Council meeting room at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Rodney Grogan presided over the meeting.

Mayor Rodney Grogan called the Council Meeting to order.

Mayor Grogan announced at this time we will open with a Public Hearing on the following items: Item #1 is the Discussion of Ordinance No. 2024-03 to authorize the city to lease the Old Field House Building, including the term of Lease, consideration, and other terms and conditions. Mayor Grogan asked if anyone in the audience or council would like to comment on the discussion of Ordinance No. 2044-03, there were no comments from the audience or council. Item # 2 is the Discussion of Ordinance #2024-03A to amend the “Side depth” provision of Subsection 4.101 of the Zoning Code to reduce the required side depth from 10’ to 5’. Mayor Grogan asked if anyone in the audience or council would like to comment on the discussion of Ordinance No. 2044-03A, there were no comments from the audience or council. Mayor Grogan then asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing. A motion to close the Public Hearing was made by Councilmember Mamie Perry and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lee Condolle, Councilmembers DeMale Bowden, Jr., Ray Dewey, Mamie Perry, Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem Lee Condolle voted yes.

Mayor Grogan advised the public we will not enter into our regular meeting.

Pastor Steve Manfield with Bethel Pentecostal led the invocation.

Councilmember DeMale Bowden led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Grogan for a moment of silence for Mr. Joseph “Joey” Landry who passed away 2 weeks ago and for Mrs. Angeline Aucoin, mother of local businessman, Tim Aucoin.

Midge Bourgeois, City Clerk, called Roll. Councilmembers DeMale Bowden, Jr., Ray Dewey, Mamie Perry, Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem were present.

C. J. Franklin from Providence Engineering, Holden Murray, and Chief Garrett Grogan were in attendance. City Attorney Russel Cremaldi was absent.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lee Condolle and seconded by Councilmember Mamie Perry to dispense with the reading and approve the March 5, 2024, minutes. Councilmembers DeMale Bowden, Jr., Ray Dewey, Mamie Perry, Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem Lee Condolle voted yes.

Councilmember DeMale Bowden asked Mayor Grogan and Reginald Weary if the council can start getting account balances as per the Thursday before the council meeting on the first of the month. Reginald Weary, CFO replied yes. A motion was made by Councilmember DeMale Bowden and seconded by Councilmember Miranda Weinbach to accept the financial statement submission. Councilmembers DeMale Bowden, Jr., Ray Dewey, Mamie Perry, Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem Lee Condolle voted yes.

There were no public comments.

Ms. Briana Comeaux, Principal of Hattie Watts Elementary School stated their school would like to end the school year with a bang and she is here to ask for permission to hold their 1st Annual Glow Family Fun Run on Thursday, May 23, 2023 from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. This will not be a run to see who finishes first but it’s a family affair where there will be stations along the route with glow necklaces, glow silly string, and so forth. Each station will have glow items. Chief Grogan advised that would not be a problem. A motion was made by Councilmember Mamie Perry and seconded by Councilmember Miranda Weinbach for Hattie Watts Elementary School to host a Glow Fun Run. Councilmembers DeMale Bowden, Jr., Ray Dewey, Mamie Perry, Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem Lee Condolle voted yes.

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Beverly Domengeaux with St. Mary Council of Aging gave her annual report relating to several issues and initiatives related to senior care. Ms. Domengeaux informed that AARP conducts a monthly feeding event for seniors, which requires membership. The parish government also organizes two feedings every month in Morgan City and Franklin respectively. The Purple Lemon and some churches also occasionally provide support to seniors. The Senior Center is a great platform for mobile seniors to socialize, have fellowship, and enjoy meals. The term "homebound" refers to seniors aged over 60 who require assistance for daily activities. It was also mentioned that the Council of Aging is facing funding cuts despite an increase in services and supplies. A reduction of 50% in annual allocation from the St. Mary Parish government is one of the main cuts being considered. According to the Patterson Census, 12.2% of the population is over 65 years of age. However, the St. Mary Council of Aging caters to a higher percentage, 15-20% daily at the center and 60% for home-bound seniors. The council is in urgent need of a driver for this area, and any assistance in this regard would be greatly appreciated. To facilitate seniors, a St. Mary Council of Aging discount card is available, which they can use to avail discounts at select places.

Howard Parker asked Mayor Grogan and the Council about the sewer line problems on Mill Rd. He also inquired if anyone had received the videos that he had sent showing the sewer coming out of the manholes during a heavy rainstorm. Mr. Parker thanked Councilmember Miranda Weinbach for her efforts in helping try to resolve the sewer line problems and then asked Mayor Grogan who was responsible for fixing the sewer lines on Mill Rd. Mayor Grogan replied that the same people were in charge as at the last meeting. Steve Bierhorst informed the gathering that a smoke test was done and eight major 4” caps were missing. However, all of them were fixed within five days of the findings. Mr. Bierhorst also mentioned that during the last rain, there was some infiltration, but he and the engineer, C.J. Franklin, had spoken that morning and the lift station rehab would begin on April 25, 2024. Mill Rd would be the first station for a complete rehab and rebuild, and a company would come in to put cameras through the entire area in main lines, in addition to the smoke testing, to get a better understanding of what is happening. Mr. Parker asked again when the rehab of the sewer lift station would take place. He mentioned that it would be 10 years since he had been dealing with sewer issues on Mill Rd this coming November. C.J. Franklin, Engineer, advised that it was mostly rainwater and not all sewage coming out of manholes. Mayor Grogan assured Mr. Parker that he had signed off on everything to get sewer problems resolved, and they could move on to the next agenda item.

A motion was made by Councilmember Ray Dewey and seconded by Councilmember Mamie Perry adopting Ordinance No. 2024-03 authorizing the city to lease the Old Field House building, including term of lease, consideration, and other terms and conditions. Mayor Grogan did a roll call. Councilmember DeMale Bowden, Councilmember Ray Dewey, Councilmember Mamie Perry, Councilmember Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem voted yes.

A motion was made by Councilmember Ray Dewey and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem adopting Ordinance No. 2024-03A to amend the “Side Depth” provision of Subsection 4.101 of the Zoning Code to reduce the required side depth from 10’ to 5’. Mayor Grogan did a roll call. Councilmember DeMale Bowden, Councilmember Ray Dewey, Councilmember Mamie Perry, Councilmember Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem voted yes.

Mayor Grogan stated that the merger of the commissioners of the Patterson Community Center Board with the Patterson Recreation Board, which is now obsolete. The board will be responsible for managing all parks except Morey Park and the Community Center. The following commissioners have been assigned terms: Regina Leonard for 1 year, Ed Jones for 2 years, Holden Murray for 2 years, Terrence Johnson for 3 years, C.L. Grogan for 3 years, Renee Broussard Stelly for 4 years, and Sandra Turner for 5 years. However, this board will have no jurisdiction to make any changes to the parks or other things. They will need to bring any proposed changes to the council for approval. Also, they will not have any authority over Morey Park as it is located on Main St. Mayor Grogan explained that Morey Park has private donors, including the Acadiana Foundation and Water Conservation, as it is situated near the water, and all of this is related to grants. A motion was made by Councilmember Ray Dewey to the approval of appointments and seconded by Councilmember Miranda Weinbach. Councilmember DeMale Bowden, Councilmember Ray Dewey, Councilmember Mamie Perry, Councilmember Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem voted yes.

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Reginald Weary, the CFO, has informed us that tonight's meeting will include the introduction of the 2024-2025 budget and projections for our two major accounts. However, he was unable to prepare the entire budget packet due to three factors. Firstly, we have not received our assessment from the parish. Secondly, we have a rate study scheduled for next Friday, which will impact the budget. Finally, our FY 2023-2024 audit will not be completed until April 30, 2024. Mr. Weary went on to state he would not be with the City of Patterson for he had given Mayor Grogan his 2 weeks' notice. Mayor Grogan read Mr. Weary’s letter of resignation. During the council meeting, Mr. Weary informed the council members that the two primary funds that dictate how the city operates are the General fund and the Utility fund. He expressed his concern about leaving his task unfinished and suggested a Budget Workshop to ensure that the Mayor and the Council can take charge of the numbers for the coming year. The main aim of this workshop would be to achieve fiscal sustainability, and it would be the responsibility of the council to ensure that the city is well taken care of. Mr. Weary also promised to organize a meeting for everyone to make solid projections for the years 2024-2025, but a special call meeting would be required for this purpose. The council scheduled a Special Call meeting for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 9, 2024.

Mr. Weary announced that the City of Patterson has approved three projects: the Water Meter project, the Water Plant project, and the Sewer project. Mayor Grogan clarified that the new budget needs to be approved by June 30, 2024. However, since there are some numbers that are not plugged in, they do not want to rush into the budget. If the budget is not introduced before June 30, 2024, then they will have to survive off half of the current budget. Mayor Grogan also mentioned that as soon as Mr. Weary turned in his resignation, he contacted the city’s consultant Alan Taylor to advise him. They will take their time to hire a replacement for Mr. Weary to ensure that all the numbers are correct. Councilmember DeMale Bowden asked about the fiscal sustainability of the present budget and whether it will be maintained. Mr. Bowden reviewed the 14 items that Mr. Weary and Mr. Taylor spoke about cutting and ways of saving. He asked if Mr. Weary could give his recommendation on the items, except for items 13 and 14, to the council so that they could see how they could implement them. Mayor Grogan stated that Reginald Weary wants to have a study done, similar to the parish, where payment and other aspects will align with the jobs the employees are doing. During the council meeting, Mayor Grogan informed that he could meet with 2 council members at a time to discuss the matters he and Reginald had talked about. Further, the Mayor informed us that there will be no summer recreation program and feeding for the children this summer as the city could not afford it. The city only charges $50.00 per child for the program, but the parents are not willing to pay this amount. The money for the program is being cut statewide, and it is difficult for the city to bear the cost alone. Councilmember DeMale Bowden inquired about the custodian of the Community Center's financial records. Mr. Weary clarified that the Community Center has its own bank account and all their bills come to city hall for auditing by Alan Taylor, consultant. Furthermore, Councilmember Mamie Perry asked about how big purchases are made and who approves them. Reginald Weary explained the process of making purchases and who approves them. Lastly, Councilmember DeMale Bowden requested that the council receive packets by the end of Monday before the council meeting, so they have enough time to review them and avoid agreeing to anything they have not had time to consider.

City Attorney, Russel Cremaldi has asked that the city get special counsel because this lawsuit will be held in Federal Court. The special counsel will be a lawyer that the city has used before. Mayor Grogan advised he can’t disclose details due to a personnel matter involving law enforcement. A motion was made by Councilmember DeMale Bowden and seconded by Councilmember Mamie Perry to contract a special legal counsel that defends in Federal Court about a lawsuit in which our insurance company has some exclusions. Mayor Grogan did a roll call. Councilmember DeMale Bowden, Councilmember Ray Dewey, Councilmember Mamie Perry, Councilmember Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem voted yes.

Mayor Grogan read a Resolution of Respect for Sheriff Blaise Smith. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lee Condolle and seconded by Councilmember Ray Dewey. Councilmember DeMale Bowden, Councilmember Ray Dewey, Councilmember Mamie Perry, Councilmember Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem voted yes.

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Mayor Grogan read a Resolution of Respect for Joseph Luke “Joey” Landry. A motion was made by Councilmember DeMale Bowden and seconded by Councilmember Mamie Perry. Councilmember DeMale Bowden, Councilmember Ray Dewey, Councilmember Mamie Perry, Councilmember Miranda Weinbach, and Mayor Pro Tem voted yes.

Chief Garrett Grogan had no announcements.

Scott Hutton, Fire Chief had no announcements.

Holden Murry advised that he received an email that we won 2 grants; the Sustainability grant for $15,000 and the City Health Dashboard grant. Mr. Murray advised that any business in the City of Patterson with 10 employees or less, that is not a member of the Chamber of Commerce but would like to be a member, will be going live tomorrow at noon where you can apply for a micro-grant through the Economic Development where we will fund you to become a member of the Chamber of Commerce with a one-year membership, this is not done through city money, this is done through grant money. Other things going on around the city are:

* + April 6, 2024 – Grief Support Group at 10:00 a.m.
	+ April 20, 2024 - E.P.I.C. Outreach Anxiety Support Seminar
	+ April 27, 2024 - will be a day of service in Keeping Patterson Beautiful by picking up trash throughout the city.

According to C.J. Franklin of Providence Engineering, there have been no changes to the Water and Gas Meter Replacement project. The Construction Agreement Contract was recorded at the Parish Clerk of Court’s office on March 7, 2024. A preconstruction conference was held on March 19, 2024, during which the contractor, E.B.Feucht & Sons, LLC, was given the Notice to Proceed and the recorded Construction Agreement Contract. The project is set to start on April 15, 2024, and is expected to be completed by October 2024. Once the construction is finished, the contractor will submit a Confirmation Letter to the LDH Region 3 office, stating that the project has been completed and constructed according to the plans and specifications approved by LDH.

William Gil from Planning and Zoning advised Louisiana updates its building codes every few years. This year, two new codes were introduced. The first one requires buildings in flood zones to be constructed at least a foot above the base elevation. The second code mandates that a roof being constructed with a 30lb felt must be double felted. Contractors undertaking such work are advised to obtain a permit and adhere to the new regulations, as insurance companies will be verifying compliance.

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, Councilmember Miranda Weinbach made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember DeMale Bowden. The Council unanimously agreed.

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Midge Bourgeois, City Clerk Rodney A. Grogan, Mayor