

GENERAL MEETING
TOWN OF MAURICE MINUTES
Wednesday, February 21, 2024

The general meeting of the officials of the Town of Maurice was opened by Mayor Neil Arsement at 6:00 p.m. at the Maurice Municipal Building, 405 Lastie Ave., Maurice, Louisiana

Mayor Arsement led the assembly in Prayer and Alderwoman Megan Landry-Lalande led the Pledge of Allegiance
Roll call of officers

Present: Mayor Neil Arsement; Alderwoman Megan Landry-Lalande; Alderman Troy Catalon; Alderman Matthew Trahan; Alderman Scott Trahan

Absent: Alderman Jonathan Schlicher

Also present: Melanie Denais; Joan Methvin; Nichole Bonin; Claire Meche; Shakyla Brailey; Ricky Lafleur, Legal Advisor; Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates; Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor; Chief Guy Nerren; Kim Touchet, Primeaux Touchet & Associates; John Sonnier; Chad Roussel; Cooper O'Brian; Jeremy Hidalgo; Wayne Theriot; Brennan Billeaud

Motion: Catalon/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded, and carried to enter into the Public Hearing. Yay- All Present

Public Hearing for the Purpose of:

An Ordinance to Amend the Building Code Ordinance No. 11-1 and 12-12

An Ordinance Regulating Signage in the Town of Maurice and Repealing Ordinance No. 18-2B

Legal Ricky Lafleur introduced an Ordinance to Amend the Building Code Ordinance No. 11-1 and 12-12 to update certain items and language in the current Building Code Ordinances. Mayor Arsement advised the changes are being presented to strengthen what Town of Maurice currently has in place. Kim Touchet, Town Building Official, prepared a suggested addition referencing Commercial Drainage Impact Analysis, Sitework, and Utility Plan Reviews, Fees and Development requirements and responsibilities for each as stated in the Town of Maurice Subdivision Manual. If adopted, Legal Lafleur will include the additional information in the final draft of the Ordinance for publication and send to Municipal Clerk Melanie Denais. No other comments were made.

Legal Ricky Lafleur introduced an Ordinance Regulating Signage in the Town of Maurice and Repealing Ordinance No. 18-2B setting in place regulations more current with other municipalities in the surrounding areas. Catalon inquired about inspection responsibilities. Arsement advised Primeaux, Touchet, & Associates will complete a review and perform inspections of proposed signs. No other comments were made.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to close the Public Hearing and enter the General Meeting. Yay- All Present

Approval General Meeting Minutes of January 17, 2024

Motion: Landry-Lalande/S. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to accept the minutes of the January 17, 2024 General Meeting as submitted.
Yay-All Present

Public comment period on agenda items listed- Add 3-a. Prairie Cove Phase 3 Preliminary Plat Approval Extension; 3-b. Prairie Cove Phase 3 Construction Plans and Drainage Approval; 3-c. Subdivision Ordinance Amendments; 5-c. Purchase Excavator; 4-b. Hiring of Officer

Motion: Catalon/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded and carried to accept the agenda as amended. Yay- All Present

Kim Touchet, Primeaux Touchet & Associates- advised additional inspections and fees have been added to their contract with Town of Maurice. Mayor Arsement reappointed Primeaux Touchet & Associates as Town of Maurice Building Official.

Legal Ricky Lafleur presented for approval an Ordinance to Amend the Building Code Ordinance No. 11-1 and 12-12 with the additional supplement suggested by Kim Touchet. Discussion was held

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to adopt an Ordinance Amending Building Code Ordinance No. 11-1 and 12-12 with the additional supplement. Yay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, M. Trahan, S. Trahan; Absent- Schlicher

Legal Ricky Lafleur presented for approval an Ordinance Regulating Signage in the Town of Maurice and Repealing Ordinance No. 18-2B

Motion: M. Trahan/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded, and carried to adopt an Ordinance Regulating Signage in the Town of Maurice and Repealing Ordinance No. 18-2B. Yay- Catalon, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande; Absent- Schlicher

J. Ricky Lafleur- Executive Session- Arsement suggested Council Members make a motion to enter into Executive Session to speak with Lafleur

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to enter into executive session at 6:19pm to discuss litigation. Yay- M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon; Absent- Schlicher

Motion: M. Trahan/Catalon moved, seconded, and carried to return to the General Meeting at 6:31pm. Yay- All Present

Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates- Prairie Cove Phase 3 Preliminary Plat approval Extension was presented for consideration by Mr. Sonnier. He informed Council members the Preliminary Plat for phase 3 was previously approved in 2022. Arsement advised the time allowed for preliminary plat approval is not sufficient since the developers have experienced several different challenges. This timeframe is one of the items that will be addressed when presenting amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance. Council members were informed the extension only applies to Prairie Cove Phase 3 and were advised by the developer that Phase 2 of the subdivision is about 50-60% occupied. Discussion was held

Motion: M. Trahan/Catalon moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Preliminary Plat Extension for Prairie Cove Phase 3. Yay- M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon; Absent- Schlicher

Nick Sonnier, Sellers & Associates- Prairie Cove Phase 3 Construction Plans and Drainage Approval- Mr. Sonnier presented the Construction Plans and Drainage Impact Analysis. He recommended Council approval contingent upon the developer addressing comments made by Seller's & Associates. Discussion was held

Motion: M. Trahan/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded, and carried to approve Prairie Cove Phase 3 Construction Plans and Drainage Impact Analysis contingent upon the developer addressing comments made by Sellers & Associates. Yay- S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon, M. Trahan; Absent- Schlicher

Subdivision Ordinance Amendment- Mr. Sonnier advised Council members there are amendments that need to be made to the Town's Subdivision Ordinance. Amendments include but are not limited to clarifying the model to be used in submitting Drainage Impact Analysis and updating Review Fees. Legal Lafleur suggested a motion be made to hold a Public Hearing at next month's General Meeting. Discussion was held

Motion: M. Trahan/Landry-Lalande moved, seconded, and carried to set a Public Hearing to introduce an Ordinance to Amend the Town of Maurice Subdivision Ordinance. The Public Hearing will take place at 6:00pm during the March 20, 2024 General Meeting located at the Town of Maurice Meeting Room, 405 Lastie Avenue, Maurice LA 70555. Yay- Landry-Lalande, Catalon, M. Trahan, S. Trahan; Absent- Schlicher

Chief Nerren- advised Council members he received positive feedback on 2 of the department's officers. One was a verbal phone call complimenting Officer Christian Touchet on a job well done and the other was an email recognizing Officer Scotty Daigle for going above & beyond his duty. He presented Council members with a list of traffic fines and possible increases at the request of Mayor Arsement. Joan Methvin suggested possibly increasing court cost but advised this amount is dictated by the State. She also suggested looking into increasing administration fees. Ricky Lafleur will look into the legal court cost limits. Lafleur advised the Town collects a good portion of traffic fines but does not keep all money collected because the State of Louisiana has mandated fees that are paid out to them each month. He will work with Chief Nerren and Joan Methvin and readdress areas that can be increased during next month's General Meeting. Discussion was held

Hire New Officer- Nerren informed Council members he received an application from a qualified candidate who is seeking full-time employment with Maurice Police Department stating if approved, Maurice would be welcoming their first female officer, Samantha Irvin. Nerren was very impressed with Irvin's qualifications and evaluation. He felt she would make a great addition to the department. Catalon asked if Nerren examined his budget and if funds were available for the new hire. Mayor Arsement addressed budget concerns in the department with Council members but expressed favor in hiring Officer Irvin for additional public safety. Arsement said the situation is tough and suggested possibly doing away with Maurice Police dispatchers and have Vermilion Sheriff's Office dispatch calls for Maurice to help Maurice Police Department overcome financial issues. Nerren advised he understood the Sheriff's Office does not want to dispatch for Maurice, at least during the day, since there is a higher volume of traffic calls. Vermilion Sheriff does dispatch Maurice calls at night because of lower call volume. Scott Trahan stated he had a conversation with the current Sheriff and was advised the Sheriff department would assist if Maurice's department was operating in the red. Landry-Lalande understood the same when speaking with the current Sheriff. Scott Trahan and Landry-Lalande were in favor of Vermilion Sheriff dispatching calls for Maurice officers if necessary and the option is available. Lengthy discussion was held

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded, and carried to hire Samantha Irvin as a full-time Maurice Police Officer. Yay- Catalon, M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande; Absent- Schlicher

Matthew Trahan asked for a meeting to be set up with the Sheriff, Arsement, Nerren, and one other Alderman and advised he would be happy to discuss with the 911 Director, the possibility of securing positions with the 911 office for Maurice dispatchers if necessary. Nerren suggested Scott Trahan be the other Alderman present in discussing options for Maurice. Scott Trahan was happy to discuss the possibility of two salaries opening up to later hire more officers.

Richard Meche, Maintenance Supervisor- January 2024- 9,245,000 gallons of water produced; 8,073,799 gallons of water sold; 1,171,201 gallons of water unmetered; 12%. Mr. Meche informed Council members the maintenance crew started cleaning ditches with the Town's current excavator but advised it is very difficult because of the reach on the machine. He stated the new dump trailer is working very well. Kaplan intends to help change out the banners throughout Town. Discussion was held

Purchase Excavator- Mr. Meche was able to obtain new quotes for Council consideration in purchasing a new excavator with a longer reach. All of the quotes are for the same type and size of the machine and come with a 4-year warranty. Legal Lafleur advised Council members could accept a quote that is not the lowest if good cause is shown. Meche explained that during his search for new quotes, he was able to find and test a different excavator brand that appeared to function equally as well as other brands on the market. The Hitachi machine came in at \$46,944 which is lower than the previous quotes provided and has the same type of motor, reach, and 4-year warranty. It also comes with a 3-foot ditch bucket. The local CLM dealership can perform service on the machine. Discussion was held

Motion: Landry-Lalande/Catalon moved, seconded, and carried to accept the quote from CLM in the amount of \$46,944 for the purchase of a new Excavator. Yay- M. Trahan, S. Trahan, Landry-Lalande, Catalon; Absent- Schlicher

Meche advised Council members one of the maintenance employees was involved in a severe motorcycle accident. The employee is ok but sustained injuries prohibiting him from returning to work for an undetermined period of time. The crew is maintaining functionality at this time but the upcoming season is normally very busy. The current crew will do extra as necessary during the employee's recovery.

Mayor Arsement- Sales Tax Update- December 2023 sales tax is \$112,797.82 which is up 9.2% from last year. Arsement asked residents to continue supporting local businesses. He also advised he is waiting on the Fire Marshal to approve the Maurice Park bathroom plans. Dirt work at Maurice Park is almost complete and Arsement is trying to get one section of the park playground re-opened. Arsement advised Catalon the ground has not been seeded since the winter grass is dying off but the spring grass should grow after the dirt work has been dressed up.

Council Concerns: None

Citizen Concerns: Wayne Theriot advised Mrs. Louise Broussard passed away. She was 104 and was Maurice's oldest resident. Theriot asked everyone to keep her family in prayer.

Motion: Landry-Lalande/M. Trahan moved, seconded and carried to adjourn at 7:23pm. Yay- All Present