



# TOWN OF PEARL RIVER

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BRIDGETT BENNETT

VIRGIL R. PHILLIPS

LORA CUTRER

DAVID MCGREGOR

Aldermen

DAVID McQUEEN

Mayor

KATHRYN WALSH

Mayor Pro Tempore

CARLA O. BENELLI

Town Clerk

TIMOTHY MATHISON

Town Attorney

MATHIEU E. DAIGLE

Assistant Town Attorney

The following minutes were taken at the regular monthly meeting of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen on March 21, 2017 at the Town Hall in Pearl River. Mayor McQueen called the meeting to order at 7:03p.m.

Alderman Cutrer gave the invocation; the pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor McQueen.

## ROLL CALL:

Aldermen Bennett, Walsh, Cutrer and McGregor were present. Also present were Attorney Mathison and the Town Clerk, Carla Benelli. Alderman Phillips and Chief Jennings were absent.

Mayor McQueen called for approval of the minutes from the Town Council meeting held on February 21, 2017. Alderman Walsh asked that the last page be amended to read "accept the garage, special permit". Alderman Bennett made the motion to accept with the changes, seconded by Alderman McGregor.  
**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen noted that changes could be made to the minutes as long as it is approved in the meetings. If a change is requested after the meeting, the change won't be made until the following meeting.

## SPECIAL COMMENTS:

Alderman Cutrer announced the winners for the "Polishing the Pearl" poster contest. The winners from Riverside Elementary were Brooklyn Zeringue (1<sup>st</sup> place), Sophia DaSilva (2<sup>nd</sup> place) and Clairese Tune (3<sup>rd</sup> place). The winners from Creekside Elementary were Isaiah Rushing (1<sup>st</sup> place), Trinity Smith (2<sup>nd</sup> place) and Anna Johnston (3<sup>rd</sup> place). The winners from Pearl River High School were Caitlyn Sixkiller and James Fourcade (1<sup>st</sup> place), Serentiy Burge and Hannah Jump (2<sup>nd</sup> place) and Jordan Ingram and Sarah Davis (3<sup>rd</sup> place). Each winner received ribbons and a gift card from a local business.

Alderman Bennett and the mayor recognized two special Pearl River High School senior students for their academic achievement and for being great roll-models. Jenay Jackson and Mason Hemphill were awarded certificates by the mayor.

Charlie Williams introduced the Ordinance Franchise renewal for CenterPoint Energy; he announced that the franchise renewal fee will go from 4% to 4.5% of the gross sales. A public hearing will be held at the May meeting.

Trilby Lenfant, Deputy CAO for St. Tammany Parish Government spoke about educating the public about the Jail and Justice Center Complex Sales Tax Renewal which is on the ballot for April 29<sup>th</sup>. She announced that the ¼ cent sales tax for the jail and St. Tammany Complex will be reduced to 1/5 cent. Ms. Lenfant handed out pamphlets with additional information. Gene Bellisario also spoke for several minutes about the Sales Tax Renewal. For more information, CD's are available at Town Hall.

## **PUBLIC HEARING:**

David Wolf with Adams and Reese LLP spoke about the 20 year loan for improvements to the sewage system in the town. Mr. Wolf added two statutes to Ordinance #17-15-02 "Authorizing Issuance of Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00) of Taxable Sales Tax Bonds, Series 2017, of the Town of Pearl River, State of Louisiana, prescribing the form, terms and conditions of said Bonds".

Mayor McQueen asked for a motion to accept the amendments to the Ordinance, motion made by Alderman Bennett and seconded by Alderman McGregor.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen asked for a motion to open the public hearing on Ordinance #17-15-02 with the amendments. Alderman Bennett made the motion and Alderman McGregor seconded.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen opened the public hearing for the amendment to the Ordinance. No one had any comments or questions. Mayor McQueen closed the public hearing. Alderman Bennett made the motion to accept the Ordinance as amended, seconded by Alderman McGregor.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

David Wolf announced that the application had been submitted to the Bond Commission today. It will go before the Commission on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully the town will be able to make its first draw from the loan in May or June.

Mayor McQueen called for a motion to remove Ordinance #01-03-A "Mobile Homes/Trailers from the table. Motion made by Alderman Walsh, seconded by Alderman McGregor.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Ordinance #01-03-A will be replaced by Ordinance #03-16-17 "Mobile Homes/Trailers". The mayor opened the public hearing on Ordinance #03-16-17. The mayor explained the ordinance to the citizens. Alderman McGregor asked if someone could live in a camper trailer in a mobile home park temporarily, 6 months or less. Alderman Bennett wanted it noted in the minutes that she did ask that the word "Special Permit" be left in this ordinance for purposes of extenuating circumstances. The mayor said that there are circumstances where a special permit could be granted and would be looked at on a case by case basis. Mayor McQueen closed the public hearing and asked for a motion to accept the ordinance, motion made by Alderman Walsh, seconded by Alderman Cutrer.

**Alderman Walsh and Alderman Cutrer – Yea**

**Alderman Bennett and Alderman McGregor - Nay**

**Mayor McQueen voted to accept the Ordinance, So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen called for a public hearing on Ordinance #3-13-17 "Appropriation of funds for Expenses related to storm expense reimbursement work". Six hundred thousand (\$600,000.00) will be transferred from the money market to pay FEMA / GOHSEP. Mayor McQueen closed the public hearing and called for a motion to accept, motion made by Alderman Walsh, seconded by Alderman Cutrer.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

Mayor McQueen introduced Ordinance #17-21-03 "Adopting certain codes relative to the creation of a Fire Prevention Division of St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 11". The public hearing will be held at the next town meeting in May. Mayor McQueen explained the ordinance. The mayor called for a motion to introduce the ordinance; motion made by Alderman Walsh, seconded by Alderman Bennett.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Alderman Cutrer handed out copies of an ordinance that she is introducing, "Forming Keep Pearl River Beautiful Commission" to the council. A public hearing will be held in May. Alderman Cutrer said that to be affiliated with Keep America Beautiful the town must have an ordinance like this in the book

stating that the town will have a board. She also stated that the board can't have official meetings until this ordinance is passed.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**COMMENTS & REPORTS:**

**Legislative Comments and reports**

Alderman Cutrer updated everyone on "Polishing the Pearl" which is set for Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. She gave the details and announced that there were still t-shirts for sale. Mayor McQueen added that the Lions Club would be serving hotdogs and burgers to the volunteers after the clean-up. Alderman Cutrer said that the bottled water was donated by Jubilee Grocery and the Football Association donated the hotdogs and hamburgers. She also announced that the local pastors would like to host and present our mayor with a community prayer breakfast for the national day of prayer. Proceeds will go into a fund for needy families. It is scheduled for May 4<sup>th</sup>.

Alderman Bennett updated everyone on the impromptu clean-up of the river last Sunday. It was a huge success and thanked everyone who participated. She also gave an update on the Run the River 5K; she said that there are about 120 people signed up so far. The medals were donated by a company out of North Carolina, Jubilee donated all the food and the Lions Club will be cooking for participants. She also updated everyone on the upcoming Honey Island Swamp Festival meetings; everyone is invited to attend the meetings.

Mayor McQueen reminded everyone about the annual Easter Egg Hunt coming up on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

**CHIEF OF POLICE:**

Not Present

A citizen asked about the police department and how things were going in the town where it pertained to drugs and other activities. Chief was not in attendance so the questions were not answered.

**PARISH COUNCIL:**

Gene Bellisario spoke about Sawmill Creek and the drainage. He also spoke about the board and commissions, training sessions, ethics and purchasing requirements. Alderman Walsh asked about the dirt being removed from Sawmill Creek.

**RECREATION DISTRICT #5:**

Peter Finger stated that they are still working on the agreement with the town. The mayor explained that the holdup is the liability insurance company; we are still waiting on RMI to get back with us on adding Rec. 5 to the policy. The mayor also said that he needed a better drawing for the state to show the stages of work to be performed by the Pearl River boat launch. The town also has an appointment on the board for Rec. 5. Peter also asked about the lights on the Veterans Flags, the mayor said that the lights are on order.

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION:**

No business

**FIRE DISTRICT 11:**

Left a report

**SCHOOL BOARD:**

Not Present

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Eddie Sticker talked about the STOP signs on Pine Street and how they aren't working. Mayor McQueen said that he can't do anything else but put in speed bumps; the chief is in control of his officers. The mayor said that he is tired of taking complaints for the police department; please put your complaints in writing. Alderman Walsh said that she had spoken to the police chief about other solutions.

Gene Montz asked why the police chief couldn't and didn't send one of his officers as a representative from the police department for this meeting. He stated that there should be a representative from the police department at every town meeting.

Madison Barbin would like to ask the Sheriff's office to patrol in the town if needed.

Charles Howard spoke about the old and new administration, he doesn't want to see ugly FaceBook posts or newspaper articles about the town.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

None

**MAYOR:**

Mayor McQueen read his comments about FaceBook and the recent articles on the front page of the Slidell Independent; please see attached.

MEETING ADJOURNED  
AT 8:44 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 21<sup>st</sup> DAY OF MARCH 2017.

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Carla Benelli, Town Clerk

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Honorable Clarence McQueen, Mayor

I hate that it has come to this but, I feel there are a few things I need to say.

First, I would like to apologize to the people in our Town for the newspaper article that came out a few weeks back. I think that it is ashamed that someone would take a Facebook fight to the newspaper. To me this gave our Town another blackeye it did not deserve. People from all over this Town came to me and could not believe that our Town made front page of a newspaper because of Facebook.

So because of this please except my apology.

Secondly, my Town Clerk and I were accused of wrong doings with Town records by the same people. I have worked hard for the past two years bringing this Town forward and improving the Town's image. My Clerk, Ms. Benelli, has been viciously attacked by people who never have taken the time to stop by and introduce themselves and get to know her. If someone does have a problem with Carla, it needs to come to me for me to address, not a Facebook post. Carla, works hard for this town and did not deserve these attacks. These allegations are wrong and I wish they would stop so the Town can move on.

After these attacks Ms. Bennett defended both Carla and myself against these allegations and for this I would like to publicly thank you.

Thank you Bridgett.

Next I am tired of being blamed for the Council not getting along. I ran for Mayor to work for this Town and the people of this Town. Not a referee for this Council. I have some Councilmen that feel, I can't do my job I was elected for, so they go out and make appointments and meetings at banks, businesses, organizations representing this Town. I need you to do your job and I will do mine. I was elected as Mayor to work for the people and this Town. If I am doing a bad job at running this Town, it doesn't matter to me what you think, the people of this Town will let me know November of 2018.

Having said these words I do wish all of us will try and come together for the sake of the Town.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of you who come to our meetings, serves on our boards and those who work so hard for this Town.

Mayor David McQueen