

The following minutes were taken at the regular monthly meeting of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen on May 16, 2017 at the Town Hall in Pearl River. Mayor McQueen called the meeting to order at 7:02p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

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

Mayor McQueen called for approval of the minutes from the regular Council Meeting held on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Alderman Walsh made the motion to accept, seconded by Alderman Bennett. Alderman Cutrer asked to have the person's name added to the minutes who spoke for CenterPoint Energy at the last meeting along with the fact that she questioned him on gas leaks in Pearl River area. Ken Wheats name will be added to the April 18<sup>th</sup> minutes along with the requested comments about the gas leaks. Alderman Walsh made a motion to accept the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes with the changes, seconded by Alderman Bennett.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

**SPECIAL COMMENTS:**

John Schroder, State Representative canceled and reschedule for July.

**TABLED ITEMS**

Alderman Cutrer made a motion to remove Ordinance #03-22-17 "Forming Keep Pearl River Beautiful Commission" from the table. Seconded by Alderman Walsh.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen asked for a change to Ordinance #03-22-17, he would like to have the mayor added to the ordinance allowing him to have an appointment to the board just like the council. Alderman Cutrer stated that the ordinance does have the mayor appointing the chairman and the executive director. Alderman Bennett would like to know how many grants, nationwide, are given out by KLB. Ms. Susan Russel, executive director for Keep Louisiana Beautiful, spoke to the council for several minutes. She stated that KLB has given \$160,000 to \$180,000 statewide to affiliates and non-profits yearly. This is separate from KAB which also awards about seven (7) different grants just for affiliates. The grants can be from \$1,000 up to \$10,000; this depends on the application and the request to KLB. Ms. Russel said that you do not have to be an affiliate of KLB to be awarded one of the grants.

Ms. Russel discussed workshops for teachers, tools, resources and training for the community. Alderman Bennett asked what the primary reason is for needing a law for this committee. Alderman Cutrer stated that she had spoken to Ms. Cecile, the president of KAB, and was told that the purpose of the ordinance is to give control to the mayor. Alderman Phillips stated that the mayor couldn't just do away with this ordinance but if the mayor sees an issue with the committee he can go to the council and request that the council make

changes or suggest that the ordinance be abolished. Alderman McGregor asked if it were possible for the alderman to be the board and have a committee to get the grants. Ms. Russel said that the Town of Pearl River could apply for a Healthy Communities Grant with KLB but they have two others grants that are only for affiliates. Keep America Beautiful has seven types of grants that are only for affiliates.

Mayor McQueen announced that the Town of Pearl River had won first in STATE this year for Polishing the Pearl River Cleanup. The mayor thanked the council and the town crew for their hard work. He also thanked everyone who had pitched in to help.

Alderman Cutrer made a motion to amend Ordinance #03-22-17 to add an additional sentence that states “each member shall be entitled to exercise one vote”. Seconded by Alderman Walsh.

**Three (3) in Favor (Alderman Walsh, Cutrer & Phillips), Two (2) Against (Alderman Bennett & McGregor). So Moved.**

Alderman Cutrer made a motion to accept Ordinance #03-22-17, seconded by Alderman Phillips.

**Roll Call:**

**Alderman Walsh – Yes**

**Alderman Bennett – No**

**Alderman Phillips – Yes**

**Alderman Cutrer – Yes**

**Alderman McGregor – No**

**3 Yes, 2 No. So Moved.**

#### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

Mayor McQueen opened the public hearing on Ordinance #16-20-12 “2016 Final Budget”. The mayor asked if there were any comments. Alderman Bennett stated that she had an issue with the Police Dept. budget; she said that it is her understanding that it is illegal to build a budget on tickets and fines, this refers to the 2017 budget too. Chief Jennings said that he thought she might be referring to the law, don’t quote him, but he thinks that when a certain part of the revenue from tickets supersedes the revenue for what is coming in, but the ticket money now goes into the General Fund. Attorney Mathison, Alderman Bennett and Chief Jennings continued to discuss this issue for several more minutes, please listen to CD at the Town Hall for more details. Alderman Walsh asked Attorney Mathison to do some legal research on this issue. Alderman Bennett continued to explain her issue with this budget to the council.

Milton Marshall, a Pearl River citizen, spoke about the budget for the Police Department and asked if services to the town would be cut to support that budget. Chief Jennings explained that the PD could make it on a budget of seven-hundred thousand dollars (\$700,000.00); he said that he would adjust other line items on his budget and wouldn’t have to cut jobs. Alderman Bennett stated that PD salaries alone are six-hundred, fifty-six thousand, and eight hundred dollars (\$656,800.00). Chief Jennings said that he ran the police department on seven-hundred thousand dollars (\$700,000.00) when he first got into office. The discussion continued; listen to CD for more details.

Mayor McQueen closed the public hearing; Alderman Cutrer made the motion to accept Ordinance #16-20-12, seconded by Alderman Walsh.

**Roll Call:**

**Alderman McGregor – No**

**Alderman Bennett – No**

**Alderman Phillips – Yes**

**Alderman Cutrer – Yes**

**Alderman Walsh – Yes**

**3 Yes, 2 No. So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen opened the public hearing on Ordinance #16-21-02 “2017 Amended Budget”. The mayor asked if there were any comments. Alderman Walsh stated that she would like to table this Ordinance after the public hearing and have another special meeting. She asked Attorney Mathison to do some research on the issue and give the council advice. Attorney Mathison stated that he did not see a problem with the ordinance and neither did Attorney Daigle. Mayor McQueen closed the public hearing; Alderman Walsh made the motion to accept Ordinance #16-21-02, seconded by Alderman McGregor. Alderman Walsh said that the council could get together at a later date to amend this budget. Mayor McQueen said that he would like to see this passed tonight and then the council could change it as they see fit.

**Roll Call:**

**Alderman McGregor – No**

**Alderman Bennett – No**

**Alderman Phillips – Yes**

**Alderman Cutrer – Yes**

**Alderman Walsh – Yes**

**3 Yes, 2 No. So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen opened the public hearing on the MS4. The mayor asked if anyone had any questions concerning the MS4. The mayor closed the public hearing and asked for a motion. Alderman Phillips made the motion, seconded by Alderman Walsh.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Mayor McQueen asked if anyone from the council had any comments or anything to add about the request by owner, Michael King of Cajun Mike's Creole Kitchen, to serve beer and wine. Alderman Walsh submitted to the council the measurements from both churches to the restaurant. Mayor McQueen stated that the state law is 300 ft. from front door to front door. Alderman Walsh explained how the measurements were taken. Alderman Bennett stated that the Pentecostal Church is less than 300 ft. from the restaurant; none of the people from that church had an issue with the restaurant wanting to serve beer and wine but that it is a town and a state law. She also stated that she hopes they will do well here and thinks that the Town of Pearl River will support the restaurant. Alderman Cutrer agreed and stated that they needed to follow the laws that are in place already. Alderman Walsh also stated that she hopes the restaurant makes it in our town.

The mayor stepped out and Attorney Mathison stepped in for several minutes. Attorney Mathison reinstated that the council had no intentions on changing the present liquor license ordinance, the council agreed. The owner of the restaurant's building and the mini-storage, Paul Richard, spoke to the council. He stated that his last two tenants couldn't make a go of it because they weren't able to serve beer. He also talked about his new tenant and how he would have total respect for the town and the local churches. Alderman Phillips spoke to Mr. Richard about the laws on serving liquor. Attorney Mathison also spoke about conditional use and why it could not be used for just Cajun Mikes.

Alderman Phillips asked if the establishment were to serve a certain percentage of food compared to the percentage of alcohol, would that change anything in the states eyes? Attorney Mathison said that it wouldn't; Slidell does have a restaurant exemption.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mayor McQueen announced Resolution #17-05-06 "Adopt Millage Rates" Renewal. The mayor asked for public comment for the renewal of "Adopt Millage Rate". The mayor closed the public comment and asked for a motion to accept the Resolution as written. Alderman Bennett moved to accept the Resolution, seconded by Alderman Phillips.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Alderman Walsh introduced Resolution #R17-05-17 "Video Taping and Recording Minutes". Alderman Walsh stated that she has had request that the town video tape the town meetings and put them on a public access channel. Alderman Bennett agreed. Alderman Walsh said that she thinks this would be cost efficient, there are several options. Option One is to purchase our own equipment and have the clerk set it up and turns it on before each meeting, Option two is to purchase our own equipment and have it hard wired for recording; Option three is to pay someone to come to the meeting and record. Mayor McQueen stated that he had gotten only one quote to have someone come out and do the recording for the town; \$300 for 3 hours and \$100 each hour after that which would be billed in 15 minute increments. This person would also provide the town with one DVD. Alderman Walsh said that owning our own equipment would be a benefit to the town in many different aspects. Ms. Rinkus explained how she would video tape the meetings and some of the details on equipment she would be using if hired. Mayor McQueen asked for a motion to accept the Resolution. Alderman Walsh made the motion.

Alderman Walsh talked about "Community Center Rental Forms and Applications". She asked the council and the chief if they had anything they wanted to add or change. She also stated that the new "Pearl River Community Center" sign was on order. Alderman Cutrer asked that felt be put under the chairs and the tables so that they wouldn't scratch the new floors. The council discussed the rental forms and some of the details. None of the council members recommended any changes and the money from the rental would be deposited into the General Fund.

## **COMMENTS & REPORTS:**

Pastor Pittman spoke about the Prayer Breakfast. 159 people attended the breakfast; \$2000 was raised towards the event and for community benevolence fund.

Alderman Cutrer announced that we would be receiving the first place award in June for the Cleanest City. She said that we could put it on FaceBook so that the citizens could join the mayor when the award is presented.

Alderman Bennett announced that the Honey Island Swamp Festival is coming up soon. Everything is in place and so many people and businesses have helped. We do need more volunteers.

Alderman McGregor asked the mayor for an update on the sewage lines by the Pearl River High tennis courts. Mayor McQueen stated that he is waiting to hear from the School Board.

Alderman Phillips announced that with the mayor's approval, Pearl River is going to have their first annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks show. Information will be released soon.

## **CHIEF OF POLICE:**

Chief Jennings reported: April 1<sup>st</sup> to May 3<sup>rd</sup> the Police Department had 37 arrests with 57 offenses. Chief Jennings broke down the arrest and offenses. He also addressed the amount of tickets reportedly issued on Pine Street; he stated that from April 24<sup>th</sup> to May 6<sup>th</sup> there were only 51 tickets handed out on Pine Street. Alderman Walsh stated that she had been told that someone had gotten a ticket for doing only four miles per hour over the limit. Chief Jennings said that he had not seen one ticket issued for only 4 miles per hour over the limit. He stated that the tickets on Pine Street had been reduced to only one per day at this time.

## **MAYOR:**

Mayor McQueen gave an update on the Round-About. He also said that Pearl River may be responsible for 20 percent of the bridge replacement on Hwy. 41 Spur; the bridge does belong to the town. He talked about trying to speed up the process; it could be 6 months to 1 year before the bridge replacement would be started. Alderman Cutrer and Walsh suggested putting information on the town's FaceBook page so that the citizens can contact representatives and complain to officials about the bridge being out for so long. The mayor also announced that Hickory Street would be closed for several more days because of issues with repairs. They mayor said that the bank would be installing a privacy fence at the back of the property soon. He also apologized to citizens for the problems with the water, the crew had flushed the system but some people still got the brown water.

Alderman Cutrer asked why the splash pad in the park was not on yet. The mayor stated that the splash pad is usually turned on the weekend before Memorial Day. He said that he would have turned it on earlier but some bigger kids had bent the plunger and it had to be repaired first.

## **PARISH COUNCIL:**

None

## **FIRE DISTRICT 11:**

None

## **RECREATION DISTRICT #5:**

Peter Finger spoke for several minutes about the Pearl River boat launch/landing. They had someone donate some dirt. The mayor said that he would get them the CEA. Mr. Finger talked about the

size of the parking area along with a buffer zone, green space and pavilion areas. Alderman Phillips said that he may have someone who can do the drawing for the landing improvements.

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION:**

None

**SCHOOL BOARD:**

Not Present

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Krennerich from Sullivan Place spoke about the ditch by the bank and drainage.

Ms. Buckley from Sullivan Place also spoke about the water from the school that is flooding her property, the parents picking up children at the school being on the phone and throwing cigarette butts out of the windows onto Sullivan and the school buses driving too fast. She also complained about the kids on the buses not having seat belts and that the police need to be in Pearl River not the interstate. She also talked about the old seafood place on the corner of Hwy. 41 and Sullivan.

MEETING ADJOURNED

AT 9:18 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 16<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MAY, 2017.

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Carla Benelli, Town Clerk

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Honorable Clarence McQueen, Mayor