



**TOWN OF PEARL RIVER  
BUDGET MEETING  
JANUARY 11, 2018 5:10 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Council Meeting was held at the Pearl River Town Hall and so called to the order by Mayor McQueen at 7:10pm.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Aldermen Walsh, Bennett, Cutrer, McGregor along with Mayor McQueen, Chief Jennings, Attorney Mathison and Attorney Daigle. Absent: Alderman Phillips.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Attorney Daigle reviewed Ordinance No. 17-12-12 2018 Budget with the Aldermen. Attorney Daigle started with the General Fund, where \$12,000.00 (twelve thousand dollars) was given to Recreation District #5 and adjusting other buckets. Attorney Daigle explained that the Police Department pays \$15,000.00 (fifteen thousand dollars) to St. Tammany Parish for the radio towers, he feels that those funds should stay in the General Fund instead of transferring those funds. Attorney Daigle explained that this would put the Police Departments budget from \$450,000.00 (four hundred and fifty thousand dollars) to \$435,000.00 (four hundred thirty five thousand dollars), with the \$15,000.00 (fifteen thousand) staying in the General Fund. Attorney Daigle explained that the Police Department's budget can start at \$435,000.00 (four hundred thirty five thousand dollars) until March. Once the actuals from 2017 are received any remaining funds could be used to bring the Police Departments budget up. Attorney Daigle went over the Street Department budget with the Aldermen and informed them that the Street Department still owes the State \$89,547.00 (eighty nine thousand five hundred forty seven dollars) for the round-a-bout. Next he reviewed the Sewer and Water Department budget. Attorney Daigle stated that in order to have the funds to pay for the new sewer plant loan the aldermen will need to discuss raising the sewer and water rates. He also informed the aldermen that in March they will have separate budgets for sewer and for water.

Alderman Walsh asked if there was a loss in Occupational Licenses. She also asked if anyone had any updates on COAST, if they had enough people in order to continue their services. Cheryl, acting Town Clerk, informed the aldermen that COAST is doing great. Mayor McQueen stated that word of mouth has helped get their numbers up. Alderman Walsh asked about the Finance Clerk. Attorney Daigle informed the aldermen that this will not be a salary position it will be hourly pay. Alderman Walsh asked if this would be open for applications. Mayor McQueen informed her that he has received three application previously, two of those have the credentials for the Finance Clerk. Mayor McQueen stated that he can reopen the application process. Alderman Walsh asked about decreasing the Town Clerks salary. Mayor McQueen thought about this but he would hate to go backwards, but that is something the aldermen needs to decide. Mayor McQueen does feel that \$150.00 (one hundred fifty dollars) for every special meeting is high, maybe \$75.00 (seventy five dollars). Alderman Walsh suggested starting the Clerk at \$35,000.00 (thirty five thousand dollars) a year and then raising the Clerk to \$37,000.00 (thirty seven thousand dollars) after the first year. Alderman Bennett does not wish to decrease the Clerks salary again, because this position is asking a lot from a person. She would like to keep the salary

at \$40,000.00 (forty thousand dollars) a year. Alderman McGregor asked if the applicants are aware of the current salary. Mayor McQueen stated that the salary was not discussed, but it is public records. Alderman Cutrer asked if there was a base line starting salary for the Clerk. Mayor McQueen stated he understands what she's asking but that would work for someone working hourly. Their salaries are in an ordinance and that pay cannot change unless this ordinance is changed. Attorney Daigle stated that the original Clerk's salary was \$38,000.00, but she was getting payed extra from special meetings and other pay that actually equaled 40,000.00 so the mayor made it a flat \$40,000.00 then the aldermen changed it to \$42,000.00 and now decreased it back to \$40,000.00. Mayor McQueen stated that he would like make the Clerk classes mandatory. Alderman Walsh feels that there are a few jobs that the Town Clerk is no longer responsible for such as: property tax, Sales tax, Occupational License, and now the finances. She doesn't feel that they will be going backwards. Attorney Daigle stated maybe the aldermen could put in the ordinance that the Town Clerk would start at \$40,000.00 (forty thousand dollars) a year and go up from there. Mayor McQueen stated they have changed the ordinance three times already. Attorney Daigle informed the aldermen that the budget will stay at \$40,000.00 (forty thousand dollars) a year until the ordinance is revised. Alderman Walsh asked about the Farmers Market, because there is \$500.00 (five hundred dollars) in the budget for this. Mayor McQueen informed her that he is still working on having a Farmers Market, but the funds are only for the placement of an electric pole. Alderman Walsh asked about the insurance for the Farmers Market. Mayor McQueen stated if the insurance is to high then there will not be a Farmers Market. Alderman McGregor asked about raises for the Clerks and the street crew. Mayor McQueen informed the aldermen that this would be a decision for them to discuss. Mayor McQueen informed the aldermen that he would like to hire someone in the Sewer and Water Department. Attorney Daigle feels that raises will needed to be looked at in March once they have a more accurate number. Attorney Mathison said that if they receive any raises then those won't take effect till the first of the year. Alderman McGregor asked if the funds for the Swamp Fest could have \$500.00 to make the budget \$8,000.00 due to this event being a two day event. Attorney Daigle stated he could move some funds around but that final decision will be up to the aldermen. Mayor McQueen informed the aldermen that those funds can be taken out of the Holiday funds. Alderman Walsh asked for an update on Billy Burkett. Mayor McQueen informed the aldermen that he came in yesterday to inform him that the Town got approved for another payment, but \$6,000.00 (six thousand dollars) was rejected out of the \$126,000 (one hundred twenty six thousand dollars). Mr. Burkett was going to have a meeting with FEMA and will get back with the Mayor.

Attorney Daigle discussed the Sewer and Water budget. He feels that having a \$5.00 (five dollars) increase in the sewer and a \$5.00 (five dollars) increase in water would help with the payments for the new sewer treatment plant. Attorney Daigle feels that this flat would help the revenue until the metering is started. Mayor McQueen stated his only concern about going up on the flat rate would be the elderly people. Alderman Bennett feels that this raise should have already been done.

Attorney Daigle reviewed the Street Department. He explained about the funds that will go to the State for the roundabout. Alderman Walsh asked where in the budget are the funds that go to the Parish for the fixing of the Spur 41 Bridge. The Town will owe the Parish \$55,000.00 (fifty five thousand dollars). Mayor McQueen stated he needs to add this to the budget, because he forgot about that. Alderman McGregor asked about the water lines that run alongside the Spur 41 Bridge. Mayor McQueen replied that the parish informed him that those lines are not close to where they will be working. He informed the parish that he would like to be present for this construction to make sure the water lines are protected. Attorney Daigle stated the transfer from money market into the Sewer and Water Department will be \$144,547.00 (one hundred forty four thousand five hundred forty seven dollars). Alderman Walsh asked if the funds were added into the health insurance for a new employee. Attorney

Daigle stated those funds are added. He also informed the aldermen that the balance for the Street Department is \$189,547.00 (one hundred eighty nine thousand five hundred forty seven dollars).

Attorney Daigle reviewed the MMA account with the aldermen, and discussed taking the \$144,547.00 (one hundred forty four thousand five hundred forty seven dollars) from the Sewer Plant Project bring those funds to \$252,795.60 (two hundred fifty two thousand seven hundred ninety five dollars).

Mayor McQueen and the aldermen discussed the ratio changes, by the Fire Board, to the sizing of the water lines.

Mayor McQueen informed the aldermen that David Wolf will not be able to make it to the next Council Meeting, but he will be at the Town Tuesday, January 16, 2018 at 2:00pm.

Attorney Daigle discussed the Police Department Budget. Chief Jennings explained his reasoning for wanting an increase in the Police Departments Budget. Attorney Daigle discussed the funds for the new vehicle purchase with the Mayor and the aldermen. Chief Jennings and Alderman Bennett spoke about the Police Department revenue and the Officer's take home vehicle. Chief Jennings also spoke about the possibility of St. Tammany Parish taking over the 911 calls.

Chief Jennings let the aldermen know that Kevin Rawls resigned, due to health issues.

Mayor McQueen informed the aldermen know that James Lavigne's, past Mayor, family called in Hospice.

Alderman Walsh suggested taking the date of February Council Meeting off the floor. All in favor. Open for discussion. Alderman Walsh informed the aldermen that The Mid Winter Conference will be February 20th and the 21st in Baton Rouge. She wanted to bring this to the aldermen's attention for them to consider changing the date of the meeting in order for them all to attend.

Alderman Walsh asked about the process of changing the physical year with the Legislation Office.

CD available in Records room, per-request.

**MEETING ADJOURNED  
AT 6:00 P.M.  
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 11th day of JANUARY, 2018**

  
Honorable Clarence D. McQueen, Mayor

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