

TOWN OF SIMMESPORT

MAYOR LESLIE DRAPER III

DISTRICT I
TED TURNER



DISTRICT II
KENNETH MARSH

DISTRICT III
MYRON K. BROWN

DISTRICT IV
SHERMAN BELL

ALDERMAN AT LARGE
JACOB COCO

July 8, 2019 Regular Town Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Simmesport held at the Simmesport Town Hall on Monday, July 8, 2019, at 6:00 p.m.

Presiding: Mayor Leslie Draper

Members Present: Ted Turner, Myron Brown, Kenneth Marsh, Jacob Coco, Sherman Bell

Members Absent: None

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Draper and was opened with a prayer given by Alderman Myron Brown followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Alderman Coco and seconded by Alderman Turner that the agenda be amended to include a discussion on raising the utility rates for the water. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____
Alderman Brown	X	_____	_____
Alderman Coco	X	_____	_____
Alderman Marsh	X	_____	_____
Alderman Turner	X	_____	_____

The motion was carried.

A motion was made by Alderman Bell and seconded by Alderman Coco to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____
Alderman Brown	X	_____	_____
Alderman Coco	X	_____	_____
Alderman Marsh	X	_____	_____
Alderman Turner	X	_____	_____

The motion was carried.

A motion was made by Alderman Marsh and seconded by Alderman Turner to pay the bills. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X		
Alderman Brown	X		
Alderman Coco	X		
Alderman Marsh	X		
Alderman Turner	X		

The motion was carried.

DELEGATION TIME:

Ricky Adams, Avoyelles Parish School Board Member, addressed the assembled delegation to inform them that recent reports show test scores in Avoyelles Parish Schools are on the rise again. He said there are still problem areas that need to be addressed, but the trend is positive. Mr. Adams thanked all the dedicated parents and hard-working teachers and staff in the parish for helping to improve education in Avoyelles.

Mr Sammy Ducote, Director of the Port of Avoyelles, addressed the council. He stated that he saw the previous town minutes in the paper and the that the council wanted to speak with a representative from the Port Commission. Mayor Draper told Mr. Ducote that there were problems with the new water tower and the sewer lift station that serves the port on the Atchafalaya River side. Mayor Draper then suggested they set up a meeting with Simmesport Maintenance Supervisor Charles Carter to discuss these issues.

Mr. Daryl Deshotel introduced himself to the Mayor, Council and all assembled as a candidate for State Representative. Mr. Deshotel stated that one of his main goals was to bring more jobs to Avoyelles Parish so that the parish could grow and flourish.

Mayor Draper addressed the Council about the issue of relatives of deceased people living in the deceased person’s home and not paying town utility bills because the names had not been switched over on the bill. The Mayor said it was nearly impossible to collect from someone who is deceased when one of the family runs up a bill in the deceased’s name. Possible solutions to this situation were offered, however, the Town Attorney, Kirk LaCour, said he would research various legal options to see if a suitable solution could be found.

Mayor Draper then led a discussion on the need to raise water rates to pay for new electronic meters. In the May 13, 2019 Regular meeting the Town Council voted to go ahead and finance the wireless meters. Mayor Draper informed the council that the new meters will have to be paid for. The cost for each new meter will be \$5.31 per month per meter. The meters will be financed for a 15-year term, during which we could pay them off at any time. Councilman Turner commented that the last time water rates were raised was over a decade ago to pay for a pump. Mayor Draper informed the Council that Simmesport has the lowest rates for water in the Parish. Currently the rates are \$16.00 for the first 2,000 gallons of water and \$2.65 for every 1,000 gallons above the 2,000. The basic sewer rate is \$12.00 making the minimum rate just over \$29.00 with taxes added. Various plans were brought forth from raising the basic rate to also raising the amount over 1,000 gallons. In the end the discussion was tabled and Alderman Bell and Alderman Coco agreed to meet with the Mayor in a working group on July 17, 2019 to bring a recommendation to the board.

Mayor Draper also informed the council that the auditors will be at the Town Hall the week of July 22 to complete the 2017-2018 Audit. The completion and filing of this audit will bring the Town of Simmesport back into

compliance and make us eligible for many grants we are now locked out of. Mayor Draper told the Council that he would bring a full review of the audit once it was complete.

The next discussion centered on blighted property and what to do about them. Town Attorney Kirk LaCour suggested that one solution would be the formation of a separate court to handle only blighted properties. Mr. LaCour said he could draft an ordinance for the next regular meeting that would bring owners of blighted property to “nuisance” court.

A motion was made by Alderman Marsh and seconded by Alderman Coco that the Town of Simmesport draft and ordinance to form a nuisance court to handle cases of blighted property . All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X		
Alderman Brown	X		
Alderman Coco	X		
Alderman Marsh	X		
Alderman Turner	X		

The motion was carried.

Mayor Draper also brought up the issue of parking problems in front of the Town Hall. He asked about the possibility of creating a crosswalk so that town employees could park across the street and safely walk across the road. Mayor Draper also brought up the possibility of parking behind or on the side of the old community center.

With the increased use of the ball field behind Riverside Elementary and the renovation of the tennis courts, Mayor Draper suggested that a Town Athletic Commissioner be appointed to handle those areas. New nets were ordered for the tennis courts and plans to convert one of the tennis courts into a basketball court, along with the negotiations to take control of the fields at the Port of Avoyelles make this a necessity. Mayor Draper asked the councilmen to possibly recommend one person from each of their districts to form a committee to study the matter. The council agreed to take up the issue at the next regular meeting.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Chief Damion Jacobs gave a report on the calls for service and arrests made for the month of April. The Simmesport Police Department had 10 calls for medical service and made 25 arrests in the month of June. Chief Jacobs also reported that fine collections for June were more than expected.

Town Clerk Dacia reported that bank reconciliation was proceeding normally. She also reported that the Town needed to decide if it wanted to move forward with the LCDBG grant application.

A motion was made by Alderman Turner and seconded by Alderman Marsh that the Town of Simmesport move forward with the LCDBG grant application. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X		
Alderman Brown	X		
Alderman Coco	X		
Alderman Marsh	X		
Alderman Turner	X		

The motion carried.

District 1 Report

Alderman Ted Turner reported that his main concern was still potholes. He also noted that the gutters at the Senior Center needed to be cleaned out.

District 2 Report

Alderman Kenneth Marsh expressed concerns about potholes also.

District 3 Report

Alderman Myron Brown reported the street light out near the lift station on Cooper St.

District 4 Report

Alderman Sherman Bell said the bayou on Lincoln street needed to be cleaned up.

At Large Report

Alderman Jacob Coco reported that the tennis net had been ordered. He also said a kit for putting in the lines for the tennis court and basketball court had been found.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Alderman Marsh and seconded by Alderman Bell to adjourn. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X		
Alderman Brown	X		
Alderman Coco	X		
Alderman Marsh	X		
Alderman Turner	X		

The motion was carried and the meeting adjourned.

Leslie Draper, III
Mayor

Dacia Adams
Town Clerk