

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
PRESLEY BORDELON

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August 10, 2020 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, August 10, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. **This meeting was live-streamed via the Town of Simmesport's Facebook because of COVID-19 meeting restrictions. The meeting can be seen on Facebook, the Town of Simmesport's website (www.simmesportla.com) and on YouTube.*

Presiding: Mayor Leslie Draper

Members Present: Ted Turner, Myron Brown, Kenneth Marsh,

Members Absent: Sherman Bell, Presley Bordelon

Town Attorney: Present (Kirk LaCour)

Town Clerk: Dacia Adams

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 Brown and seconded by Alderman Marsh to accept the agenda as amended. All present voted as follows:

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

The motion was carried.

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

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

The motion was carried.

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

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

The motion was carried.

AGENDA ITEM 7: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Danny Lemoine stated that he thought the town was going down because we didn't have enough workers. Mr. Lemoine also complained about blighted property.

Ms. Tiesha Kennedy asked the Mayor about the law regarding the placement of campaign signs. Mayor Draper stated that signs cannot be placed on public property or right-away.

AGENDA ITEM 8: RESOLUTION FOR MILLAGE

Every year the Avoyelles Parish Assessor's office asks the Town to pass a resolution stating that the millage taxes on property for the upcoming year. This is not a new tax but is composed of existing taxes.

A motion was made by Alderman Marsh and seconded by Alderman Brown to move the resolution further down the agenda. All present voted as follows:

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

The motion was carried and the resolution moved.

AGENDA ITEM 9: MONTHLY CALENDAR

Mayor Draper presented the Council with a monthly calendar for town activities. These are regularly scheduled maintenance activities such as limb pickup and meter reading.

A motion was made by Alderman Brown and seconded by Alderman Turner that the calendar be adopted for the month of August. All present voted as follows:

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

The motion passed.

AGENDA ITEM 10: WORK ORDER FORM FOR COUNCILMEN

Mayor Draper introduced a work order form for the Town Councilmen to use when they notice items that the maintenance department needs to address. Mayor Draper told the council this was necessary for two reasons: 1) the Councilmembers have no control over daily operations under the Lawrenson Act and 2) this will help the maintenance department and the Mayor keep track of maintenance issues. The Mayor asked that if there were needs that need to be addressed in their district, the councilmen would fill out the form and return it to the Town Hall.

A motion was made by Alderman Brown and seconded by Alderman Marsh that the work order form for councilmen be adopted for use by the Town of Simmesport. All present voted as follows:

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

The motion passed.

AGENDA ITEM 11: EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Mayor Draper informed the Council that the official Employee Handbook is nearing completion. The Mayor did say that there were some aspects that needed a legal opinion regarding federal labor laws. The handbook did undergo major revisions to make it clear and user friendly. Mayor Draper said he would present it to the Council for review as soon as the above legal questions were ironed out.

AGENDA ITEM 12: CITY OF RAYNE CULVERT CLEANING SYSTEM

The City of Rayne developed an ingenious apparatus for cleaning culverts. The mayor showed a short video on how the piece of equipment works. The City of Rayne will construct and train our town maintenance workers on how to use it for \$2,000. LaMATS also endorsed the system and the City of Rayne received an LMA Community Achievement Award for the design. The council members agreed that the Town should purchase the item.

AGENDA ITEM 13: INTRODUCTION FOR NEW ORDINANCES

Attorney Kirk LaCour presented a new process put forth by the Louisiana Municipal Association on how to deal with blighted property. The Town cannot just go on someone’s property and cut grass or clean up private property. It is illegal for a municipality to give free services to a private individual. There is a legal process whereby the Town of Simmesport can demand the owner clean up their property, then, after due process, the Town can go in and clean up the property and charge the owner. Attorney LaCour said the process is meticulous and has to be documented before the property can be adjudicated.

Mayor Draper wanted to introduce six new ordinances: 1) and ordinance dealing with utility deposits 2) another dealing with commercial sewer rates 3) one addressing grass cutting 4) a fourth addressing littering 5) another dealing with unauthorized removal of signs and 6) an ordinance addressing tampering with meters. Attorney LaCour informed those assembled that because the Town of Simmesport adopted the Louisiana Criminal Code, the proposed ordinances addressing littering, and removal of signs are already in the Louisiana Criminal Code and the Town does not need separate ordinances. Attorney LaCour did suggest we pass an ordinance for tampering with meters as the state ordinance regarding meters only applies to theft of utilities.

Mayor Draper introduced ORDINANCE NO. 08-2020-03 TAMPERING WITH MUNICIPAL GAS OR WATER METERS to be set for public hearing on September 14, 2020.

A motion was made by Alderman Marsh and seconded by Alderman Brown Ordinance No. 08-2020-03, Tampering With Municipal Gas or Water Meters be introduced and set for a public hearing on September 14, 2020 . All present voted as follows:

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

The motion passed.

Mayor Draper introduced ORDINANCE NO. 08-2020-04 COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL GRASS CUTTING to be set for public hearing on September 14, 2020.

A motion was made by Alderman Marsh and seconded by Alderman Brown Ordinance No. 08-2020-04, Commercial and Residential Grass Cutting be introduced and set for a public hearing on September 14, 2020. All present voted as follows:

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

Since the introduction of a motion requires a 3/5 vote of the council and only three were present, motion failed.

Mayor Draper introduced ORDINANCE NO. 08-2020-05 UTILITY DEPOSITS AND PERMIT FEES to be set for public hearing on September 14, 2020. Mayor Draper commented that the fees are the same for commercial, owners and renters.

A motion was made by Alderman Brown and seconded by Alderman Marsh Ordinance No. 08-2020-05, Utility Deposits and Permit Fees be introduced and set for a public hearing on September 14, 2020. All present voted as follows:

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

The motion passed.

Mayor Draper introduced ORDINANCE NO. 08-2020-06 AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH BASIC WATER & SEWER RATES FOR COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS to be set for public hearing on September 14, 2020. Mayor Draper commented that the fees are the same for commercial, owners and renters.

A motion was made by Alderman Marsh and seconded by Alderman Brown Ordinance No. 08-2020-05, An Ordinance To Establish Water & Sewer Rates For Commercial Customers be introduced and set for a public hearing on September 14, 2020. All present voted as follows:

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

The motion passed.

AGENDA ITEM 14: DEPARTMENT REPORTS

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Because of the meeting size restrictions, all department reports were given by Mayor Draper from written reports by the Town of Simmesport department heads. The only department head present was Town Clerk Dacia Adams.*

Engineer – Jeremy Hebron

No report.

Utility Department- Charles Carter

Mr. Carter informed the council that the Canadaville Ball Fields are cut every 15 days. Highway 1 and the Yellow Bayou Park are cut every 10 days. Eagle Field is cut every 14 days. In July there were some downed trees which were picked up. The Town recently purchased a new Exmark zero-turn mower. The clutch in the John Deere tractor was recently changed, but when it was returned, the PTO was not turning and was slipping. The Mahindra tractor was also not functioning and is continually losing power. The Snapper zero-turn is also not functioning. The seals and bearings on the main pumping station pump went out causing the pump to lose prime. The pump had to be repaired. The crew is contending with hundred-degree temperatures. One of the employees reading meters was attacked an bitten by a dog. Mr. Carter talked with the chief about an appropriate pepper spray for the meter readers. Mr. Carter said the dog was impounded but someone cut the kennel over the weekend and stole the dog. The incident is under investigation. Alderman

Marsh asked about the levee leak, and Mr. Carter said the Corps of Engineers and the Red River Levee Board had approved the permits for an exploratory dig to find the problem.

Sewer Plant- Charles Carter

Engineers are putting together a plan to upgrade the sewer plant. The nearly 40-year old plant is in need of upgrades and the engineering firm is analyzing and prioritizing the upgrades.

Street Department- Dana Smith

Fire Department – Dana Smith

Police Department – Chief Glenn Hall

Chief Glenn Hall told those assembled that there were 145 calls in July. Well over 100 citations were written. There was a series of recent burglaries in the area, but there are suspects and investigations are underway.

Town Attorney/Magistrate – Kirk LaCour

Magistrate LaCour told the Council that the court was catching up on the backlog of cases that piled up because of the COVID-19 shutdown. Mr. LaCour said they were not too strict in June, but for those who do not show up for the August court, warrants for failure to appear will begin being issued.

Alderman Marsh asked about the budget for the Town. Attorney LaCour told the Council that when we paid off all debts with the money from Sustainability Partners, Simmesport threw a major kink into the budget. Because the debts were paid off right at the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the budget that had been laid out for 2020-2021 had to undergo major revisions. Had the Town submitted a deficit budget, the State of Louisiana would most likely have taken over and the town would have been in receivership.

Town Clerk – Dacia Adams

The lobby is still locked. Utility bills are still going out and payments are being processed daily even though the utility department is short-handed. Mrs. Adams reported to the Council that she was working with the auditors and accountants on the 2019-2020 audit and it is underway. A new requisition form has been instituted for the Town employees whereby a supervisor has to sign off on any purchase so that we can better keep track of the budget.

District 1 Report

Alderman Ted Turner asked if the Town could get the Railroad to spray along the sides of the tracks. Mr. Turner also asked if the Town could cut any low-hanging limbs that may interfere with the buses when school begins.

District 2 Report

Alderman Kenneth Marsh said the large pile of limbs in the median between Railroad Ave and Mission Dr. Alderman Marsh also reported a mass of cut limbs on Hillside Dr. close to Erhardt Dr. He said the limbs are in the ditch and could cause a possible drainage issue because they are blocking the culvert.

District 3 Report

Alderman Myron Brown said he had no issues to bring forth at this time.

District 4 Report

Alderman Sherman Bell was absent.

At Large

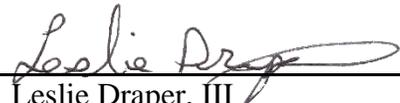
Alderman Presley Bordelon was absent.

Mayor Draper also added that he had a very productive meeting with a group who wishes to add an apartment complex in Simmesport. Up to 100 units are in the planning stages. Mayor Draper related that he took the representatives from the company planning the housing to view a site and they were very encouraged. Mayor Draper said that he would share more information about the housing as he got it. Preliminary drawings and plans are in the works. Decent, affordable house is in demand in Simmesport and this project would go a long way in alleviating the housing shortage in Simmesport.

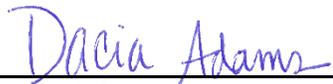
There being no further business, a motion was made by Alderman Turner and seconded by Alderman Marsh to adjourn. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> X </u>
Alderman Brown	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Bordelon	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> X </u>
Alderman Marsh	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Turner	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The motion was carried and the meeting adjourned.



Leslie Draper, III
Mayor



Dacia Adams
Town Clerk