

TOWN OF SIMMESPORT

MAYOR LESLIE DRAPER III

DISTRICT I
GLENN GAUTREAUX



DISTRICT II
TIESHA KENNEDY

DISTRICT III
PATRICK WRIGHT

DISTRICT IV
SHERMAN BELL

ALDERMAN AT LARGE
ROMARO TURNER

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June 14, 2021 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, June 14, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. **This meeting was live-streamed via the Town of Simmesport's Facebook page.*

Presiding: Mayor Leslie Draper

Members Present:, Sherman Bell, Glenn Gautreaux, Tiesha Kennedy, Romaro Turner, Patrick Wright

Members Absent: none

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 Sherman Bell followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM 4

A motion was made by Alderwoman Kennedy and seconded by Alderman Gautreaux that the agenda be amended to include a discussion of the position of police commissioner as agenda item 8a. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____
Alderman Gautreaux	X	_____	_____
Alderwoman Kennedy	X	_____	_____
Alderman Turner	X	_____	_____
Alderman Wright	X	_____	_____

The motion was carried.

AGENDA ITEM 5: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Alderman Bell and seconded by Alderman Turner to approve the minutes of the prior meeting. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____
Alderman Gautreaux	X	_____	_____
Alderwoman Kennedy	X	_____	_____
Alderman Turner	X	_____	_____
Alderman Wright	X	_____	_____

The motion was carried.

AGENDA ITEM 6: PAYMENT OF BILLS

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

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____
Alderman Gautreaux	X	_____	_____
Alderwoman Kennedy	X	_____	_____
Alderman Turner	X	_____	_____
Alderman Wright	X	_____	_____

The motion was carried.

AGENDA ITEM 7: ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE 05-2021-01: THE TOWN OF SIMMESPORT 2021-2022 BUDGET

Mayor Draper stated that the public hearing on the ordinance had been held in accordance with state law.

A motion was made by Alderman Bell and seconded by Alderwoman Kennedy to adopt ordinance 05-2021-01, the operating budget for the year 2021-2022. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____
Alderman Gautreaux	X	_____	_____
Alderwoman Kennedy	X	_____	_____
Alderman Turner	X	_____	_____
Alderman Wright	X	_____	_____

The motion was carried.

AGENDA ITEM 8: NEXTDOOR APP

Mayor Draper told those assembled that Alderwoman Kennedy introduced the idea of the NextDoor app. Councilwoman Kennedy explained that this app was a social media app where people in a certain zip code could communicate with each other about events or happenings in the town. This would allow the members of the Council to be made aware of problems and happenings in their districts. The app is for Apple and Android. Mayor Draper and Town Attorney Kirk LaCour said the Town of Simmesport would not be monitoring or sponsoring the app. This would not be an official means of communication for the Town of Simmesport; it would only be a voluntary app that citizens could use.

AGENDA ITEM 8a: POLICE COMMISSIONER

Town Attorney Kirk LaCour explained that because the Town of Simmesport is a Lawrason Act town with an appointed Chief of Police, the Police Chief is under direct control of the Mayor. The Council cannot appoint anyone of its members to oversee the police department or in any way interfere with the police department. Attorney LaCour explained that the Council could appoint a liaison from the Council to the Police Department where that Council person could carry concerns and needs back to the Council. However, that liaison could not tell the police department how to run any day-to-day operations. The Town Council has no direct oversight authority and can only make policy as a body. The Council cannot enforce policy as that is the Mayor’s purview only under state law. Attorney LaCour strongly suggested that the Council develop a set of written guidelines for the role of the liaison so that the Council member who is appointed the liaison can safely remain in compliance with the Lawrason Act and not infringe upon the executive authority of the Mayor. Mr. LaCour said the name of the position did not matter as long as the role of the position is strictly defined by the guidelines set forth in the Lawrason Act.

AGENDA ITEM 10: DEPARTMENT REPORTS

TOWN ENGINEER

The town engineer was not present.

SEWER & WATER

Mr. Charles Carter informed the council that the Town hired a new employee while also letting one go. Mr. Carter said they were cutting grass and cleaning out culverts as weather permits. Mr. Carter said the sewer plant is operating at approximately 50%. Mr. Carter said he is waiting on the upgrades to the plant. Mr. Carter also suggested the Town find out what is to happen with the Canadaville pumping station and the sewer lines to the trailers now that they are selling the trailers.

STREETS & DRAINAGE

Town Maintenance worker Dana Smith informed the council that grass cutting is behind schedule due to rains. He also said that they are also trying to fill as many potholes as possible. Mr. Smith said the rented tractor has been running 6 days per week while the rain is holding off. Mayor Draper said he would get with Mr. Smith about street signs that have been torn down. Mr. Carter also suggested that the Town address the issue of house numbers. Emergency personnel have complained about not being able to find houses because of lack of house numbers.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

From the Fire Chief report Mr. Smith told the council the Fire Department smoothly. There were very few calls last month although there was a wreck on Yellow Bayou the night before the meeting.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Firmin told the Council that in the month of April the department had written 30 tickets which resulted in 41 charges and had one juvenile arrested. The juvenile was transported to a juvenile facility. There were 4 misdemeanor and 3 felony arrests in the month of April. The two working radars in the cars had to be recertified and two officers had to be recertified to use the radar. Chief Firmin said he and the Mayor also met with a representative from Axxon for body cameras and tasers. The company offers a five-year plan where the police department would receive 8 tasers and body cameras. At the end of 2 ½ years the body cameras are exchanged for new ones. The company also offers cloud storage for the body camera footage that can be accessed from anywhere. Chief Firmin said that the body cameras are GPS enabled and constantly gives the position of the officers. The cameras automatically come on whenever the officer exits the vehicle. Attorney LaCour added that video footage is nearly always asked for any time an incident occurs. This could potentially stifle many lawsuits before they are filed. Also, the Town has a large deductible on lawsuits and the decrease in these premiums or deductible could potentially pay for the cost of the package.

A motion was made by Alderman Bell and seconded by Alderwoman Kennedy to move forward with the agreement with Axxon for the body cameras and tasers. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X		
Alderman Gautreaux	X		
Alderwoman Kennedy	X		
Alderman Turner	X		
Alderman Wright	X		

The motion was carried.

Mayor Draper informed the council that the tractor (John Deere 570M) the Council voted to buy was sold out and it could be 4 to six months before any were received from the factory. Mayor Draper said that he contacted LaMATS and got quotes on a comparable Case and Kubota tractor. Mayor Draper also said that LaMATS offers financing. The Council refused to act until they saw the actual price quotes on the Kubota and Case tractors.

TOWN CLERK

Town Clerk Dacia informed the Council that there was a meeting with the auditors for the 2018-2019 audit. That audit is complete. The auditors did offer many ways in which we could move faster with the 2019-2020 audit. Communication discrepancies between the auditors and Town employees were the cause of some of the delays.

TOWN ATTORNEY/MAGISTRATE

Attorney LaCour also said the auditor meeting was very productive. The Town has to send in responses to the findings and those will be sent to the Legislative Auditors Office. The Town will now move into the 2019-2020 audit. If the 2019-2020 audit and the 2020-2021 audits can be completed before December 31 of this year, the Town can get back in compliance. There was no Magistrate court because it fell on Memorial Day. Mr. LaCour said they were still making headway with Quick PD. One of the findings of the audit was keeping track of the ticket log and tracking of tickets. Attorney LaCour said the Town of Simmesport has still not been served with the lawsuit reported in the media against the police department. Mayor Draper added that plans have been put in place to deal with the

financial consequences should that lawsuit be served on us. Attorney LaCour said that 4 years ago, when he took over as Town Attorney, there were 15 active lawsuits against the town. There has not been a lawsuit in well over a year.

AGENDA ITEM 11: COUNCILMEN REPORTS

District 1 Report

Alderman Glenn Gautreaux reported no issues.

District 2 Report

Alderman Kennedy had no issues to report.

District 3 Report

Alderman Wright asked if the property behind the east projects was owned by the Town of Simmesport.

District 4 Report

Alderman Sherman Bell reported no issues. Mayor Draper added that we need to revisit the bayou on Clark Street.

At Large

Alderman Turner had no issues at that time.

AGENDA ITEM 12: DELEGATION TIME

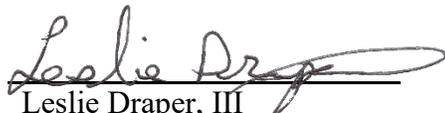
A citizen wanted to request the Canadaville basketball courts for a parish-wide outdoor basketball tournament. Mayor Draper told the citizen that he needed to get an application, fill it out and turn it in. The rules and regulations for the use of the facility, along with the prices, are on the application. Alderman Turner said he would help the citizen plan the event.

AGENDA ITEM 13: ADJOURN

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

	YES	NO	ABSENT/ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____
Alderman Gautreaux	X	_____	_____
Alderman Kennedy	X	_____	_____
Alderman Wright	X	_____	_____
Alderman Turner	X	_____	_____

The motion was carried and the meeting adjourned.


Leslie Draper, III
Mayor


Dacia Adams
Town Clerk