

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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October 12, 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, October 12, 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:

Town Attorney: Present

Town Clerk: Present

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Draper with Alderman Sherman Bell giving the opening prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM 4

A motion was made by Alderman Wright and seconded by Alderman Turner that the agenda be amended to add Engineer Jeremy Hebron as item D1, the Town Clerk's report, from the agenda. 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.

A motion was made by Alderman Turner and seconded by Alderwoman Kennedy that the agenda be accepted as amended. 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

Mayor Draper noticed a typographical error on the minutes from the previous meeting. On the motion to accept the August minutes as amended the second to the motion to accept was erroneously written as a second by Alderman Bell, who was absent at the meeting. The motion to second was made by Alderwoman Kennedy. A motion was made by Alderman Turner and seconded by Alderwoman Kennedy to make the above correction 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.

A motion was made by Alderman Turner and seconded by Alderman Wright to accept the minutes of the previous meeting as corrected. 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 Alderwoman Turner and seconded by Alderman Turner to approve payment of the October 2021 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: INTRODUCTION OF AVOYELLES PARISH SUPERINTENDENT Mrs. KAREN TUTOR

The new Avoyelles Parish Superintendent of Schools Mrs. Karen Tutor was introduced by school board member Rickey Adams. Mrs. Tutor introduced herself to those present and extended an invitation to the Town of Simmesport to work with her to improve not only Riverside but all Avoyelles Parish schools.

AGENDA ITEM 8: ELECTRICAL QUOTE FOR VFW HALL

Two bids for the rewiring the Simmesport VFW Hall were presented to the Council. One quote was from Bordelon Electric, LLC for \$21,040 while the second was from Big Stafford Contracting for \$18, 000.

A motion was made by Alderman Bell and seconded by Alderwoman Kennedy to accept the bid by Big Stafford Contracting. 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 9: AMERICAN RESCUE ACT COMMITTEE

Mayor draper informed the council that the monies dedicated to the Town of Simmesport by the American Rescue Act have been received. Mayor Draper asked council members to volunteer for a committee to offer guidance in spending the funds. The Mayor reminded those present that only two council members can meet to avoid having a quorum. Alderwoman Kennedy and Alderman Turner volunteered to be on the committee.

AGENDA ITEM 10: COMMITTEE FOR POSSIBLE PAY RAISE FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mayor Draper informed the council that many towns around the parish are raising salaries for their police departments. This has led to difficulties in finding qualified police officers for staffing. Mayor Draper asked for two of the council to volunteer for a committee to explore the idea of raising the pay for the Simmesport Police Department. Councilman Bell and Alderwoman Kennedy volunteered.

AGENDA ITEM 11: DEPARTMENT REPORTS

TOWN ENGINEER

Marselene Joseph, our new rep from Meyer, Meyer, LaCroix & Hixon, Inc engineering, reminded the Town that if Simmesport wanted to use Recovery Act money for professional services, the services would have to be bid out first. Mayor Draper asked about the Watershed Initiative and the availability of grant money from that program. Mr. Joseph said that the deadline for the first round of the Watershed program is November 1. The Mayor agreed that the deadline would not be conducive for us applying for funding through that program. Mayor Draper informed the Council and all assembled that the Town of Simmesport only recently was brought back into compliance with he Legislative Auditor’s Office. This allows us to now apply for funds we were previously locked out of.

SEWER & WATER

Mr. Charles Carter was absent.

STREETS & DRAINAGE

Town Maintenance worker Dana Smith said they were trying to cut as much grass as possible before the rains began again. He reported that the new tractor and bush hog are being used almost daily but it will still take some time to catch up. He also reported that all the other equipment was running normally. A citizen asked when the Town would be able to pick up limbs again. Mr. Smith said the burn site still needed to be cleaned of non-burnable debris before we can apply for a permit from DEQ.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Dana Smith said there were only a few calls for service.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Daniel Firmin told the Council that a total of 31 tickets were written resulting in 61 charges. Nine reports were filed resulting in 2 arrests. Chief Firmin reported that a police unit had to be repaired. The chief also reported that a shooting occurred and the suspect was still at large. Chief Firmin said they were working with the US Marshall’s Office to pursue the suspect.

TOWN CLERK

Town Clerk Dacia Adams told the Council that the last bits of information were sent to the accountants and passed along to the auditors for the 2019-2020 audit. Preparations have also begun for the 2020-2021 audit.

TOWN ATTORNEY/MAGISTRATE

Attorney LaCour said that the turnout for Magistrate’s Court last month was very good. Mr. LaCour said he appreciates the citizen’s participation in the process by attending court. From the Town Attorney side Mr. LaCour asked that an executive session be added after the delegation time to discuss matters relating to the lawsuit Chaney v. Hall, docket number 21-190 in the US Middle District Court of Louisiana, and a second legal issue protected under attorney-client privilege.

A motion was made by Alderman Bell and seconded by Alderwoman Kennedy to add an executive session after delegation time, and amending the agenda to add the executive session as Agenda Item 13a. 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 9: COUNCIL REPORT

District 1 Report

Alderman Glenn Gautreaux had nothing to report.

District 2 Report

Alderwoman Kennedy had nothing to report.

District 3 Report

Alderman Wright wanted to know if there was a plan to cutting the grass. His concern was that the grass cutting seemed to be random and that some areas were left unfinished. Mayor Draper asked Alderman Wright to meet with him outside the meeting to discuss this issue.

District 4 Report

Alderman Sherman Bell had no issues to report.

Alderman at Large

Alderman at large Romaro Turner said he had no issues to report.

AGENDA ITEM 12: DELEGATION TIME

Mr Cecil Whitmore asked if there was a plan to deal with excessive overtime in the Police Department. Mayor Draper said that this was an issue of day-to-day operations that could best be addressed outside of a Town Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 13A: EXECUTIVE SESSION REGARDING LEGAL ISSUES AND LAWSUIT 21-190 CHANEY v. HALL

A motion was made by Alderwomen Kennedy and seconded by Alderman Turner to enter into executive session. 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.

Am motion was made by Alderman Bell and seconded by Alderwoman Kennedy to exit the executive session. 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 13: ADJOURN


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

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

The motion was carried and the meeting adjourned.



Leslie Draper, III
Mayor



Dacia Adams
Town Clerk