

Regular Meeting of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen
of the Village of French Settlement, January 8, 2020

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Village of French Settlement met at 16015 Hwy. 16, French Settlement, Louisiana on the 8th day of January 2020 at 6 p.m. in regular session convened. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rhonda B. Lobell with the following members present:

Alderman Teresa Miller, Alderman Kim Demarest

Absent: None

Present: Chief Mosby, Village Attorney, Tim Pujol

A prayer was offered, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Public Comments on Agenda Items: None

Guest Speaker: Jeremy Aydell, Leadership Livingston

Playground approved by the Chamber and has preliminary tentative drawings. March 8, 2020 there will be a fund raiser and public viewing of drawings at the French Settlement Pavilion. Food and possibly live entertainment. If all goes as planned, playground may be ready this summer. Jeremy will continue to come to meetings with playground updates.

Reading of Minutes:

- The motion to adopt the minutes for the month of December 11, 2019, as presented, was made by Alderman Miller and seconded by Alderman Demarest. A yea and a nay vote were called for and resulted as follows:
 - Yeas: Miller, Demarest
 - Nays: None
 - Absent: None

- The motion to adopt the Special Meeting minutes for the month of December 18, 2019, as presented was made by Alderman Miller and seconded by Alderman Demarest. A yea and a nay vote were called for and resulted as follows:
 - Yeas: Miller, Demarest
 - Nays: None
 - Absent: None

Statement of Finances:

Alderman Miller inquired about the line item Communications & Electronics Account 3020. She asked if these were electronics in the French Settlement Police Units and questioned the continual increase in the billing. They are the mobile 'hot spots' from AT&T in the unit for internet connectivity. Chief Mosby stated they are about \$240 per person and that this increase may be adding himself and Officer Ordineaux to the AT&T plan.

The motion to adopt the Statement of Finances for the month of December 2019, as presented was made by Alderman Miller and seconded by Alderman Demarest. A yea and a nay vote were called for and resulted as follows:

Yeas: Miller, Demarest

Nays: None

Absent: None

Recommendation to fill vacancy - Alderman

Alderman Miller made the recommendation to appoint Paul "Gene" Eleazar as Alderman to fill the vacancy on the Board. Alderman Miller stated that with Genes experience as an Architect, his working relationships with GOSHEP, FEMA, familiarity of the reimbursement processes and working with FEMA on ongoing 2016 Flood recovery projects for several Livingston Parish Schools, City of Albany and Denham Springs Housing, his experience will be an asset to the board and community.

Alderman Miller made a motion to appoint Paul "Gene" Eleazar to the vacant seat on the Board of Aldermen and seconded by Alderman Demarest. A yea and a nay vote were called for and resulted as follows:

Yeas: Miller, Demarest

Nays: None

Absent: None

Paul "Gene" Eleazar accepted the appointment of the position of Alderman, Village of French Settlement.

Village attorney, Timothy Pujol administered and notarized the signed Oath of Office for Paul "Gene" Eleazar to the position of Alderman, Village of French Settlement.

Appointment of Mayor Pro Tem

Alderman Miller made a motion to appoint Paul "Gene" Eleazar as Mayor Pro Tem and seconded by Alderman Demarest. A yea and a nay vote were called for and resulted as follows:

Yeas: Miller, Demarest

Nays: None

Absent: None

Propose Resolution No. 1 of 2020

Alderman Miller read aloud the proposal of Resolution No. 1 of 2020.

Reappointment of Timothy E. Pujol as Village Attorney and appointment as full time Village Court Magistrate.

Alderman Demarest made a motion to reappointment of Timothy E. Pujol as Village Attorney and appointment as full time Village Court Magistrate and seconded by Alderman Miller. A yeas and a nay vote were called for and resulted as follows:

Yeas: Miller, Demarest, Eleazar

Nays: None

Absent: None

Mr. Pujol thanked the Board and mentioned that he'd been working with the Village for about 10 years. Arraignments and Trials will be performed on the same day, once a month for efficiency.

Police Department Report:

- Chief Mosby presented the monthly policy report to the Mayor and Aldermen for the Month of December. Chief Mosby requested follow-up on the possible hiring of Officer Ordineaux full time. Mayor Lobell asked if Chief Mosby performed calculations as to the expense of bringing Officer Ordineaux full time. He figures that it would be about \$162.00 additional for full time. Mayor Lobell stated that we are just getting into 2020 and that in light of the circumstances, just getting into the appointment of Mayor that she needs time to review. Alderman Miller stated that at this point that she is not ready to add anything to the budget. Alderman Eleazar asked if we can place this on February agenda.
- Mayor Lobell stated that according to the information provided to the Board by Chief Mosby the Department had a total of 98 calls. Police Department had a very busy month.

Old Business

Grounds Report

- The Mayor stated that she is aware that there is a water heater in the pavilion that is not working and that she is working to get a plumber or electrician to come out to look at it and it will be looked at soon to prepare for spring rentals of the pavilion.

Road Report

- Alderman Miller stated that the new 55 MPH speed limit on Hwy 16 right past the Fire Department heading towards Mecca Road is missing. Officer Ordeneaux advised that the sign was knocked down in a traffic accident. The Mayor stated that the French Settlement Corp Limits sign at Bayview coming into town is still missing. We are working with DOTD about the French Settlement School crossing markings on the road. They are not very visible. Alderman Eleazar talked with DOTD during this past week and they've advised that they just repainted the crosswalk about a year ago. The Mayor stated that she believes that other school zones have the bold white lines with diagonal lines between the two making the crossing much more visible to traffic. Weather permitting, we will take pictures of other school crossings in Livingston Parish and will submit those to DOTD.

The Mayor asked the audience if they were aware of any potholes, Sean Moran advised that the hole at Aydell Lane and Highwater Road is still there.

Grants

- **LGAP Grant 2018-19 and 2019-20:** Mayor Lobell reached out via email to Mitch McDaniel, Grant Specialist with the Community Development Program and is waiting to hear from him. There is email from the prior administration that cannot be located. It is obvious going through the chain of email communication that some are deleted. While reading email correspondence, the Mayor noted that spans of time in emails have been deleted. The Mayor is reconstructing data and making contacts for updates. With the way that the holidays fell in December and beginning of January it's been difficult to make contact. The Mayor will follow up.
- **FEMA – GOSHEP Hurricane Barry Reimbursement**

Mayor Lobell stated that regarding the FEMA – GOSHEP Hurricane Barry Reimbursement that the December 11, 2019 meeting states that a meeting was held here in the Town Hall with GOSHEP, Joe Costello on December 4, 2019 to review and complete paperwork for submissions for reimbursements of 75% of true expenses and later on 25% of volunteer work by members of the community and equipment to equal 100% reimbursement to the Village. On Thursday January 2, 2020 a meeting was held with Joe Costello of GOSHEP, Mayor Lobell, Paul "Gene" Eleazar and Pam Melancon to review paperwork. Mayor Lobell stated that she's had the opportunity to review the documents and that Hurricane Barry was essentially a 'non-event' and that she had a few questions that she'd like to address with a couple of the members of the audience. Mayor Lobell stated that there is a list that was submitted of some volunteer hours and addressed Bill Bliss to inquire as to how many hours and what kind of equipment was used. The Mayor stated that the report reflects 45 hours of volunteer time and lists Bill performing work such as French Settlement briefing, patrolling, curfew patrol highwater patrol, and understands that Mr. Bliss did perform some volunteer work but wanted to validate how much and type of work performed. Mr. Bliss stated he did not perform 45 hours of work, but delivered a generator and an air conditioner that he brought to the FSPD (in case of loss of electricity). He performed his normal duties and no additional patrol. The regular officers did their normal duty. Mayor Lobell then addressed Chief Mosby to validate the report reflecting 2 hours of volunteer time and use of a Kabota 75 HP 4 x4 tractor with a frontend loader to remove mud from a stretch of 7.5 miles of Louisiana Hwy 16. Chief Mosby stated that it was only $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. Mayor Lobell asked about the debris and how many hours were worked. Chief Mosby stated that the powerline company removing equipment due to storm coming and tracked mud on the road. Mayor Lobell stated that there is also 12 hours of volunteer time from an individual that they id patrolling of highwater detail and identifies someone as a Colonel. Mayor Lobell asked Chief Mosby if he is aware that he has a Colonel in the French Settlement Police Department. Captain Rhodes replied that we've had a reserve Colonel. Mayor Lobell asked the name of the Colonel. Captain Rhodes stated he is Don Hogan of Baton Rouge Police Supply. Mayor Lobell asked if we commissioned him and

Captain Rhodes said that he wasn't sure because that was before his time. Alderman Miller asked if Don Hogan was a Colonel with French Settlement Police Department. Mayor Lobell replied that this is what the documents state. Captain Rhodes stated that as far as he knows he has a commission. Alderman Miller stated that she believes that he owns Baton Rouge Police Supply. Captain Rhodes confirmed. Alderman Eleazar asked Captain Rhodes how long he'd been with the French Settlement Police Department. Alderman Miller replied that Captain Rhodes has been with the police department since 2015, Captain Rhodes stated that he's been with the department for 5 years.

Mayor Lobell stated that the documents that the former administration and Emergency Manager prepared for FEMA for reimbursement are incorrect and that it disturbs her and she will not be a party to any of that and that she will probably end up withdrawing the request for reimbursement.

New Administration Update

Mayor Lobell thanked the Board of Alderman for their willingness to serve the community and appreciates them. Mayor Lobell then recognized and thanked Pam Melancon, Village Municipal Clerk for her service and stated that she's been the glue that has held the town together for the last month and that we appreciate what she does for the Village.

Mayor Lobell stated that it's an honor and a privilege to serve the Community of French Settlement.

The prior administration gave a 2-day notice of resignation and had been in the position since 2004 and much of the information that she had was not passed on to current administration. Mayor Lobell shared with the audience that the prior administration left a couple of computers 'set back to factory settings' and did not leave information such as ID and Passwords for critical websites, deleted the official Facebook page and left the Village in a position to have to recreate items. The Facebook and Village website is critical in disseminating information to the citizens and will be back up as soon as possible. The current website is extremely dated and will be updated with current information. The new website will promote local shopping. The Village credit card was cancelled, not transferred. Mayor Lobell is working on establishing another credit card for the Village. This credit card is used for online purchasing Village items. In fact, when the admin left abruptly, the Village was left with no one with the authority to sign checks. There were still security camera phone apps in use. These were disabled.

Mayor Lobell stated that the Village will have one designated Village Emergency Manager, Alderman Eleazar.

Local Events

- No local events to announce. Mayor Lobell mentioned that it's important to keep the citizens of the Village involved and that in future meetings during this portion of meetings that the audience can share information about local events that they are aware of.

Adjourn

- A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Miller and seconded by Alderman Demarest. A yeas and a nays vote were called for and resulted as follows:
Yeas: Miller, Demarest, Eleazar
Nays: None
Absent: None

Rhonda B Lobell, Mayor

Pam Melancon, Municipal Clerk