

**TOWN OF MANY**  
January 19, 2021  
**Regular Session**

The Mayor and Aldermen of the Town of Many met in regular session, Tuesday, January 19, 2021, at 5:15 p.m. at Town Hall. Present at Town Hall were Mayor Ken Freeman, Mayor Pro-Tem James Kennedy and Council Members Mary Brocato and Bobbie Jackson. Present by phone were Council Members Gay Corley and Anita Darwin. Also present were Town Clerk Amie Brown, Chief of Police Cheryl Wooley, Asst. Chief of Police Kyle Cook, Officer Carla Nicks, Operations Manager Mark Oxley, Street Supervisor and Animal Control Officer David Smith, Water Superintendent Roger Dew, Sewer Supervisor Joshua Darden, Grant Writer Suzanne Williams and Payroll Clerk/Mayor's Assistant Phyllis Jeansonne.

Mayor Ken Freeman called the meeting to order. Prayer was offered by Alderwoman Brocato, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Freeman.

**Minutes:** Minutes for November 17, 2020 regular session was approved as written and presented with a motion by Jackson; seconded by Corley. Vote unanimous. Minutes for December 15, 2020 regular session was approved as written and presented with a motion by Jackson; seconded by Corley. Vote unanimous.

**Amend Agenda:** Alderman Kennedy asked to add the grant writer, Alderwoman Corley asked if we were going to discuss Middlecreek Apartments to which Mayor Freeman stated no because that he has not been able to get the information he needs due to COVID, Chief of Police Cheryl Wooley asked to add two new-hire recommendations, Mayor Freeman asked to add the elevated water tank bids, Resolution #1 of 2021 to apply for an LGAP grant in the amount of \$35,000.00 to be used for fire hydrants and valve management program and comprehensive flush program, Resolution #2 of 2021 to apply for a CWEF grant in the amount of \$35,000.00 to be used for the ground water storage tank at the water plant, and a Reminder to all city employees they are not to politic on city time or will be terminated. Passed with a motion by Kennedy; seconded by Jackson. Vote Unanimous.

**Open to Public Comments relating to items on agenda:** None

**Guest(s):** Cherry Williams – Candidate for Alderwoman District D; chose not to speak and only to observe

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

**1a. Amendment-Elevated Water Tank – Received no sealed bids – Checked with LMA and we can go with a quote – Received quote of \$58,000.00 from Suez:** Mayor Freeman explained that during the last storm he watched the witches hat roof blowing in the wind so we let it out for bid to take it down but did not receive any sealed bids so we contacted LMA and was told that we can go with a quote that we received for \$58,000.00 from Suez and we have hired them to take it down. Mayor Freeman went on to say that it is 100 years old and we need to do a story on it. Alderwoman Brocato asked when they were coming and Mayor Freeman replied that it would be in the next 60 days. Alderwoman Brocato said to let her know when they come and she will go take pictures and try to do a story about it. Alderman Kennedy asked if this company was covered under liability and Mayor Freeman said yes.

**1. Bids for ground storage tank – Thrown out and re-bid with the request for a 3-year financing option:** Mayor Freeman explained that it will cost well over \$100,000.00 to fix the ground storage tank at the water plant and it was let out for bid but we did not include the option of 3-year financing should we not be able to pay out of next year's budget. He also noted that this tank is essential to the operation of the water plant and is leaking and has got to be fixed. Vote to re-bid with the option of 3-year financing on a motion by Brocato; seconded by Jackson. Passed unanimously.

2. **Order of the office:** An organizational chart was presented by Town Clerk Amie Brown as requested by Mayor Freeman showing the order of the office. Mayor Freeman stated that he felt it was beneficial to share this information and that authority starts with him then the Council then Amie Brown as Town Clerk, Janice Randow as Deputy Clerk then Valisa King as Utility Clerk, Phyllis Jeansonne as Mayor's Assistant, Payroll Clerk and HR Manager, Sandra Neel as Receptionist and part-time help during Christmas and tax season and Suzanne Williams as the Grant Writer. Alderwoman Brocato asked if Suzanne Williams was full-time or part-time to which Mayor Freeman replied that she is contract.
3. **Phyllis Jeansonne to be sent to Clerks school:** Mayor Freeman reported that he would be sending Phyllis to Clerks School because he likes to have depth in staffing just in case anyone falls out there is someone else ready and capable to step up in that position.
4. **Yearly financial audit – Requested a three-month extension:** Mayor Freeman reported that we had to apply for a 3-month extension; that the auditors normally come in August and we normally would have it finished and the report received already but due to our CPA's wife's health he has not been able to give the attention needed but that the auditors said due to COVID this is not unusual to request an extension and other governmental offices are behind also and applying for extensions and getting them rather easily; that our CPA will be working on it to get it done; and that this audit is required and costs about \$50,000.00 yearly and that someone outside of our purview comes in to make sure we are doing everything correctly. Mayor Freeman stated to council that he would keep them posted.
5. **List of permits issued for the fourth quarter of 2020:** A list of permits issued by the Sabine Parish Building Inspector's Office was provided to each council member.
6. **Raises for Mayor and Council:** Mayor Freeman stated that Alderwoman Anita Darwin asked for this to be put on the agenda and asked her what was on her mind. Alderwoman Darwin reported that it has been eight years since they have had a raise and that some people have suffered from COVID. Mayor Freeman stated that he is not sure that this is the time and it is true that people are suffering but we all still have our jobs and doing well and he does not think the public will appreciate them asking for a raise when they are just trying to hang on. Alderwoman Brocato stated that their salaries have not been affected by COVID. Mayor Freeman asked Alderwoman Darwin if she wanted to make the motion and she stated that it can be tabled until a later date. No second was offered. Alderman Kennedy made a motion not to receive a raise and seconded by Brocato. Passed unanimously.
7. **Reports:** Council was presented with the **Profit & Loss Performance Budget** for December 2020 showing \$122,959 in the black for the month and Mayor Freeman reported that we had our budget meeting with the department heads and each of them understood the expenditures they were over on and why and Mayor Freeman agreed with each overage in which he congratulated David, Roger, Mark, Josh, Amie and the Police Department for doing a good job controlling their budgets and because of so he promised each department head that if they kept their budget in check he would look at raises for their employees, and that Wednesday we would hold a meeting to discuss next years budget and as soon as the election is complete he will get with the incoming Mayor and go over the budget with them and ask if they wanted anything added to next years budget; the **Payables Log** for December 2020 with evidence of invoices paid; balanced & reconciled **Bank Statements** for December 2020; **Overtime report** through December 2020; Verification of Federal & Louisiana **Taxes paid** for December 2020; and Verification of **Insurance paid** for December 2020. All reports were accepted as written and presented with a motion by Corley and seconded by Brocato. Vote unanimous.
8. **Chief's Report with update on warrants:** Chief of Police Cheryl Wooley provided a report to the Council on activity for the last 30 days for Many Police Department. Chief Wooley reported that technology for the units have been upgraded and being utilized by patrol officers; Officer Eddington is reporting to the Academy this week; Officer Darch resigned; Officer O'Con will be going to Academy in July; Officer Neel has declined to attend Academy and will be resigning when he finds another job; currently there are no

reports of COVID; Homeland Security has contacted them and has reserved for them 15 vaccinations but not sure when they will arrive; Officers are still dealing with the death of Chief Freeman but are moving forward; vehicles are being brought up to standard with new tires, repairs, in-car cameras and any maintenance items needed; Sheriff's Department loaned them labor and officers volunteered to help put in ceiling tiles and do some painting and other maintenance work; security has been increased inside the building by installing an electronic door that is opened by a code between the dispatch desk and the rest of the office and will also be installing an electronic door at the back door; looking at new security cameras; purchased two additional body cameras and a 700 radio; ten new body armor vests were ordered with a grant that was received and will be coming in; the donated Tahoe received from Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office was outfitted with equipment and put on the road; another thing they are working on is improving technology; and they will be featured on NBC Channel 6 News at 10:00 tomorrow on their Back the Blue feature. **Amendment-Recommendation to promote part-time Officer Mark Holder to full-time Detective at \$14.00 per hour:** Passed with a motion by Corley and seconded by Brocato. Vote unanimous. **Amendment-Recommendation to promote Reserve Officer Brian Mattison to part-time Assistant Detective at \$15.00 per hour with a cap of 18 hours weekly:** Passed with a motion by Brocato and seconded by Corley. Vote unanimous. Alderwoman Brocato asked why Mark Holder would be hired as full-time at \$14.00 per hour but Brian Mattison hired as part-time at \$15.00 per hour and Alderwoman Corley stated that she had the same question. Chief Wooley stated that Officer Holder would be going to Academy in July and when completed he would receive a raise to \$15.00 per hour and Officer Mattison is POST certified and actually retired from Lake Charles Police Department and has kept up all of his certifications. Alderwoman Corley asked as a reminder to please get new-hire packets to the council at least two days prior to the council meeting.

- 9. Sales Tax Report: Increase of 14.89% over November 2019:** Report was given by Alderwoman Corley. She stated that they have completed two audits recently which helped; that people are actually shopping in Sabine Parish more; they will have a meeting Thursday and the CPA will be at that meeting and go over the audits. Mayor Freeman congratulated Alderwoman Corley on being appointed as the Chairman again.
- 10. Tourism Report:** Alderwoman Jackson reported their meeting was by phone; overnight room sales were up 10% over this time last year; Christmas lights at Cypress Bend welcomed 11,419 people; the Zwolle Museum is being worked on very diligently; the No Man's Land documentary has interviewed 6 of the 7 historians by Bill Rodman's crew and the script is being developed now and the completion due in six months; the following grants have been received: \$7,000 Sunshine Grant Phase I, \$4,500 Louisiana Travel Channel, \$2,500 The Lock Campaigns through Trumpet and \$35,000 Sunshine Grant Phase II.
- 11. Cultural District Report:** Alderwoman Brocato reported that not much has been going on due to COVID; there is a Valentine's music show with the Flashbacks scheduled for February 13<sup>th</sup> but she feels that we should cancel it due to COVID and they can always do another show at a later date to which Mayor Freeman said that call would be made by the Cultural District; they purchased and have been installing a new lighting system in the theater and putting in a new light board in the control room. Mayor Freeman stated that he and his granddaughter walked to the book nook at the Methodist Church to get a book and the door was off and it was empty to which Alderwoman Brocato stated she brought that door up here 4-5 months ago to be put back on. Operations Manager Mark Oxley stated that he will have to get a new door built because that one was rotten. Mayor Freeman told him to contact Mr. Greene. Alderwoman Brocato stated that they continue to fill the book nooks on a regular basis; and she hopes Movies in Many can be started back sometime this Spring.
- 12. Historical Committee Report:** Mayor Freeman stated they will meet Thursday for the first time in months due to COVID and will have more to report on after that.
- 13. Fire Board:** Alderman Kennedy gave a report that there was a fatality on Highway 6 involving an eighteen-wheeler.

**14. Airport:** Mayor Freeman stated the airport is moving rapidly on getting the extra runway done; he will be going to Austin as soon as they can get a meeting; he is hoping the runway will be completed in the next year where jet planes can land out there; he started working on this project 30 years ago and it has been a long process; have talked to some industries who are unique to airports like cushions and some have showed an interest in building plants out there when it is finished; and he understands that for our economy to move forward people have to get in and out of here and the airport will play a big role in that whether it is in tourism or industrial development and he is pleased with that accomplishment.

**15. Zoning:** Mayor Freeman stated that All Hours Fitness is building a million dollar facility and the application has been approved by the Zoning Commission: **a.) All Hours Fitness - 770 Shreveport Hwy. - To open a new business:** Vote to accept the zoning commission's recommendation to approve with a motion by Brocato; seconded by Kennedy. Passed unanimously.

**16. Grant Report:** Grant Writer Suzanne Williams reported that she has pretty much been focusing on three FEMA claims for Debris Removal, Mitigation and Buildings & Equipment for a total of \$339,000. Mayor Freeman asked how much she has brought in from FEMA and COVID to which Mrs. Williams stated somewhere around \$400,000-\$500,000; she has started the CWEF grant process for the water tank and the LGAP grant for fire hydrant repair is also in the process and both need to be in before February 1<sup>st</sup>; she received support letters today from Louie Bernard and Rodney Schamerhorn for both projects.

**Amendment-Resolution #1 of 2021 - To apply for an LGAP grant to be used for fire hydrants and valve management program and comprehensive flush program - \$35,000.00:** Passed with a motion by Kennedy and seconded by Jackson. Vote unanimous.

**Amendment-Resolution #2 of 2021 - To apply for a CWEF grant to be used for the ground water storage tank at the water plant - \$35,000.00:** Passed with a motion by Brocato and seconded by Kennedy. Vote unanimous.

Mayor Freeman asked Mrs. Williams what other grants she was working on besides FEMA, CWEF and LGAP and Alderwoman Brocato asked her what about the grants that she worked on with her to which Mrs. Williams stated that she has not been able to work on any other grants that they have worked on because all of those dates are after April 1<sup>st</sup> and she has a weekly phone meeting with FEMA and she has been consumed on getting that finished; she has found a grant on cultural and social venues for music and movies that she just got notice about at the end of last week; Alderwoman Brocato asked what the deadline was on that one and Mrs. Williams said May. Mayor Freeman asked Alderman Kennedy what his question was about the Grant Writer. Alderman Kennedy asked what her job description was to which Mayor Freeman stated that she is to apply for whatever grants we asked her to apply for and whatever grants she finds that can be recommended to us. Alderman Kennedy stated that she should not be doing office work or taking calls about vaccinations that it is not her job. Mayor Freeman said she works for him and he sets her job descriptions. Mrs. Williams stated that she was asked to take calls to help people register for vaccinations and Mayor Freeman asked her was this too much and did she need to work somewhere else that does not require so much of her and Mrs. Williams went on to say that she will do what he asks her to do but she will not put her neck out because there are liability issues. Alderwoman Brocato said that people cannot call they have to apply online and many people do not have internet or computers; Mrs. Williams asked could she please just finish speaking and Alderman Kennedy asked Alderwoman Brocato to please let her finish. Mrs. Williams went on to say that she has talked to the pharmacist and other places and found out where people need to call to get on the list but no one knows when they get the vaccine until they open the FedEx box and they have them but what really scares her is the liability and that if the Town of Many sets up the appointments for residents as a courtesy then that person has an adverse reaction or ends up getting COVID then that puts the town at risk. Mayor Freeman stated this is the first he has heard of this and he is irritated about it and will talk to her about it tomorrow. Alderwoman Brocato stated that she feels like we are here to serve the citizens of Many and many of them are having a great deal of trouble

signing up and she feels that it is our responsibility to assist them not saying that we do it for them but to help in every way we can to which Mrs. Williams stated she has helped everyone that has called her or left her messages.

**15. Street:** Street Supervisor David Smith reported they have been working on debris from the storm, catching up on work orders and helping read water meters right now.

**16. Animal Control:** Animal Control Officer David Smith reported for the last month he had a total of five dogs taken to the animal shelter and four of those have already went to rescue and he has trapped three cats.

**17. Water:** Water Superintendent Roger Dew reported they have been reading meters and was working on a leak on Highland today at the Old Junior High. Mayor Freeman stated last month we had a total of 22 cutoffs for a total of \$7,903 and this month we have a total of 19 cutoffs for \$4,085 so in two months we've had a total of \$11,000 in non-payments and we cannot cut them off or force them to pay and it will only continue to get worse.

**18. Garbage:** Operations Manager Mark Oxley said they were doing good and the guys really work hard out in all types of weather. Mayor Freeman said he knows they are doing a good job because they are showing a profit.

**19. Amendment-Reminder to all city employees they are not to politic on city time or will be terminated:** Mayor Freeman asked for a motion to reaffirm to all of our employees that during political season they are not to politic or do anything that would appear to support one person over another and if found out and proven they can be terminated and that it is not our employees place while on the towns payroll to be out supporting one issue or another to which Alderwoman Corley stated that the same goes for the council. Passed with a motion by Corley and seconded by Brocato. Vote unanimous.

Next scheduled Regular Council Meeting is on February 16, 2021 at 5:15 p.m.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:22 P.M. was made by Kennedy and seconded by Jackson. Vote unanimous.

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KENNETH A. FREEMAN, MAYOR

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AMIE BROWN, TOWN CLERK