

## **TOWN OF MANY**

July 20, 2021

### **Regular Session**

The Mayor and Aldermen of the Town of Many met in regular session, Tuesday, July 20, 2021, at 5:00 P.M. at Town Hall. Present were Mayor Robert H. Hable, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem Bobbie Jackson and Council Members Mary Brocato, Mary Perry, Anita Darwin, and Cherry Williams. Also present were Town Clerk Amie Brown, Chief of Police Cheryl Wooley, Officer Carla Nicks, Wastewater Plant Supervisor Joshua Darden, Deputy Clerk Valisa King, Mayor's Assistant Phyllis Jeansonne, HR Manager/Payroll Clerk Kimberly Rodrigues, A/R Clerk Dawana Simmons, Airport Manager Lee Woods, Town Attorney Chris Sylvia and Kenneth Ammons.

Mayor Robert Hable called the meeting to order. Prayer was offered by Alderwoman Perry, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Hable.

**Minutes:** Minutes for June 15, 2021 regular session was approved as written and presented with a motion by Jackson; seconded by Brocato. Vote unanimous.

**Amend Agenda:** Alderwoman Williams reported that guest Anna-Cate Wright would not be attending tonight's meeting.

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

**Guest(s):** Lee Turner with Congressman Johnson's Office, Nolan Rivers with the Sabine Parish Sales & Use Tax Office, James Wagley with Sabine Prevention Alliance, and Monte Davis

James Wagley reported that a couple months back they partnered with the Town of Many to help them develop positive alternatives for children in youth; since then, they have started their fiscal year and revised their budget to help the local law enforcement provide supervision and compliance monitoring of vendors selling alcohol and tobacco illegally; and to increase awareness problems with underage drinking. They received a five-year grant because their numbers were really high. He wants better signage around recreational areas in the town that says "this is a safe place for kids", "no alcohol, no drugs, no weapons", "we are taking care of our kids at this site", and the grant will pay for these signs and they will be at the Leon James Park as well as the Fairgrounds and he wants a picture with the police and to come up with a prevention message for the sign. He introduced two students that are part of the drama club and these students are writing their public service announcements for them and recording them on the local radio stations and are also pictured on their billboard signs. Mr. Wagley asked the board for approval to place the signs, and what message to place on the sign. They have trainers that will come in and train vendors for free on compliance checks to know exactly what the law is and how to check for fake I.D.'s. Alderwoman Brocato stated that she would want the council to have final approval of what goes on the sign, to which Mr. Wagley said that is what he is asking for and would like for someone from the town to have input in it and to help design the signs. Alderwoman Brocato and Mayor Hable volunteered to help.

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

**1. Emergency Water Project Loan to replace ground storage tank at water plant, new pump for water intake and repair well at Patrick Lane:** Mayor Hable explained that a worksheet was provided and went on to say that the engineers came about a month ago to clean the ground storage tank and upon investigation they could not even clean it with the pressure washer without possibly blowing holes in the side of it and it needs to be replaced. Wastewater Plant Supervisor Joshua Darden explained that the elevated water well on Hwy. 6 the screen was clogged with bio growth and was killing the chlorine residual in that area so we had the pumping equipment pulled and had the screen washed out and flushed, and a high chlorination in there, then let set and flush again then repeat then send samples off to the state. Mayor Hable went on to say that we have one pump pulling water out of Lanan Creek and under advisement of the water operators and engineers we need a second pump for backup in case this pump fails. He explained these items are not budgeted and we will have to spend this money fairly quickly and we will have to borrow this money and present it to the bond commission in August and it will be paid back through utility revenue. Alderwoman Williams asked if this was a patch or a fix and Mayor Hable said it was a replacement. Mayor Hable stated we are not making any decisions tonight; this is just for information purposes only.

**2. Resolution #3 of 2021 – Change office hours from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. to 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. effective immediately:** Passed with a motion by Brocato; seconded by Darwin. Vote unanimous.

**3. Appoint members to the Employee Complaint Committee:** Robert Hable, Anita Darwin, Bobbie Jackson, Cheryl Wooley. Passed with a motion by Brocato; seconded by Perry. Vote unanimous.

**4. Appoint members to the Zoning Commission:** Due to the fact that we had to replace four members and have only found two replacements we need to table this item until next month. Motion to table until next month by Jackson; seconded by Brocato. Vote unanimous.

**5. Appoint members to the Airport Board:** Kenneth Ammons, Brian Tannehill, Dianne Andries, Rick McCurdy, Don Burkett. Passed with a motion by Perry and seconded by Jackson. Vote unanimous.

**6. Appoint representative to serve on the Tourism Board:** Currently serving on the Board is Alderwoman Bobbie Jackson. Motion to reappoint Bobbie Jackson by Brocato; seconded by Perry. Vote unanimous.

**7. Appoint representative to serve on the Sales Tax Commission Board:** Mayor Hable asked Sales and Use Tax Administrator Nolan Rivers to make a statement. Mr. Rivers stated that the current representative for the Town of Many is Ms. Gay Corley and even though she is no longer a member of the Town of Many he would like to ask that we allow Ms. Corley to remain our representative for the calendar year for the following reasons; she is currently their chairperson and has responsibilities along with him; she is experienced; they are currently working together with the state where the state is currently trying to change the law where they collect all the sales taxes; on behalf of the Sales Tax Commission, they are all in agreement to have Ms. Corley stay on the board for the calendar year as Mayor Hable saw at their regular scheduled meeting that he attended. Motion to allow Gay Corley to serve on the Sales Tax Commission Board for the calendar year by Darwin; seconded by Brocato. Vote unanimous.

**8. Appoint representative to serve on the Fire Board:** Currently James Kennedy represents the Town of Many on the Fire Board. Mayor Hable stated that he also serves on that Board and Mr. Kennedy serves the Town of Many very humbly and he asked Mr. Kennedy would he consider remaining on the Board and he accepted. Motion to appoint James Kennedy by Jackson; seconded by Perry. Vote unanimous.

**9. Appoint Town CPA:** Motion to reappoint Eugene Fremaux by Brocato; seconded by Jackson. Vote unanimous.

**10. Appoint Valisa King as Records Retention Officer through Louisiana Secretary of State Archives:** Passed with a motion by Perry; seconded by Williams. Vote unanimous.

**11. Renew Airport Hay Contract with Buddy Brandon – Two-year contract payable to TOM for \$1,000 per year:** Passed with a motion by Jackson; seconded by Perry. Vote unanimous.

**12. Hire Payne, Moore & Herrington as auditors for the 2020-2021 fiscal year audit:** Passed with a motion by Jackson; seconded by Brocato. Vote unanimous.

**13. Vote to allow Ken Freeman's family to develop a small park behind the Water Office facing Main Street with a bench and tree planted to honor Ken's years of service to the Town:** Mayor Hable stated that Betsy Godfrey reached out to him about developing a small park behind the old water office, behind First United Methodist Church, where the old water storage tank is, next door to Mrs. Blake's house to honor Ken Freeman and it would be funded by the Godfrey and Freeman family. Passed with a motion by Perry; seconded by Jackson. Vote unanimous. Alderwoman Brocato stated the council needs to have final approval on what can be put at the park.

**14. Revisions to collecting and depositing cash payments:** Mayor Hable reported that we deal with a lot of currency in the water department and they make multiple trips to the bank to make deposits so he is limiting the number of bank deposits to Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and he also volunteered to make night deposits if we have a large sum of cash, and also to utilize the safe in the Clerk's office to store the cash on days that we do not make deposits. Utility Clerk Valisa King stated that her main concern is getting customers current on their

bills; they only want to pay just enough to keep from being disconnected but will never catch up if they are currently being late and accruing late fees and only paying what they are behind and not the current bill; she called around and we are the only town in the parish that allows arrears; she showed Mayor Hable the list today of past due customers and there are 82 customers owing \$18,766.00; her goal is by January 2022 to have all customers caught up on their bills.

**15. Lawrason Act and Ethics:** Alderwoman Brocato asked for a digital copy or hard copy of the Lawrason Act be sent to each council member. Mayor Hable also mentioned that he wanted everyone to know there are town vehicles with Foy Motors on the back and they were all purchased prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> and he agrees that everyone needs a copy of the Lawrason Act and that we all could go to prison if in violation of it.

**16. List of permits issued from the Sabine Parish building permit office for the second quarter of 2021:** A copy was presented to the council.

**17. Reports:** Council was presented with the **Profit & Loss Performance Budget** for June 2021 showing \$204,725 in the black for this fiscal year-to-date; the **Payables Log** for June 2021 with evidence of invoices paid; balanced & reconciled **Bank Statements** showing \$1,928,146.94 in checking accounts and \$501,581.86 in savings accounts for June 2021; **Overtime report** of \$127,677.77 from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021; Verification of Federal & Louisiana **Taxes paid** for June 2021; and Verification of **Insurance paid** for June 2021. All reports were accepted as written and presented with a motion by Brocato and seconded by Perry. Vote unanimous.

**18. 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 which include: We have two officers resigning at the end of the month; The Town of Many, the School Board and the Sheriff's Office will all chip in a 1/3 each of the salary to provide a school resource officer. Alderwoman Brocato asked what that salary would be to which Chief Wooley stated right now we will have to put one of our officers in there because they require a POST certified officer and we did not have time to hire someone and send them to POST and have them ready by the time school starts on August 10<sup>th</sup>. The School Board and the Sheriff's Office will contribute \$10,000 each and we will contribute \$10,000 plus about \$3,000 in benefits. Officer Evan Eddington will start on August 10<sup>th</sup> and Keith Jones is up for new-hire to fill that position as soon as he completes POST certification. Chief Wooley asked Attorney Sylvia if the School Board had signed off on the agreement and he said he has sent them the revised document; Jacob Bridges will get out of POST at the end of the month; they had the 4<sup>th</sup> of July enforcement that proved to be highly successful with 10 out of 15 businesses in the Town of Many selling alcohol/tobacco products to a 17-year old without checking his ID and at the close of each operation, citations were issued to each business; they got a grant for a speed monitoring device that will also read the license plate and will let them know if the tags or insurance is expired and they will get training on it Thursday; Suzanne got them a grant for first aid kits and now each unit has a first aid kit in it; she attended the Chief's meeting this morning and the AG's office is going to give them a voucher for the antidote Narcon for drug overdose, for as many as they want, to also put in each unit and Doctor/Detective Holder is going to teach a class on it; neighborhood watch signs are being put up and they will be working with the community in ongoing or in-progress crimes.

**a.) Vote for town to pay 1/3 salary plus benefits for a School Resource Officer:**

Passed with a motion by Darwin and seconded by Perry. Vote unanimous.

**b.) Chief's recommendation to hire Keith Jones as the School Resource Officer after POST Certification:** Passed with a motion by Williams and seconded by Perry. Vote unanimous.

**c.) Chief's recommendation to hire Jacob Wilkerson as a full-time police officer with a starting date of 9/1/21:** Passed with a motion by Brocato and seconded by Jackson. Vote unanimous.

**d.) Chief's recommendation to hire POST Certified Kathryn Charest as a part-time police officer with a starting date of 7/21/21:** Passed with a motion by Williams and seconded by Perry. Vote unanimous.

**19. Sales Tax Report: Decrease of <6.73%> over May 2020:** Alderwoman Corley submitted a typed report. Mayor Hable stated we all know that in May of 2020 that we all were sitting tight in Sabine Parish and not going anywhere which, he thinks, is the reason for the decrease this month.

**20. Tourism Report:** Alderwoman Jackson submitted a typed report which states the overnight room sales and occupancy tax was \$22,991.63 which was the highest May since 2008, a 3% increase over May 2019 and a 17% increase over May 2020; during the month of June there was 23,823 users visit their website which helps bring in tourists; the No Man's Land has a seven-parish group and they are working on a lot of things; \$35,000 Sunshine Grant helped pay \$12,525.51 for the printing of 15,000 new Toledo Bend maps and they paid \$4,000 for graphic design and new table cloths; they have a new director, Chip Davis, who seems to be real enthusiastic and she thinks he will help get things going; a welcome reception was held by the Chamber and Tourism Commission; lots of upcoming events for July and August; she will attend the Summit in New Orleans, August 24-26.

**21. Cultural District & Historical Committee Report:** Alderwoman Brocato submitted a typed report which states the first Music in Many concert was held on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and was successful with 203 seats filled; the air conditioning stopped working but was able to get it going right before the show started; the units are well over 20 years old and the oldest unit uses freon that is very hard to find anymore; we need to find funding to get at least one unit replaced this year; we also had to cancel the Juneteenth movie Harriett and send everyone home, because an amplifier went out and had to be replaced; everything is ready to go for Aladdin this Saturday night; we are going to have a special event in September with a documentary about No Man's Land and will be working closely with the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission and the premier will be at the Many Community Center on Thursday, September 9<sup>th</sup> by invitation only and it will also air next Spring on PBS; the next Music in Many show will be September 4<sup>th</sup> and will feature Flashback; we have feather flags now thanks to Cherry Williams; we will have Christmas flags along San Antonio Avenue during the Christmas holidays where the American flags were placed during the patriotic holidays; we are making lots of progress on the Depot Museum; we are going to receive \$25,000 in funding from the state of Louisiana to build exhibits thanks to a bill introduced by Senator Louis Bernard; we will also receive in excess of \$1,000 from the sale of the book about the Choctaw Apache Tribe that can be purchased at Nichols and they are donating their half of the sale of the book to the museum; she met Sunday with Dorsey Brunson at the Depot and took room measurements to plan the exhibit for the Choctaw/Apache Tribe and they are going back now to plan the maps and paintings and will develop a video and we now know what will go on the walls and in the display cases; we will be purchasing at least a 50-inch smart TV and stand to show the video; the group is planning seminars; one for basket making, one on herbal medicines and another on tamale making; Work is also proceeding on the train room and on the No Mans Land exhibit. Cane River Heritage Foundation is assisting with the No Mans Land exhibit and we have written a grant for additional funding from them.

**22. Fire Board:** Mayor Hable reported that in June central fire station had a total of 89 calls; there is a shortage of volunteers right now and if anyone knows of any individuals looking for very rewarding work go see Scott Gowen or Matt Ward at central station; some good news is that we have 12 fire stations in our district and we have had a void around Oak Hill Road at BJ's and the Fire Dept. is entering into a lease agreement with the owners of BJ's to house two fire trucks at the metal building on their property which will hopefully lower the fire rating for lower insurance rates for our citizens.

**23. Airport:** Airport Manager Lee Woods reported they are getting ready to start phase 3, the final phase, of the runway reconstruction project; the state grant is \$90,000 and the FAA is \$664,000; it is a 45 day project and hoping to finish around the first week in September; the other two phases over four years were 1.4 million and 1.1 million which brings the total runway replacement cost to \$3.3 million and it was all funded by federal and state funds and did not cost the Town of Many anything. Mayor Hable added that a lot of people have questions about the airport and he wanted to comment that we have a hidden jewel at the end of Botan Road and that Mr. Lee does a great job securing grants for the airport and it does not cost us anything for the airport to operate; he asked if it was the middle of the runway that is being

replaced to which Mr. Woods stated that it is the very south end of it then we will move on to a parallel taxiway which is 1.8 million.

**24. Zoning:** Zoning Administrator Amie Brown stated there was no report.

**25. Grant Report:** Mayor Hable reported that Grant Writer Suzanne Williams was on vacation. Alderwoman Brocato reported they received a grant for a historical sign for the Depot.

**26. Street:** Street Supervisor Jeremy Wilkerson left a report with Mayor's Assistant Phyllis Jeansonne that they have been tearing down the old barn because the new one is on the way; all work orders will have to be postponed until the barn is finished; last week they started mowing but the tractor and sidearm broke down and is in the shop; once the barn is complete, they plan to pick up trash, start back mowing and side arming down Middlecreek Road and work orders. Mayor Hable added that the new barn by central fire station was budgeted in last year's 2020 financials and the plan for it is to reduce maintenance costs by having a comfortable place to perform our own maintenance to our equipment and vehicles and it is being constructed by General Shelters. He went on to say that the work orders are not being ignored we are just prioritizing right now.

**27. Animal Control:** Street Supervisor Jeremy Wilkerson left a report with the Mayor's Assistant Phyllis Jeansonne that two cats and four dogs were picked up.

**28. Water:** Wastewater Plant Supervisor Joshua Darden reported that they read meters this week; worked on the lift station pump at Walmart; Highway 6 well flushed today, the screen was built up with sedimentation and bio growth, will flush again tomorrow and do a high chlorination in it, will flush it some more after then let it set about 12-14 hours, will do the same for the tank on the ground storage next to it, then take a sample to LDH and when they approve it we will put it back on line; done sewer taps on Georgia and Ivanhoe; new customers at the new bank on San Antonio, gym on Shreveport Hwy. and residence on Orange Street; done monthly water samples today and all chlorine was satisfactory.

**29. Sewer:** Wastewater Plant Supervisor Joshua Darden stated he has been trying to get the clarifier back on line; has been having issues with the drive shaft on the scraper that agitates the sludge in the bottom; the parts the company sent they got the specs wrong and they will pick it back up at their cost, refit it and send it back to us; Mayor Hable asked how long we had been working with one clarifier and Mr. Darden stated it has been a while because due to COVID it has been an ordeal getting parts for anything. Mr. Darden stated that he and Harry manages to do what they can with it and they clean out the contact chamber once a week.

**30. Garbage:** Wastewater Plant Supervisor Joshua Darden reported that the truck is in the shop but the guys are doing a good job. Mayor Hable stated Town of Many passed an ordinance in 2009 about garbage cans and Sanitation Supervisor Mike Moore stated this morning that there's maybe only five customers that we have problems with loose trash and cans with no lids which is a positive number. Mr. Darden added a suggestion that maybe when someone files for zoning in the future they can go out ahead of time and do some surveying for accessibility of water and sewer and that would eliminate frustration on some items to which Mayor Hable stated that he agrees with the suggestion. Alderwoman Williams stated she thinks some of the customers about the garbage cans are in her district and it does not look good.

**31. Remarks from Council Members:** **Perry:** Nothing. **Darwin:** Upkeep and maintenance on Eastside. **Jackson:** By McDonald's and Southern Classic there is always lots of trash. **Williams:** Have Mary Byles' husband's name removed from water bill now that he is deceased and not have to pay a reconnect fee, Water Clerk Valisa King stated it was a rule when she got here, Town Clerk Amie Brown stated that we can change our policy that asks customers to provide a death certificate or divorce papers which keeps customers from cheating out of paying high water bills to change the name and vote on it at the next meeting; Contractor asked her to look at permit fees and possibly raising fees to discourage out of town contractors from doing work here which Mayor Hable asked Attorney Sylvia to look into this; Town sponsoring Back-To-School pep rally to recognize athletes, Mayor Hable and Alderwoman Brocato is all for it, she will contact someone and get the ball rolling for it; Cleaning of town focus on east, south towards Florian, Texas Hwy., north and Main Street and getting it nice and clean and then turning over the neighborhoods to the aldermen to be in charge of overgrown lots, abandoned cars and have a schedule of cleaning one district each week and she thinks after a couple months of maintaining it might be a way to handle the town

cleaning. Mayor Hable added that it is all over the place right now with work orders coming in and emergencies popping up and the barn that is coming in right now. Street Supervisor Jeremy Wilkerson joined the meeting and he stated that while it may look good on paper but they would run out of time trying to catch up because by the time they finish with one district they are already three weeks behind on the other districts. Alderwoman Williams stated she picked up trash for five weeks in her district and the sides of the road were so thick they could not get in it. Alderwoman Brocato stated we have had a real rainy season and the guys have been overwhelmed to which Alderwoman Williams stated they have done great. Alderwoman Brocato stated that instead of us trying to devise a plan we need to get with Jeremy and the crew and the town to which Alderwoman Williams said we were not trying not to get with them, we were trying to get with them and work with them. Mayor Hable also stated that not only the rain but we have also had problems with our equipment. **Brocato:** Road to the animal shelter is almost impassable. Mayor Hable asked Alderwoman Darwin if it was in her district to which she said yes. Mayor Hable stated he does not know why it has not been overlaid. Alderwoman Darwin stated it is on her list to be overlaid

Next scheduled Regular Council Meeting is on August 17, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

Alderwoman Perry left the meeting at 6:55 P.M.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:07 P.M. was made by Brocato and seconded by Jackson. Vote unanimous.

---

ROBERT H. HABLE, JR., MAYOR

---

AMIE BROWN, TOWN CLERK