



Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 16, 2017
7:04 P.M.

Members in Attendance:

Aldersperson Simeon Profit
Aldersperson Donald Richard
Aldersperson Janice Fleming
Aldersperson Leola Keys
Aldersperson Wysinger Cleveland

The Town of Richwood met for a Regular Meeting held November 16, 2017 at 7:04 p.m. at the Richwood Multi-Purpose Center, 2710 Martin Luther King Drive, Richwood, Louisiana to consider the following business:

- I. Meeting Called to Order by Mayor Gerald Brown at 7:04 p.m.**
- II. Prayer-** was offered by Mayor Gerald Brown
- III. Pledge of Allegiance -** recited in unison
- IV. Roll Call-** Mayor Gerald Brown called roll with the following results:
 - **The record shall reflect all (5) Alderspersons present at time of roll call:**

Aldersperson Simeon Profit	Aldersperson Donald Richard
Aldersperson Janice Fleming	Aldersperson Leola Keys
Aldersperson Wysinger Cleveland	

V. Adoption of the Agenda-

Aldersperson Wysinger Cleveland – stated he would like to add something to the agenda, concerning property taxes and the safety of the Town of Richwood as well.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised a motion and a second is needed to make the addition.

- **It was then seconded by Alderperson Leola Keys to add the items to the agenda.**

A vote was taken to amend the agenda and add the requested items with the following results:

Alderperson Simeon Profit	Yes	Alderperson Donald Richard	Yes
Alderperson Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderperson Leola Keys	Yes
Alderperson Wysinger Cleveland	Yes		

Per Mayor Gerald Brown- * The record shall reflect the following:

- **Let the record reflect (2) items will be added to the agenda; these items will be added as Items XIV Property Tax and Item # XV Safety concerns.**
- **It was then moved by Alderperson Donald Richard and seconded by Alderperson Simeon Profit to adopt the agenda with the updates.**
- **A vote was taken to adopt the revised November 16, 2017 agenda with the following results:**

Alderperson Simeon Profit	Yes	Alderperson Donald Richard	Yes
Alderperson Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderperson Leola Keys	Yes
Alderperson Wysinger Cleveland	Yes		

- **The record shall reflect all (5) Alderpersons voted yes to adopt November 16, 2017 revised agenda.**

VI. Adoption of October 19, 2017 Regular Minutes:

- **It was moved by Alderperson Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderperson Donald Richard to adopt the October 19, 2017 Regular Minutes as presented.**

A vote to adopt the October 19, 2017 Regular Minutes was taken with the following results:

Alderperson Simeon Profit	Yes	Alderperson Donald Richard	Yes
Alderperson Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderperson Leola Keys	Yes
Alderperson Wysinger Cleveland	Yes		

VIII. Public Comments as they relate to Items on the Agenda:

Mrs. Barbara Sydney (Public Attendee)- addressed the forum and indicated when they had come in and talked to them at the previous meeting and were told the prior incident of water leakage in the ditches were not waste water, there are people's lives in jeopardy out here, and they have a waste water report that says this.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised he has not received a report stating this as being accurate.

Aldersperson Leola Keys- suggested Mrs. Barbara Sydney bring the report to the Mayor and they can discuss the report.

Mr. Jimmy Thomas (Public Attendee)- stated his concern is about Mr. Steven Collins, and a proposal to purchase land from the Town of Richwood, have you spoken to the Board about this?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised, Mr. Collins is coming to make a presentation to the Board tonight, he is just inquiring about the possibility of doing this.

Aldersperson Wysinger Cleveland- stated Mr. Collins is not on the agenda.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised, yes, he is, that is Item # XI.

IX. Mayor's Dialogue:

Mayor Gerald Brown- reminded everyone there is an election this Saturday, and we can vote at the Richwood Middle School, the Secretary of Treasurer and the polls are open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated he wanted to thank the contributors and sponsors we had for our Trick or Trunk Halloween Event, Creed & Creed, K-9 Entertainment, C-3 Car Club, Tup Truck Club, and everyone that came out for the Trick or Trunk Halloween Event; and wanted to thank Aldersperson Keys and Aldersperson Richards for stopping by, we had almost 200 kids at that particular event and turned out to be more than we expected, and we appreciated everyone's participation.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised there would be an event on November 20, 2017 in conjunction with Southern's Youth Movement, which will be a Diabetes Walk, to raise awareness on Juvenile and Type II Diabetes which is now listed as the number 3 killer of African Americans in this country. The walk will be a 1 ½ mile walk, that will begin here at the building and go around Highland to Honeysuckle down Brown which will be approximately a 1 ½ mile walk. Registration will begin @ 8:30 a.m.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised there will be a Christmas Parade on December 16, 2017, it will be sponsored by mostly the same individuals that sponsored our Halloween Event, but also Representative Katrina Jackson.

Mayor Gerald Brown – advised, our route will tentatively begin at the Mason Hall and come up the Highway come across Richwood Road # 2 come across and to the building.

Mayor Gerald Brown - advised any Alderperson or Civic body wanting to contribute to that event can come see Mrs. Rainwater.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised the next monthly commodity distribution is on November 20, Monday. which tentatively begins at 8:30 a.m. as soon as everything is setup.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised, the commodities we do through a partnership with the food bank of Northeast Louisiana, as you know the Town of Richwood tries to distribute turkeys for Thanksgiving, to our senior citizens, and that is an event we plan to do here, the two have nothing to do with each other so they will be doing their normal commodity distribution and probably that Monday afternoon or that Tuesday morning, we will be distributing our turkeys to our seniors.

Mayor Gerald Brown – advised a lot of people had been asking about that, and that is something he wants to do and plans to do, but he did want to explain, that is just not something the Town can just write a check out of the General Fund and finance, that is not legal.

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated, we must get those funds from donations and that is how we get those turkeys, we cannot use public funds for those turkeys.

Alderperson Leola Keys- inquired as to when the turkeys would be distributed?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised either Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised the Municipal Offices would be closed on November 24th and the 25th in observance of Thanksgiving Holiday.

Mayor Gerald Brown-advised the final thing he wanted to share was in accordance to the Traffic Study, which was done on Richwood Road # 2 and HWY 165 South; that when we contacted DOTD and asked them to do the study, it was in the hopes they would do something to increase safety at that particular area; our suggestion was a signal light, but we were advised we did not meet the requirements for a signal light. The requirements for a signal light is 500 cars per hour on the main thoroughfare, which is Hwy 165, and 150 cars per hour on the secondary thoroughfare, which is Richwood Road # 2. We did meet the criteria for 165, but I am told that we fell short on Richwood Road #2. I do not know what the numbers are, but I have ordered a report and should have it sometime next week. What they have said is we have been approved for a modification of that median, based on the crash information and traffic at that location, they

would basically go in and fill in the median where you would not be able to cross there anymore but would be required to go up or down to make your left turn. This is a project that DOTD will be doing, financing themselves which would be approximately \$600,000, and they are in the process of obtaining funds for that project and they will keep us posted on that.

Ms. Elonda Potter (Public Attendee)- inquired if they would find out when the roads would get fixed in the Richwood area?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised the roads are on a priority list with the Parish, some roads we are in partnership with the Parish to fix, like the one on Honeysuckle.

Ms. Elonda Potter (Public Attendee) – commented at least Highland

Mayor Gerald Brown – advised the roads are listed on a priority list with the parish, they are listed from worst to best, and setup on schedule to be addressed according to that list, the list includes the entire parish and not just the Town of Richwood.

Ms. Elonda Potter (Public Attendee)-inquired if we would be getting those funds back, the \$80,000 from the transportation fund?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised, that never happened, I am sorry you were told that, but that never happened.

Ms. Elonda Potter (Public Attendee)- inquired as to how much time were we looking at?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised, we are going to do the best that we can to get those things done, we have applied for funds through different areas to try and get money in to do those particular things, we have some things on the docket already to do, and he thought the next project on the docket is Richwood Road # 2, but it takes money to do these projects, and street projects are very expensive, and at this time with the condition of the State's Budget, and we are currently not receiving a piece of the pie from the transportation fund, that is something that will hopefully be back on the ballot for 2019.

Ms. Elonda Potter (Public Attendee)- commented that with the amount of taxes being collected, we should have plenty of money for these roads.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised he would like to sit down with Elonda Potter and show her what was actually being collected and what is paid out, because our tax base is not enough to support the fixing of our roads.

X. Mr. David Dailey (Presentation Regarding Waste Water Certification)

Mr. David Dailey- addressed the forum and introduced himself, and advised he had talked to the Mayor and the Mayor had asked him to come and take a look at the Pump Stations / Lifts in the Town, and had checked and found a few little problems.

Mr. David Dailey- advised he had also discussed the education needed to get the Town the certifications to become self- sustaining, and he was willing to share his knowledge with the public works people who would be attending class this week.

Mr. David Dailey- advised the forum of his background and experience concerning his expertise in this area. He advised the forum he had been asked by the Mayor to come on board and assist in the Town of Richwood, and he agreed and that is why he was at the meeting.

Aldersperson Leola Keys- inquired as to what David meant when he said he found a few things wrong?

Mr. David Daily- advised on the manholes the grout is off on some of the manholes, which can cause an excessive inflow of water by allowing water to enter the sewage system from outside.

Mr. David Dailey- advised also state code requires the lift stations be secured by a climb resistant fence and a couple strands of the barbed wire surrounding the Towns lifts were bad and needed replacing, and around the lift station must be kept clean of debris in the case of terrorism etc., and there is a bunch of undergrowth on one of them.

Mr. David Dailey- stated the sewage department, the two guys he met, John and Laurence, the Town's equipment, and things like that are in good condition.

Aldersperson Wysinger Cleveland – inquired, what would be his job title be with the Town of Richwood?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised he would be an advisor.

XI. Mr. Steven Collins (Proposal to Purchase Land from the Town)

Mr. Steven Collins- addressed the forum and introduced himself; Mr. Collins advised he would like to open a commercial driving school in Richwood, and to do so he would like to purchase a piece of land from the Town.

Board- inquired as to where the land is located.

Mayor Gerald Brown - advised the land located close to Richwood to the Family Dollar Store.

Aldersperson Simeon Profit- advised the land Mr. Collins is interested is currently not for sale and he would need to find another location.

Aldersperson Leola Keys- inquired is the land in question the same land a proposed town hall was to be placed?

Aldersperson Simeon Profit- answered yes.

Aldersperson Leola Keys- inquired if this is still in view (Answer was yes).

XII. Concerned Citizens for Richwood (Discussion on receiving a copy of monthly minutes and itemized financial reports)

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- stated, the minutes she has a problem with the minutes, but she has talked about that and it seems it does no good, that she was not going to address that, but they were wondering about a financial report, because everything should be itemized to the point its where you know where every dollar goes, and it doesn't seem that's the case. I would like to have that if I can.

Mayor Gerald Brown- inquired, why does that seem like that's not the case?

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- replied, because look at the streets.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised the Town has an audit performed every year, and our audits has never talked about missing money.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- stated a couple of years ago y'all had two audits that money was missing, that's why the streets are in the shape they are, because that money was missing.

- **Mayor Gerald Brown and Members of the Board advised that is not accurate.**

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- asked why did the Town have someone in South Louisiana taking care of the finances of the Town?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised that was done based on a recommendation by the auditors to hire a CPA.

*** *A discussion ensued* ***

Mrs. Linda Clark (Public Attendee) – asked if the Town would put in a lighting district and advised the forum about the need for lighting around Richwood Road #2 to help with safety.

Mr. Jimmy Thomas- (Public Attendee)- advised there has always been a lighting district because he pays for it on his bill.

Mrs. Linda Clark (Public Attendee) – indicated the Town previously had an arrangement with Entergy for a Lighting District which would not have cost for the Town but was told Ex-Mayor Harris had changed the agreement, Prior Mayor Gholston had setup with Entergy.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised this is something they are actually in talks with the Parish and the City of Monroe, DOTD, because it's not just Town it's the highway and this entire side of Town that's dark and that is something we are talking about who is going to pay for installation and maintenance, there is a lot of people at the table currently trying to see what we can do about getting lighting on this side of town.

Ms. Elonda Potter (Public Attendee)- inquired if the property taxes Richwood collected would pay for this?

Mayor Gerald Brown-advised no, and advised Ms. Potter the taxes collected are not sufficient to pay for this we are not collecting what she thinks we are collecting in taxes.

Ms. Elonda Potter (Public Attendee) – advised her mother's taxes has gone from \$86 to \$700 plus dollars, and she was told that Richwood assesses the tax amount.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised that is not true the Parish assesses the tax amount we do not assess taxes.

****** Discussion ensued concerning assessment of property taxes ******

XIII. Adoption of Ordinance # 2017-22 (An Ordinance Prohibiting Commercial Trucks on Certain Roads, Streets, and Drive in the Town of Richwood)

Public Attendee- addressed the forum and advised he had a problem with this ordinance that he felt it was targeting him, while there were houses that needed condemning and there were other issues that need to be addressed.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised the attendee this was not directed at him, but rather was to address the issue which were going on due to the number of 18 wheelers which were entering into the Town and causing issues with the streets.

- **It was then motioned by Alderperson Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderperson Donald Richards to vote to adopt Ordinance 2017-22 (An Ordinance Prohibiting Commercial Trucks on Certain Roads, Streets, and Drives in the Town of Richwood)**
- **A Vote was taken with the following results: 3 Yeas, 1 Abstain and 1 No Vote Ordinance 2017-22 Passes.**

Alderperson Simeon Profit Yes
 Alderperson Janice Fleming Yes
 Alderperson Wysinger Cleveland No

Alderperson Donald Richard Yes
 Alderperson Leola Keys Abstain

XIV. Property Tax

Aldersperson Wysinger Cleveland- addressed the forum and advised the division of the taxes collected is showing the Town of Richwood only receiving \$26 on a tax bill showing \$ 200 plus

Public Attendee- questioned why we are paying taxes to Ouachita Parish?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised everyone in Ouachita Parish pays taxes to Ouachita Parish.

Ms. Blackmon (Public Attendee)- questioned why we allow the Parish to collect our taxes?

- It was answered the reason the parish is collecting taxes is everyone (the surrounding towns and the Town of Richwood agreed to them collecting the taxes, however if we were collecting our own taxes we would still received the same amount for the Town as is being received now.

XV. Safety concerns.

***** No Additional Discussion was discussed earlier*****

XVI. Adjournment

It was motioned by Aldersperson Donald Richard and seconded by Aldersperson Simeon Profit to adjourn the meeting @ 8:45 p.m.