



Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 16, 2023

7:00 P.M.

Members in Attendance at Roll Call:

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.

Alderman Simeon Profit

Alderman Leola Keys

Alderman Wysinger Cleveland

The Town of Richwood met for Regular Meeting held on March 16, 2023 at 7:00 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 7:06 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 (4) Aldermen present at time of roll call.**

Present: Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.

Alderman Simeon Profit

Alderman Leola Keys

Alderman Wysinger Cleveland

- *Alderman Janice Fleming arrived after roll call @ 7:09 p.m.*

V. Adoption of the Agenda-

Mayor Gerald Brown- requested Items XI & XII swap position due to presentation being given in Item # X which correlates with Item # XII.

- **The record shall reflect a vote was taken to change positions of listed Item # XI & XII with the following results: All (4) Aldermen present voted Yes to change positions of Items # XI & XII on the agenda.**

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr. – requested a Discussion of Police Salary and City Status be added to the agenda.

It was motioned by Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr. and seconded by Alderman Leola Keys that a discussion of Police Salary and City Status be added to the agenda as Items X and XI.

- **The record shall reflect a vote was taken with the following results:
All (5) Aldermen present voted Yes to add Police Salary and City Status to the agenda as Items # X and XI.**

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.	Yes	Alderman Simeon Profit	Yes
Alderman Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderman Leola Keys	Yes
Alderman Wysinger Cleveland Yes			

It was motioned by Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr. and seconded by Alderman Simeon Profit to adopt the Amended Agenda.

- **The record shall reflect a vote was taken to adopt the Amended Agenda with the following results: (5) Votes Yes to adopt the amended agenda.**

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.	Yes	Alderman Simeon Profit	Yes
Alderman Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderman Leola Keys	Yes
Alderman Wysinger Cleveland Yes			

VI. Adoption of February 2, 2023 Special Meeting and February 16, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

It was motioned by Alderman Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderman Janice Fleming to adopt the February 2, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

- **The record shall reflect a vote was taken with the following results as follows:
(3) Yes and (2) Abstain Votes.**

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.	Abstain	Alderman Simeon Profit	Yes
Alderman Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderman Leola Keys	Abstain
Alderman Wysinger Cleveland Yes			

It was motioned by Alderman Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderman Janice Fleming to adopt the February 16, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

- **The record shall reflect a vote was taken with the following results as follows:
(3) Yes and (2) Abstain Votes.**

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.	Abstain	Alderman Simeon Profit	Yes
Alderman Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderman Leola Keys	Abstain
	Alderman Wysinger Cleveland	Yes	

VII. Adoption of Financial Reports

It was motioned by Alderman Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderman Janice Fleming to adopt the Financial Reports.

- **The record shall reflect a vote was taken to adopt the Financial Reports with the following results: (2) Yes Votes, (2) No Votes, and (1) Abstain Vote.**

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.	No	Alderman Simeon Profit	Yes
Alderman Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderman Leola Keys	No
	Alderman Wysinger Cleveland	Abstain	

VIII. Public Comments as they relate to items on the agenda.

Mr. Nathan Brown (Public Attendee) – addressed the forum and expressed his concerns regarding the need for an engineer.

Mr. Nathan Brown- shared with the Board that he had a conversation with a Greater Ouachita Water the have about 20 leaks from the church to his house and an engineer would be able to address the needs of the Town concerning getting this issue resolved. .

Mr. Anthony Anderson- addressed the forum and expressed his concerns in regard to the introduction of Ordinance 2023-01 which would amend the operating hours of all places of business where alcoholic beverages are kept, sold, stored for sale at retail, served or consumed.

Mr. Anthony Anderson- conveyed to the forum the impact 2:00 a.m. earlier closing due to concerns of shooting would destroy his business and in 14years this has never happened.

IX. Mayor’s Dialogue :

Mayor Gerald Brown – advised the Board of the 46 Annual Municipal Day they have in Baton Rouge is scheduled for April 25. It is going to be at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Baton Rouge the cut-off day for the special rate for the hotel rooms of \$ 112 will expire Saturday, March 25, if you are interested in potentially going to that. The registration for delegates is \$ 75 if you bring a guest it is an additional \$ 100.

X. Possible Additional Funding / Police Salary & City Status

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr. – stated there has been a situation in the Richwood Police Department for a number of years; recently we have found one of the main concerns is pay. I am under the impression that maybe we could vote as a Board to increase the pay or salary

for police officers, but also require maybe move from 10 hours a day to 12 and work to balance out overtime and maybe we can be a little more competitive in the area .

I mentioned that to the Chief, and he said he would be willing to work some additional hours if we could come up with the pay, I would be willing to do that Chief if you are still willing to change the hours from 10 hours to 12 and that would give us an additional 2 hours they would be on the streets.

Mayor Gerald Brown- inquired, are you basically saying you want the Chief to put something together to bring back to the Board.

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr. – replied, yes it's not an action we are going to take right now.

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr. – the other thing was about the City Status. The Town has grown over the years, looking at city status, when Richwood was initially introduced, I think Mrs. Gholston had the idea of growing to one day meet that obligation. Over the years we have grown, looking at the 2020 Census, Richwood has met the threshold for that obligation. It would be very beneficial if we could apply and get city status. It would help as far as some monies are concerned and recognition of the town, I'm pretty sure it would benefit us as a whole to become a city when it comes down to additional funding.

The process for what I have been able to understand is that the Board has to draft a resolution, pass a resolution, the Mayor signs it and sends it to the Governor, the Governor looks at your information verifies it and grants the status, it doesn't cost anything, to my knowledge it doesn't cost anything, right now it's just a comment I am not asking the Board to do anything right now I'm just throwing it out there so we can start getting some feedback citizens might come between meetings or the next meeting; once you get that city status you are in a position where you can get that bigger piece of the pie.

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated he did have a comment on the city status, that to my knowledge we have to have at least 5,000 citizens to gain city status; you saw something on the Census Report that says that we have that many citizens?

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr. – replied, yes sir, it is possible, it is possible it is right now you have almost 6,000. Most municipalities use everybody within their jurisdiction which includes your incarcerated citizens, you can use those, and when you combine those figures you come up with almost 6,000; that's why I brought it up. Yes, I have done a little research and looked at the Census, it's on the internet, you can go on that and find anything you want to find out. You combine all residents, you have right at 6,000 people. So, the Town has grown over the years you know we talked about this last year during the, ugh when we tried to get that redistricting that's when I really looked at the population. We can still get city status, it doesn't take an ordinance, doesn't take an Act of Congress or anything like that; we just draft a resolution, the Mayor signs it, and sends it to the Governor and he verifies it and either grant it or not grant it based on whatever criteria he may feel, and may be any additional. What I

understand from the research I’ve done it only takes approval of the Board and the Mayor, send a resolution and if the population stands, they will grant city status, we would move from the Town of Richwood to the City of Richwood and from that point there are a lot of other doors that would open up to funding you can receive.

Alderman Janice Fleming- it would also be to our benefit to incorporate into the Town of Richwood some of the other surrounding areas, i.e. Tanglewood, that would increase our population greatly; but we have to be unified and pass budgets in a timely fashion and do all the necessary things that helps to be looked at in a favorable manner; right now we got to get our reputation were it needs to be because right now we are not looked at in a favorable manner.

XI. Chris Patrick: Representing Volkert, Inc. Engineering Services

Chris Patrick – introduced himself and informed the forum that Volkert was previously known as Denmon Engineering and with the resources Volkert has there is nothing that they cannot do. As an example the Mayor asked that he come look at some of the streets in Richwood and just give you a rough cost estimate on what it might cost to redo some of the streets. I sent that to him today so that you can take a look at it, that’s just one of the things we do, also if you have sewer problems or anything we can help you with we can cover all those bases for you. We work on a case by case basis the approach fees according to the type of work you want us to do, we don’t do anything without your prior written approval so anything you need, feel free to come to us let us know what we can do for you.

XII. Adoption of Resolution 2023-02 (A resolution Authorizing the Town to hire Volkert, Inc. for engineering services related to the Town’s Engineering Firm)

It was motioned by Alderman Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderman Janice Fleming to adopt Resolution 2023-03.

- **Let the record reflect a vote was taken to adopt Resolution 2023-02 as follows:
(4) votes Yes and (1) Abstain vote to adopt Resolution 2023-03; Resolution 2023-02 was adopted.**

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.	Abstain	Alderman Simeon Profit	Yes
Alderman Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderman Leola Keys	Yes
Alderman Wysinger Cleveland		Yes	

XIII. Adoption of Resolution 2023-01(Authorizing the Town of Richwood to participate in additional NATIONAL SETTLEMENTS as expressed in the recent national Pharmacy Defendants Settlement Agreements (CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart Defendants),in conjunction with and pursuant to the previously agree to Louisiana Memorandum of Understanding with the Louisiana Attorney General’s Office.

It was motioned by Alderman Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderman Janice Fleming to adopt Resolution 2023-01.

- **Let the record reflect a vote was taken to adopt Resolution 2023-01 with the following results: (4) Yes and (1) Abstain vote, Resolution 2023-01 was adopted.**

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.	Yes	Alderman Simeon Profit	Yes
Alderman Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderman Leola Keys	Abstain
Alderman Wysinger Cleveland	Yes		

XIV. Adoption of Resolution 2023-03 (A resolution appointing an Auditor for the Town)

Mayor Gerald Brown- reminded the Board we are behind in the audits and out of compliance, as a result some funding we have for computer systems cannot be accessed until we are in compliance with the audit.

It was motioned by Alderman Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderman Janice Fleming to adopt Resolution 2023-03.

- **The record shall reflect that a vote was taken with the following results: (2) Yes votes and (3) Abstain votes.**

Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.	Abstain	Alderman Simeon Profit	Yes
Alderman Janice Fleming	Yes	Alderman Leola Keys	Abstain
Alderman Wysinger Cleveland	Abstain		

XV. Introduction of Ordinance 2023-01 An ordinance amending Ordinance 2021-02 regulating operation hours of all places of business where alcoholic beverages are kept sold, stored for sale at retail, served.

Chief Cleveland- addressed the forum and expressed his concerns with the clubs now closing at 3:00 a.m., and that this is an issue of public safety.

Chief Cleveland- indicated the current closing times allows more opportunities for those that would not be in Richwood if the hours changed to be in Richwood causing these situations.

XVI. Adjournment:

It was motioned by Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr. and seconded by Alderman Janice Fleming to adjourn @ 8:22 p.m.