



Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 21, 2017
7:00 P.M.

Members in Attendance:

Aldersperson Simeon Profit
Aldersperson Janice Fleming

Aldersperson Donald Richard
Aldersperson Leola Keys

The Town of Richwood met for a Regular Meeting held September 21, 2017 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 7:00p.m.

II. Prayer- was offered by Aldersperson Donald Richard

III. Pledge of Allegiance - recited in unison

IV. Roll Call- Mayor Gerald Brown called roll with the following results:

- The record shall reflect (4) Alderspersons present at time of roll call:

Present:

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

Absent: Aldersperson Wysinger Cleveland

V. Adoption of the Agenda-**A motion was offered by Aldersperson Simeon Profit and seconded by Aldersperson Donald Richard to adopt the Regular Meeting Agenda.*

- **A vote was taken with the following results: The record shall reflect all (4) Alderspersons present voted yes to adopt the agenda as presented.**

Aldersperson Simeon Profit yes	Aldersperson Donald Richard yes
Aldersperson Janice Fleming yes	Aldersperson Leola Keys yes

VI. Adoption of August 17, 2017 Minutes -

It was moved by Alderperson Janice Fleming and seconded by Alderperson Simeon Profit to adopt the August 17, 2017 Minutes

- **A vote was taken with the following results: The record shall reflect all (4) Alderpersons present voted Yes to Adopt the August 17, 2017 Minutes.**

Alderperson Simeon Profit	yes	Alderperson Donald Richard	yes
Alderperson Janice Fleming	yes	Alderperson Leola Keys	yes

VII. Financial Reports: It was moved by Alderperson Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderperson Donald Richard to adopt the Financial Reports.

- **A vote was taken with the following results: The record shall reflect all (4) Alderpersons present voted Yes to Adopt the August 17, 2017 Minutes.**

Alderperson Simeon Profit	yes	Alderperson Donald Richard	yes
Alderperson Janice Fleming	yes	Alderperson Leola Keys	yes

VIII. Public Comments (As they Relate to Items on the Agenda)

Mayor Gerald Brown- opened the floor for public comments and advised the forum comments would be accepted for items on the agenda and limited to no more than (5) five minutes per comment.

IX. Mayor's Dialogue:

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised the forum the Ford Explorer which Chief Cleveland has been driving was purchased with the grant funds the town received for the Police Department.

X. Joan Hampton (Presentation for SOS Pets of Ouachita)

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised the forum he had provided Mrs. Joan Hampton a letter of support pertaining to the SOS Pets of Ouachita.

Joan Hampton- thanked the Mayor and forum for allowing her to speak with them; and advised the forum of the prospective plan to build a new Ouachita Parish Animal Shelter.

Joan Hampton- provided the Board a presentation handout which included pictures of the present location of the shelter located in West Monroe, Louisiana and its' enclosures, and provided a phase 1 plan showing the proposed shelter to be built.

Joan Hampton- advised the forum this is a (2) Year plan, and the \$366,000 needed for this phase would be collected over the 2-year plan period; this time would be used to obtain the funds needed for the build of the new shelter; among this effort to raise funds for this campaign, there is an upcoming fundraiser entitle "Raise the Roof."

Joan Hampton- advised there is approximately 5,000 animals which come through the shelter and approximately for every 4 which comes in only 1 comes out, the others are euthanized and that is not a good situation.

Joan Hampton – advised in addition to looking at grants, she is also pursuing fundraising initiatives, these fundraising initiatives include sponsors, and she has already met with the Ouachita Parish Police Jury, as well as West Monroe, and will be going to Sterlington next Tuesday night and now she is here at the Town of Richwood, requesting a pledge of funds of \$5,000 which would not be transferred now, but would be pledged and presented when those funds are needed.

Joan Hampton (Presenter)- inquired if there were any questions?

Aldersperson Leola Keys- had a question on page 13, advised she was looking at the lonely dog room, and inquired if there will be therapy for the dog?

Joan Hampton – advised there are all kind of grants out there, and certainly they would be considering all available grants, nothing is off the table right now, these are some great animals, and they deserve a chance.

XI. Blackheart LLC: *(Requesting Permission to Host a Homecoming Event for Richwood)*

- ***Blackheart LLC, was not present item was not discussed.***

XII. Concerned Citizens for Richwood, LA: (CPA, Night Security, Use of Richwood High School, Property Tax, Meeting Minutes, Community Upkeep, Ordinance, Tapping Fees)

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated he was requesting if the presenters of the issues by the Concerned Citizens for Richwood, would please be specific pertaining to the items the listed to be addressed.

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- stated she had a question , and inquired if the Concerned Citizens for Richwood included the Board Members?

Mrs. Linda Clark (a member of the group)- answered it was a group of concerned citizens.

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- stated she understood that, but had the group met prior to tonight's meeting?

**Participants of the Concerned Citizens Group*- answered yes.

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- inquired if they had met with Alderspersons?

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- they had met with Alderspersons Keys and Cleveland.

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- inquired if they (the Board) had been made aware of the meeting, because she had advised them she was not aware of the meeting, and thought it to be a little unfair to come with these comments, whereas everyone on the Board has not had the opportunity to hear your concerns, and that she felt at a disadvantage as a Board Member, because she has not had the opportunity to hear any of these concerns, and that all of the Board Members should have been made aware of this before the meeting.

Ms. Elonda Potter (Participant of the Concerned Citizens Group)- inquired if Aldersperson Janice Fleming if she had received the request?

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- replied no she did not.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- stated that everything on here is something which was taken from the minutes, and not something that was just pulled out.

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- stated, you said this was a meeting, and you had persons from the Town, which were present, and I don't see how (2)two people can represent this body, why wasn't we allowed to come as well, I am a concerned citizen, why wasn't I notified?

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- stated, first of all no one was excluded,

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- inquired how was the communication given?

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- she guesses the same way things are communicated around here, I guess word of mouth.

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- advised she did not receive a notification.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- advised this was not a closed-door meeting, it was held at the recreation center for anyone to attend.

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- advised it was closed to her, because she was not notified.

Mrs. Linda Clark- advised this was to make them aware of somethings, and the first thing she was going to talk about had to do with an article in the Free Press where the Town was

advertising for CPA and she wanted to know if Mr. Walker had turned in his resignation, and do we still have a CPA, because this was in the September the 9th Free Press

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised, Mr. Walker's engagement as the CPA has not run its course yet, we have put out an application request, that after the engagement is complete, it is opened back up to other CPA's and that is what that article was pertaining.

And what he is saying, is No, it is not available today, but it is coming to be available and this will open the application process to other individuals.

Mrs. Blackmon (Public Attendee) – inquired who is the CPA now?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised Mr. Walker is still the CPA, but his time is due to expire sometime in October.

Mrs. Linda Clark-inquired what was Ms. Jolla's position and do we need a CPA to work with her?

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated that this is not a requirement, but was a suggestion within the last audits to have a CPA in conjunction with Ms. Jolla.

Mrs. Linda Clark- inquired with (3) officers why can't some work at nights, but are able to work other functions at night?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised they do work some nights, and when they are working events at night that is on their own time.

Elonda Potter (Public Attendee)- inquired, how can they work at other places at night, yet leave them without security, why can't (2) two officers work during the day and (1) one at night?

Mayor Gerald Brown – advised the Town is protected at night, the Ouachita Parish Sherriff does patrol, and if you contact them they will come.

Mayor Gerald Brown- shared with the forum that he had received reports from the Sherriff Department which indicated most of the crimes occur in the day, not at night.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- commented she is very concerned about the police security, because she feels it is not safe at night at no time for her as a senior citizen or the single mothers.

Aldersperson Leola Keys- stated, she would like to address this to the Mayor, the Board, and the Citizens, and to You and Mrs. Fleming, because you mentioned that, in other words you implied some other Board members were there; and frankly she was there, but that meeting was announced on television, and it said for the citizens of the Town of Richwood.

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- stated she did not get that announcement, and she still felt if this was a meeting the Board needed to attend they should have gotten that memo so they could have attended as well, because they are concerned as well.

Aldersperson Leola Keys- stated, she heard this over the news, and she went as a concerned citizen.

Aldersperson Simeon Profit- stated, they should table this, and we do have security.

Elonda Potter (with Concerned Citizens of Richwood)- indicated she felt they should be allowed to proceed with the other issues they had and if necessary table their item whatever the issue is but allow them to proceed.

Aldersperson Simeon Profit- stated, ok go ahead but there is a time limit on this, and this out of order conversations will not be tolerated, and either come up to the podium or they will end this.

Mr. Ward (Public Attendee)- addressed the Board and advised them they (the Board) are paid by us; and all of you sitting up there you get a paycheck, but you are paid to represent us, and you should not be rude to us but listen to what we have to say. We need to get together, no one is going to put money in the Town if we're not together.

Aldersperson Leola Keys- stated the problem is the majority of the Board don't want to listen to the Citizens.

Aldersperson Janice Fleming- asked if she could be permitted to just make a statement; and stated that she did not know anything about this and would like to address each bullet on this, and had she been given notification she would have gladly addressed these issues.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- inquired if the Old Richwood High School, was leased yet?

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated no, not yet.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- inquired who can use the building, can the citizens use the building?

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated he was not sure why Mrs. Sydney was asking this question, because she herself was at the meeting with the School Board and was aware of what was said; but if any citizen wishes to use the building, they need to come to the office, and discuss what purpose they are requesting the building be used.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- inquired if they had to come to the office?

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated yes, because he has no idea what may or may not be inside the building, in terms of asbestos or mold, and that may limit its use, this is the first he has heard of anyone wanting to use the building other than Mr. Epting, and Mr. Jones, and at no time has one of the citizens contacted him stating they wanted to use the building, so this is the first he is

hearing of that; but when you are talking about additional people in the building doing other things, you are talking about additional liability to the Town's insurance, but at this point that has never been a concern, because no one has come to him to discuss this.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- inquired, is not the recreation money to provide recreation for the people of the Town?

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated it is, but he was wondering how much money for recreation do you think the Town is receiving?

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- indicated that was her next question.

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated there are taxes we pay that are ear marked for Police and Recreation, and he thinks last year they collected about \$ 130,000, and to be frank, the Police Department uses the bulk of those funds at this time.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- commented that is not fair, recreation should be separate.

Mayor Gerald Brown- commented we have done somethings to the park recreationally but it is not a 50/50 split, it is based on where we see the need.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- inquired, are you saying the Board has the right to take the Recreation Funds and apply them to the Police?

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated, what the law states is it has to be applied to the police and recreation.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- stated, but there is no recreation.

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated he begged to differ with you, we have a park with (2) two pavilions which we have done extensive work on, and several people rent those pavilions and children do go to the park and play basketball and play on the little playground equipment we have, and it may not be the best recreation environment in the world, but it is one, and it is one we have applied dollars to, but at this time, and we just talked 10 minutes about security, at this time, our dollars are best utilized with the bulk of them going toward the rebuilding of our Police Department applied toward our Police Department. When I took office, we had (1) one police officer and (2) cars that barely ran, that's something we had to address.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- stated our children have no place to play.

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated he opened the gym for the children to use.

Alderperson Leola Keys- states she has her property tax bills from 2012 to 2016 and all them except 2015 and 2016 shows Police & Recreation, 2015 and 2016 only shows Police? I was

talking to Mrs. Stephanie Smith, and she said we only collect for it, but it is up to the Town, to determine how you dibble it out, now I am wondering why nothing is ear marked for recreation for 2015 and 2016, and Mrs. Henderson has an estimate that shows Police & Recreation, and I am wanting to know what happened to our Police & Recreation money?

Mrs. Henderson (Participant Concerned Citizens of Richwood)- addressed the forum and stated her concern was about the taxes, she had (2) items, she wanted to know the difference between Richwood Police & Recreation and Law Enforcement inquired why it was she saw (2) items on her taxes.

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated the Police & Recreation taxes for Richwood is exactly what it says; the tax for Law Enforcement is for the Ouachita Parish Sherriff.

Mrs. Henderson- inquired why must we pay those taxes if we have our own police force?

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated this is not his mandate but a requirement by the Parish, the Sherriff Department is in the parish and can come here because we are part of the parish, and if you are in the parish you are required to pay these taxes.

Mrs. Henderson- inquired by the General Fund?

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated anything you see on that bill other than Richwood General Fund and Richwood Police & Recreation are parish required taxes.

Mrs. Henderson- inquired what is the General Fund used for?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised a number of things such as, upkeep of the building, salaries as well as a number of other things.

Mrs. Henderson- wondered if the fund was also for upkeep of the Town such as cutting limbs back.

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated that is something that they will address as the season weans off and inclement weather the cutting back of the limbs, and what he would like to say to those type of questions is the Town Office is open Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and we welcome you to come in and you would be able to go into more detail and examine any information you would like.

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated, you are not limited to just speaking with me at a meeting but are welcome to come in at any time.

Aldersperson Leola Keys- stated she wanted an answer why her bill did not show Police and Recreation on her 2015 and 2016 bills?

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated his bills showed Police and Recreation, and although there is no indication of recreation on her tax bill, that does not indicate the way the monies were spent, but rather what actions the Board takes at the meetings.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised Alderperson Leola Keys, she is welcome to come in the office and we would be glad to show her the monies spent on the park and the Old Richwood High School.

Ms. Elonda Potter (with Concerned Citizens of Richwood - addressed the forum advised that there are a number of dilapidated buildings, and other issues, and pot holes that need to be addressed, even if we need to use the recreation funds to do so, our community is looking like we are living in a 3rd world country and we do not deserve that.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised if she would just look at all the other items on the agenda those ordinances address those items.

Ms. Elonda Potter (with Concerned Citizens of Richwood - inquired what happened to the \$80,000 to repair the roads, and how we have a \$150,000 missing?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised that is not accurate, there was a deficit of \$150,000 and that is not showing on this audit.

Ms. Elonda Potter (with Concerned Citizens of Richwood - inquired why this has not been done before?

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised it is a question he has as well.

Ms. Elonda Potter- inquired why she is not receiving a refund of her tapping fee, that she had her tapping done and she wants a refund.

Ms. Elonda Potter (with Concerned Citizens of Richwood - stated after she discovered and asked for a refund back, she was advised it was a maintenance fee.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised he did not advise of a maintenance fee, the tapping fee is charged because there is an additional connection onto the Towns water.

*** DISORDERED EXCHANGE INSUED***

Chief Johnny Cleveland- cautioned the attendee the arguing would not be allowed and that continued disruption would merit removal from the meeting.

Mrs. Barbara Sydney- addressed the Town Clerk, as to what she stated she was present at a meeting on July 15, 2017, and the problem is you all passed this resolution and it was voted to be tabled.

Ms. Woods (Town Clerk)- advised that particular Resolution did not have anything to do with Southern Youth Movement, that resolution had to do with the Economic Development Area.

XIII. Adoption of Ordinance 2017-13 (An Ordinance Setting the Town Clerk Salary)

- It was motioned by Alderperson Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderperson Donald Richard to Adopt Ordinance 2017-13 An Ordinance Setting the Town Clerk Salary.
- **A vote was taken with the following results: The record shall reflect all (4) Alderpersons present voted Yes to Adopt Ordinance 2017-13 (An Ordinance Setting the Town Clerk Salary)**

Alderperson Simeon Profit yes
Alderperson Janice Fleming yes

Alderperson Donald Richard yes
Alderperson Leola Keys yes

XIV. Introduction of Ordinance 2017-16 (An ordinance Positioning an Administrative Hearing Officer)

Mayor Gerald Brown- indicated as part of the things necessary to get everything set up for our Code Enforcement, is to appoint an Administrative Hearing Officer, and our current judge, Judge Bob Noel is willing to be the Administrative Hearing Officer, so the plan is once he completes traffic court we would move into code enforcement court and we do need an Ordinance to place him in that position.

Mayor Gerald Brown- asked if there were any questions?

Alderperson Leola Keys- asked that this be explained again.

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated that Judge Noel is currently the traffic judge and he is willing to be the Administrative Hearing Officer for Code Enforcement, but we need this ordinance to appoint him as the Hearing Officer.

*****Comment from the floor *** I thought Ms. Woods was the Code Enforcer*****

Mayor Gerald Brown- responded, she is the code enforcer, and is responsible for citing the properties, however we must have an Administrative Hearing Officer to hear anyone wanting to come to court, and Judge Noel would be the Hearing Officer.

XV. Introduction of Ordinance 2017-17 (An Ordinance Amending Health and Sanitation Chapter 5 to include Derelict Structures)

Mayor Gerald Brown- read the heading of Ordinance 2017-17 (An Ordinance Amending Health and Sanitation Chapter 5 to include Derelict Structures)

Ms. Blackmon- commented from the floor that this has been a long time coming, and is an issue that has been addressed for a number of years, even when Mayor Harris was in office

Mayor Gerald Brown – advised this ordinance would allow the Code Enforcer to cite owners of derelict structures and have them come to court.

Mayor Gerald Brown- asked if there were any questions?

**** With no additional questions the agenda moved forward****

XVI. Introduction of Ordinance 2017-18 (An Ordinance Amending Health and Sanitation Chapter 5 to include Litter & Trash

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised the forum this ordinance would allow the excessive trash and litter piled up to be addressed.

Mayor Gerald Brown- asked if there were any questions?

**** With No Additional Questions the Agenda Moved Forward****

XVII. Introduction of Ordinance 2017-19 (An Ordinance Amending Health and Sanitation Chapter 5 to include Weeds and Obnoxious Growth)

Mayor Gerald Brown -read the heading and advised this ordinance would address the excessive growth of weeds and obnoxious growth in the town.

XVIII. Introduction of Ordinance 2017-20 (An Ordinance Amending Health and Sanitation Chapter 5 to include the requirements and penalties for fireworks use.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised as part of the code this would regulate firework use.

XIX. Introduction of Ordinance 2017-21 (An Ordinance Amending Health and Sanitation Chapter 5 to include abandoned Vehicles, Automobiles, Major Appliances, and Other Junk

Mayor Gerald Brown- read the heading and advised the forum this ordinance will help us to clean these situations.

XX. Adjournment:

It was motioned by Alderperson Donald Richard and seconded by Alderperson Simeon Profit to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.