

**IBERVILLE PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2022**

The Parish Council of Iberville Parish, State of Louisiana, met in Regular Session, in the Council Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, Courthouse Building, 58050 Meriam Street, Plaquemine, Louisiana, on the 20th day of December, 2022.

The Council Chairman, Matthew H. Jewell, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by the roll call with the following Council Members in attendance: Shalanda L. Allen, District 1; Chasity B. Easley; District 2; Steve C. Smith District 5; Raheem T. Pierce, District 6; Ty J. Arnold, District 7; Hunter S. Markins, District 8; Terry J. Bradford, District 9; Louis R. Kelley, Jr., District 10; Timothy J. Vallet, District 11; Matthew H. Jewell, District 12; Bart B. Morgan, District 13.

Absent: Jackson, Dominique.

Parish President- J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr., Chief Administrative Officer- Edward Songy, Legal Counsel- Scott Stassi were also in attendance.

A quorum was present and due notice had been posted and published in the Plaquemine Post South newspaper on the 15th day of December, 2022. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Council Chairman Jewell called for anyone wanting to make public comments to register with the Clerk. Brian Lezina, Joe Baustian, and Dean Wilson registered to speak before the council.

ADDENDUM

- A) Resolution of the Iberville Parish Council in opposition to the East Grand Lake project in the Atchafalaya basin.

Upon a motion by Councilman Kelley, seconded by Councilwoman Easley, it was moved that the resolutions would be moved on to the agenda as agenda items 11-A. The motion having been duly submitted to a vote was duly adopted by the following yea and nay votes on roll call:

YEAS: Allen, Easley, Smith, Pierce, Arnold, Markins, Bradford, Kelley, Vallet, Morgan.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Jackson, Dominique.

PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES

- A) Update of Parish Opioid Settlement by Patrick W. Pendley, Attorney
- The State of Louisiana through the Attorney General Office has been active in the national Opioid litigation and has formed a task force. Any settlement money will be distributed through the task force to the local governing authority in the parish.

The parish government will receive 80% and the Sheriff's office will receive 20% of each settlement. The first settlement payment should be received in the early part of 2023 in the amount of \$2,275,000 that will be paid to the Parish over 18 years and the yearly amount being around \$126,000. The money has to be used for opioid treatment or support people that are getting treatment. The money has to be used for opioid related things like treatment, support, and court pretrial programs.

- He stated that there are multiple upcoming settlements that the State of Louisiana and Iberville will be receiving money from sometime this year and in the future. There is a lot of money that will be coming in the future from these litigations.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Pierce, it was moved to wave the reading of the minutes of November 15, 2022. The motion having been duly submitted to a vote was duly adopted by the following yea and nay votes on roll call:

YEAS: Allen, Easley, Smith, Pierce, Arnold, Markins, Bradford, Kelley, Vallet, Morgan.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Dominique, Jackson.

The motion was declared adopted by the Chairman.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Ourso reported on the following:

- He stated that the between the City of Plaquemine, Entergy, and Pointe Coupee Electric that the Parish pays about \$8,000 a month to these companies for street lights across the parish. The companies have not maintained the street lights. He has been in contact with the city of Plaquemine and Pointe Coupee Electric and they are receptive to the Parish riding around and locating the lights through GPS and each light being numbered as a way to identify the lights and determine which lights are out and need to be replaced.
- The State of Louisiana leased 11,800 acres of land in the north end of the parish to Capio Sequestration. The lease was filed in the Clerk of Court in October. The Parish has no authority over that land.
- He asked the council to support the new solar farm ordinance that is being introduced at the meeting tonight. He presented the council with a handout from LDNR on solar farm developments.
- He presented the council with handout on the progress update on the bridge in Iberville. The environmental impact study on all three locations will not be finished until the fall of 2024. In 2025 the final location will be selected.
- The library director Michael Stanton informed President Ourso that he will be stepping down and the position will be open in the first quarter of next year.

- The parish received \$2.1 million in sewer improvements for the parish. The parish must put up \$1.6 million for sewer improvements. Sewer is costly and he hopes this money will help correct some of the issues.
- He presented the council with a presentation on the ongoing work at the Bayou Blue Park. Belleview park should be completed by end of February or early March completion. Park in St. Gabriel will have new basketball courts and a park by the levee.
- He showed the council pictures and diagrams of the pipeline corridor in St. Gabriel. There are two major drainage canals, one is Bayou Breaux and the other is Community Canal. The Parish has spent over \$1 million dollars to clean up the corridor. There are nine pipeline companies that are responsible to clean up their section of the corridor to allow the water to flow freely. In the current condition the water has to rise 2 feet before it can flow.
- He stated that the parish is in freeze preparation for the upcoming cold weather. All protective measures have been taken. His biggest concern is the water and gas. The water pressure will go down due to everyone having their water dripping even though the parish has prepped and all the water tanks are full.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Finance Director, Randall Dunn he had nothing to present today. He stated that in January he will have the figures from the property taxes and sales taxes from the year to present. The sales taxes are averaging out to be about \$7 million a month.

OLD BUSINESS

NONE.

NEW BUSINESS

A) Introduction of Ordinances

1. Ordinance to fully substitute and replace ordinance number 008-21 and ordinance number 013-22 related to article 7, division d, of the unified development code pertaining to solar farms. An ordinance to enact article 7, division d, of the unified development code of the parish of Iberville pertaining to solar farms within the unincorporated areas of Iberville parish.

Upon a motion by Councilman Bradford, seconded by Councilman Kelley, it was moved that a public hearing be held on Tuesday, January 17, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. on the introduced ordinance.

The motion having been duly submitted to a vote, was duly adopted by the following yea and nay votes on roll call:

YEAS: Allen, Easley, Smith, Pierce, Arnold, Markins, Bradford, Kelley, Vallet, Morgan.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Dominique, Jackson.

RESOLUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Resolution Committee met on Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 6:15 p.m., followed by the roll call with the following Resolution Committee Members only in attendance: Smith, Vallet, Arnold, Pierce, Markins, Kelley, Morgan.

Absent: Jackson.

The following resolution was read aloud by Mr. Songy:

- A) Resolution of the Iberville parish council in opposition to the east grand lake project in the Atchafalaya Basin.

Councilman Kelley made a recommendation to forward the resolutions to the regular meeting, seconded by Councilman Markins. The recommendation having been duly submitted to a vote was duly adopted by the following yea and nay votes on roll call by Resolution Committee Members only:

YEAS: Smith, Vallet, Pierce, Arnold, Markins, Kelley, Morgan

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Jackson.

The recommendation was declared adopted by the Chairman to forward these items to the regular meeting.

During the Regular Meeting:

Brian Lezina, representing the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, registered to speak before the Council in opposition to the East Grand Lake resolution. He stated that the project is a restoration project is about enhancing the basin not causing more harm. It will add more water to the system. He asked the Council to defer the passing of the resolution until they can make a full presentation to the public and Council. They want to restore water flow to areas that have become over silted and return the area back to swamp area.

Councilman Kelley stated that if water is put in area there must be a place for the water to go out and with this project there is no outlet for the water to escape. He stated they can work together to get a better project but he is opposed to the current plan.

Joe Baustian, representing the Nature Conservancy, registered to speak before the Council in opposition to the East Grand Lake resolution. He stated that this project has been in the works since 2012. He said the main goal of the project is to let water into the area and also to get the water out of the area.

Councilman Kelley expressed that this project will fill the area with even more sediment and sand. He said making a cut by the Bayou Sorrel locks will be better plan than what is currently being presented.

Dean Wilson, the Atchafalaya Basin Keeper, registered to speak before the Council in support of the East Grand Lake resolution. He stated that this project will allow more sand and silt into the swamps just like past projects.

RESOLUTION IPC# 2022- 023_____

RESOLUTION OF THE IBERVILLE PARISH COUNCIL IN OPPOSITION TO THE EAST GRAND LAKE PROJECT IN THE ATCHAFALAYA BASIN

The following resolution was introduced by Councilman Kelley and seconded by Councilman Markins.

WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya River Basin contains the largest remaining wetland forest in North America, and irreplaceable natural treasures; and

WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya Basin's cypress-tupelo swamps are the most productive wetlands in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya Basin wetlands are the number one producers of crawfish in the entire world; and

WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya Basin wetlands are about the most important wetlands for migratory birds in the Western Hemisphere and will become the most important as sea level rises and our delta disappears; and

WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya Basin wetlands can feed more aquatic birds per acre than any other wetland in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya Basin is critical to Louisiana's culture as the last bastion of the Cajun culture; and

WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya Basin is designed as a spillway protecting communities from flooding all the way to Lafayette to the west, Morgan City to the south, from Baton Rouge to New Orleans to the east; and

WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya Basin protects our entire industrial corridor, including over 150 industrial plants between Baton Rouge and New Orleans and the largest port in the western hemisphere, the Port of South Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, communities from Bayou Sorrel and Bayou Pigeon to Morgan City on the east and many communities on the west side will have no future if we keep filling the Basin's wetlands; and

WHEREAS, the Basin's flood capacity is critical to protect much of south-central Louisiana from flooding; and

WHEREAS, the loss of flood capacity is already responsible for a record flood in 2021 that created great misery to communities from Bayou Pigeon and Bayou Sorrel to Morgan City; and

WHEREAS, similar projects, the Buffalo Cove Project and the Beau Bayou Project, have filled huge amount irreplaceable of wetlands to the detriment of all; and

WHEREAS, the East Grand Lake Project will fill huge amount of wetlands with sand and silt.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent forthwith to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and the New Orleans District of the Corps of Engineers so that they will be made aware of our position on this matter.

The above resolution was duly adopted in regular session on the 20th day of December, 2022 by the following vote on roll call:

YEAS: Allen, Easley, Smith, Pierce, Arnold, Markins, Bradford, Kelley, Vallet, Morgan.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Jackson, Dominique.

The resolution was declared adopted by the Chairman on the 20th day of December, 2022.

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS REPORT

The Boards and Commissions Committee met on Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 6:15 p.m. followed by the roll call with the following Committee Members only in attendance: Vallet, Markins, Pierce, Smith, Arnold.

Absent: Jackson.

A quorum was present.

- A) Appointment of Catherine Simpson to the Iberville Parish Council Advisory Board for Planning and Development (Tim Vallet)

Upon a recommendation by Councilman Vallet, and seconded by Councilman Arnold, to it was recommended to forward the appointment of Catherine Simpson to the Iberville Parish Council Advisory Board for Planning and Development. The recommendation having been duly submitted to a vote was duly adopted by the following yea and nay votes on roll call by Boards and Commission Committee Members only:

YEAS: Vallet, Markins, Pierce, Smith, Arnold.
NAYS: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: Jackson.

The recommendation was declared adopted by the Chairman.

B) Reappointment of Tonya Orcino and Deena Thomas to the Iberville Parish Library Board of Control

Upon a recommendation by Councilman Vallet, and seconded by Councilman Arnold, it was recommended to re-appoint Tonya Orcino and Deena Thomas to the Iberville Parish Library Board of Control. The recommendation having been duly submitted to a vote was duly adopted by the following yea and nay votes on roll call by Boards and Commission Committee Members only:

YEAS: Vallet, Markins, Pierce, Smith, Arnold.
NAYS: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: Jackson.

The recommendation was declared adopted by the Chairman.

DISCUSSIONS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved by Councilman Pierce, and seconded by Councilman Arnold, to adjourn at 7:43 p.m. The motion was unanimously adopted.

/s/ MACY WILLIAMSON
COUNCIL CLERK

/s/ MATTHEW H. JEWELL
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN