

**IBERVILLE PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021**

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 23rd day of February, 2021.

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; Thomas E. Dominique, Sr., District 3; Leonard Jackson, Sr., District 4; Steve C. Smith District 5; Raheem T. Pierce, District 6; 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.

Absent: Bart B. Morgan, District 13.

Parish President- J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr., Chief Administrative Officer- Edward Songy, and 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 18th day of February, 2021. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Council Chairman Jewell called for anyone wanting to make public comments to register with the Clerk. No one registered to speak.

ADDENDUM

- A) Resolution in opposition to the proposed Constitutional Amendment to provide for Centralized Sales and Use Tax to be administered by the State of Louisiana Department of Revenue

Upon a motion by Councilman Kelley, and seconded by Councilman Markins, it was moved to add the addendum resolution to the agenda. 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, Dominique, Jackson, Smith, Pierce, Arnold, Markins, Bradford, Kelley, Vallet.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Morgan.

The motion was declared adopted by the Chairman on February 23, 2021.

PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Councilman Jackson, and seconded by Councilman Arnold, it was moved to wave the reading of the minutes of January 19, 2021 and approve as written. 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, Dominique, Jackson, Smith, Pierce, Arnold, Markins, Bradford, Kelley, Vallet.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Morgan.

The motion was declared adopted by the Chairman.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Ourso reported on the following:

- President Ourso made a phone call to the Governor to find out why our Parish has not received the COVID-19 vaccines yet. The State is requiring the use of the Health Unit in Plaquemine and asked the Parish for help administering the shots due to their strained resources. Ochsner Medical Facility and Acadian Ambulance agreed to help administer the vaccines. Governor John Bel Edwards assured President Ourso they would make this happen as soon as possible. This Thursday the vaccines will be available at the Health Unit in Plaquemine. The State is giving the list to Ochsner to contact the people who requested a shot and will start administering the vaccines every Thursday. President Ourso will also provide a van to bring people to Plaquemine from other areas of the Parish. The State is taking the calls to request a vaccine, and that phone number is 225-687-9021. The Parish will put word out through the Parish communication system to contact this number to make an appointment to receive the vaccine.
- Councilman Kelley asked for the age limit for the vaccine, President Ourso stated at least 65 years old and older.
- President Ourso stated this recent ice storm is the first time Iberville Parish has experienced an ice storm. The ice storm affected every tree in Iberville Parish. The residents need to bear with the Parish to collect the debris along the roads. The water systems were also affected. The water towers could not be full during the freeze, along with the citizens dripping their water, the water got below 20 pounds of pressure in one area and the boil water advisory was mandated per DHH guidelines. There will be rising water bills and higher gas bills because of this. The gas company increased their prices because of the demand. The water prices do not change. The Community Services Office has funds available for a crisis for those who cannot afford these bills from the ice storm.
- The road program has been delayed. The bids haven't been opened due to the ice storm. The bulk of the road funds of \$1.7 million will go towards the Intercoastal.
- The parish received bids for the courthouse's pavilion project and it was awarded to Tullier Services who won the bid at \$225,000 for the bomanite project.
- President Ourso spoke about the potential of solar panel fields in the Parish. There will be a meeting tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. with a solar panel company and some landowners about a potential solar panel field. This is an introduction meeting with this company.
- President Ourso stated the sales taxes provide for 65% of our budget, not including the collection of the mills. The sales taxes are crucial to our budget and every year the State brings up centralized sales tax collections. He said this would be the worst thing for any parish to agree to. There will be no checks and balances, no audits, and once you lose this authority then they shut the gate on you. He believes the industry is behind this along with the State. He urged the Council to oppose centralized sales tax collections.
- President Ourso received an email from DOTD with mistakes including the Highway number and the date regarding the Bayou Sorrel bridge which may be closed in March to repair damage. He stated this is an example of what the Parish would have to deal with if the State collects the Parish's sales taxes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Finance Director, Randall Dunn stated Financial statements had been sent out. The Finance Department is working on the audit now. He spoke about the natural gas prices from Henry Hub, that went from \$3.50 to \$16.30 overnight during the ice storm. Once demand goes down the prices should go down as well. The Parish purchases the gas for resale. Consumption went up because of the cold weather and the prices.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- A) Introduction of Ordinances
 - 1) None.

RESOLUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Resolution Committee met on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 6:22 p.m., followed by the roll call with the following Resolution Committee Members only in attendance: Smith, Vallet, Pierce, Arnold, Kelley, Markins, Jackson, Dominique.

Absent: Morgan.

The following resolutions were read aloud by Mr. Songy:

- A) Resolution authorizing and directing the Council Chairman to execute a contract with Strategic Demographics, LLC to provide Reapportionment and Redistricting services for the Iberville Parish Council
- B) Resolution requesting the Louisiana Delegation to provide Reapportionment and Redistricting services for the Justice of the Peace and Constable districts in Iberville Parish
- C) Resolution expressing support for the Upper Terrebonne Basin Watershed Project and support for funding the project through the Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI)
- D) Resolution in opposition to the proposed Constitutional Amendment to provide for Centralized Sales and Use Tax to be administered by the State of Louisiana Department of Revenue

There were no questions from the Council or the public.

Councilman Vallet made a recommendation to forward the resolutions to the regular meeting, seconded by Councilman Pierce. 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, Kelley, Markins, Jackson, Dominique.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Morgan.

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

DURING THE REGULAR MEETING:

Mr. Dannie Garrett, representing Strategic Demographics came before the council to introduce himself. He spoke briefly on how reapportionment works. He offered to answer any questions and there were none.

RESOLUTION IPC# 2021-004

RESOLUTION OF THE IBERVILLE PARISH COUNCIL AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH STRATEGIC DEMOGRAPHICS, LLC TO PROVIDE REAPPORTIONMENT AND REDISTRICTING SERVICES FOR THE IBERVILLE PARISH COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the following resolution was introduced by Councilman Arnold, and seconded by Councilman Smith.

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the United States Constitution and federal law, there is conducted a decennial census of the population of the United States;

WHEREAS, the most recent federal decennial census was conducted in 2020 and the results thereof will be released in 2021;

WHEREAS, Louisiana law mandates that the Iberville Parish Council consider the impact of the federal decennial census on its election districts to determine whether the relative populations of those election districts are in accordance with the principals of one person one vote set forth in the United States Constitution;

WHEREAS, in order to accomplish this obligation, the Iberville Parish Council requires the assistance of professionals in demographics, reapportionment and redistricting;

WHEREAS, Section 2-02 entitled "Reapportionment" of the Iberville Parish Home Rule Charter provides that following official publication of each census by the United States Bureau of the Census for the Parish of Iberville, the Council, shall, if required, by ordinance alter, rearrange or change Council district boundaries in order to provide for population equality among the districts. Each district shall reflect as near as possible the "One Man, One Vote" principle.

WHEREAS, the Iberville Parish Council must make the necessary preparations for the process of reapportionment upon receiving the official publication of the U.S. Census Report for 2020 and to ensure the reapportionment process is conducted timely in accordance with the Iberville Parish Home Rule Charter.

WHEREAS, Strategic Demographics, LLC, through its principals and subcontractors has extensive experience in demographics, reapportionment and redistricting, including experience following the 2000 and 2010 census;

WHEREAS, Strategic Demographics, LLC has submitted a proposed Contract for Demographic Services, a copy of which is attached hereto;

WHEREAS, the Iberville Parish Council authorizes and directs the Council Chairman, to execute the Contract for Demographic Services with Strategic Demographics, LLC.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Iberville Parish Council as follows:

"That Matthew Jewell, Council Chairman, be and is hereby authorized to negotiate and engage the professional services of "Strategic Demographics, LLC" to conduct and perform the reapportionment services of the Iberville Parish Council in accordance with law."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Iberville Parish Council authorizes and directs the Council Chairman to take all actions necessary to carry out the Contract for Demographic Services with Strategic Demographics, LLC;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Iberville Parish Council directs the Council Clerk to forward an executed copy of this Resolution and the attached Contract for Demographic Services to Strategic Demographic, LLC.

The above resolution was duly adopted in regular session this 23rd day of February, 2021 by the following vote on roll call:

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

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Morgan.

The resolution was declared adopted on the 23rd day of February, 2021.

RESOLUTION IPC# 2021-005

**RESOLUTION OF THE IBERVILLE PARISH COUNCIL REQUESTING
THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION FOR THE PARISH OF
IBERVILLE TO PROVIDE REAPPORTIONMENT AND
REDISTRICTING SERVICES FOR THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE AND
CONSTABLE DISTRICTS IN IBERVILLE PARISH**

WHEREAS, the following resolution was introduced by Councilman Arnold, and seconded by Councilman Smith.

WHEREAS, the most recent federal decennial census was conducted in 2020 and the results thereof will be released in 2021;

WHEREAS, Louisiana law mandates that the Iberville Parish Council consider the impact of the federal decennial census on its election districts to determine whether the relative populations of those election districts are in accordance with the principals of one person one vote set forth in the United States Constitution;

WHEREAS, the Louisiana State Constitution of 1974, Article V, Section 20 cites the Louisiana State Legislature, alone, as the governing authority to reapportion justice of the peace and constable districts.

WHEREAS, the Iberville Parish Council requests the legislative delegation of Iberville Parish to provide for reapportionment of the justice of the peace and constable districts in their upcoming legislative session.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Iberville Parish Council directs the Council Clerk to forward an executed copy of this Resolution requesting the assistance of the Louisiana Legislative Delegation for Iberville Parish to provide for redistricting of the Justice of the Peace and Constable Districts in Iberville Parish.

The above resolution was duly adopted in regular session this 23rd day of February, 2021 by the following vote on roll call:

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

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Morgan.

The resolution was declared adopted on the 23rd day of February, 2021.

RESOLUTION IPC# 2021-006

**RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE UPPER TERREBONNE BASIN
WATERSHED PROJECT AND SUPPORT FOR FUNDING THE PROJECT THROUGH
THE LOUISIANA WATERSHED INITIATIVE (LWI)**

WHEREAS, the following resolution was introduced by Councilman Arnold, and seconded by Councilman Smith.

WHEREAS, the Upper Delta Soil and Water Conservation District (UDSWC) has partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to complete an environmental assessment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to determine whether or not a federal action has the potential to cause significant environmental effects; and,

WHEREAS, the Upper Delta Soil and Water Conservation District (UDSWC) is in the final stages of completion of the Upper Terrebonne Basin Watershed Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) Document to obtain a Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to proceed to engineering, design, and construction of the Upper Terrebonne Basin Drainage Improvements project; and,

WHEREAS, Iberville Parish will directly benefit from the Upper Terrebonne Basin Drainage Improvements project, which will mitigate flood risk to existing residential, commercial, and industrial development, critical infrastructure, historic sites, schools, and public facilities, reduce agricultural losses, reduce insurance and public health and safety claims, reduce public works maintenance and repairs to drainage channels and structures, and enhance water quality, aquatic habitat and recreational fisheries; and,

WHEREAS, the anticipated federal funding to be administered by LWI presents an opportunity to fund major features of this critical, regional project; and,

WHEREAS, Iberville Parish is within Region 6 of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) regions; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE IBERVILLE PARISH COUNCIL, do hereby express their support for the Upper Terrebonne Basin Drainage Improvements project and urge both the LWI Region 6 Steering Committee and the Louisiana Council on Watershed Management to provide funding for the project.

The above resolution was duly adopted in regular session this 23rd day of February, 2021 by the following vote on roll call:

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

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Morgan.

The resolution was declared adopted on the 23rd day of February, 2021.

RESOLUTION IPC# 2021-007

RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO PROVIDE FOR CENTRALIZED SALES AND USE TAX TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE STATE OF LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

WHEREAS, the following resolution was introduced by Councilman Arnold, and seconded by Councilman Smith.

WHEREAS, according to the Business Report, a legislative study group recently issued a report to the House and Senate leadership that recommends the Legislature will call for a constitutional amendment during the 2021 regular session to create a new sale and use tax system with the State having control over the sales and use tax collection system in Louisiana.

WHEREAS, the proposed constitutional amendment will create a single sale and use tax collection board that will be utilized to collect state and local sales and use tax, the new board will operate as a statewide political subdivision, and the new board will receive funding through state and local sources of revenue.

WHEREAS, the Iberville Parish Council and other local taxing authorities such as school boards and sheriffs, have professional staff that are extremely capable to collecting the local sales and use taxes for their Parish. These local tax collectors are capable of providing information and assistance to parish taxpayers without having to depend on any telephone answering system in an attempt to resolve an issue. State offices have telephone answering systems when a citizen calls and there is nothing but frustration of citizens in their attempt to speak with an individual to resolve any issue, including sales/use tax issues. State government agencies are not responsive

to calls for assistance from the citizens. Furthermore, citizens like to do business locally where they have ample parking available when visiting a local sales/use tax office rather than having to drive around looking for a parking space, very few of which offer free parking.

WHEREAS, State government agencies frustrate citizens with all of the red tape and bureaucracy when a citizen attempts to resolve any outstanding issue, specifically sales and use tax issues. The local sales and use tax collectors have the best knowledge and experience related to its sales/use tax ordinances and regulations, and have clearly demonstrated expertise and efficiency in enforcing its local ordinances, auditing taxpayers, resolving tax disputes and successful litigation of tax issues when appropriate. A Parish governing authority can best provide for the needs of its citizens related to local sales and use tax matters.

WHEREAS, the Iberville Parish Sales and Use Tax Department has been very responsible to the needs of its taxpayers and professional, courteous, and quick services are generally rendered and outstanding tax issues are resolved immediately. The Iberville Parish Sales and Use Tax Department has received very minimal complaints from citizens regarding the administration, enforcement and collection of local taxes.

WHEREAS, local sales and use taxes are used to incur bond indebtedness for Parishes, the local collector is in the best position to provide information regarding its sales and use tax ordinances and the collection and distribution of all local taxes. The Parishes do not need a State tax collection entity to collect and distribute its taxes or to provide data on purely local collections and local bond issues for parish projects.

WHEREAS, the attempt to centralize sales and use tax collections is nothing more than an attempt to usurp the power and authority of local governing authorities to enable the statewide collection authority to obtain more funding and deprive local governments of its much-needed tax revenues.

WHEREAS, this scheme and attempt to deprive local governing authorities of its ability to enact, interpret, collect and resolve any tax issues will not be in the best interest of local taxpayers, and one central collection entity for the State of Louisiana will result in much frustration, confusion and aggravation of the citizens related to purely local tax issues.

WHEREAS, a single centralized sale and use tax agency will result in the loss of numerous jobs at the Parish level with an adverse impact on the local economy.

WHEREAS, if the State is looking for efficiency in tax collections, perhaps Louisiana should allow the Internal Revenue Service to collect the Louisiana income taxes and distribute the taxes to the Louisiana Department of Revenue.

WHEREAS, the Iberville Parish Council as a local tax collection authority requests that each member of its State legislative delegation for the Parish of Iberville vigorously oppose any and all proposed legislation that transfers the Parish's sales and use tax collections to the Louisiana Department of Revenue or any other State entity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Parish legislators so that they are made aware of the Parish President and Parish Council position regarding this matter.

BE IT ALSO FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Governor of the State of Louisiana, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Revenue, Louisiana Chemical Association, Police Jury Association of Louisiana, Louisiana School Boards Association, Iberville Parish Industries and Louisiana Sheriff's Association.

The above resolution was duly adopted in regular session this 23rd day of February, 2021 by the following vote on roll call:

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

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Morgan.

The resolution was declared adopted on the 23rd day of February, 2021.

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS REPORT

None.

DISCUSSIONS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved by Councilman Vallet, and seconded by the Councilman Pierce, to adjourn at 7:06 p.m. The motion was unanimously adopted.

/s/ KIRSHA D. BARKER
COUNCIL CLERK

/s/ MATTHEW H. JEWELL
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN