



Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 21, 2022

7:00 P.M.

Members Present:

Alderman Simeon Profit Alderman Leola Keys Alderman Wysinger Cleveland

Absent at Roll Call: Alderman Janice Fleming Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.

The Town of Richwood met for a Regular Meeting on July 21, 2022 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 7:09 p.m.

II. Prayer- 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 (3) Aldermen present and (2) Aldermen absent at roll call.**

Present:

Alderman Simeon Profit Alderman Leola Keys Alderman Wysinger Cleveland

Absent: Alderman Janice Fleming and Alderman Wilbert Reed Jr.

V. Adoption of Agenda :

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised the Board that Item # XI on the agenda, Adoption of Resolution 2022-05 resolution Authorizing the Town to hire Volkert, Inc. the engineer was out of town and will not be present and he would like to delete that item and add an item to be discussed in executive session pertaining to the settlement information with Attorney Nolan.

It was motioned by Alderman Leola Keys and seconded by Alderman Simeon Profit to amend the agenda as stated.

- **The record shall reflect a vote was taken with the following results: All (3) Aldermen present voted Yes to amend the agenda as stated.**

Alderman Simeon Profit Yes
Alderman Leola Keys Yes
Alderman Wysinger Cleveland Yes

It was moved by Alderman Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderman Leola Keys to adopt the amended agenda.

- **The record shall reflect A vote was taken with the following results: All (3) Aldermen voted Yes to adopt the amended agenda as stated above.**

Alderman Simeon Profit Yes
Alderman Leola Keys Yes
Alderman Wysinger Cleveland Yes

VI. Adoption of June 16, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Alderman Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderman Leola Keys to adopt the June 16, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

- **The record shall reflect A vote was taken with the following results: All (3) Aldermen voted Yes to adopt the June 16, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes.**

Alderman Simeon Profit Yes
Alderman Leola Keys Yes
Alderman Wysinger Cleveland Yes

VII. Adoption of financial Reports

It was motioned by Alderman Wysinger Cleveland and seconded by Alderman Simeon Profit to adopt the financial reports.

- **The record shall reflect a vote was taken with the following results: All (3) aldermen voted Yes to adopt the financial reports as presented.**

Alderman Simeon Profit Yes
Alderman Leola Keys Yes
Alderman Wysinger Cleveland Yes

VIII. Public Comments As they relate to items on the agenda:

No Comments * Agenda Proceeded**

IX. Mayor's Dialogue:

Mayor Gerald Brown – addressed the Board and inquired if they would like to order new shirts? The shirts they have they have had for approximately 6 years, and asked if the Board wanted new shirts?

Alderman Leola Keys- stated, truthfully she felt the Board should start wearing their shirts because her shirt she received 6 years ago was new.

It was further discussed an addition of different shirts which would be lighter could be ordered.

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated he wanted to make sure the Board and Public were aware some of the things OMCAP can do for the community.

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated he was a member of the board with OMCAP and shared with the forum that OMCAP can help out with child preparation classes, the HISET aka the GED to get you placed for the test, income management classes helping with budgeting and , LHEA which stands for Low-income Home Energy Assistance where they work with crisis and non- crisis folks.

Mayor Gerald Brown- informed the forum of the upcoming School Supply Drive on August 13, 2022 presented by the Town of Richwood and our Community Partners; the giveaway would last from 10:00 a.m. until all supplies were given away; if they wanted to donate any items contact Mrs. Rainwater.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised the Board that we had been informed by three different companies our Air System would need to be replaced and we had received 3 different estimate amounts.

X. Charles Burks: Representing Washitaw Nation:

Mr. Charles Burks -addressed the forum and thanked everyone for the opportunity to be here.

Mr. Charles Burks -shared he came to let us know that Richwood is loved by the Washita Nation and the Empress Verdiacee of the Washitaw Nation was a previous Mayor of Richwood.

Mr. Charles Burks- expressed the joy of memories he had of visiting Richwood and the atmosphere of love and home he felt.

Mr. Charles Burks- indicated previous Mayor of Richwood Verdiacee Goins who was Empress of the Washita Nation hailed from Richwood and the Nation would like to assist Richwood .

Mr. Charles Burks – stated, the more you read about Empress Verdiacee and what she has done, in her book “Return of the Ancient Ones,” you can see what he was talking about when it comes to how Richwood is important to the whole world.

Mr. Burks- stated, they have a seat at the United Nations, seat 215, Mr. Burks indicated that the Washita Nation is the oldest indigenous people in the world.

Mr. Burks -provided additional information relating to Poverty Point and the recognition of Empress Verdiacee of the Washita Nation's accomplishments; Mr. Burk indicated the United Nations want to help Richwood, the United Nations is waiting on us as a people.

Mr. Burks- asked the forum are there people that want to build on Richwood and that he is asking that we come together and that we come up with a plan where we can submit a proposal for the United Nations to come here

XI. Adoption of Ordinance 2022-03(An ordinance amending Ordinance 2021-01 the Town's expenditures for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022)

It was motioned by Alderman Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderman Leola Keys to adopt Ordinance 2022-03; an ordinance amending Ordinance 2021-01 Town's Expenditures for Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022.

- **The record shall reflect a vote was taken with the following results: 3 Votes Yes to Adopt Ordinance 2022-03.**

Alderman Simeon Profit Yes

Alderman Leola Keys Yes

Alderman Wysinger Cleveland Yes

XII. Adoption of Ordinance 2022-04 (An Ordinance Adopting the Town's Expenditures for the Year beginning July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022)

Alderman Wysinger Cleveland- inquired if the recreation funds were going to be amended in Ordinance 2022-03?

Mayor Gerald Brown- answered, if you look what I have listed under the American Rescue Plan that is where I want to go, to each non-profit that existed prior to the pandemic, I would like to donate funds to all of those.

Alderman Wysinger Cleveland- stated, he would like to see funds put back in the community, such as the roads getting fixed as well as sewer, I noticed down on MLK down there,

***** For the record:** *Ms. Potter and inaudible.... Need a water hookup line.*

They have to run their water line all the way back to Robinson Road, road construction on Highland Road, and the sewer.

Mayor Gerald Brown- advised, again in the letter of documentation that I have sent you, that is what I am proposing that 3/4th's of the American Rescue Plan money about 1.1 Million that we dedicate all of that to Capital Improvements, which is roads, which is sewer, which is building, because all those type of things require matching funds, we will have to go out and seek funding, but all of those things are going to require 10, 20, 50 percent matching funds, and that is what we would use that money.

We should have the 2nd half of the funds by sometime towards the end of August.

Alderman Leola Keys- addressed the forum and stated, first I want to say, and I hope this is not taken the wrong way, I don't answer to man, I don't answer to the Legislative Auditors, I answer to a higher power. Let me address some of the things I find unpleasant to me and this Town... Mayor Brown all I am asking is that you, do what you know is reasonable within your own conviction for the people of this Town; now I want to talk about that \$ 90,000 settlement, primarily for Mr. Thomas and Foster Construction. All I ask is one question, and I am going to try to remain quiet, when I get upset, I get loud...I want you to get what I am saying tonight. In the last of last year, I recall we proposed \$90,000, now I want to know, the Board went along with that proposal, am I right, to your best understanding?

Mayor Gerald Brown- answered, Yes.

Alderman Leola Keys- stated, okay, so what happened then that did not get taken care of ?

Mayor Gerald Brown- I would like to address each one of those separately.

Alderman Leola Keys – responded, I am just talking about Mr. Thomas and Mr. Foster.

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated, let me start with Mr. Thomas.

Alderman Leola Keys- responded, okay, go ahead.

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated, in Mr. Thomas's situation it was brought to our attention, by our attorney, that he may have done somethings that were contrary to the law, some of the things he may have done might preclude us from having us to make that payment to him.

Alderman Leola Keys- stated, I believe we were waiting on the opinion from the attorney, how long will we have to wait on that, and how long have we waited on that?

Mayor Gerald Brown- answered, I think we started that in March with the opinion, but I can tell you from personal experience that sometimes it can take some time. They have acknowledged they have received it and assigned it to somebody.

Alderman Leola Keys – stated, okay, I am going to move on from that, because to me there is a little dragging your feet on that; now I am going to move on from that, because I came here tonight to vote for this budget one way or the other for this budget, and what I hear tonight is going to determine whether I vote for it or not, I want to vote for it, I want it to pass.

I know this proposal for brick and mortar, schools, churches and non- profits, that is good, I have asked that we look for the greater needs first. Mr. Cleveland have already said we are looking at churches we are looking at schools, we are looking at non-profits; and the last time I looked the schools are not in the boundaries of the Town, and I am not angry with anybody, but this is why the citizens put me in here. The schools may not be within the corporate limits, when I look at that sign that says Richwood Corporate limits.

Mayor Gerald Brown- that is right, they're not, they're not, that is why we are discussing this; the reason I have proposed doing things for the schools is because our children which live here, are educated at these schools; I am not talking about every school in the parish, I am talking about, schools that have children that live in the Richwood; Richwood Middle , Robinson, Swayze, and Richwood High. All of these schools we have children that attend these schools; my reasoning is by assisting these schools we are assisting our children , but again we can discuss this.

Alderman Leola Keys – stated, let me say something; surely that is a good thing to donate to brick-and-mortar schools, but when I know of a citizen on Martin Luther King, I think two, that is incapacitated with sewer and water like that, I think that is when we need to drop our before we donate to schools. I think we should specific needs instead of being nonspecific reference in the budget. I done.

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated, we can specify projects instead of people...

Alderman Leola Keys- stated, can't we say we will take care of infrastructure on the lower end of Martin Luther King?

****A discussion continued on the proper reference to list prospective projects as to other areas which may also have concerns of projects.*

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated, that is why he is suggesting to contract with an engineer which can look and determine how we can get the best bang for our bucks.

Alderman Leola Keys – recommended a committee be formed to determine the projects to address, we don't have to name names .

Mayor Gerald Brown -stated, that is what I am saying ... that's what capital outlay is...

Alderman Leola Keys -said that we talk a good talk, but why can't we establish a committee to look at this ?

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated that is a good idea, but a committee won't be able to do anything without dedicated funds

**** A discussion ensued****

Alderman Leola Keys- stated until

It was moved by Alderman Simeon Profit and seconded by Alderman Wysinger Cleveland to adopt Ordinance 2022-04(An ordinance adopting the town's expenditures for the year beginning July 1, 2022 thru June 30, 2023)

- **The record shall reflect a vote was taken with the following results:**

Alderman Simeon Profit Yes

Alderman Leola Keys No

Alderman Wysinger Cleveland No

Alderman Leola Keys- inquired if we were voting on the adoption of this budget?

Mayor Gerald Brown – answered, Yes.

Alderman Leola Keys -stated, I hope the persons sitting out there have understood everything she has said and as a result of what I have heard, and my conviction is I don't answer to the Legislative Auditors, I answer to God and I am going to see about these people as long as I live, and **my answer is No, put it down.**

*****Per Alderman Wysinger Cleveland*** The record shall reflect Alderman Wysinger Cleveland stated*** Let the Record Reflect the same as Mrs. Keys, let's take care of the citizens first, then we can take a look at the non-profits.**

Mayor Gerald Brown- stated, so let me ask this, then as I go back and work the numbers, are you saying we want to take all this stuff out? The non-profits, churches, schools take that out?

Alderman Wysinger Cleveland – replied, I'm not saying that Mayor, lets get to the table and

Mayor Gerald Brown- I'm asking a question, I don't know anymore, I have called, texted, I've been asking y'all for two months... and you do this tonight, lets go ahead and work it out, if you guys are saying, no we don't want to give money to the non-profits, we don't want to give any money to the churches, we don't want to give any money to the schools, we want all money calculated through, just tell me that.

Alderman Leola Keys- stated, we can handle up on it, but I am saying this, pay Foster, pay Cliff and then we can move on.

Mayor Gerald Brown – stated, we are going into executive session to discuss Foster, and what the Board voted for us was to get an opinion from the Attorney General and so that is what we have done and that is what we are waiting on now.

Alderman Leola Keys -stated, I am telling you the truth, that Attorney General is slipping and sliding it does not take that long.

****** Executive Session ***8:03 P.M.**

XIII. Discussion regarding SYM donations request

- *Item was tabled and continued until next meeting*

XIV. Executive Session :

It was motioned by Alderman Wysinger Cleveland and seconded by Alderman Simeon Profit to end Executive Session and return to Regular Session @ 8:15 p.m.

XV. Adjournment:

It was motioned by Alderman Wysinger Cleveland and seconded by Alderman Simeon Profit to adjourn @ 8:16 p.m.