

CITY OF WALKER COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

September 13, 2021

6:00 PM

The regular meeting of the Walker Mayor and City Council was held at the Walker City Hall on Monday, September 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Watson followed with prayer led by Gary Griffin. After the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance, the Municipal Clerk called the roll.

The following council members were present: Eric Cook, David Clark, Gary Griffin and Scarlett Major. Richard Wales was absent.

A motion was made by Mr. Griffin, seconded by Mr. Cook, to approve the minutes from the August 9, 2021 council meeting.

YEAS: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major
NAYS: None
ABSENCE: Wales

The July 2021 finance report was presented by Finance Director, Mike Cotton. It was reported that the net profit for the period ending July 31, 2021 was \$361,579. The gas revenue increased by 2% and sales tax increased by 14%. Members of the council were invited to visit Mr. Cotton should they have questions.

The Executive Director for Louisiana Municipal Association (LMA), John Gallagher presented Mayor Watson and the Board of City Council, the LMA Community Achievement Award announced at the 84th Annual Convention held in July 2021. This award recognizes a municipality for outstanding improvements with a city population of 3001 – 10,000. An independent panel of judges selected the City of Walker for its new city hall project. Awards were given to each member of the council as well.

A resolution to enter into an agreement with the Livingston Parish Sewer District was presented to the council by Jamie Etheridge. This local service agreement shall be for the period of September 13, 2021 through December 31, 2022. It sets forth the sums which shall be remitted to the City of Walker by the Livingston Parish Sewer District for the collection of service connections, new taps for first time service, sewer impact fees, and monthly meter service for water supplied by the City of Walker. This is applicable to residents outside of the Walker city limits.

It was motioned by Mr. Cook, seconded by Ms. Major, to approve the resolution authorizing the mayor to enter into an agreement with the Livingston Parish Sewer District.

Yeas: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major
Nays: None
Absent: Wales

Jamie Etheridge presented before the council for approval a resolution that authorizes the mayor to enter into an agreement with Quick-PD for ticket processing software with Michel & Pratt Consulting, Inc. that will replace the current antiquated software. The upgrade will allow online ticket payments which will be beneficial to the Clerk of Court office.

Upon motion made by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Griffin, the resolution authorizing the mayor to enter into agreement with Michel & Pratt Consulting, Inc. was approved.

Yeas: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major
Nays: None
Absent: Wales

Jamie Etheridge recommended before the city council a resolution which changes the New Employees/Filling Vacancies section of the City of Walker Handbook as it pertains to criminal background checks conducted through the Walker Police Department. Background checks are currently run through the Louisiana State Police. Furthermore, it is recommended that the policy changes from 'Individuals convicted of a felony *are not to may not be*' eligible for employment with the City of Walker.'

It was motioned by Ms. Major, seconded by Mr. Cook, to approve the resolution to make the proposed changes to the City of Walker handbook.

Yeas:	Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major
Nays:	None
Absent:	Wales

Ms. Scarlet Major presented before the council a request for a resolution to terminate the Traffic Enforcement and Criminal Patrol Program Policy (T-CAP) for the Walker Police Department.

It was motioned by Mr. Cook, seconded by Mr. Clark, to approve the resolution as proposed to terminate TCAP.

Yeas:	Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major
Nays:	None
Absent:	Wales

Upon motion made by Mr. Cook, and seconded by Mr. Griffin, the council meeting entered into public hearing.

Yeas:	Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major
Nays:	None
Absent:	Wales

Ordinance #09-2021-01 introduced at the August 9, 2021 council meeting, was presented by Ms. Major before the council for approval to Amend Chapter 4/Animal Fighting Paraphernalia. It was, then motioned by Mr. Cook, seconded by Ms. Major to approve said ordinance.

Yeas:	Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major
Nays:	None
Absent:	Wales

Ms. Major presented for approval, **Ordinance #09-2021-02**, which introduced at the August 9, 2021 council meeting, to Enact Chapter 4/Obstruction of Justice, Section 13-237. Thereby, it was motioned by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Cook, to approve said ordinance.

Yeas:	Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major
Nays:	None
Absent:	Wales

Mr. Clark presented before the council for approval, the 2021 Annual Budget Amendment No. 4, Ordinance #09-2021-03, to increase the general fund for Parks and Recreation capital outlay expenditures \$100,000 for the all-inclusive playground introduced at the August 9, 2021 council meeting.

It was motioned by Mr. Griffin, seconded by Ms. Major, to approve this ordinance as proposed.

Yeas: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major

Nays: None

Absent: Wales

Mr. Clark presented before the council for approval, the 2021 Annual Budget Amendment No. 5, Ordinance #09-2021-04, to increase the general fund for the capital outlay expenditures \$420,000 for the improvements for Parks and Recreation.

It was motioned by Ms. Major, seconded by Mr. Griffin, to approve said ordinance.

Yeas: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major

Nays: None

Absent: Wales

Mr. Cook introduced Budget Amendment 6-Natural Gas Regulator Station/near Woodside Dr., Hwy 190.

Mayor Watson read aloud the “**NATIONAL RAIL SAFETY WEEK**” Proclamation, September 20 – 26, 2021, attesting his full support of the dangers associated with highway rail grade crossings. This proclamation is to raise awareness to ensure the safety and protection of pedestrians and motorists near railways.

It was motioned by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Cook, to close the public hearing.

Yeas: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major

Nays: None

Absent: Wales

Additional comments were given by Mayor Watson acknowledging the city employees who worked diligently during Hurricane Ida. He expressed his gratitude for the proactive measures taken to prepare for the upcoming storm. The floor was turned over to Jamie Etheridge who additionally expressed his appreciation for the around the clock dedication of the staff and employees before, during, and in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida. He thanked the council members for their budget approvals which allowed the city to purchase generators needed to sustain operations during major storm events. Mr. Etheridge also expressed his appreciation to Mr. Joe Murphy and Ms. Wendy Gill with the Livingston Parish School Board for supplying the fuel needed to maintain infrastructure support. Mr. Etheridge stated that residents who apply for permits to build/repair their homes if they incurred structural damage resulting from the storm will have the permit fee waived. If anyone have any questions regarding permits, they can contact Nancy Kimble in the Permits Department.

Chad Bacas with Forte and Tablada briefly addressed the council and public regarding the completion of the city-wide evaluation of the Drainage Impact Study. Forte and Tablada plan to present this information at the October 2021 council meeting.

Chief David Addison presented before the mayor and council two candidates for full-time employment with the Walker Police Department: James Craven and Dyllan Hodges. Both candidates are post-certified with prior law enforcement experience. They have successfully met the required criteria set forth to secure employment as police officers.

Upon motion by Mr. Griffin, seconded by Mr. Cook, James Craven was approved for hire as a full-time officer with the Walker Police Department.

Yeas: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major

Nays: None

Absent: Wales

Upon motion by Ms. Major, seconded by Mr. Cook, Dyllan Hodges was approved for hire as a full-time officer with the Walker Police Department.

Yeas: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major

Nays: None

Absent: Wales

Chief Addison presented before the council a recommendation for the termination of employee—Sgt. Laura Jenkins. City Attorney, Bobby King, acknowledged that he had previously spoken to Sgt. Jenkins regarding her option to discuss her employment details in open meeting or executive session. She chose the executive session forum to discuss such matters.

It was motioned by Mr. Cook, seconded by Mr. Clark, to enter an executive session.

Yeas: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major

Nays: None

Absent: Wales

Afterwards, Mayor Watson requested that the courtroom be cleared. Present in the executive session were Council members: David Clark, Eric Cook, Gary Griffin, and Scarlet Major; Mayor Jimmy Watson, City Attorney, Bobby King; Assistant Chief, Kenath Black; Sgt. Laura Jenkins and her representative, Rusty Jenkins (spouse); COO, Jamie Etheridge, and Municipal Clerk, Tammy Payton.

After a discussion of the character, work ethic, professionalism, and mental/physical competence of Sgt. Jenkins by all parties, the Walker City Council upheld the decision made by Chief David Addison to terminate the employment of Sgt. Laura Jenkins.

It was motioned by Mr. Griffin, seconded by Mr. Cook, to exit the executive session.

Yeas: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major

Nays: None

Absent: Wales

With no further business to discuss, the city council meeting for September 13, 2021, was adjourned.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,


MAYOR JIMMY WATSON

ATTEST:


Tammy Payton Municipal Clerk