

**THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN AND ALDERWOMAN, THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF EUNICE, PARISH OF ST. LANDRY/ACADIA, STATE OF LOUISIANA**, met in Regular Session on Tuesday, July 14, 2020 at six-thirty (6:30) o'clock p.m., at their regular meeting place, the Eunice City Hall.

6:30 pm           The Mayor called the Regular meeting of the City of Eunice Board of Aldermen and Alderwomen to order:

There were present:   Mayor Scott A. Fontenot, Alderman at Large Marion "Nootsie" Sattler, Alderman Chad Andrepont, Alderman Ernest Blanchard and Alderwoman Connie Thibodeaux.

There were absent:   Alderwoman Germaine Simpson.

It was announced that a quorum was present and ready to transact business.

There was one (1) public comment request on Agenda item I-6. The Mayor announced that he would call for the public comment when the Board reached that item on the Agenda.

It was moved by Alderman at Large Marion "Nootsie" Sattler, seconded by Alderman Ernest Blanchard and carried to adopt the Minutes of the June 9, 2020 meeting.

Code Enforcement Officer Judson Venezia presented the following structures for scheduling of "Show Cause Hearings":

**100 Fruge Street:**

Mr. Venezia presented photos of the house and advised the Board that the building appeared unstable, unsecure and unsafe and he had not observed anyone working on the building.

It was moved by Alderwoman Connie Thibodeaux, seconded by Alderman at Large Marion "Nootsie" Sattler and carried to schedule a "Show Cause Hearing" for the house at 100 Fruge Street.

**451 North Beulah Street:**

Mr. Venezia presented photos of the house and advised the Board that part of the building was burned, windows and doors broken and was a danger to the public's safety.

It was moved by Alderman at Large Sattler, seconded by Alderman Ernest Blanchard and carried to schedule a "Show Cause Hearing" for the house at 451 North Beulah Street.

**541 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street:**

Mr. Venezia presented photos of the house and advised that the yard had been cleaned up and that the structure on the property, a garage and storage room, were secure and not a danger to the public's safety.

It was moved by Alderman Blanchard, seconded by Alderman at Large Sattler and carried to schedule a "Show Cause Hearing" for the structure at 541 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

Alderman Chad Andrepont spoke about the retirement of Coach Paul Trosclair of Eunice High School. Alderman Andrepont spoke of Coach Trosclair's positive influence on the children of Eunice, himself included, over his career as a teacher and a coach. Andrepont acknowledged in the audience Mr. Mitch Fontenot, principal of Eunice High School and Mrs. Irma Trosclair, Coach Trosclair's wife. Alderman Andrepont presented a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen and Alderwoman of the City of Eunice. Mrs. Trosclair thanked the Board and citizens of Eunice on behalf of Coach Paul Trosclair who could not attend himself due to reasons of health.

Mayor Scott Fontenot announced that the annual July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks held in Eunice were better than ever and that there were no problems associated with this annual event. The Mayor thanked former Mayor Kenneth Peart for once again putting the fireworks show together along with his helpers, and city employees from the Street Department, the Recreation Department, the City Marshal's Office, the Eunice Police Department and the Eunice Fire Department.

The Mayor announced that the grace period for delinquent City of Eunice utility bills was going to come to an end and encouraged everyone with outstanding balances to work with the Gas/Sewer billing department to make arrangements to pay off their outstanding balances.

(Not on the Agenda) – the Mayor announced that the Liberty Theater was still closed due to the COVID-19 virus restrictions and an inoperable air conditioning system, however, a non-profit group has been formed, the Association of the Liberty Theater of Eunice, with Joel Savoy, son of Marc and Ann Savoy, and Mr. Paul Feavel as two (2) of its members. The group is researching plans on how to re-open the Theater.

It was moved by Alderman at Large Sattler, seconded by Alderman Blanchard and carried to approve the application of an alcohol permit by the owners of Chip's Daiquiris (David Burlison, Jr., Donnette Burlison, Nick Stelly and Donnelly Fruge) doing business at 1501 West Laurel Avenue in Eunice.

The City Clerk explained the re-adjustment of property tax millages for the City of Eunice for the Tax Year 2020, reducing the General Alimony millage from 6.77 mills to 6.47 mills and the Street Maintenance millage from 5 mills to 4.78 mills, as the St. Landry Parish Assessor re-assessed property for 2020 tax year and in 2021 the City will be able to roll the tax millages forward back to their maximum.

It was moved by Alderwoman Thibodeaux, seconded by Alderman Andrepont and carried to adopt Resolution 0720(A), setting the City of Eunice 2020 property tax millages as follows:

General Alimony: 6.47 mills  
Street Maintenance: 4.78 mills

It was moved by Alderman Blanchard, seconded by Alderman at Large Sattler and carried to declare the following:

- a. 2003 Ford F150 truck ID # 8090, assigned to the Recreation Department, as surplus.
- b. 171 small gas meters, 22 large gas meters and 118 gas regulators as surplus.
- c. Pieces of broken concrete as surplus.
- d. 35 outdoor lights from the Southeast Ballpark, 28 outdoor lights from the Harris Ballpark and 8 outdoor lights from the Harris Tennis Courts as being of no value (over 40 years old) and as surplus.

Fire Chief Mike Arnold advised the Board that the Fire Department recently had an election to elect their representative to the Eunice Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board and that Fire Captain Garrett P. Daville, current representative, ran for re-election, was unopposed and was elected to be the Eunice Fire Department's representative to the Civil Service Board for another three (3) year term.

It was moved by Alderman Andrepont, seconded by Alderwoman Thibodeaux and carried to acknowledge Fire Captain Garrett Daville's election to represent his fellow Firemen on the Eunice Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board.

Fire Chief Mike Arnold spoke of a software application (app) which can be downloaded to a mobile phone and/or ipad (the fire department has five (5) ipads) which can assist in response by showing an alert of a call, the manner of emergency, location, a map of the route to the location of the emergency, other app users responding to the emergency and their location and the number of hydrants in the area of the call. The use of these apps could also help to improve the City's Fire Rating. The cost of the app is \$12.50 per device a year. Fire Districts 4 and 6 will reimburse the city for their costs associated with their devices.

It was moved by Alderman Blanchard, seconded by Alderman at Large Sattler and carried to approve the cost of the software applications (apps) for the Eunice Fire Department recommended by Fire Chief Mike Arnold.

Fire Chief Mike Arnold read the monthly report of Fire Department activities for the month of June, 2020.

The next item on the Agenda was not addressed as they were discussion of two (2) City Ordinances placed on the Agenda by Alderwoman Germaine Simpson who was not in attendance.

Police Chief Randy Fontenot advised the Board that the Police Department recently had an election to elect their representative to the Eunice Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board and that Lt. Donnie Thibodeaux, current representative, ran for re-election, was unopposed and was elected to

be the Eunice Police Department's representative to the Civil Service Board for another three (3) year term.

It was moved by Alderwoman Thibodeaux, seconded by Alderman Andrepont and carried to acknowledge Lt. Donnie Thibodeaux's election to represent his fellow Police Officers on the Eunice Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board.

Police Chief Randy Fontenot recommended the hiring of the following in the indicated positions within the Police Department:

Keith Peters – Police Officer

Shane Beard – Police Officer

Dustin Broussard – Jailer

It was moved by Alderman Blanchard, seconded by Alderman at Large Sattler and carried to concur with the Police Chief's recommendation and hire the above listed in their indicated positions within the Police Department.

Police Chief Fontenot stated that he had put information on purchase of new vehicles for the police department in the folders of the Mayor and Board members. He hadn't gotten the information in time to be placed on the Agenda.

City Attorney Vernon McManus stated that the Board could pass a motion to allow new subject matter, allowing the Police Chief to request the purchase of police vehicles.

It was moved by Alderman Blanchard, seconded by Alderman Andrepont and carried to allow new subject matter on the Agenda.

Police Chief Randy Fontenot requested approval from the Board to purchase the following vehicles on three (3) year leases:

Two (2) 2021 Ford F-150 Police Responder Trucks at a cost of \$33,600.00 each; payments of \$6,130.26 each (\$12,260.52 total) two (2) times a year (\$24,521.04 per fiscal year) for a 3-year lease.

One (1) Ford F-150 SSV (Special Service Vehicle) at a cost of \$34,200.00; payment of \$6,250.00 two (2) times a year (\$12,500.00 a fiscal year) for a 3-year lease.

Two (2) Chevrolet Malibu Black & White vehicles at a cost of \$23,387.94 each; payments of \$3,897.99 each (\$7,795.98 total), two (2) times a year (\$15,591.96 a fiscal year) for a 3-year lease.

Two (2) unmarked Chevrolet Malibu at a cost of \$20,247.25 each; payments of \$3,604.58 each (\$7,209.16 total), two (2) times a year (\$14,418.32 a fiscal year) for a 3-year lease.

Total annual fiscal year cost for the above vehicles would be \$67,031.32 for three (3) years.

Police Chief Fontenot advised that the sedan vehicles are less expensive than others the City has purchased in the past because these sedans are not "police pursuit" vehicles which cost more with upgrades specifically for pursuit capabilities. These sedans will be used by Administrative personnel and Detectives in his department who are currently driving pursuit package vehicles, allowing the pursuit package vehicles to be used by patrol personnel since detectives and administrative personnel do not need pursuit capable vehicles. This will also allow the police department to surplus older vehicles which are costing the department more money for repairs and maintenance. The Chief stated that in the past when new vehicles are purchased the maintenance costs of vehicles is reduced significantly. Vehicles are to be purchased locally and under state contract.

The Mayor asked about the condition of the pursuit vehicles that were currently being used by the Detectives and Administrative personnel and would be transferred to the patrol division. The Chief advised that on average these vehicles have no more than 50,000 miles on them and are still in good condition.

It was moved by Alderman Blanchard, seconded by Alderman at Large Sattler and carried to approve the Chief's request to purchase these vehicles for the Police Department.

Mr. Michael Dunn, who had made a public comment request on the next Agenda item, was called to give his public comment. Before his comment Mr. Dunn handed copies of a letter to each Board member and the Mayor.

Mr. Dunn stated that he had an active appeal to the Civil Service Board on disciplinary action taken against him and asked that the matter of declaring the Eunice Police Department's K-9 dog as surplus be tabled until the Civil Service Board makes their decision on his appeal.

Police Chief Fontenot advised that there was no disciplinary action taken by the Chief against Mr. Dunn and that he never recommended any disciplinary action and the appointing authority never approved any disciplinary action against Mr. Dunn.

The Police Chief stated that because of cuts to the Police Department's budget and loss of revenue by the City and after discussion with senior members of the Police Department it has been decided to discontinue the Police Department's K-9 program which will save the Police Department money while not adversely affecting the operation of the Department.

The Police Chief advised that since the K-9 program has been discontinued he was giving the K-9 dog, Robin, to the City and recommended that the Board declare the dog as surplus along with its kennel and equipment. The Chief advised that there were three (3) law enforcements agencies interested in purchasing the dog.

The Mayor asked the Chief if he would consider continuing the K-9 division if the money to support it could be made available to his budget. The Chief advised that he didn't have the money necessary to continue the program and he didn't see the benefit of the K-9 program outweigh its costs.

It was moved by Alderwoman Connie Thibodeaux to table the Chief's recommendation to surplus the K-9 dog pending the outcome of Mr. Dunn's Civil Service appeal hearing and until Mr. Dunn, the K-9 handler Officer, returns to duty from his sick leave. The motion was seconded by Alderman Blanchard and carried.

Alderwoman Thibodeaux advised that she had spoken to the K-9 trainer in Lafayette who is currently boarding the dog and that he advised that the dog responds well to all commends and functions well during training sessions.

Alderman at Large Sattler commented on the illegal drug problem in Eunice.

Alderman Andrepont questioned the Chief's reason for discontinuing the K-9 program. Chief Fontenot advised that the cost of the program outweighed its effectiveness. Alderman Andrepont asked the Chief to investigate why the program was ineffective. Alderman Blanchard questioned the annual cost and Alderwoman Thibodeaux advised that citizens had expressed interest in donating money to offset the cost of the K-9 program.

Chief Fontenot advised that he had already made the decision and taken the action necessary to discontinue the K-9 program within the Eunice Police Department, which is within his authority and discretion, and as such, he no longer had need for the K-9 dog and it was now up to the City as to what they wanted to do with the dog.

Police Chief Randy Fontenot read the report of the Police Department's activities for the month of June, 2020.

It was moved by Alderman Andrepont, seconded by Alderman Blanchard and carried to approve payment of the City's bills for June, 2020 and acknowledge that the Board has received the financial reports for the City.

Mayor recognized Representative Phillip Devillier in the audience. Representative Devillier announced the following: the project to overlay Highway 91, Maple Avenue is moving forward and should begin by the end of this year or the beginning of 2021; a \$250 rebate for frontline workers will soon become available; Louisiana Department of the Treasury will begin taking applications on July 28<sup>th</sup> for the Main Street Recovery Program which can provide up to \$15,000 in grants to small businesses; Representative Devillier encouraged people to participate in the Census, either by mail or online.

Mayor announced that the City's Recreation Department has postponed the baseball and softball season until the next update by the Governor, due to the current face mask mandate. If the Governor extends the mask mandate then the season will be cancelled and the city will give partial refunds of registration fees. The Mayor also announced that in accordance with the Governor's mandate on face masks, face masks are now required to enter City Hall building.

It was moved by Alderman at Large Sattler, seconded by Alderman Ernest Blanchard and carried to adjourn.

---

Ginny Moody, City Clerk

---

Scott A. Fontenot, Mayor