

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF ST. MARTINVILLE, LOUISIANA
HELD ON THE 3rd DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2025.

The Mayor and City Council of the City of St. Martinville, Louisiana met in Regular Session on the 3rd day of February 2025 at City Hall, their regular meeting place, pursuant to the call of the Mayor.

THERE were present: Jason Willis, Mayor

Mike Fuselier, Councilman

Carol Frederick, Councilman

Jonas Fontenette, Councilman

Janise Anthony, Councilman

Flo Chatman, Councilman

Allan L. Durand, City Attorney

THERE were absent: None

Mayor Jason Willis presiding called the meeting to order.

It was moved by Janise Anthony duly seconded by Flo Chatman and unanimously carried that the minutes of the regular meeting held January 6, 2025, January 8, 2025 and January 14, 2025 hereby be approved for publication in the Teche News, the Official Journal of the City of St. Martinville.

Public Hearing to amend boundaries of Election District #1 & #2 of St. Martinville City Council has been rescheduled for the next council meeting scheduled for February 17, 2025 due to inclement weather.

Councilwoman Carol Frederick requested clarification for criteria that qualifies for the Council to go into Executive Session. City Attorney Allan Durand stated that the following reason apply to the Council Meetings.

Discuss the character, professional competence or physical or mental health of a person.

Discuss pending or threatened litigation

Discuss investigative proceedings regarding allegation of misconduct

Mayor Willis stated that the reason executive session is held at the time of hiring an employee or employee status change is to protect the privacy of the employee.

Councilwoman Frederick stated she just wants to make sure the City is following proper procedures and is consistent with procedures.

Following discussion of streaming of the Council meetings on Facebook Live, City Attorney Allan Durand informed that the Council can determine by a majority vote if meetings will be streamed on Facebook.

Pam Granger with McMade Engineering gave an update on the City's current grants.

Office Manager Candy Bertrand gave an update for the Utility Billing Department. Mayor Willis stated that some of the issues are cashiers are new, the department is installing new AMI meters, there are issues with meter readers and the billing software. Mayor Willis stated that the bills are accurate. Mrs Bertrand stated that phone calls are now being returned daily and the department is continuing to work on a solution for the large volume of calls. IT Coordinator Lynn Leger spoke of the issues with utility software.

Mayor Willis spoke of his duties and responsibilities. He is in charge of day-to-day operations. Mayor spoke of the importance of the council working together with him.

City Attorney Allan Durand read a letter from Attorney Chester Cedars regarding the current City Charter which he feels does not permit the City to effectively function as a governmental entity. Karen White of Karen White Consulting presented information regarding the differences between municipalities operating under a special legislative charter and the Lawrason Act. Ms. White stated that 24 out of 304 municipalities still operate under special legislative charters.

RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION

A Resolution and Proclamation by the City Council of the City of St. Martinville

WHEREAS the City of St. Martinville has been advised by competent authority that the Charter under which it operates is outdated and does not provide the most efficient procedure for the administration of City Government, and

WHEREAS the Council has been advised that the City would benefit from converting to the Lawrason Act for its governing provisions,

THEREFORE be it resolved that :

The City of St. Martinville does hereby proclaim and call for a Special Election, to be held on May 3, 2025, the date provided by law for a Spring Election, to submit to the voters the following proposition : **SHALL THE CITY OF ST. MARTINVILLE CONVERT FROM GOVERNMENT PURSUANT TO ITS CURRENT 1895 LEGISLATIVE CHARTER TO GOVERNMENT UNDER THE LAWRASON ACT?**

The foregoing Resolution was offered by Flo Chatman, duly seconded by Jonas Fontenette, and upon being submitted to a vote, the vote was :

Yeas: J. Fontenette and F. Chatman

Nays: M. Fuselier and C. Frederick

Abstain: J. Anthony

The vote resulting in a tie, Mayor Willis voted yes in favor of calling for an election in May to allow Citizens to vote to change the City's Special Charter to the Lawrason Act effective immediately following certification of election results by the Secretary of State.

The Resolution and Proclamation above was thereon declared adopted on the 3rd day of February, 2025.

JASON WILLIS, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I HEREBY CERTIFY that this is a true and fully correct copy of a Resolution and Proclamation passed and adopted by the St. Martinville City Council on the date shown above.

Lorrie M. Poirier, City Clerk

City Attorney Allan Durand requested to table the discussion of the FOCO Road lawsuit.

Following the presentation by Mr. Howard Ratliff, it was moved Mike Fuselier duly seconded by Jonas Fontenette and unanimously carried to approve the concept and encourage Mr. Ratliff to bring a more detailed proposal for the use of an area of the festival grounds to add 3-5 RV spots to complement his RV spots at Camping on the Bayou and enhance tourism and economic activity in the City.

The following resolution was introduced by Mike Fuserlier duly seconded by Flo Chatman and unanimously adopted:

Proclamation

WHEREAS, the St Martinville Senior High School (SMSH) Graduating Class of 1975 did significantly contribute as a group to the betterment and recognition of the City of St Martinville, LA through the acts and accomplishment of :

- The 1st Louisiana state title for the St Martinville Sr High school as an integrated unified High School in St Martin Parish with a school record of most Basketball wins in a season of record of 39 wins and 3 losses, an undefeated record in district plays at 12-0 in 5AAA division,
- Producing service leaders in the areas of education, health and community service, religious affairs, military service, farming, government and public service, elected office, industry, business, and legal affairs, etc.
- And many other accomplishments - seen and unseen in the city, parish, state, national and other jurisdictions to be included herein

WHEREAS, 50 years has passed since graduating from St Martinville Senior High School, but these men and women, uncles, aunts, grandparents have served their communities well,

WHEREAS, they stand in high regard for their contributions to the history of this great city,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, I, Mayor Jason Willis along with approval of the city council do declare and proclaim these members (living and deceased) , as a group, be known as “Honorary Citizens of the City of St Martinville, LA” in conjunction with the 50th class reunion events on the officially designated three (3) days of Feb 14, 15, & 16, 2025.

Wishing you a successful reunion event and Welcome to our City.

Mayor Jason Willis
City of St.Martinville

Upon request of Mr. Ron Beauchamp on behalf of owners of a dilapidated structure located at 112 Labbe Street, it was moved by Mike Fuselier duly seconded by Flo Chatman and unanimously carried the windows and doors be boarded up to keep trespasser out and that 3 months be granted to make repairs to structure. Planning and Zoning Coordinator Otis Chatman will take pictures to monitor progress and present the council an update in 3 months.

It was moved by Flo Chatman duly seconded by Mike Fuselier and unanimously carried that Ms Catherine James be allowed to hold a Grief Walk from Candlelight to Lil Easy on March 16th at 2:00pm. Chief Ricky Martin will work with Ms. James for the safest route possible.

The Acadian Memorial Courtyard was discussed. Otis Chatman researched different options to address the tiles that are slippery. Based on the information obtained, the general consensus was to pressure wash and buff the tiles, then apply a sealer with an additive to increase traction. It was also decided to revisit in 30 days,

It was moved by Flo Chatman duly seconded by Jonas Fontenette and unanimously carried that City Attorney Allan Durand submit to the Governor's office Ordinance 20-05 that was adopted on October 5, 2020 by the previous council to amend the City Charter to provide term limit for Mayor and Councilmembers but for various reasons was never submitted to the Governor for approval.

It was moved by Mike Fuselier duly seconded by Janise Anthony and unanimously carried that Mayor Willis be authorized to execute the general lease agreement with St Martin Parish School Board for the use of the former Tiny Tot Park/Playground as a Veterans Memorial Park.

It was moved by Janise Anthony duly seconded by Flo Chatman to go into executive session to discuss status changes for employees and update on Section 8 Program

Ms Anthony's motion being submitted to a vote, the vote thereon was:

Yeas: J.Fontenette, J. Anthony and F.Chatman

Nays: M.Fuselier and C.Frederick

Motion Failed

It was moved by Mike Fuselier duly seconded by Carol Frederick that the employment status change of Cherie Guilbeaux from Docent to CRT Administrative Assistant be tabled for two weeks to allow time to look at duties of CRT Department.

Mr. Fuselier's motion being submitted to a vote, the vote thereon was:

Yeas: M.Fuselier and C.Frederick

Nays: J.Fontenette, J. Anthony and F.Chatman

Motion Failed

It was moved by Jonas Fontenette duly seconded by Flo Chatman that the employment status of Cherie Guilbeau be changed from part-time docent (\$10.00/hr) to full-time CRT Administrative Assistant with a pay grade of 104 plus 8% (\$11.50/hr), effective February 5, 2025.

Mr. Fontenette's motion being submitted to a vote, the vote thereon was:

Yeas: J.Fontenette, J. Anthony and F.Chatman

Nays: M.Fuselier and C.Frederick

Upon recommendation of CRT Director Danielle Fontenette, it was moved by Flo Chatman duly seconded by Janise Anthony to hire Lauren Richard as part-time docent with a pay grade of 103 (\$10.00/hr), effective February 5, 2025.

Ms Chatman's motion being submitted to a vote, the vote thereon was:

Yeas: J.Fontenette, J. Anthony and F.Chatman

Nays: M.Fuselier and C.Frederick

Constance Boudreaux gave an update on Section 8 Program.

- November 12, 2024 received Audit report from HUD stating the program was out of compliance for the past 3 years
- Currently
 - 50% back in compliance
 - 13 Landlords
 - 49 tenants (2 ineligible/3 removed themselves)
- Need to appoint an Interim Director for program
- Jennifer Tyler is the only certified inspector at this time
- Constance Boudreaux taking training online
- Letter from SMP Gov was sent to HUD 2-3-25 for approval of transfer to SMP Gov
- Request approval to transfer accounting services to different vendor

It was moved by Mike Fuselier duly seconded by Janise Anthony and unanimously carried that Constance Boudreaux be appointed Interim Executive Director of Section 8 Program.

Upon recommendation of Constance Boudreaux, it was moved by Mike Fuselier duly seconded by Janise Anthony and unanimously carried that Section 8 Accounting Services be changed from HSA to Trish Hamaker & Co at a monthly rate not to exceed \$250.00 a month.

Flo Chatman exited the meeting

It was moved by Carol Frederick duly seconded by Janise Anthony and unanimously carried to go into executive session to discuss the employment status change for Sheree Davis and Carolyn Comeaux.

The City Council reconvened after executive session upon motion of Jonas Fontenette duly seconded by Carol Frederick.

Councilwoman Flo Chatman and Councilman Mike Fuselier did not reenter the meeting.

It was moved by Jonas Fontenette duly seconded by Carol Frederick and unanimously carried that the employment status of Carolyn Comeaux be changed from Accounting Specialist with a pay grade of 109 (\$16.00/hr) to Accounting Clerk with a pay grade of 108 (\$15.00/hr), effective February 5, 2025.

It was moved by Carol Frederick duly seconded by Janise Anthony and unanimously carried to amend the job description and changed the employment status of Sheree Daivs from Accounting Clerk with a pay grade of 109 + 7% (\$16.05/hr) to Accounting Specialist with a pay grade of 111 (\$18.00/hr), effective February 5, 2025.

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and City Council, Mayor Willis adjourned the meeting upon motion of Janise Anthony and duly seconded by Jonas Fontenette.

JASON WILLIS, MAYOR

ATTEST:

LORRIE M POIRIER, CITY CLERK