

PARISH PRESIDENT JESSIE BELLARD WAS ABSENT FOR THIS MEETING

**ST. LANDRY PARISH COUNCIL
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7th, 2024
OLD CITY MARKET, 131 W. BELLEVUE ST.
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA**

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

1. Chairman Wayne Ardoin called this meeting of the Public Works Committee of the St. Landry Parish Council to order.
2. **Roll Call:** Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Vivian Olivier, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. Ex-Officio: Wayne Ardoin. **ABSENT:** None.
3. **Elect Chairman:**

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “I will now call the second meeting to order which is Public Works Committee. We will elect a Public Works Chairman.”

Councilman Jimmie Edwards stated, “If I am in order I would like to make a motion to elect Ms. Vivian Olivier.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “Second.”

Chairman Wayne Ardoin stated, “Are there any other nominations?”

Councilman Jimmie Edwards stated, “I will close the nominations.”

A motion was made by Councilman Jimmie Edwards, seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to elect Councilwoman Vivian Olivier as the Public Works Chairwoman for 2024.”

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion carried.

4. **Person to address the Committee:**

Mr. William Jenkins addressed the council. He stated, “Good evening, Chairman, council men and women. I came to talk to you all about the permit fees. We are an Electrical and Air-Conditioner Contractor and a few years ago if we had to cut a line or service or something for one of our power companies we had the okay to cut the line, pull the meter and we would hook the people back up. Then the power companies said that the parish want us to buy permits, not us particular but the customers. They would require a \$10.00 permit fee to get the power back on at the people houses. They said it was for an affidavit saying that they did no other work like building or adding to the structure or anything. Then after Hurricane Katina the state said that we had to have certified inspectors. The parish hired some inspectors for some reason and I found out last year. We don’t buy permits in this parish, they don’t require us to go and buy the permit, even for a new construction, it is either the home owner or the contractor. All of a sudden if you do some work you will find out that your customer has to pay \$150.00 for a permit to get the power put back on. I was just wondering why the permit fees are so high. Mostly every municipality that we work in, every other parish the fees are not that high. I am the Electrical Inspector for the City of Opelousas and we basically have three different fees for the kind of work that we do, Alterations are \$50.00, new Construction is something else but for alterations, the highest fee that we have is \$50.00. We are just wondering why the fees are so high and where could we get a copy of what you all did to do these fees to make these fees official. That is all that I have.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I have a copy but I don’t have it in front of me at this moment. Mr. Jenkins had called me and I was suppose to give him a copy of the fees. I would ask the council to look at those fees so we could look over them to see what they are. I

don't think anybody know off hand what the fees are. Maybe we can look at them and see what they are and how they are compatible to other parishes, maybe just look into this again."

Mr. Van Reed stated, "Mr. Jenkins, I can have the Permit Officer call you and give you the fees and the fee schedule. I can also have Ms. Karia provide the fee schedule to the councilmembers as well."

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, "I also agree with Ms. Carriere. I feel the same way. I think that we need to re-visit that ordinance. If it is \$150.00 we need to look at that. You know many times Government can be easy. We have to follow the law plus we have to use common sense plus we have to have a heart of compassion. If I go to someone's home and I am seeing their living conditions and knowing they don't have the way to pay \$150.00, that is when you have to let common sense kick in and some compassion. I think that we need to re-visit this ordinance and see what we can do to make it where it will be constituent and customer friendly as well. Life is hard enough for some other than us putting extra things if it is not necessary for them to have to deal with. I think that we really need to re-visit that ordinance. Thank you."

Mr. Van Reed stated, "Mr. Jenkins, if you will give Ms. Milburn your number after the meeting we will have the Permit Office call you."

Mr. Bernard J. Lewis III addressed the council. He stated, "Good evening everyone. I have a little bit of a thing. I contacted the Electrical Inspector about 2-3 months ago on a job on Miller Road. I called him to ask him a question about certain things that I needed to do on the job. I have been doing it for a while but I know a lot of the codes changed at the beginning of last year. I had a conversation with him that morning just to see what I needed to do and where I needed to go. He was a little flustered and he was aggravated. I don't know if he is the only Electrical Inspector for the whole parish but it got to a point where my line of questioning apparently upset him. At that point he got irate and he got profane with me and he hung up in my face, I really did not appreciate it. I called Mr. Bellard's Office to speak to Mr. Bellard about it but he did not answer and they had someone else call me back. I don't know if that is the actual procedure but I know he is the highest I can go with that situation. I just wanted to bring it to your attention as to where professionalism in this work goes a long way. You can't handle people the way you feel because you are feeling some type of way about a certain situation or other people. The reason he said that he came at me that way is because electricians like to argue with him. I stated to him that I was not trying to argue but I was just trying to get a little information that I did not have. So that is all that I have to say."

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, "Would you like us to have the Parish President contact you? Ultimately he is his boss."

Mr. Bernard J. Lewis III stated, "He can. That is why I tried to contact him. They had a lady call me back instead of him calling me back, I left him a message on his line. I have not heard from him sense then."

Mr. Van Reed stated, "If you will give us your number after the meeting we will look into it and we have Mr. Bellard give you a call."

Mr. Bernard J. Lewis III stated, "Yes Sir. Thank you."

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, "Mr. Van, since you are sitting in for Mr. Bellard I don't believe this is the first time, I have had an experience also. This is not the first time that we have had complaints. This is the question that I have, what is the consequences? We have people that are not handling situations professionally and we have people that are out there trying to do a job. If they are not understanding if things have changed then they have questions. My thing is this, what are the consequences? That would be one of my questions? Because it has happened in the past."

Mr. Van Reed stated, "I am unaware of any complaints that is just me because I am not connected to that department. I will talk with Jessie and get the Inspector Supervisor involved and we will find out."

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I know that you are not the Parish President that have received any complaints but as the council I am wondering what we can do to have a paper trail. If we have complaints, where can they file a complaint if they have one? We need to try and see about that because a lot of things are not know because nobody knows who to talk to. He did say that he went up to the highest person that he could. We need to know where a complaint can have a paper trail so we can know. We are the parish council and I know we don’t hire people but the point is that we represent the people. They are going to call us when they a have a complaint so they need to know that it is noted. I would like to know.”

Mr. Van Reed stated, “We will definitely look into that.”

Councilman Jody White stated, “Just to add to that with that being said, if you are an employee of Parish Government wouldn’t a complaint actually be written and filed in Human Resources.”

Mr. Van Reed stated, “If a complaint is made the supervisor has the option of documenting that with Human Resources, yes.”

Councilman Jody White stated, “Which would lead to if we have questions over and over about a particular person we can maybe summon Human Resources in reference to something in their jacket if we have an ongoing problem.

Mr. Van Reed stated, “Yes, Mr. Bellard can request his file, the Inspector’s File to see if there are other complaints that have been filed.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “The public needs to know if they can file a complaint. If they don’t know and they are trying to resolve it then nothing is ever going to be in a file. We need to first let the Public know there is a place that you can file a complaint and that way we can see. It has happen before and there is nothing noted.”

Mr. Van Reed stated, “I will get with Jessie and we will get with Human Resources. We will get with his Supervisor and we will see if we can formulate some type of complaint procedure for the Public.”

Ms. Patrice Lewis addressed the council. She stated, “Good evening, my name is Patrice Lewis. I am a Managing Member of B & J Electrical Services with my dad and my brother. It has come to my attention as being a Managing Partner that we have an Electrical Inspector for the parish that is not properly credentialed. When you have someone who is not properly credentialed to do their job and you are relying on this person who is also known as the authority having jurisdiction and you are relying on them to know something about that industry especially in our case, the Electrical Industry and they don’t have the proper knowledge to guide you it can be a problem and it is not conducive to our business. I know I have experience with hiring people based on a job description. I have to look at the credentials needed for that job description. If someone approaches me to hire them but they don’t have the credentials, as much as I would like to hire them, I can’t. It won’t be conducive to my business. If we have an Electrical Inspector who I was told has certain credentials that have been pending for two years how can you do a job and you are not qualified to do it. If that is the case for our parish I encourage you to re-evaluate his job description based on the required credentials. If he does not have that in place I strongly urge you to reconsider him being in that position and find someone qualified for that position so that business like ours can receive the help that we need from the authority having jurisdiction then we can get proper approval for the work that we do and we don’t have to around and around in circles with someone who has no idea what they are talking about. I can speak for our business, we are 50 years of electrical experience. My grandfather was an electrician, my dad is an electrician and now my brother is an electrician and they have to work with someone who suppose to have knowledge that is equivalent to theirs or a step up and that is not happening. I thank you so much for you time and for hearing me out.”

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “Ms. Lewis I have a personal heart thing there because I contract for 28 years and I have experienced the exact same thing. What I would like to see from my experience in the pass is that we be obligated to the people that our president is

hiring that they are qualified. I have a note here after Mr. Lewis came up and talked and one of the notes says, 'Are our inspectors qualified to inspect?' I would just like to see that we would make a general effort to see what those qualifications are and just see if the people we have fit. Because at the end of the day as Mr. Jacob said earlier we are passing these ordinances and we are charging these people for these permits and it is the people who pay the taxes who are buying these permits and it is not a win-win situation here. I would just to say to the committee that perhaps we could just look into that and make sure that we have qualified people and I concur with you Ms. Lewis."

Mr. Van Reed stated, "Ms. Lewis, if you would give Ms. Milburn your number after the meeting we will have someone check into it and give you a call back."

Chairman Wayne Ardoin questioned, "Mr. Van Reed, how many Electrical Inspectors do we have? Do you have any idea?"

Mr. Van Reed stated, "We have one."

Chairman Wayne Ardoin questioned, "How many Building Inspectors?"

Mr. Van Reed stated, "I think one."

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, "Van, if you are certified in all areas....."

Mr. Van Reed stated, "I am not aware of that. We will definitely find out tomorrow."

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, "We have had this discussion. I don't know if everybody can remember this, the new members probably don't but we had some building inspectors that were interested in doing the work for us so it won't be a conflict and we did discuss the building inspector and the qualifications. I don't know if you all remember what the conversation was, do you all remember? It was not satisfactory to me but again everybody else was okay with it. From what I can recall the building inspector was not qualified in all areas or he was not certified in all areas, let me correct that. Mr. Van said that he will see what it is and we will have it and we will know definitely but I remember that issue coming up. Also Mr. Van, if you can do me a favor with the Coding. If we could get a present copy of the codes and see that he has it. When he is making decisions a lot of that is based on the coding. If it has changed our electricians in the parish, all electricians need to be aware of that. I think most of them are up to date on that so we need to make sure all of that is in line and he does have the correct coding books, there is a book that he has to follow and I think it is like the bible so we need to make sure that all of that is in line because like Mr. Jolivette said, they are representatives of the parish because they are doing work and they pay taxes and for the tax paying constituents of the parish."

Mr. Van Reed stated, "Not a problem. We will look into that as well."

Councilman Jody White stated, "Mr. Lewis and Ms. Lewis, your homestead, is it still on West Bellevue?"

Mr. Bernard J. Lewis III stated, "I am on Cherry Street."

Ms. Patrice Lewis stated, "I am on Noah lane in Opelousas."

Councilman Jody White stated, "I just remember from back in the day you all being on West Bellevue Street. Before you all leave please take my card. If there are some more issues we can talk about it instead of waiting for the next meeting if there is an issue."

Ms. Patrice Lewis stated, "Excellent, thank you."

Councilman Dexter Brown stated, "Not to long ago I brought a Utility Trailer from someone in Opelousas. This guy is from Texas and he moved to Opelousas and he build houses. We got on the subject about building codes. He brought up the electrical inspector. He said the building code booklet is about yeah thick. For that inspector to be certified in several areas that is a lot to take in. He asked how many inspectors we have because he recently built a

house. He basically stated that one person over the inspector's division was a lot for one person to handle. Ms. Lewis was talking about certification, we would like to have everybody certified in whatever they are doing. Just like I am an educator, I have to have my certification in education, I am a Reserve Police Officer and I have to have my certification with the police officer association. We just want to be correct in everything that we do to be on the correct side. Thank you."

5. Public Works Report:

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, "I will allow Ms. Cynthia Fontenot with Code Enforcement to go before me."

Ms. Cynthia Fontenot, Code Enforcement stated, "Good evening Madam Chairwoman and Councilmembers. If you look before you they have some packets in front of you for property on Harold Street, it is located at 172 Harold Street. I inspected this property last August and I sent the property owner a letter. It was received by certified mail and I also sent it via regular mail. They did contact the office on three occasions and they were going to get it demolished and get it cleaned up. Until this day I went out and inspected it again last week and it is in the same condition. St. Landry Parish Government is coming in at this time to get authorization so we can move on you all allowing the council clerk to send a notice for them to appear so we can demolish that resident. It is a bid eye sore in the subdivision."

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024** to authorize the Council Clerk to forward a letter to the owner of the Property at 172 Harold Street and invite them to come and address the council about the demolition of their property.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

Ms. Cynthia Fontenot, Code Enforcement stated, "Thank you. The second item that I have is two affidavits of adjoining landowners that we received. Two property owners have some properties adjacent to their property. The first one will be **Chris and Audrey Marie Guilbeau-Trahan**. They are adjoined to some property that is adjudicated to the parish. It is one lot: T190, 100 x 105 on 3-Mile Lake Subdivision. It has been adjudicated to the parish as a Tax Sale on 07-20-2020 for 2019 Parish Taxes. Their attorney did submit an Affidavit of adjoining landowner. We are asking at this time if we can move on that property. We need a Special Ordinance for that. Attached you will find the Assessor's Sheet showing the Trahan's and the adjoining property that is adjudicated."

A motion was made by Councilman Alvin Stelly, seconded by Councilman Timmy Lejeune to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024** to approve an Ordinance to allow the Parish Government to sell adjoining adjudicated property located at the Three Mile Lake Subdivision to Mr. Chris Trahan and Mrs. Audrey Marie Guilbeau-Trahan. Parcel No. 0402518875.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

Ms. Cynthia Fontenot, Code Enforcement stated, "The third item is another affidavit of an adjoining land owner. The Parcel Number is 8602770904. It is located on Spatz Road in Eunice Louisiana. You will see the Assessor's Sheet showing Mr. Marlon Keith Clark Sr. He resides at 160 Spatz Road. He is the adjoining land owner and he has been caring for the property for years and the upkeep of the property. This is one of the properties that had gone before and we cannot find that property owner. You all agreed to put them back on the Sale List. Mr. Clark has been caring for the property all of this time. It was not offered to him when he did go to the Parish Government Office a few years ago, a couple of years ago. At this time his attorney have submitted an affidavit of adjoining landowner. That is one lot 50 x 140 on Spatz Road. At this time St. Landry Parish Government is requesting a Special Ordinance so we can move forward on this."

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry, seconded by Councilman Jimmie Edwards to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024** to approve an Ordinance to allow the Parish Government to sell adjoining adjudicated property on Spatz Road to Mr. Marlon Keith Clark Sr. Parcel Number 8602770904.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

Chairman Wayne Ardoin questioned, “Where are we at on Kappy’s Korner?”

Ms. Cynthia Fontenot, Code Enforcement stated, “On Kappy’s Korner we have to get that Ordinance approved before you all at the Full Council Meeting.”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, “January was a rough month for Public Works. With three weather events it kept us very, very busy. Despite that we did five cross pipes, we changed out. We cleaned out culverts on two roads. We did a Culvert insulation on four roads. We removed debris on 24 roads. We did ditching to six roads. We graded 55 roads. We spread material on 9 roads. We patched 25 roads. We installed 21 street signs. We removed 8 trees and 4 washouts. We gave out 1,500 sand bags two weeks ago due to the flood and we have another 1,000 sand bags made and set aside in an event of an emergency. We are prepared but hopefully not another one soon but we are prepared for whatever come to us.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “Mr. Soileau, I have a question. Remember a few months ago I have requested that we do High Water Signs throughout the parish where ever those roads flood. It is just to warn someone who is not familiar with the area. I remember a while back you stated that you have started but you have not completed because you had to order more signs. Did we ever get that completed?”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Director of Public Works, “Believe it or not we did get it completed but I think that I still have 3 left standing. They are very easy to steal. It is unfortunate but we have some more and we will attempt it one more time.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “If there is anything that you all can do, I know you stated and Mr. Bellard have stated this as well about the money that is there to clean Bayou Mallet and Bayou Karron and nothing is being done. It has been over a year and we still have these people homes who are constantly being flooded. My heart just grieve when I pass and see Collins Lane. Did you all ever go out that way when it is raining? It is pitiful to see. You have Doctor’s that live on that road and you have a Dentist that lives on that road. It is not that they are more than anyone else but because of their profession they need to be able to get out to go and see about patients. It just hurts me to see that it is like hands are tied, the money is there but it cannot be utilized.”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, “No ma’am. We have to follow procedures like any other entity. We are at that stage, in fact we have a person who is dealing with the Core of Engineers right now. I will put myself a note and I will call them again tomorrow. But anyone who have any dealings with the Core of Engineers know that it is not an easy task. This guy that we have hired to negotiate for us hopefully he is making some headway but it is not easy. We knew this when we get to that point and that is the last hurdle. There is nothing that we can do to push them. They have to do their studies, they have to possibly save an animal or some kind of something that is in those Bayous. Once we have cleared that then we are going to proceed. Jessie and I both thought that these Bayou’s would be cleaned by now. But Government tells us no, you have to follow procedures. Jessie and I are not too easy on following procedures and waiting to get something done. We are aware of that. All over the parish we flooded horribly two weeks ago. We are hanging in there trying to get things done.”

Councilwoman Mildred Thierry stated, “Thank you and I appreciate all that you do.”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, “Not a problem. I am glad to do it.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “I just want to tell you thank you for the fast action with the tree that fell down during the storm. I know that you all were very busy and you all were doing a very good job in trying to clear everything out. Can you tell me the status of Shorten and Donato? I know everything have been approve but is it just the weather that is holding up everything?”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, “We have I think 7 or 8 more crossings to be overlaid. Maybe once February settles down we can move. I am terribly as anxious as you are to continue. It is in the works and we are waiting for Mother Nature to cooperate with us.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “Thank you very much for that update and thank you again for all that you do and your patience Mr. Soileau.”

a. Final Subdivision Plat approval for Gardner Farms Estates Phase III lots 26-42 located on Chris Road.

Mr. Jarrell stated, “Good evening Counsel. By the time we submitted final documents and everything we had all of this flooding and weather which caused some significant erosion in this new subdivision which is pretty normal when one is just built. Mr. Karl Aucoin did an inspection and wrote a letter to the parish. As of now we have addressed all of the erosion issues. The contractor have had some trouble erosion control but now he does have access to it. He said that he is trying to get our erosion control in for these ditches by the end of the week. There was an issue with the freeze with the new road at a joint that they had a small crack and that is being addressed. We are going to heat up the asphalt and bring in some new mix and roll it and address that crack. I don’t know if you all saw the letter but basically all of these issues are already being addressed. I did speak with a client today about the HOA and their attorney is going to have a conversation with me tomorrow. They are unsure if they are going to do an HOA for this Subdivision but they will stipulate in each sale of a lot that that individual lot owner is going to be responsible for maintaining and sharing the cost with the other residence for maintaining the out fall ditches. Leaving the parish roadway they are going to remain private.

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to forward to Regular Meeting held on Wednesday, **February 21st, 2024** to approve the Final Subdivision Plat for the Gardner Farms Estates Phase III Lots 26-42 located on Chris Road.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

A motion was made by Councilman Alvin Stelly, seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to accept the Public Works Report.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion carried.

6. Authorize the Council, Clerk to advertise for two appointments to the Coulee Croche Fire Protection District No. 4 for a two-year term. (04-20-2024 – 04-20-2026).

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry, seconded by Councilman Timmy Lejeune to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024** to authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for two appointments to the Coulee Croche Fire Protection District No. 4 for a two-year term. (04-20-2024 – 04-20-2026).

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

7. Authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for five appointments to Ward 1 South Gravity Drainage District No. 1 for a four-year term. (04-02-2024 – 04-02-2028).

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024** to authorize

the Council Clerk to advertise for five appointments to Ward 1 South Gravity Drainage District No. 1 for a four-year term. (04-02-2024 – 04-02-2028).

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

8. Authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for two appointments to the South St. Landry Community Library District for a five-year term. (04-02-2024 – 04-02-2029).

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry, seconded by Councilman Jimmie Edwards to forward to Regular Meeting held on *Wednesday, February 21st, 2024* to authorize the Council Clerk to advertise for two appointments to the South St. Landry Community Library District for a five-year term. (04-02-2024 – 04-02-2029).

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

9. Discuss starting the process to accept Bear Road as a Parish Road. (Councilman Ken Marks).

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Madam Chair, this is a situation that has been festering for over 20 plus years. Initially from the initiation of our Road Tax and Roads it was determined to be put into our roads to be taken in at that time. This road was initially put in on the list but did not make it. These Constituents have been paying these taxes, two taxes if you will, one for Public Works and one for Smooth Ride Home and get zero aspects of service. What I would like to propose to this council is that before we start to process on any road that we have some laws in place to dictate an ordinance if you will on what needs to be done and how it needs to be done where we will not have just anybody that have a private road that wants to have incorporated into our parish, they have to meet certain criteria, specific criteria. Mr. Taylor and I are very blessed to have a Public Works District so we are kind of self-sufficient if you will and that particular district is ready to take this road in and maintain it and take care of it just like the parish would. What I would like to propose tonight is to start an Ordinance or compose and ordinance to be brought to the council for policies and procedures for acceptance of non-hard service roads into Parish Road Systems. Getting with Garrett I think that we need to take a look at the verbiage and work out the details if you think that is appropriate.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “Yes, I think this ordinance that you are proposing amends the ordinance that sets forth the procedure and the conditions for taking a road in and making it public, correct?”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Yes sir that is section 36-14.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “I think that ordinance is pretty much ready now to be introduced in 2 weeks and as we look at it maybe it will be tweaked by the time it passed or not but I guess we will go over the ordinance carefully to make sure the procedures and the conditions for taking a road in are what they need to be.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Okay, thank you Mr. Garrett. So that is what we are proposing here. Before we put the cart ahead of the horse we would like to have these things proposed by the council and passed by the council. We have general guidelines going forward.”

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, “Mr. Marks, are you proposing this as a Pilot Program with the two Public Works Districts?”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “I think it would probably be a good idea to have it as a Pilot Program and not as a Blanket and see how it works out and see if it is feasible or not. Common sense I think for it to work out that way. I would propose that as well.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “Sometimes back we spoke about not particularly that road but private roads in general. It never did fly or get off the ground but what we did speak

about was the particular. I know there is issues with the road, maybe not that particular road but there are a lot of roads that you can hardly pass on them and these people purchased the property in the area in which it is not a parish road. They knew that jumping in the program. We had a conversation about possibly the road acquiring a service permit. We would write an ordinance that would allow the constituents that live on these roads the opportunity to find out what the cost was and that would be the cost of the permit of service everything you would have to submit for a new permit and you would have to have every constituent on that road sign an easement or a right-of-way for that grader to go and service it at a minimal cost, as cheap as possible. I don't know if that is what you are leading to or what but the problem that I have is if we start taking all of these private roads in then the rest of the parish and we have a lot of private roads and we have a lot of private roads that are in really bad shape. If we start taking this in I don't know how we are going to afford it. Only in your area, because I get it that you have a tax but the rest of the parish don't so what is going to happen?"

Councilman Ken Marks stated, "Mr. Lejeune I appreciate your bringing me up to date on basically a service permit if you will. I would not be perusing this to add extra cost to the parish system. This is not any money that the parish government would have to put out for this road, the district will take care of all of the expenditures okay. As long as those citizens sign an affidavit that we will have drafted up. If they are all in agreement then we would go through the due process to get it done. Not to open up as you say a can of worms but I think to protect those that can get this done through Parish Government rather than not is all that I am saying."

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, "I am confused about something. I thought that we were suppose to draft an ordinance or we were suppose to have some kind of information that would explain. I have been waiting on it to give to a couple of constituents on what they need to do to get the road up to par so that we could accept it and that is a big task so it will not be cheap or easy. First of all I never got a copy to know because I have someone that is waiting on it to see what they need to do which all of the residents would have to put together because not one person can pay to get the road up to par. What are the qualifications? It is not just everybody getting it where it does not have pot holes also there is a situation where there is not enough width for ditches and all of that. I am trying to understand, I know what you are asking is that the same thing almost? I know you are talking about in your district where you have those tax dollars. I am talking bout in general. With the parish we suppose to have something in place to say what each private road would need to do."

Councilman Ken Marks stated, "And we do. That is the one that we are referencing. That ordinance again, the amendment of that ordinance would be to specifically finalize that particular draft and go forward from there. To answer your question I would think that would open up any of your constituents in areas that have a concern what route you need to go to get that done. I have the old ordinance and we are going to look at tweaking it and proposing it to you guys and go from there. You will have input."

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, "I guess to put it in a thirty-thousand foot view of what is being proposed here is there is no private road in this parish can be taken in unless the parish makes it public. We have to make it public to spend public money on it that is number one. What Mr. Marks is proposing is that as a Piolet Program in two districts that are self-funded that we allow these district to do whatever we have to do to legally get possession of the right-of-way. Once they get possession of the right-of-way and it is a public road then that district can go in and black top, grade it, put gravel or whatever they need to do and they will agree to maintain it. One of the things that it says is that it will be done at no expense to the Parish Government. That is the thirty-thousand foot view of what we are trying to do here. This particular road that he is speaking about is in his area is called Bear Street. As I understand when the Police Jury and their wisdom declared certain roads that were public/private the folks in that district were not real friendly with the Police Jury so he just cut them out and made a private road. Now that is the story that I got and I have no facts to back up what I am telling you but a lot of roads got changed to private roads when a lot of roads that were private got changed to public roads. All we are trying to do is find an amicable way. In these two districts I have spoken to my district and they said if I make it public they would take care of it. I think that he has spoken to his district. Let me tell you about his district. He has 67 miles of road in his district and 67 miles of his roads are blacktopped at their expense. That is parish roads blacktopped with the money that they are

using. I am not that fortunate because I have 177 miles of roads and I would get a lot blacktopped with the Smooth Ride Home. That is the thirty-thousand foot view.”

**10. Discuss Daronne Bay and Courtableau Bay Bridge repair or replace.
(Councilman Ken Marks).**

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “We have a situation Barry, his department and the parish President is very much aware of this situation at Bayou Darbonne and Courtableau just north of Hwy 190 where there is an old wooden bridge that has been in existence some 90 plus years I presume. It is in dire need of repair, replacement I should say. This particular bridge does not have any edges, no boarders on it. It is just flat. We had a situation in the ice storm where that particular bridge was completely iced over, thank goodness for our districts being pro-active and due diligence and they went out and put up a barricade to protect the safety of the public. Low and behold somebody removed the barricades in the middle of the night. Thank God we did not find them in the water because they could have easily have slipped of that bridge. St. Landry Parish School Board has already passed an ordinance about 2 or 3 years ago where they will not cross that bridge with students on buses. That situation is pretty dire. What I understand is that we have annually our bridge Federal Off System Bridge Money where the Parish President has the authority to pick and choose which ever bridges he sees dire need and there are 3 of them if I recall that are possibly enough money to take care of. All I am want to do here is to bring it to the forefront and to make sure that we don’t let this fall through the cracks and let us do what we have to do to get this thing done for the safety of our citizens and any other area that needs attention like that. This bridge I understand is pretty high on the list and with that being said we are waiting on the process to get the monies and we might even have some opportunity from the district to help as well.

Mr. Van Reed stated, “That bridge is number one on the list that we have submitted to the stated.

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “I was told that and I appreciate that and I want to make sure that it stays number one. That is why I was bringing it up maybe to open up some of my councilmembers of some bridges that may have some concern in their particular district that maybe was not brought up to Barry and his office or the Parish President.

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “What is on the other side of the bridge?”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Courtableau Road. You have Port Barre that goes to Hwy 190 and it makes a loop and the Bayou have roads on either side. To get across the Bayou the only access route on the east side would be this bridge. On the west side you have Port Barre Bridge to be able to get to the other side, a concrete bridge. So that is the situation. It is a pretty long stretch without people having to access to get across.

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “If they close the bridge nobody is really trapped they can get around it.

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “Yes, they have alternative routes even though they may not like them but yes they do have alternative routes but it is a 7 mile trip.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “What about safety reasons? Maybe the bridge needs to be closed until they fix it. We will probably get more ice and we will have flooding. If they have another way to get around temporarily why not close it until?”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, “As the situations come up when they have a freeze we close it. We work well with the Public Works Department. When we have a weather event my crews separate and we check every bridge, we know everywhere where it floods and we go and check them and we close them.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “The only reason why I said that is because he said that they moved the barricade at night and thank God nobody went into the water. That is the reason why I am saying that.”

Mr. Barry Soileau, Public Works Director stated, “I appreciate that and that is true but by the same token I don’t think that it would be a pleasant thing to close at this time. I think we can try to hurry up and try to get money do it.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “That is correct Barry. Basically the local residents are aware of the situation and they had been for a number of years. That is a great access for them. I know that it is not the best situation Ms. Nancy but at least it gives them a route to be able to cross that is close to where their residence are.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “If they remove the barricade and they go into the water who is responsible? The bridge was unsafe because they crossed it and they went into the water. If somebody gets killed and they removed the barricade and the barricade is nowhere to be found and someone says there was never a barricade.”

Mr. Van Reed stated, “Ms. Nancy, I think Barry, Jessie and I can look into a stronger or bigger barricade that cannot necessarily just walk away. Like he said we did lose a lot of barricades during the flooding event. I know for a fact that last year when we put out barricades we went to pick them up and they were gone. There was one barricade that I put out in the Lawtell area and I put another one on the other side then I noticed the one that I put out on the other side of the flooding was already gone. They do steal these barricades and I have no idea why they steal them. We can look into something a little stronger and a little heavier that cannot be taken.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “I would like to make motion that we move this to the full council to have Mr. Bellard give us a report on approximately when this bridge will be seen about. Just to give an update to the people in the community. I am sure this bridge has been in that condition since it has been established. The rails did not fall off yesterday so they understand those weather conditions and the operation of that bridge. Maybe we could just give them an update of how far away we are from some type of service or reconstruction.”

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilman Jimmie Edwards to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024** to authorize the Parish President Jessie Bellard present the council with updates on the repairs to the Daronne Bay Bridge and the Courtableau Bay Bridge.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

**11. Discuss proposed amendment to St. Landry Parish Ordinance against Littering.
(Councilman Faltery Jolivette)**

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “Thank you Madam Chair. To my surprise my constituent Mr. Ken and Mr. LeBouef have pretty much started the process in which I want to implement this amendment. The amendment is to encourage the public to participate in helping us find the people that is littering our highways and byways and back roads. As an employee of St. Landry Parish Solid Waste I have first knowledge of knowing all of the problems that we are having with litter. It is not just a bag of McDonald’s waste we are talking about refrigerators, dryers, mattresses a used furniture store. It is really bad. I was going to propose a way to catch these people but it is pretty much the biggest problem but the second biggest problem is finding them. How we can do this is to implement something like an anonymous phone number which Mr. Ken and Mr. LeBouef already spoke about and use that process to get the ball rolling to encourage them with an incentive. This incentive will come if there is someone that is prosecuted and whatever they are charged with as far as the fine. They can get a percentage of that as an incentive. It will get the public involved. I think a lot of people are seeing and turning a naked eye. If you go fishing you use the right tackle I think that you can catch more fish. What this amendment would do to the existing ordinance that we already have in place, which is pretty good, Garrett and I went over it earlier and I have a copy of it. I think that it would encourage the public to be more proactive in getting involved and keeping our streets and our ditches cleaned. It is also a part of the drainage if you look at it. It is just something to put there and we can look at. We don’t know what that return is going to be to the public. Lets’ just say that it is a third offense and it can be up to \$1,500.00 and after everything is paid like the court cost and what have you they can get 50%

of that. That can be pretty enticing. That is my addendum to the litter ordinance. We have a plan in motion.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “We did not mean or appear to be taking anything from your process.”

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “It is a win, win.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “It is a win, win and your process for the ordinance puts the teeth and the things that we need to have into the enforcement aspect. The deal that Mr. LeBouef talked about is the support sector enforcement of that law broader than just one or two people or one or two entities. It is a win, win as you just stated. I just wanted to make sure that the public understand that we are working together on this and we are going to come to the conclusion of getting this parish cleaned up the way that it needs to be and all be proud of it.”

Councilman Dexter Brown stated, “Mr. Jolivette, you might would want to state that the public or the constituents would turn the people in would get a reward instead of saying a certain percentage of whatever the fine maybe.

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “The word is reward, yes sir.”

Councilman Dexter Brown stated, “You might want to a make a category of a \$250.00 reward or maybe a \$500.00 reward. Just like crime stoppers.”

Councilman Faltery Jolivette stated, “Actually that is how I had a small writing. That is how it is worded. There is a reward. You are right, it is like Crime Stoppers with tips. It is an anonymous call which we already spoke about and it is an incentive. The key word is the reward and the incentive to get them involved so we can catch the bad guy. I would make the call.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “Is it going to be legal that we can give a reward? I have no problem with it. I am just wondering if everything will be legal. If you have several people calling about that same one incident, how do you give the reward?”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “I do not believe the council will Legislate that the public receive for the fine or reward or anything like that in the ordinance. The ordinance have enough teeth in it. A reward for a tip can be very effective as in Crime Stoppers which you see on TV and that is how people know about it and they know about it through Social Media and Television. That is how they know that they can make money by turning someone in. As far as the council legislating something going to public reward or the public part of the fine I don’t think that council can and should do that. The effect will be by a reward for a tip as we have with Crime Stoppers on television, that is how people know about it and it can be done like that. As far as the council’s part, the council have done its part as far as the ordinance. It appears to be enough teeth in it as far as this community service and first offence, second offence, third offence for both gross littering which is bulk items such as furniture and just plain littering. The fines are quite substantial. I think the council has done its part. So the next part is more along the lines of the Executive Branch and rewards for tips.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “How are they going to get it? If we are going to let the public know if you turned someone in and you are going to get a reward then where are they this money from? I know Mr. Jolivette suggested from the fine.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “The fine would go to the Government. It would not go to private individuals. What you would want to do you would want to have it parallel like you see on Crime Stoppers where there is some kind of fund which would provide the tips. You might want to consult with the Sheriff’s Department on that. As far as the Criminal Ordinance the council has done its part on that.”

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, “If we say that to the public then we need to have the money there for the public. Do Mr. Bellard have to make that decision if we can do that?”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “It would be a consultation between the Sheriff’s Department and the Parish Government. I do know that the Sheriff’s Department have a Public Relations Department in regards to Crime Stoppers. It would be something along those lines.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “The Task Force that was mentioned earlier is a pretty extensive list of law enforcement and a collaboration if you will of entities. I don’t know if it is possible but it is something that I am throwing out that might be able to be funneled through Crime Stoppers. This is a crime that is going to be an ordinance or is an ordinance so it holds merit, is that correct? So they already established I would think the enforcing aspect and it would be pretty well received by the General Public if it is going through that particular aspect.”

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, “Right, there is a fund where these rewards would come out of. We would want to find out how they do that with Crime Stoppers and that would give us a lot of insight as to how to do it.”

Councilman Ken Marks stated, “I happen to be a non-voting member of that Crime Stoppers Board. We can definitely start the ball rolling in that direction and see what they say about it.”

Councilman Timmy Lejeune stated, “Do we need to make a motion for anything on this issue? Are we going to wait until Mr. LeBouef comes forward with more information on the program that we are putting together now?”

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, “It look like Mr. Jolivette and Mr. Ken Marks are going to be the author of whatever comes out. So let them do the research and they will get back to us. I don’t think that we need to take any action from the council.”

12. Discuss moving Precinct 21-A located at Opelousas Fire Department Sub-Station 3, 109 S. Union Street Opelousas, La 70570 to Opelousas Civic Center, 1638 Creswell Lane Opelousas, LA 70570. (Councilman Jody White).

Councilman Jody White stated, “Council, I was contacted by the Mayor of Opelousas and together we also spoke to the Fire Chief of the City of Opelousas in which the Fire Chief and the Mayor is asking that we no longer use the Precinct as stated here for the Fire Station as a voting precinct or a voting polling place. The Mayor has already stated that it is 100% okay that the polling place is relocated to the Opelousas Civic Center. I don’t know if I am at liberty to say but I will say it: There are some issues behind the scene that inevitably we would have to move that polling place anyway. It is know that substation is not even owned by the city of Opelousas. The actual owner of that building is also requesting that is no longer used as a polling place. In the future there are voting machines that rather is passes to use them or not they can’t be located in the days of that fire station where as when the doors are open the elements could affect what you have with those polling machines. At this time I am just asking that we make a motion and let the council vote on it but the mayor and the city fire chief and you have a letter in your packet that the fire chief wrote just giving some reasons that we just allow that voting polling place to be moved to the Opelousas Civic Center.”

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, “Mr. White, I think the proper procedure is to have our clerk get in touch with our Demographer and make sure that we can move it into another district. I think that is a different voting precinct. I am not sure but we need to get a little more information. I agree that we will have to move it but the civic center may not be where we need to have it. We will have to find another location.”

Councilman Jody White stated, “To answer you Sir, understand that we did have which is a block down the street from that polling place it was used temporarily which was the Louisiana Methodist Church. That is no longer a polling place. In reference to geographical locations that I did look into that and probably the next alternative from the Civic Center might be back at the courthouse itself.”

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, “How about City Hall.”

Councilman Jody White stated, "I am not certain that they are using City Hall."

Administrative Finance Chairman Harold Taylor stated, "Certainly the Mayor would want voting at City Hall."

Councilman Jody White stated, "I think in reference to where they are already voting they are at the Civic Center."

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, "Last year Mr. White I had a precinct there with the former Councilmember's precinct. I choose to move because I know about the issue. We moved to the Civic Center. I understand what you are saying and I am just saying that because only right now it was asked back then for it to be moved and that is why I left because it was both of us sharing it over there. I relocated to the Civic Center for those people in that area. That is the proper place that it would be locate at the Civic Center."

Councilman Jody White stated, "Also to chime in with that the Mayor and myself also spoke to the Registrar of Voters Office as well. It is not a surprise to them in reference to trying to move this polling place."

Councilwoman Nancy Carriere stated, "Whatever you have to do Garrett but I can only back that up that there were two. Mine and his and mine moved and the other one wanted to stay there which was not a good idea back then. I understand now. It was not because of the mayor back then it was those unseen situations you are speaking of."

Legal Counsel Garrett Duplechain stated, "I understand that our Clerk have already contacted our Demographer about that. Our Demographer is going to have to contact her and me again."

A motion was made by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry, seconded by Councilman Timmy Lejeune to forward to Regular Meeting held on **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024** to authorize the Council Clerk to contact the Demographer to give the council updates on moving Precinct 21A that is located at Opelousas Fire Department Sub Station 3 to the Opelousas Civic Center.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion forwarded.

13. Discuss any other business properly brought before this committee.

None.

14. Adjourn.

A motion was made by Councilman Timmy Lejeune, seconded by Councilwoman Mildred Thierry to adjourn the Public Works Committee.

On roll call vote: YEAS: Jody White, Mildred Thierry, Alvin Stelly, Timmy Lejeune and Jimmie Edwards. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. **ABSTAINED:** None.

Motion carried.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY THE FOREGOING TO BE EXACT AND TRUE
KAREN BARLOW, ASSISTANT COUNCIL CLERK**