

CITY OF WALKER COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 13, 2023

6:00 PM

The regular meeting of the Walker Mayor and City Council was held at the Walker City Hall on Monday, March 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jimmy Watson, followed with prayer led by Council member, Richard Wales. Municipal Clerk, Tammy Payton called the roll of the council after the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

With no comments, Mayor Watson called for a motion to adopt the council minutes for the February 13, 2023 meeting.

Upon motion was made by Mr. Cook, seconded by Mr. Griffin, the minutes from the February 13, 2023 council meeting were adopted.

YEAS: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major, Wales

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Financial Director, Mike Cotton, presented before the mayor and members of the council the January 2023 finance report. Assets as of January 31, 2023 were \$827,395. Gas revenue and sales tax revenue was up by 2% for January. Mr. Cotton remarked that gas revenue decreased by 31% year over year the end of February 2023.

Mayor Watson called for a motion to enter a public hearing. Upon a motion made by Mr. Wales and seconded by Mr. Clark, the council meeting entered into public hearing.

YEAS: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major, Wales

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Ms. Major presented **Ordinance #03-2023-01; ORDINANCE TO APPROVE THE REZONING OF 28811 WALKER SOUTH ROAD SUITE 400, WALKER, LA 70785 FROM RC TO RC-CAB-1 FOR STIRLING PROPERTIES, LLC AS RECOMMENDED BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION.**

City attorney, Bobby King, and Building Official, Nancy Kimble, brought before the council members attention that Hebert's Cajun Meats were in violation of certain codes. The tenants, Matthew and Cristina Hebert, were present and were allowed to address the council regarding the violations. After a discussion, the council agreed to approve the rezoning request of Stirling Properties, LLC. The tenants, Matthew and Cristina Hebert, would be required to make all required modifications in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Permits Department.

It was motioned by Ms. Major, seconded by Mr. Wales, to approve **Ordinance #03-2023-01** with the agreement that the tenants, the Matthew and Cristina Hebert, would comply with all requirements stipulated by the Permits Department.

YEAS: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major, Wales

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Mr. Griffin presented, **Ordinance #03-2023-02; ORDINANCE TO ENACT SECTION 5.29 OF THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE (UDC) RELATED TO SELF-STORAGE FACILITIES.**

Mike Cotton provided the council members additional information explaining that this would protect the City of Walker from having multi-level storage buildings. This update to Sec. 5.29 for self-storage facilities will follow the guidelines of the Unified Development Code (UDC) following the standards of design and development.

It was motioned by Mr. Griffin, seconded by Mr. Wales, to approved **Ordinance #03-2023-02** as proposed.

YEAS: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major, Wales

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Mr. Cook presented **Ordinance #03-2023-03; ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF WALKER SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY.**

Jamie Etheridge explained to the council members that the sexual harassment policy currently in the municipal handbook is outdated. The approval of this ordinance will allow the city to amend it and bring it into compliance with state law.

It was motioned by Mr. Cook, seconded by Mr. Griffin, to approve **Ordinance #03-2023-03** as recommended.

YEAS: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major, Wales

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Mr. Clark presented **Ordinance #03-2023-04; ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 13 OF THE CITY OF WALKER ORDINANCES OF WALKER PARKS AND RECREATION RULES AND REGULATIONS.**

Jamie Etheridge navigated the council members through the proposed updates to the existing ordinance. The changes proposed are to expand the meaning of existing restrictions and to include recent trends which are violations in park facilities and on park properties. The revisions will extend to include all Park and Recreation properties. As defined in Sec. 13.5-3—The parks of the City of Walker are established and maintained as areas of recreation and enjoyment for all citizens of the City of Walker. It is the responsibility of Walker to ensure proper use of park property, safety and equitable access. The following policies have been developed to govern all activities conducted at City of Walker parks.

It was motioned by Mr. Wales, seconded by Mr. Clark, to approve **Ordinance #03-2023-04.**

YEAS: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major, Wales

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Mr. Etheridge brought before the council members the following: Resolution Giving Preliminary Approval of the Issuance of a Taxable Excess Bond (LDH) of the City of Walker, State of Louisiana, in a Principal Amount not Exceeding, Two Million, Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,500,000) and Providing for Other Matters in Connection Therewith

Mr. Etheridge briefed the council members regarding the purpose of the Taxable Excess Revenue Bond loan agreement through the Louisiana Department of Health. It was explained that this

bond would be subject to loan forgiveness by the Department. However, the City of Walker would be responsible for paying the interest. The revenue would be used to permanently remedy the brown water problems that is due to the presence of manganese.

It was motioned by, Mr. Griffin, seconded by Mr. Clark to approve this resolution as presented.

YEAS: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major, Wales

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

The month of **March is “Problem Gambling Awareness Month”**. Tammy Payton read the proclamation signed by Mayor Watson showing forth the City of Walker’s dedication and support.

Additional Comments:

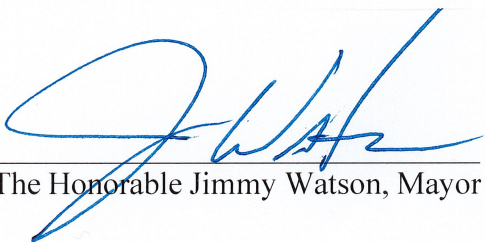
- ◆ Mayor Watson commented on the success of the Kite Flying Event at Sidney Hutchinson Park which took place on March 11, 2023.
- ◆ The ribbon cutting for the First Responders Monument was a wonderful event. Over one hundred people attended the event on Wednesday, March 8, 2023. The event included a ceremony at the Walker Community Center which honored past and present first responders, acknowledged the financial contributors and the Leadership group which included Nancy Kimble, who was the driving force in the successful construction of the monument. Pictures of the event were shown which highlighted incredible the gathering.
- ◆ Mayor Watson clarified that the political signs between the city hall and Hancock Whitney Bank are not on city property. It is on private property owned by the Aydell family. Therefore, we have no control over that area or what’s located on it.


With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Wales, seconded by Mr. Cook, to adjourn.

YEAS: Clark, Cook, Griffin, Major, Wales

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None


The Honorable Jimmy Watson, Mayor

Attest: 
Tammy Payton – Municipal Clerk