

Special Council Meeting
City of Tallulah
July 17, 2019

A special council meeting of the Mayor and City Council was held on Wednesday, July 17, 2019 at 8:00 P. M., in the Council Room Chamber of Tallulah City Hall.

Mayor Gloria Hayden called the meeting to order, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and asked for a moment of silent prayer.

Due to the absence of City Clerk Alfred McClodden, Mayor Hayden appointed City Administrative Assistant Yvonne Lewis to take minutes of the meeting.

A roll-call is listed as follows:

Finlayson	Present
Robinson	Present
Sims	Present
Day	Present
Whitney	Present

Mayor Hayden granted the public a time period to make comments regarding items on the agenda. City employee Estavan Brooks said that he had a public comment but that it was not about agenda item. Mayor Hayden advised Mr. Brooks that he would not be able to make the comment and noted that his comment would be addressed. There being no other public comments at this time, the meeting continued.

Regarding the approval of a loan from the Madison Parish Police Jury, Mayor Hayden explained to the council the nature of how the loan came about. She first explained to the council that the Madison Parish Police Jury had obtained grant funds and \$12,800 of those funds would be allotted to the City of Tallulah to be used for water only. When she became aware that the aerator at the Wastewater Treatment Plant was out, she contacted Senator Francis Thompson and Police Jury Dalton Fortenberry to see if the \$12,800 could be used toward the aerator replacement. Mayor Hayden said that she was told no, the money could not be used toward anything except water. Mayor Hayden then explained that the Police Jury expressed that they had funds that could be used to pay for the cost of repairing on aerator and purchasing an additional new one. The cost for the repairs and purchase is \$42, 345.00. The loan agreement would be that when the City began receiving property tax in late 2019, that the money would be repaid out of that revenue. Mayor Hayden said before making a decision, she spoke with City Clerk Alfred McClodden to see if the City could in fact pay the \$42,345.00 itself. She advised that Mr. McClodden told her that the City did not have the money. Mayor Hayden apologized several times to the Council for acting without their approval; however, she explained that she did so because it was an emergency situation and that she took full responsibility for her decision because it was an emergency situation. Mayor Hayden expressed several times that the Madison Parish Police Jury did not pass a resolution regarding the loan. She explained that the Jury held a special meeting and that Councilwoman Day accompanied her to the meeting where the Jury voted to approve the loan. Mayor Hayden then asked if the council had any questions: (1) Councilwoman Marjorie Day asked about the legality of the loan and how the repayment would work. Mayor Hayden again reiterated that re-payment would come from future property tax revenue when it began coming in. She also said that she wanted to see if money could be set aside each month towards the debt so that perhaps it could be paid sooner. (2) Councilwoman Day said that it would be best if the Mayor made sure in the future that she came to the council for approval before obligating the City to any debt. The Mayor agreed and apologized again. (3) Councilman

Whitney asked if the approval had to come during this meeting. The Mayor said yes, she felt it needed to be approved during the meeting. (4) Private citizen Antonio Wilson (406 6th Street) advised that he felt if the council approved the loan, after the fact, that the councilmembers would be committing malfeasance. He also expressed that he believed that the Mayor had said at another meeting that the aerator had been out for a year.

Regarding the approval of a loan from the Madison Parish Police Jury, Councilman Robinson motioned that the matter be tabled until further information could be gathered. Councilman Sims seconded the motion.

A Roll Call Vote Was Taken:

District 1 – Yes
District 2 – Yes
District 3 – Yes
District 4 – Yes
District 5 – Yes

The Motion passed and the item was tabled until a future meeting.

Regarding the Approval of an Ordinance to adopt the Municipal Budget for the City of Tallulah for the Fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019 and Ending June 30, 2020, Mayor Hayden asked if there were any questions. Private citizen Antonio Wilson asked the council how could they approve the budget if it did not take into consideration the \$42,345 loan from the Police Jury, as well as the potential of another \$150,000 loan. He said he believed that the budget was incorrect and needed to be amended.

Councilman Finlayson made the motion to adopt the Municipal Budget for FY 19-20. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Day.

A Roll Call Vote Was Taken:

District 1 – Yes
District 2 – Yes
District 3 – No
District 4 – Yes
District 5 – No

The motion passed.

Regarding the approval of a resolution to apply to the Louisiana State Bond Commission for \$150,000 Mayor Hayden offered the following explanation. She said that originally the City thought it would have to borrow \$700,000. After a meeting with Bill Boles (Boles Law Firm) and Nnamdi Thompson (Government Consultants) the City was made aware of revenue held in reserve accounts in Regions Bank. She listed three accounts with Regions Bank as having (respectively) \$213,593.79, \$198,419.14 and \$7,312.83. The cumulative total of these accounts comes to \$419,325.76. Mayor Hayden said that the city was approximately \$150,000 short of the money needed for the September 1, 2019 debt payment. She explained why the resolution was changed from applying to the bond commission for \$700,000 down to \$150,000. Mayor Hayden also explained to the council that during the meeting with Mr. Boles and Mr. Thompson, City Clerk Alfred McClodden was given information that revenue from water should be used to first put the required amounts in the reserve funds, then to pay employees associated with the water fund first. After those two things were done, the funds could be used to help pay other expenses and

payroll. Mayor Hayden expressed that the rumor about people not getting paid was not true. She also expressed the difficulty she faced getting the budget passed due to the inability of office personnel to accomplish the task. She asked if there were any questions: (1) Councilman Sims asked about the deadline of the resolution. Mayor Hayden advised that it was needed immediately as the information had to go to Baton Rouge (bond commission) for presentation. (2) Councilman Robinson asked about the water and sewer budgets. Mayor Hayden explained that after requesting assistance from Allen Green and Williams to formulate the FY19-20 General Fund budget, she had to go back to them to do the water and sewer budgets. She explained to the council that under the budget act, the sewer and water budgets do not have to be advertised like the general fund budget. She apologized to the council for the delay in getting the water and sewer budgets to them, explaining that because the budgets were unable to be produced in house, she had to go to an outside source to get them done. (3) Private Citizen Antonio Wilson asked his questions specifically to Councilman Sims: (a) "Wasn't it true that the funds found in the Regions Bank accounts were in reserve funds? Councilman Sims answered yes, that was true. (b) "Wasn't it true that the funds in the account had been there since last year when Mr. Gerald Odom (prior City Clerk) was putting money in the account to meet the debt reserve requirements? Councilman Sims answered yes. Mr. Wilson then went on to say that he felt Councilman Sims should question the fact that the Mayor said they "found" funds, as if City Clerk Alfred McClodden was not putting money in the account as he should. Both Councilman Sims and Mayor Hayden quickly disagreed with the assertion. Councilman Sims stated that Mr. McClodden didn't know the money was in the account. Mr. Wilson then stated so the money was in a reserve account as it should have been and the City was actually in compliance. Councilman Sims agreed and Mr. Wilson took his seat.

A motion to approve the resolution to apply to the bond commission for \$150,000 was offered by Councilman Finlayson and seconded by Councilman Whitney.

A Roll Call Vote Was Taken:

District 1 – Yes

District 2 – No

District 3 – Yes

District 4 – Yes

District 5 – Yes

The motion passed.

Mayor Hayden explained to the council the agenda item regarding payment to Attorney Joy Jackson for work she did for the Police Department. Mayor Hayden said she put the item on the agenda because the amount of payment exceeded Attorney Jackson's normal fee. Mayor Hayden said that she'd spoken with Chief McCoy and that the expenses were justified and she recommended approval of payment.

A Roll Call Vote Was Taken:

District 1 – Yes

District 2 – Yes

District 3 – Yes
District 4 – Yes
District 5 – Yes

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Hayden.

Attest:

July 17, 2019

Yvonne Lewis, Administrative Assistant

Gloria Owens Hayden, Mayor