

SHELLY HORTON JR
MAYOR



STEPHANIE SULLIVANT-COLLIER
CAO/TOWN CLERK

TOWN OF BENTON LOUISIANA

MINUTES

MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMAN
TOWN OF BENTON

105 SIBLEY STREET, BENTON, BOSSIER PARISH, LOUISIANA
MONDAY, JULY 19, 2021, AT 6:00 PM

Call to Order: Mayor Shelly Horton

Pledge: Alderman Jones

Invocation: Alderman Friday

Present: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and
Alderman Cathcart.

Also Present: Attorney Stinson, Chief Collier, and members of the Public

Agenda: Motion by Alderman Manning seconded by Alderman Friday to approve the Regular
Session Agenda

Public Comments: None
In Favor 5 Ayes
Oppose 0 Nays

Minutes: Motion by Alderman Cathcart seconded by Alderman Jones to approve the Minutes from
June Meeting

Public Comments: None
In Favor 5 Ayes
Oppose 0 Nays

OLD BUSINESS:

1. None

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NEW BUSINESS:

1. Nominations for the Town of Benton appointed Board member of the Cypress Black Bayou Recreational District:

Mayor Horton explained the format of the process. The individuals who wish to be nominated shall have 5 minutes each to address the board and any members of the public who wish to comment will have 3 minutes each for comments.

Mr. Tom Thompson: Requested to be appointed to serve the five-year term for the Board of Commissioners of Cypress Black Bayou. I am 70 years old and have spent 44 years as a Trial Attorney and will be retiring at the end of August. This is one of the things that I will have time to devote, one of the things that is dear to me, and I want to devote some time to. My private practice I primarily have worked with individuals and small businesses. In addition to that I have worked with a number of governmental agencies over the years. I sat on the board of Northwest Louisiana Legal Services for seven or eight years. They provide free legal representation for people. I served as a Public Defenders for several years which provides free legal representation to for people who are charged with criminal activity. I was an Assistant District Attorney and worked with City Prosecutors and I served as General Council for three different City Marshalls. What I have learned from running my own small business and from representing my own business clients and from working with these governmental entities it is a good and healthy thing for an organization being a public proprietor to inject new blood into it from time to time. A new person coming in brings a new way of looking at old issues and perhaps find new solutions that have been overlooked. But also, as a result from my involvement of representing businesses and working for public entities I am very comfortable developing income projections, budgets, modifying budgets, and cutting if necessary. I am also very comfortable with all aspect of human resources with all the problems that can arise when dealing with employees. This is something that I have thought about for quite awhile and I would like to do. This is a place that is my home. I live about three miles from here this is where we raised our son, and this is where we plan to live the rest of our lives. I think that this is a way I can give something back to this community. If you choose to appoint me, I will promise you right now that I will not forget that this is the board who appointed me and this is the board who I primarily answer to, especially after the revisions to the law. I will be honest, transparent, and truthful with you on all things. Thank you.

Alderman Cathcart: Mr. Thompson, do physically live on the lake?

Mr. Thompson: Yes

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Alderman Cathcart: And you have lived there for how long?

Mr. Thompson: Twenty-nine or thirty years.

Alderman Cathcart: What do you see as the greatest opportunity, right now, for Cypress Black Bayou, on the positive side? And what do you see as the potential greatest issue that would potentially prevent progress?

Mr. Thompson: I think one of the greatest things that the commission could do is make the park it runs, which itself is a small business, more accessible to the public. It is not open all the time...

Alderman Cathcart: What do you mean, all the time, Mr. Thompson. Can you elaborate on that, because "all the time" to me means, all the time?

Mr. Thompson: Well, ...(inaudible)... the park was closed a lot last year and the beach has been closed a lot this year. I understand the need sometimes to charge a fee to come in. I think now it is \$3 per head and a small fee for a carload. That prevents some people, particularly, with inflation going up, people struggling with jobs, can't enjoy something that taxpayers have already paid for. I think there is probably some cutting that needs to be done in the budget. It's something that I have looked at very carefully is the private police force.

Alderman Cathcart: So, the greatest opportunity for our asset out there would be, in the future would be further development usage?

Mr. Thompson: I think, encouraging usage by taxpayers to support the park. That's one. Of course, originally this was a project not just control flooding, but it was to provide water primarily for agriculture purposes. Although Bossier still remains pretty much an agriculture powerhouse, it's not the powerhouse it was when this was developed. There is just not as much of it going on. And that is one reason you see so much residential development here because there is so much land that used to be pastureland or used to be land that farmer owned. I think it is important to preserve the water source. We are going to need it. This last little freeze we had here should have taught us that. We ran out of water.

Alderman Cathcart: Thank you. I'll let someone else ask questions.

Alderman Friday: No questions.

Alderman Jones: No questions.

Alderman Manning: No questions.

Alderman Carr: No questions.

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Mr. Gary Wyche: I am Gary Wyche, I was asked to fill the unexpired term, at that time Mayor Cathcart, and I was reappointed in 2016. So, I am your representative for the Board, and I am asking to be reappointed again. We work hard to maintain the facilities and we did a massive job of upgrading the facilities because some were pretty deteriorated. We did a \$3 million dollar bond for ten (10) years to pay back. We are in the sixth year of pay back. We work hard to maintain the honesty of the board and the fairness to all the landowners. We try to treat everybody equal on circumstances that they are asking us about and we try to make a fair and honest decision. I've been a resident of Benton since 1975 and I live on Linton Rd., I do not live on the lake. My family came to Benton in the late 1890's or early 1900's when they moved from Bellevue to Benton. My family has been a residence of Benton for a long time. That's all I have to say. Do you have some questions?

Alderman Cathcart: Gary, I would ask you the question I asked Mr. Thompson. What do you see as the greatest upside opportunity benefit to be to arise from Cypress Black Bayou Recreation district? And the future for our community, this part of this section of the state and, you know, our state as a whole? And what do you see as a greatest, or potentially the greatest, issue that might not being realized?

Mr. Wyche: The greatest opportunity is the continuation of pushing the park and pushing the lake because it is the best lake in the area. Any of the other lakes they are overrun by Salvinia. There is South Bossier, like Lake Bistineau, they are having a horrible Salvinia problem. We have had a Salvinia problem, but we have worked hard and got a spray rig and contracted sprayers to spray for it. We encourage people to come to the lake because it is defiantly a whole lot safer than it was in years past. We have security, the Sheriff Department furnishes security verses private security which saves us money there. Of course, we are like every other business, employees are hard to find. The beach opened on Memorial Day and it's open from 10:00am to 4:30pm.

Alderman Cathcart: Is that seven day per week? So, the park is open from 10:00am until 4:30pm?

Mr. Wyche: Yes, the beach open seven days per week 10:00am until 4:30pm and the gate opens at 8:00am and closes at 5:00pm. Does anyone else have questions?

Alderman Cathcart: What could get in the way of that lake for its potential for our community and this part of the state?

Mr. Wyche: I'm not sure, it's a secondary water supply for the Town of Benton and hopefully we will never need it. However, we are seeing throughout the country that water is very critical.

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Alderman Cathcart: I am sure a few of us in this room agree that if we try to pull a cup of water out of the lake, we would have an issue with that. Or maybe not. What is the current financial situation in the park? Are we financially sound and are the finances being handled properly?

Mr. Wyche: We are just like the Town of Benton we are audited by Cook and Morehart. We've never had a finding. Well, we did have one finding years ago that Travis. We financed a tractor at no interest for three years and Travis Morehart made us change it to a two-year payoff. So, that was the only finding that we've ever had. The finances are in the black and we've done a lot of cutting. We've reduced by doing a lot of cutting. We haven't cut the services, but we are trying to cut back. It's just like running a small town.

Alderman Friday: Mr. Wyche, there have been several complaints from different people. We've received letters and phone calls about some unduly things that may be going on in the park area under the Commission. Some of them deal with attorney fees and why they are so expensive and why ya'll retain such high aspiration attorneys and spending a lot of money. One particular question is with the Ordinance on the for the State HB 630. Did you or did you not requisition money to fight against this or for it?

Mr. Wyche: We hired a lobbyist that cost us \$15,000.00. We were opposed to HB 630.

Alderman Friday: The reason being?

Mr. Wyche: Well, it was amended so many times but it's, I can't remember exactly the bill started off as, but it was amended several times and now it's a workable type deal. We did not oppose it after it came back.

Alderman Friday: Didn't it have something to do with the homeowner's property lines out on the lake? Something to do with the taxation going up or the revenues of the police jury at the time?

Mr. Wyche: Not that I am familiar, I mean, it a, the money is generated off of 1.56 mills that taxpayers pay.

Alderman Cathcart: Plus, fees? Whatever the fees turn out to be, right?

Mr. Wyche: Yes

Alderman Friday: What do you, if you are reappointed, how do you plan on improving the situation for or get rid of some of the accusations against the commission.

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Mr. Wyche: Well, we are in a situation right now that if somebody files suit against us, we have to have an attorney answer that. Last year our attorney fees were \$230,000.00 and 80% to 85% of that was a result of the Friends of Cypress, and...

Alderman Cathcart: What percent?

Mr. Wyche: 80% to 85%

Alderman Friday: Do the Friends of Cypress are they an entity by themselves?

Mr. Wyche: Yes, they are not affiliated with us.

Alderman Cathcart: Have the Friends of Cypress, have they filed suit against the Recreation District? I'm talking about the "Friends of Cypress". The Friends of Cypress to me means a group of like 1.3 thousand people who live in and around the lake and have a Facebook page. And they have conversations and is it more than that, or ? And really my question is are you telling me a Facebook page has filed suit against the district or are you talking about individual members that may or may not be affiliated with Cypress Black have filed suit?

Mr. Wyche: Individuals. Two landowners, primarily one who wanted to build a pool in the flow easement and the other we had to file suit against that one and we won that suit.

Alderman Cathcart: Which suit was that? Are you referring to the one with the pool? And do you know what that cost in legal fees?

Mr. Wyche: No. The other suit is a pending suit, and I cannot comment on that.

Alderman Friday: Ok, my last question is are these infringements on the waterfront or water easement lines, are the community around the lake or are they not aware of what the setback is or what they need to do? Whose responsibility is it for them to know this? Is it for them to know or the builders who build this on their property?

Mr. Wyche: I would say the landowners is the one responsible and the landowner has to secure the permits and with the surveyor so there are multiple steps that people are aware or should be aware of what they can or cannot build.

Alderman Manning: Is the Cypress Black Bayou regulated by the Town of Benton or the State or... explain that to me.

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Mr. Wyche: It's not regulated by the Town of Benton. Years ago, in the 60's when it was formed the Governor had the authority to appoint the Board and then after a few years they decided that the five public entities that were in the area or in the district of Cypress they would let each entity appoint one representative for them to the Board. It's not funded by the State, and it's not funded by the Parish, it's funded the Ad Valorem and the fees.

Alderman Manning: So, this Town Council Board just appoints a representative for this position. So, what does that representative do for the Town of Benton?

Mr. Wyche: Well, that representative for the Town of Benton, any concerns it has any issues that come up in relation to the Town of Benton it's like we are considered a secondary water supply for the Town, so if you or council member or citizen had any issue about what's going on you would tell me as a rep for the Town.

Alderman Manning: Ok. My last question is that is this organization is governed by a Board that governs it and you have your own bylaws and your own regulations for the residents Benton or Bossier Parish? And the Friends of Cypress and the Cypress Bayou Recreational, what is the relationship with that?

Mr. Wyche: And there is no relationship with Cypress Black Bayou Water Conservation.

Alderman Manning: Ok. So, it's just an organization of people that are wanting some changes in their community. In that area on the Lake.

Alderman Cathcart: Well, not only changes but necessarily, but I don't see that organization as a negative because there are some awfully good citizens that belong to that group, and I am sure they have some positive input about the park, and I am sure they are all trying to do right by the park. But that's where you get into the business of opinions sometimes.

Alderman Manning: Well, I was just wanting to know what that relationship is. Like is it warranted for what they are wanting or what they are doing because I got calls too. So, I wanted to know how that relates and is it important to this position that we are choosing.

Alderman Cathcart: The problem that may or may not address a little of what you are asking. The problem we have as councilmen here in the town is that Mr. Wyche has been a representative. I asked him to take the commissioners position some time back because someone left, and I don't even remember who. And Gary was willing to step up and do that and then he was reappointed by this board about four or five years ago. Mayor, I don't want to take away anything that you are going to say but I am going to say this, we really, we in this group, have no dog in the fight as far as I am concerned, as far as what happens in the operations of the park. They have their own board they their own executive director and all we do is we name one member of the commission. And the other side of that coin is I don't think that there is anyone

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on this board/council that has the time or inclination to spend the amount of time it would take to dig into every little detail that goes on regarding the commission. Now, that's not to say that we shouldn't, but let's get real, we have other things. My way of thinking is about all we can do is to make our nomination for someone we believe has the best interest of the lake at heart and will be straight up. There is some history on that lake that goes way back with some issues that happened that may or may not have been... just right. Let me just put it that way. That's not how that lake needs to be ran so all we can do is to try to appoint someone that we feel like will represent the Town's interests and making sure that it's ran properly.

Alderman Friday: You are retired, correct?

Mr. Wyche: Yes, I retired in 2007 from the Louisiana Department of Corrections Probation and Parole. I was there 37 years.

Mayor Horton: Thank you, Gary. One thing I will mention is there was recently, James touched on it, there was recently HB 630 passed. I think it went into effect at the end of June.

Mr. Wyche: August the 1st

Mayor Horton: Before HB 630 was passed this body or any other appointing body there was not a removal process should there be dissatisfaction with an appointee and just cause to take some action. This body could not remove commissioner. After HB 630 passed not there is a mechanism. It comes back to this body to have a mechanism to change a very old law set in 1958 I believe was when the original legislation was passed. So, there is a mechanism now should something show cause to remove an appointee.

I am going to open it up to public comments. I am going to limit the comments to 3 minutes, and I will ask that we not have any discussion of character or mental health and let's try to keep it a little on the positive side. We've done a sign in sheet and if you will come forward, state your name and address.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: *(The following comments are summarized. If you wish to hear the full full commentary, please visit www.townofbentonlouisiana.com)*

Andy Modica, 818 West Lakeshore Drive: Mr. Modica reiterated that the Lake Board is not governed by the State or anyone and that they are self-regulated. He directed questioning to Alderman Cathcart and Alderman Friday, stating specific question that should have been asked. Why the park is in the black and why they are not self-sustaining (financially)? He also questioned why they are able to pay the Executive Director \$157,000.00, the highest paid director in the country, when they are unable to pay their bills. He mentioned the pending ethics violation case against the current director and his discontent about various fees required annually, by property owners who have boathouses.

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Bob Keys, 202 Ryan Road: Said he has lived on the lake for 30 years and it will be difficult to keep his comments on a positive note when the public is expected to repay a bond that the public was never given the opportunity to vote. He questioned how they will repay the bond when expenses need to be cut. He expressed his disapproval of expensive legal fees and the high salary of the director. He feels that dictatorial behaviors of commissioners are the issue. He mentioned that roughly 800 people pay 347\$ for lake front fees, and he questioned where that money is going.

Bob Carrol, 230 Parks Road: A former UPS driver of 35 years and a resident of Benton area of 40 years. Mr. Carrol spoke in favor of Mr. Wyche and reflected on Mr. Wyche's original appointment and what Mr. Wyche's concerns were at that time, for the park. Mr. Carrol mentioned that there are many people who are happy and are pleased with the improvements made to the park, ever since his appointment. He also, stated that the other board members value Mr. Wyche's opinion. He closed with asking council members to accept Mr. Wyche's request for reappointment.

Mr. Gregory Theriot 2063 Woodlake: Mr. Theriot said that he and his family have been enjoyed and are pleased with the park each time they visit. He also expressed his pleasure concerning the lake commission's ability to rid the lake of salvinia and not draining or closing the lake during the bridge closure.

Mr. David Hall, 482 Merritt Road: Mr. Hall stated that he has lived on Cypress Lake for 30 years and mentioned the many changes he has seen over the past 10 years. He expressed his gratitude for the cleaning up of the previous corruption and employee issues. He then stated his disapproval of the lack of transparency about the expenses paid by the 3-million-dollar bond money. Also, the current commissioners' adversarial attitudes towards people who ask questions then threatened to be removed from the meeting. Mr. Hall went on to say how their meetings do not meet the standards of the open meeting laws. He asked if the council will make their decision tonight?

Mayor Horton: We will try to. That's up to ya'll.

Rex Moncrief, 2708 Hickory Lane: Mr. Moncrief mentioned he does not live on the lake; however, he does live in Bossier. He informed council that 80% of the voting precincts / taxing precincts of Bossier Parish help fund the park. He discussed his concerns about the commissions' lack of transparency, and how all freedoms of information requests are handled by the Caddo Parish based Law Firm. He detailed one incident, involving Mr. Wyche, and how he tried to prevent him from picking up documents approved, by the Attorneys, via freedom information request. Mr. Moncrief also voiced concern over the parks inability to financially sustain itself according to their own records. He closed by saying that not all things at the lake are negative because there are some positive things going on, however, change is needed.

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Mayor Horton: We don't call it profit/ loss, we call it revenues and expenses.

Mrs. Margaret Rougeau, 231 Merry Lane: Mrs. Rougeau mentioned she had lived on the lake for 20 years and owns one of the largest pieces of land. She said how past meetings were relaxed and now they seem aggressive. She voiced her support for Mr. Tom Thompson, whom she has known for 40 years. Also, how he is an honest person and a good lawyer with real estate and procedural law knowledge. She feels Mr. Thompson will be a voice of reason.

Mrs. Renee Hall, 482 Merritt Rd: Mrs. Hall spoke about her family history of living on the lake. She discussed her knowledge of what property owners must do before they are permitted to build and how she felt that she did everything they required her to do. However, the commission filed a suit that is still active today. She discussed the various times they tried to settle but each time they were denied, causing the continuation of high attorney expenses for both sides. Mrs. Hall recalled Mr. Wyche's verbally stopping her from speaking when she was presenting her case to the commission. She feels how the commission is angry about Friends of Cypress Black Bayou wanting to help the community. She also feels the commission are not good stewards of our money when they pay someone such a high salary but are unable to pay their bills. She closed expressing her strong support for Mr. Tom Thompson to be appointed as a commissioner.

Mr. Benjamine Lee, 121 Preston Bay: Mr. Lee said he does not personally know either of the two men requesting to be appointed. He did say that he thinks the park is phenomenal, and he and his family visited the lake when growing up. Mr. Lee said that the lake had potential to be awesome and the board have done great things.

Mr. Robert Rougeau, 231 Merry Lane: Mr. Rougeau expressed his support for Mr. Tom Thompson.

Mr. Bob Keys: Mr. Keys requested to address the council once more. He mentioned his 15-year service as a Commissioner on the Commission and how they never borrowed money. His recommendation to the lake commission was never borrow money when you cannot pay it back and to treat everyone fairly.

Mayor Horton called for nominations to be made.

A nomination was made by Alderman Friday

Alderman Friday: Mr. Wyche's family goes a long way back and he has been in Wildlife and Fishery and things over the years, and he supports Mr. Wyche.

Seconded by Alderman Jones to appoint Mr. Gary Wyche to the Board of Commissioners of Cypress Black to serve a 5-year term.

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Mayor Horton: Asked Mr. Wyche to keep this board updated more often so they will be aware of everything that is going on.

Public Comments:

Alderman Cathcart: Any time the council has a specific question about the park, we can ask Mr. Wyche and he will report it back to the council?

Mayor Horton: Yes.

Alderman Jones: Mr. Wyche, can the Park improve the sound quality of their video system when recording the meetings? You cannot hear what is being said.

Mr. Rex Moncrief: May I comment on that? The commission uses a cellphone to record live and the problem is they place the tablet or whatever over here. I'll argue that they do that on purpose, and I can back that statement up as well.

Alderman Jones: Mr. Wyche, I would like to see them add something like a microphone or something so we can hear. I've tried to listen to them, and I can't hear. A lot of people maybe misunderstand how these meetings work. The public can't just stand up and talk about anything they want to talk about, it has to be on the agenda. We have people from time to time who might have a problem with their trash or something, well, that's not on the agenda. (inaudible) Sometimes people get mad because they can't say what they want to say because it's not on the agenda. And they have the right to shut it down.

Mr. Wyche: If you are not on the agenda, just like ya'll, we have them fill out a (inaudible) and at the end of the meeting they have three minutes to make any kind of comments.

Alderman Cathcart: We have the best mayor, regardless of how good of a mayor he is, he does not run this town. He administrates. He is the administrator, and this council gives him the authority to make some decisions and that's the decisions he makes. And the Mayor is good enough that he knows if he goes past that, that there is one or more of us that is going to have an issue with it. Now, we have never had an issue...right? Because the mayor is the kind of a man he is. Your executive director is in the same place as this mayor is. He has a board that, he cannot do things without the board approval.

Unknown member of the audience: Are you aware that the executive director is a board member?

Unknown member of the audience: He is a commissioner. Dual jobs.

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Alderman Cathcart: Does he vote?

Unknown member of the public: He has one vote as a commissioner.

Alderman Cathcart: So, there are four more.

Mayor Horton: We are going to go ahead and take a roll call vote

Alderman Cathcart: My point is that maybe there should be some conversation that would be helpful to Gary or some other people, so they don't allow this to continue.

Unknown member of the public; I am willing to be nominated if someone would be willing to nominate me.

Mayor Horton: There has already been a nomination. Roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Alderman Carr

Mayor Horton: Motion Carried. I want to ask everyone here. Do you think you were heard tonight?

Unknown member of the public: I don't think we were understood.

Mayor Horton: Were you afforded the opportunity, was what I meant?

Unknown member of the public: There are half a dozen people out front that were not allowed in to be heard. They weren't allowed to even come in.

Mayor Horton: Move in and move out. I mean everyone had the choice to move in and move out. I just wondered if everyone with concerns were heard by this body.

Mr. Rex Moncrief: I will speak to that. I would like to thank ya'll for listening to all of us. Especially to me, although I don't live in Benton. Because, again, if you actually attend the meetings and you watch the videos I post where you can hear the audio, which is the reason I take my time to drive and shoot them. You'll see exactly what we are talking about in these meetings and the adversarial conduct of the current board members including the one you just

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reappointed. Now, hopefully he will learn his lesson and hopefully he will be a little more friendly to the tax paying citizens. But I would like to thank ya'll for hearing us out even though you... you know, wouldn't have any other nominations, for at least hearing us out. Because that's a lot more than that Cypress Board does, and you can watch the videos because the video doesn't lie.

Alderman Jones: The first that we've heard of any issues or problems was about three or four months ago when someone came to our meeting. And if I would have known that there was some kind of a problem (inaudible).

Unknown member of the public: Can ya'll get emails because that is how we contacted the last board. We sent personal videos to them, and they had it on email. We wanted to send emails out to ya'll and there are no email addresses on the website for us to do that. We would have provided you with those videos ...

Alderman Jones: I will be glad to give you, my email.

Mayor Horton: In defense of this council, we had some major website issues. The emails were on there and we are working on fixing that.

Unknown member of the public: Ok, we can call Mrs. Collier to get those.

Unknown member of the public: May I ask a question? And I don't mean to point any fingers or cause any problems here, but Mr. Thompson actually gave you his resume a long time ago. So, I was just wondering is there a reason why he was not nominated?

Alderman Jones: The reason I stayed with Mr. Wyche... I go to Cypress Park occasionally and my family goes out to the park, and they love it. They have no complaints about the lake and everyone I've ever talked to has no complaints. Seems like the complaints we are having are or have had are from the people who actually live on the lake. I wasn't aware of any of issues until three or four months ago. So, that's why I decided to go with Mr. Wyche because they have accomplished a lot of things like the camping area, the lake, and things of that nature. That's why I stayed with Mr. Wyche. I have nothing against Mr. Thompson; I have never met him, and he seems to be a very smart man.

Unknown member of the public: I know ya'll have a busy agenda after this and to comment on that. There has been a petition of over 500 signatures to change what is going on out there.

Mayor Horton: But that has not come to us that went to the Police Jury.

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Unknown member of the public: You'll get yours.

Unknown member of the public: I am sure they would have emailed them to you if they have your email address.

Mayor Horton: The Resumes did go out, probably now, around 15 days ago.

Unknown member of the public: I not questioning your vote, Mr. Jones. I was just wondering why there wasn't at least a nomination. You know, you vote unanimously to have Mr. Wyche on it, and I don't have anything bad about Mr. Wyche. I was just wondering why he wasn't at least nominated to have a chance to change.

Alderman Friday: Well, you have four other representatives to....

Unknown member of the public: I know but the only come up once a year. So, it was your year this year and next year it will be whomever...because you have to start somewhere. There terms are staggered.

Unknown member of the public: That is what the Friends of Cypress Black Bayou was set up to be is an organization to provide information to the residents and to answer questions. Some of us who live on the lake get a lot of questions from visitors of the park. Visitors that were treated very aggressively by some of the park staff. They commented that they had been camping there for 20 years and they are never coming back because of the way they were treated. So, we get a lot of outside influence. So, we set up this organization so we can listen and try and help improve the lake. This is a result of the feedback. Regardless of what they may say about our personal vendetta or that suit that they filed against us, spending the legal funds against us, we are trying our very best I can with the 1100 followers and the 500 petition signers out there. We have tried to improve the lake for our visitors for our future water quality. We have enjoyed peace out there for years with the commission when there are issues with these landowners about property lines we go over there and sit and talk and now they say, "talk to the lawyers". And that is the way they treated us before they filed the suit against us. They voted to spend legal dollars to try to sue us, we didn't initiate that. I would be more than happy to page and pages of documentation so that you are not just believing me. I have fully documented everything about this case.

Mayor Horton: (inaudible) we are trying to absorb a lot of information. Yall did have a meeting at one time (inaudible)

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Unknown member of the public: We had those until covid a then they had not. But we have had a lot of people attend public meetings and express concerns. Because we want to be able to be a voice of reason, we wanted to help people understand all the challenges we have had from the lake and the construction process and the confusion from the executive director that occupies a commission seat and executive director. I believe a lot of people were upset about that and a lot don't like that, and we were told by the Police Jury you got to change the state law before we can change that. There were a group of people that was working on that for a long time and got the state law changed. That's not easy to do, I am sure ya'll are aware. To get a 100% of the senators and a 100% of the House of Representatives to vote to change. So, we would like to see some change take place. We are very very concerned that these commissioners and the executive director. That the State Attorney General has filed suit against him for violating state law, and

....

Alderman Cathcart: Well, that has nothing to do with the decision that we have made.

Mayor Horton: I was just wanting to make sure that ya'll felt this council heard ya'lls concerns.

Unknown member of the public: Yes Sir, you have listened, and we appreciate.

Mayor Horton: You are putting things on this council that is outside our scope of what we normally do.

Unknown member of the public: And that's what we found out once we started talking to some of the appointing boards. And that some of the appointing boards trust that everything is going smooth, and they aren't getting feedback. And we are here trying to provide you feedback so that you can make educated decisions.

Mayor Horton: We do have town business to attend to and we don't want to be here till midnight. Thank you for coming.

***Alderman Cathcart excused himself from the meeting due to illness.**

2. Chief Collier: Ordinance setting new traffic fine rates: Approval to set for public hearing on August 9, 2021.

Motion by Alderman Friday seconded by Alderman Manning to set for public hearing.

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Public Comments: None
Ayes: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, and Alderman Friday
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Alderman Cathcart and Alderman Carr

3. Resolution to accept the water and wastewater infrastructure in Lost River Estates South Unit 2.

Motion by Alderman Jones seconded by Alderman Friday to adopt Resolution
Public Comments: None
Ayes: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, and Alderman Friday
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Alderman Cathcart and Alderman Carr

4. Update on ARCA Funding (American Recue Plan)

Mayor Horton updated council on the timeline of funds to be distributed.

5. Approval for renewal of Brookshires Grocery Beer Permit:

Motion by Alderman Jones seconded by Alderman Friday to approve
Public Comments: None
Ayes: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, and Alderman Friday
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Alderman Cathcart and Alderman Carr

6. Request approval of Monthly Financials and YTD Budget (as of June 30)

Motion by Alderman Friday second by Manning to approve the financials and YTD budget.

Public Comments: None

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In favor 3 Ayes
Opposed 0 Nays

Adjourn Regular Session:

Motion by Alderman Manning seconded by Alderman Friday to adjourn
In favor 3 ayes
Oppose 0 nays

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