

SHELLY HORTON JR
MAYOR



STEPHANIE SULLIVANT-COLLIER
CAO/TOWN CLERK

TOWN OF BENTON LOUISIANA

REGULAR SESSION MINUTES

MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMAN
TOWN OF BENTON

105 SIBLEY STREET, BENTON, BOSSIER PARISH, LOUISIANA
MONDAY, JULY 10, 2023, 6:00 PM

The Town of Benton Council met in regular and legal session on the 10th day of July 2023, at 6:00 p.m., in the Benton Council Chambers, Benton Town Hall, Benton, Louisiana. Mayor Shelly Horton called the Regular Session to order. Stephanie Collier, called the roll, with all members as follows:

Alderman Jackie Carr – ABSEBNT
Alderman Tiffany Manning – PRESENT
Alderman Ron Jones – PRESENT
Alderman James Friday - PRESENT
Alderman Wayne Cathcart -PRESENT

Alderman Friday gave the invocation and Alderman Jones led the pledge.
Others present were Attorney Erwin, Stephanie Collier, Chief Collier, and members of the public.

Motion was made by Alderman Jones seconded by Alderman Manning to amend the agenda to remove Cook and Morehart as item 2 and replace it with the Employee Health Benefits Renewal. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Alderman Carr

Motion was made by Alderman Manning seconded by Alderman Friday approve the agenda as amended. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Alderman Carr

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Motion was made by Alderman Friday, seconded by Alderman Jones to approve the minutes of the June Meeting. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Horton stated that there are no guests scheduled to speak.

Cook and Morehart: Audit Report – Removed by amendment of the agenda.

Employee Health Benefit renewal added as item 2.

Mayor Horton stated that there is no changes or increases to the health benefits package for employees and requested the council approve it for renewal.

Motion was made by Alderman Friday, seconded by Alderman Jones to approve the Health Benefits package renewal. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

Mayor Horton stated that the Official Journal is Bossier Press Tribune and requested approval, Motion was made by Alderman Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Friday to approve the Bosier Press Tribune as the Town of Benton Official Journal. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

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Chief Collier stated that a contract is needed to retain employees after they become P.O.S.T., certified. He stated that so many departments are offering a higher starting rate of pay which makes it difficult to hold on to new officers. By having a contract this will allow us to retain officers for up to 24 months after completion of all training. If they leave, ie., “break contract” they will be liable to pay the Town for all costs of the Training and any pay received during the time of training. Alderman Cathcart asked if this could hurt recruiting new officers. Chief Collier stated that there are a lot of Departments that have similar contracts. Alderman Cathcart asked about possible areas for cutting expenses to budget for pay increases. Chief Collier stated that he plans to go into the details of that subject in the next few months. Attorney Erwin stated that he has been involved in writing the contract. A motion by Alderman Manning, seconded by Alderman Jones to approve the Police Retention Contract with the corrects noted by Attorney Erwin. Mayor Horton called for comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

Mayor Horton stated that there are two properties that are up for condemnation. Pictures were distributed to council members on 616 Oakridge Drive. This property is in horrible condition. Currently the tax assessor records show Cody Investments as the company who purchased the delinquent taxes and as recent as last year, they were renting out this property. Mayor Horton stated that there are two ladies here tonight who would like to make a statement concerning this property. Mrs. Evelyn Henry, 800 South Blvd., Baton Rouge, a former resident of Benton. Mrs. Henry and her sister Kathy Henry spoke to the council about the condition of this property and how it affects their mother’s property next door. She stated that their mother is in her 90’s and her mother’s sister who is next door to her is 87. Mrs. Henry stated that she and her sister are in support of this property being demolished. In addition, she asked about the dead tree on the back of the property that is closest to her mother’s home. She stated that when the wind blows it drops large limbs and debris on her mother’s home and garage causing damage. Mayor Horton stated that the tree will be taken down as well. Mrs. Henry also mentioned that the sewer line on that property is exposed and asked if the Town will take care of that as well. The mayor stated he was not aware of the exposed sewer and would have maintenance take care of that immediately. Mayor Horton called for a motion to condemn 616 Oakridge Drive. A Motion was made by Alderman Manning, seconded by Alderman Jones to proceed with the condemnation of 616 Oakridge Drive. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

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YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Alderman Carr

Mayor Horton stated the second property is Taylor Café on Second Street. Mr. Taylor (owner) lives across the streets and for several years we have sent letters notifying him of the condition of this property. We have seen no evidence of improvements made to the property and due to its current condition, it needs to be condemned and demolished. Alderman Cathcart asked the exact address. Mayor Horton stated that it is 423 Second Street. A motion was made by Alderman Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Manning to condemn 423 Second Street, Taylors Café. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Alderman Carr

Mayor Horton called for any questions on the June financials and year-to-date budget reports. No Questions. A Motion was made by Alderman Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Manning to approve June Financials and year-to-date budget reports. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Alderman Carr

Alderman Cathcart requested that we research the Town Ordinances on Fireworks and possibly update the times to match the parish ordinance.

Motion was made by Alderman Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Manning to adjourn the meeting. All in favor: 4 Ayes Opposed: None

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