



**TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Public Hearing**  
**Town Hall**  
**June 12, 2014**  
**6:00 p.m.**

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Dora Sullivan, having established a quorum, called to order the Public Hearing of the Town Council. In addition to Mayor Sullivan, present were Vice Mayor Bannon, Councilmen Bennett, Godwin, Sullivan and Wendell, and Councilwoman Natali. Also in attendance were Town Manager Heather Arcos, Treasurer Debbie Pocock and Town Clerk Libby Hume. There were 7 members of the public in attendance.

Mayor Sullivan read the public hearing advertisements announcing that the evening's Public Hearing was to hear public comment regarding the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2015 Proposed Budget and Utility Rates. The budget would be discussed and brought to a vote at the regular meeting on June 19, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. at the St. Charles Parish Hall located at 550 Tazewell Avenue.

Mayor Sullivan opened the floor to public comments.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

*Cela Burge, 117 Mason Avenue*

Ms. Burge began by stating that she had been terribly remiss over the past 10 years in not showing up and participating in the Council meetings and added that she had been talking to Councilman Wendell over the past year about sharpening the pencil and doing the best job with the resources that we had. Ms. Burge continued to state that everything that she was going to say was meant in the spirit of being positive and moving forward together; that there was no criticism of anything and went on to comment about the following: i) She would have liked to have access to more detail of the budget items because it was difficult to understand just the numbers without the detail. She encouraged Council to look at every single line item for every department to determine where the Town could gain more efficiencies and more economies; ii) She spoke highly of the Public Works Department adding that she had never seen the Town look so good. The Public Works crew was doing a fine job. She noticed a slight increase in the Public Works budget but wasn't sure what that was for; iii) In regards to Parks & Recreation, she was happy to see so many programs available for the kids and youth and everything that was going on in the Town adding that it was a healthy thing for the Town. The Parks & Recreation budget looked like it was down a couple of thousand dollars. She wasn't sure what that was but asked that the budget did not get cut too far; iv) In regards to the Sanitation budget, she asked that Council consider recycling and the possibility of the Town picking up recycling at least once a month. It would help the citizens without trucks and those who couldn't make it to the convenience center; v) She thanked Council for making the Capital budget available and added that she was supportive of getting the Library fully functional and designing the parking area behind it. She also expressed her support of the furniture for the new Civic Center to make that fully functional, adding that it would be much better to hold meetings in that facility vs. the conference room in the Town Hall; and vi) In previous budgets, the Town cooperated with a number of organizations in the Town, such as the Our Town group, the Historical Society and Citizens for Central Park, and urged Council to continue their support since there was so much to be gained with the cooperative efforts.

*Heinz Sommer, 7 Kings Court*

Mr. Sommer asked the following questions:

1. What changes were made to the tax rates and utility user fees for trash, water and wastewater in FY 2015 over FY 2014?
2. When would the Town or County make adjustments to the property assessments for the new fiscal year?
3. Has the town or county made any changes to the property assessments for the new FY?
4. Are the FY 2014 budget numbers actual or still showing the budgeted amounts?
5. What happens if funds are shifted from one expense category to another? Was the budget changed or are the changes reflected in the budget numbers which we were provided this evening?
6. What are the duplications of efforts between the County and the Town? For instance, the police, code enforcement and planning & zoning which were both performed in the County and the Town.
7. How much was the Town paying to the County for services the County provided for the Town? Were annual payments made to the County to cover these services?
8. Mr. Sommer referred to the Revenue & Expense Summary By Fund Report and noted that the Legislative budget showed an increase of 85% over 2014, the Town Clerk budget showed an 11% increase, the Town Manager budget showed a 50% increase, the Treasurer budget showed a 5% increase, the Public Works budget showed a 35% increase and the Wastewater budget showed a 28% increase. Mr. Sommer asked for an explanation and reasons for the increases.

Town Manager Heather Arcos informed Mr. Sommer that she would provide the answers to his questions in writing via email.

Councilman Bennett commented that Council meetings and work sessions were open to the public and encouraged everyone to attend and added that all of Mr. Sommer's questions had been discussed during the budget work sessions.

There were no other comments from the public nor any written comments submitted prior to the meeting.

Mayor Sullivan thanked everyone for coming to the public hearing adding that she was happy to see citizens who were interested in the government. Mayor Sullivan went on to state that the comments would be taken into consideration and the proposed budget would be discussed and voted on at the June 19<sup>th</sup> meeting adding that everyone was invited to attend.

**Motion made by Vice Mayor Bannon, seconded by Councilwoman Natali, to adjourn the Town Council Public Hearing. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.**

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Mayor Sullivan

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Town Clerk