

TOWN OF SIMMESPOT

MAYOR TED TURNER

DISTRICT I
GLENN GAUTREAUX

DISTRICT III
CHARLES DUPAR



DISTRICT II
ALVIN DAUZAT

DISTRICT IV
SHERMAN BELL

ALDERMAN AT LARGE
PATRICK WRIGHT

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September 8, 2025 Regular Town Meeting Minutes

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Simmesport held at the Simmesport Town Hall on Monday, September 8, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Presiding: Mayor Ted Turner

Council Members Present: Sherman Bell, Glenn Gautreaux, Patrick Wright, Alvin Dauzat, Charles Dupar

Council Members Absent:

Town Attorney: Kirk LaCour

Town Clerk: Gwen Barr

Fiscal Administrator: absent

AGENDA ITEM 1,2,3: CALL TO ORDER, PRAYER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Ted Turner called the meeting to order and Alderman Bell gave the opening prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM 4: APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Alderman Dauzat and seconded by Alderman Gautreaux to approve the agenda. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X			
Alderman Gautreaux	X			
Alderman Dauzat	X			
Alderman Dupar	X			
Alderman Wright	X			

The motion was passed.

AGENDA ITEM 5: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Bell said he noticed there was no mention in the minutes of Michael Hullett being approved by the Town Council. Councilman Dauzat said he was brought before the Council at the last meeting but was not approved for hire.

A motion was made by Councilman Bell and seconded by Councilman Dauzat to accept the minutes for the May Council meeting. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X			
Alderman Gautreaux	X			
Alderman Dauzat	X			
Alderman Dupar	X			
Alderman Wright	X			

The motion was passed and the minutes accepted.

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AGENDA ITEM 6: PAYMENT OF BILLS

A motion was made by Councilman Dupar and seconded by Councilman Wright to pay the bills. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Gautreaux	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Dauzat	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Dupar	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Wright	X	_____	_____	_____

The motion was passed.

AGENDA ITEM 7: PUBLIC COMMENT

- Mr. Wayne Coco, chairman of the committee to celebrate the Simmesport Centennial. Mr. Coco said the commemoration ceremony on October 9, 2025 at 11 AM, in the public library. Mr. Wayne told those assembled the steering committee was composed of members of the community, several members of the Town of Simmesport government, the Simmesport Historical Society, RISE, the Bayou des Glaises Cultural District, the Avoyelles Council on Tourism and the Simmesport VFW. Mr. Wayne said each group has been assigned tasks to help get this done. There will be a commemorative plaque which will list all the Mayors over the past 100 years. This plaque is being donated by the Simmesport Historical Society. A proclamation will be given by the Lieutenant Governor's office and another proclamation given by US Representative Cleo Field's office. Invitations have been sent out to all mayors in Avoyelles Parish as well as dignitaries and the families of all living and deceased mayors when they could be found. Mr. Coco also found many original documents from the establishment of Simmesport as a village which will be on display at the ceremony.
- Mrs. Jennifer Gautreaux of RISE wanted to remind those assembled that the RISE Health Fair & Cancer Walk will take place on Saturday, October 18 at the Simmesport Health Hub located next to the Piggly Wiggly.
- Mr. Cecil Whitmore thanked Mr. Wayne Coco for all his work. Mr. Whitmore said that he was under the impression that only Mr. Robideaux could hire anyone. Mr. Cecil asked who hired the new deputy. Mayor Turner said Mr. Robideaux hired the new deputy. He also asked about a detective named Mr. Johnson. Mr. Whitmore asked where we got the money for these hires if the Town is broke. Councilman Wright asked attorney LaCour if it was ok for him to introduce an ordinance stating that everyone who works for the Town must clock-in on the time clock. Attorney LaCour said Fiscal Administrator is determining if this type of ordinance was appropriate. A discussion then broke out about the various murders that have occurred in Simmesport. Chief Fayyaz said that he did not investigate the death of the man on the railroad tracks. Councilman Wright asked if he can also put forth an ordinance that violent crimes be investigated by the State Police.
- Deidra Mack reported that the Joe Simon Blvd sign by the bridge was missing.
- Pastor Shari Jackson wanted the use of the senior center for October 26 while Lucy Gibson asked the Town Council for the use of the Senior center on October 4. A motion was made by Councilman Dauzat and seconded by Councilman Wright to allow both uses of the senior center.

All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Gautreaux	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Dauzat	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Dupar	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Wright	X	_____	_____	_____

Both uses were approved.

- A reporter from KALB asked why Town Clerk Gwen Barr was still working in her job after being arrested for forgery. Mayor Turner said everyone was innocent until proven guilty. The reporter asked if there was any consideration of suspending her. Mayor Turner said no. Town Attorney Kirk LaCour told those assembled that the Fiscal Administrator has conducted his own investigation along with the Louisiana Attorney General's office and determined to keep her in her position. Mr. LaCour also confirmed that Mr. Robideaux is aware of the particulars of the charge and has been in touch with the Avoyelles Parish District Attorney.

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AGENDA ITEM 8: DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A. FISCAL ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE: Joel Robideaux – absent

Although MR. Robideaux was absent, he did send copies of his quarterly report to the members of the Council. This report is required by the judge who assigned Mr. Robideaux as administrator for Simmesport.

B. UTILITY DEPARTMENT STREETS

Mr. Dana Smith said grass cutting was still ongoing. He also reported that there are still water leaks to be repaired, however, some are too complicated or extensive for the Town to complete. Mr. Smith said they met with engineers from Delta Engineering about repairing the more difficult lines.

C. SEWER DEPARTMENT

A sewer pump was replaced in the Moreau St lift station. On a personal note, Mr. Smith said he has been coming to work and helping with paper work. He informed all that he has received his prosthetic leg and is working with it to come back to work full time.

D. ENGINEERS: DELTA ENGINEERING

Marcus Guillory, an engineer from Delta Engineering, addressed the Council. He said the business was started about 2 years ago helping municipalities find grants. Mr. Guillory said he is working on an emergency funding application to Representative Deshotel's office to address some of the more challenging water leaks. Marcus told those assembled that the next step was to apply for a capital outlay grant for either the water or sewer system.

E. FIRE DEPARTMENT

Eric Rusk said he sent the updated contract for the fire hydrant testing. Mr. Rusk asked that the contract be signed by the appropriate parties for the Town of Simmesport. Mayor Turner called for a vote on accepting the contract for the Simmesport Volunteer Fire Department to complete the fire hydrant testing for the Town of Simmesport. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Gautreaux	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Dauzat	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Dupar	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Wright	X	_____	_____	_____

F. POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Fayyaz reported four cases were sent to the district attorney. A total of 102 citations were written and \$21,619.50 in fines were collected. Chief also reported that another Chevy Tahoe was donated to the Town of Simmesport. This makes a total of 6 units donated to the Town of Simmesport. Councilman Bell asked if everyone was clocking in and out. Chief Fayyaz said he had to get with the Clerk. Town Attorney Kirk Lacour stated that the time clock information was part of the investigation of Town Clerk Gwen Barr's arrest and therefore not public record yet. Councilman Bell and Councilman Dauzat asked that the Council see the police applications and the background checks.

G. TOWN CLERK

Town Clerk Gwen Barr told those assembled that when the current administration took office in January 2025, the town of Simmesport was over \$1.5 million in debt. The largest debts are owed to Cleco, Louisiana Municipal Gas Authority (LMGA) and Sustainability Partners. Currently we are current with these creditors except Sustainability Partners. We have renegotiated some contracts, like the tractor. The auditors we previously hired to complete our audits stopped working with us because of lack of payment. Currently we are paying those

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auditors back payments. We were behind with the IRS, however, all we owe is \$394. Ms. Barr also related that the largest source of revenue for the Town is the gas and water system. Mrs. Tonya Terrell stressed that, as per Town Council, there will be no carried balance for 60 days before cutoff. If your bill is not paid out on the 25th of the month it is due, it will be cut off. If your name gets on the cutoff list but your service is not physically cut off, you will be assessed a \$30 service charge in addition to your bill. If your service is physically cut off on the 25th, you will be assessed a \$50 fee to have your utilities turned back on plus your bill. Mrs. Terrell stated that we do offer payment plans for people who come to us and ask for them. The only time we pull meters is when we have cut off a meter and the customer turns the meter back on.

H. TOWN ATTORNEY

Town Attorney Kirk LaCour said the MPERS case has been resolved. Attorney LaCour stated that the quarterly report from the Fiscal Administrator Joel Robideaux was filed yesterday with the 12th Judicial District Court. The report clearly shows that the Fiscal Administrator is aware of the arrest of Town Clerk Barr and the ensuing investigation. Attorney LaCour was asked what his part was in getting Simmesport back on sound financial footing. Mr. LaCour stated that he had helped handle multiple lawsuits against the police department and the Town of Simmesport; he has helped arrange payment plans with creditors and has settled many contract disagreements among other things. When asked how the Town got in financial trouble, Attorney LaCour replied that it was found in 2023 that the level of expenditures exceeded the level of income indicating the town was heading towards bankruptcy. At that point then-mayor Draper met with the Louisiana Legislative Auditors Office and it was decided that the best course of action would be to voluntarily enter into fiscal administration. This is where a judge appoints a state-recommended person to be appointed by a judge to handle all of Simmesport's financial affairs. On December 20, 2023 Joel Robideaux was recommended by the State of Louisiana to be appointed fiscal administrator of Simmesport. Mr. Robideaux is charged by the courts to get the Town of Simmesport back on sound financial footing using proper financial procedures. Attorney LaCour said that all financial cuts and revenue increases are weighed against the overall welfare of the townspeople of Simmesport. The overriding need in the beginning of this process was to find out what was owed to whom and to find a way to either pay out what was owed or reach a settlement agreement. A comprehensive investigation as to how Simmesport arrived in its current financial situation has not been done yet.

ITEM 12: ALDERMAN REPORTS

- A. **District 1: Glenn Gautreaux** Councilman Gautreaux had no issues to report.
- B. **District 2: Alvin Dauzat** Councilman Dauzat has no issues.
- C. **District 3: Charles Dupar** Councilman Dupar had no issues to put forth.
- D. **District 4: Sherman Bell** Councilman Bell had no issues to put forth.
- E. **District 5: Patrick Wright** Councilman Wright had no issues to put forth.

ITEM 13: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Alderman Bell and seconded by Alderman Dauzat to adjourn. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Gautreaux	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderwoman Kennedy	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Turner	X	_____	_____	_____
Alderman Wright	X	_____	_____	_____

The motion was carried, and the meeting was adjourned.

Ted Turner
Mayor

Gwen Barr
Town Clerk