

TOWN OF SIMMESPORT

MAYOR TED TURNER

DISTRICT I
GLENN GAUTREAUX

DISTRICT III
CHARLES DUPAR



ALDERMAN AT LARGE
PATRICK WRIGHT

DISTRICT II
ALVIN DAUZAT

DISTRICT IV
SHERMAN BELL

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February 10, 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, February 10, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Presiding: Mayor Ted Turner

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

Members Absent:

Town Attorney: Kirk LaCour

Town Clerk: Gwen Barr

Fiscal Administrator: Joel Robideaux

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 Dupar to accept the agenda. All present voted as follows:

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Gautreaux	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Dauzat	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Dupar	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Wright	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The motion was passed and the agenda was accepted as amended.

AGENDA ITEM 5: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Gautreaux	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Dauzat	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Dupar	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Wright	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The motion was passed and the minutes accepted.

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AGENDA ITEM 6: PAYMENT OF BILLS

A motion was made by Councilman Bell and seconded by Councilman Wright to pat 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 thanks Mr. Dana Smith and Mayor Turner for repairing the water leak he had in his yard. Mr. Coco addressed the council about shooting in and around Main St, near his home. He also read a letter he wrote to District Attorney Charles Riddle about the lack of accountability for those who continue to shoot guns in and around town. Mr. Coco also asked the Town to establish a steering committee for an acknowledgement or celebration making Simmesport's 100th anniversary as an incorporated entity. In 1925, Simmesport was officially incorporated as a village and later a town.

Mr. Rickey Adams, School Board President and school board member for the Simmesport area, congratulated those newly-elected officials and offered to work with the Town of Simmesport in any way possible to better the education of the students at Riverside and in the Avoyelles Parish School System.

AGENDA ITEM 8: RESOLUTION 02-2025-01: RESOLUTION TO ADD GWEN BARR AS SIGNATORY TO ALL TOWN ACCOUNTS

A motion was made by Alderman Wright and seconded by Alderman Dauzat to add Gwen Barr as a signatory to all Town of Simmesport Bank accounts. Those 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 passed.

AGENDA ITEM 9: ANNEXATION OF PORT OF AVOYELLES PROPERTY

The discussion was begun about annexing the rest of the property owned by the Avoyelles Parish Port into the Town of Simmesport. Mr. Kirk LaCour, the Town Attorney, said that the first step would be an official survey of the property. Mr. LaCour said this would cost money and he has spoken with Fiscal Administrator Joel Robideaux about this. Attorney LaCour emphasized there are no residents living in the proposed property to be annexed so the annexation would not have to be approved by voters. Further, the annexation would not interfere in any way with the activities of the Port Commission.

AGENDA ITEM 10: TOWN HANDBOOK

Mayor Turner started the conversation that began last meeting about employees working second jobs. This handbooks states that outside employment must be approved by the Town Council. If the Town Council does not approve the second job, that would be grounds for termination. Attorney LaCour

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stated that in his opinion, the handbook was not clear if this rule applied only to town employees or if it also applied to municipal officers. Attorney LaCour stated that the removal of municipal officers, ie. the Chief of Police, is governed by the Lawrason Act, which is a state law. According to the Lawrason Act municipal officers can only be removed by request of the Mayor and a vote of the Council. It is attorney LaCour's contention that the handbook cannot supersede state law. Alderman Bell contended that the current Chief's priorities should be for Simmesport only and that he should not be working for another agency. Chief Fayaz told the Council and those assembled that his first priority was to the Town of Simmesport.

AGENDA ITEM 11: ORDINANCE 01-2025-07 ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BOND FOR THE TOWN CLERK

A motion was made by Councilman Gautreaux and seconded by Councilman Dauzat to pass Ordinance 01-2025-07, an Ordinance to Establish the Bond for the Town Clerk. 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 ordinance passed.

AGENDA ITEM 12: DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A. FISCAL ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE: Joel Robideaux

Mr. Robideaux told those assembled that he was working with Town Clerk Gwen Barr to further learn the financial software and automate tasks. He also said he had a meeting Wednesday with the MPERS retirement system to update the organization about Simmesport's financial situation. This is the retirement system that has sued the town. Councilman Bell asked Mr. Robideaux if a budget was submitted for the fiscal year 2024-2025. Mr. Robideaux said a budget was submitted to remain in compliance, however, Mr. Robideaux said he was assigned as fiscal administrator in February and by the time the budget was due, the numbers he was able to get were not as accurate as the new budget will be. Mr. Robideaux assured the Council and those assembled that the next budget would be vastly more accurate than the last one. Dr. Henry Moreau asked Mr. Robideaux why the Town of Simmesport was moved from Simmesport State Bank. Mr. Robideaux said his recollection was that digital access was the reason for the bank change. Ms. Deidra Mack asked what bank is handling the Town's business. Mr. Robideaux told those assembled that Cottonport Bank now handles all Town of Simmesport accounts.

B. UTILITY DEPARTMENT STREETS

Dana Smith told those assembled there was an emergency water leak on Cooper Rd. The leak was repaired within hours. Several more water leaks were repaired during the week. He also said the lawn mowers were being serviced in preparation for the spring. Mr. Henry Moreau asked why his water tap had not been connected. Mr. Smith said the excavator was malfunctioning. Mr. Moreau said that Simmesport Bank paid to have the excavator repaired. Mayor Turner thanked Simmesport Bank for the repairs. Mr. Moreau said that Simmesport Bank would like to be involved in the community. A citizen asked if the Town used outside contractors for work. Town Clerk Gwen Barr said that outside contractors were used if the funds were available and if the work is approved by Mr. Robideaux and the Town Council. Councilman Dauzat told those assembled that he talked with Representative Daryl Deshotel and there are emergency funds available to the Town. Mr. Dauzat said we needed to get estimates from contractors and get them to Representative Deshotel's office to get the emergency funds.

C. SEWER DEPARTMENT

Absent

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D. ENGINEERS: MEYER, MEYER, LaCROIX & HIXON, INC.

Bo Coco said the grant applications had been submitted on time and they are awaiting word on whether or not we received funding.

E. FIRE DEPARTMENT

Cody Jackson was absent.

F. POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Fayazz said the department had two units donated to the department. He said he is awaiting word on a third and fourth unit. Chief Fayazz told those assembled that 47 citations and 156 violations for over \$23,000. Three cases were sent to the District Attorney's office.

G. TOWN CLERK

Ms. Barr said she was reviewing bills and found we had 9 cell phones. Ms. Barr said we now have 3 cell phones. The last bill we have to pay was \$812. However, some of the phones were contract phones and we do not know where they are so those phones will have to be paid for over the next several months. We are not requiring purchase orders before any purchases are made. The purchase orders have to be signed off on by Mr. Robideaux, Mayor Turner and Town Clerk Barr. Alderman Bell asked about credit cards. Ms. Barr said there were gas cards being used but those have been canceled and employees will have to sign for gas purchases.

H. TOWN ATTORNEY/MAGISTRATE

Kirk LaCour said the court last month was a small docket. He told those assembled that the docket for February should be much longer. Mr. LaCour said he would keep track of the MPERS meeting on Wednesday.

ITEM 12: ALDERMAN REPORTS

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| A. District 1: Glenn Gautreaux | Mr. Gautreaux had no issues. |
| B. District 2: Alvin Dauzat | Councilman Dauzat asked if the Town could pick up limbs. This would help the drainage situation and help beautify the Town. Attorney LaCour said a citizen who lives out of town called DEQ because the Town was burning limbs and Simmesport was fined. Attorney LaCour said we would have to get a permit from DEQ to burn limbs. Councilman Dauzat said he would still like to see the limbs hauled off to the Parish Barn in Mansura. |
| C. District 3: Charles Dupar | Mr. Dupar wanted to know if the Town could do something about nuisances, especially with old tires and junk vehicles. Attorney LaCour said we do have a nuisance ordinance. Mr. LaCour said we do have an ordinance, and it starts with the police department who writes a citation for violation of the ordinance. If we do initiate a cleanup the Town of Simmesport would have to pay for it and hope the property owner pays us back. The property owner can be fined for violating the nuisance ordinance. |
| D. District 4: Sherman Bell | Mr. Bell had no issues. |
| E. District 5: Patrick Wright | Alderman Wright asked who was running the sewer plant since Mr. Carter's departure. Town Clerk Gwen Barr said the Town of Simmesport is signing a contract with Cenla Environmental Services to hire certified people to run the sewer plant until we can either get some one certified or find someone to hire who is certified. |

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ITEM 11: ADJOURNMENT

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

	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Alderman Bell	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Gautreaux	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderwoman Kennedy	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Turner	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Alderman Wright	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The motion was carried, and the meeting was adjourned.

Ted Turner
Mayor

Gwen Barr
Town Clerk