

TOWN OF SIMMESPORT

MAYOR TED TURNER

DISTRICT I
GLENN GAUTREAU

DISTRICT III
CHARLES DUPAR



ALDERMAN AT LARGE
PATRICK WRIGHT

DISTRICT II
ALVIN DAUZAT

DISTRICT IV
SHERMAN BELL

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January 12, 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, January 12, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Presiding: Mayor Ted Turner

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

Council 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 Bell and seconded by Alderman Wright to remove Agenda Item 14, ATTORNEY–CLIENT PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS AND ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT CONCERNING LEGAL RAMIFICATIONS, LEGAL OPTIONS, AND STRATEGY RELATED TO POTENTIAL AND PENDING LITIGATION, INCLUDING CONFIDENTIAL LAW-ENFORCEMENT, PERSONNEL, AND TAX-RELATED MATTERS. 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.

A motion was made by Alderman Bell and seconded by Alderman Dauzat to approve the agenda as amended. 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

A motion was made by Alderman Gautreaux and seconded by Alderman Bell to accept the minutes for the September Council meeting. All present voted as follows:

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ALDERMAN AT LARGE
PATRICK WRIGHT

	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.

AGENDA ITEM 6: PAYMENT OF BILLS

A motion was made by Councilman Bell and seconded by Councilman Gautreaux 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: RESOLUTION 01-2026-01: COMMUNITY WATER ENRICHMENT FUND GRANT (CWEF)

The Town of Simmesport wishes to apply for a state grant called the Community Water Enrichment Fund grant. This grant is only for water projects. A resolution is required allowing the Mayor to apply for the grant and submit all documents needed for the grant application.

A motion was made by Councilman Gautreaux and seconded by Councilman Wright to approve Resolution 01-2026-01, giving the Mayor authority to move forward in applying for the Community Water Enrichment Fund Grant. 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 8: RESOLUTION 01-2026-02: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT (LGAP)

The Town of Simmesport wishes to apply for a state grant called the Local Government Assistance Fund grant or LGAP. A resolution is required allowing the Mayor to apply for the grant and submit all documents needed for the grant application.

A motion was made by Councilman Bell and seconded by Councilman Dauzat to approve Resolution 01-2026-02, giving the Mayor authority to move forward in applying for the Local Government Assistance Fund Grant. All present voted as follows:

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	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 9: RENTAL OF THE SENIOR CENTER

Mayor Turner led a discussion about the rates charged for the rental of the senior center. Councilman Bell said that due to the vandalism the last time the center was rented, he believed the rates should be raised.

A motion was made by Councilman Bell and seconded by Councilman Dauzat to table the issue until next meeting. All 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 was passed.

AGENDA ITEMS 10: DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A. FISCAL ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE: Joel Robideaux

Town Clerk Gwen Barr handed out a proposed budget for the fiscal year 2025-2026. Mr. Robideaux reminded everyone that every municipality is required to have a budget and that budget cannot deviate more than 5% over or under or it has to be amended. Since we are so late with the 2025-2026 budget, Mr. Robideaux suggested we wait and make the most accurate budget we can for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Mr. Robideaux explained that for a town to come out from under fiscal administration three things have to be presented to the court. Firstly, the Town has to make more than it is spending. He told those assembled that we have crossed that hurdle. He said the second issue to address is the delinquent bills. Negotiations with the people the Town of Simmesport owes needs to happen in order to get those delinquent bills paid off or negotiate a settlement the town can afford. The third issue that has to be addressed is the ability of the Council and government employees to adequately run the town government. Mr. Robideaux said that this aspect is much better than a year ago and we are well on our way to checking off two of the three core issues to get us out of fiscal administration. The debts are now the main hurdle. Mr. Robideaux said he has already made a verbal agreement with Cleco that Cleco will keep our quarterly franchise checks and apply them to the delinquent amount. Mr Robideaux said these negotiations are ongoing with all of the Town's creditors.

B. UTILITY DEPARTMENT STREETS- Dana Smith

Mr. Dana Smith said a major water leak on Carver St was repaired. He also said the leak in Brushy Bayou is being looked at and they are trying to find a valve to isolate that part of the water system without cutting off the entire Town. Mr. Smith also reported that they were currently waiting on several 811 locate requests to be filled so they can address other water leaks. Mr. Smith did say that although grass cutting season has not fully come in, the warm winter did cause some spots in town to have the winter grass cut. Councilman Bell asked about the leak on Highway 105 near College Dr. Mr. Smith said he would contact DOTD so see what needed to be done to get this repaired.

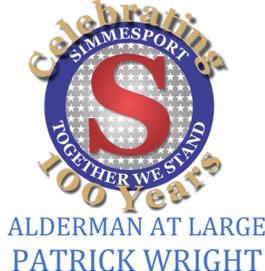
C. SEWER DEPARTMENT

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D. ENGINEERS: DELTA ENGINEERING

A representative was not present.

E. FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Eric Rusk said they had 13 medical calls and 3 fire calls. He said the station on Yellow Bayou will be completed Saturday. He asked if there were any updates on the repair of the hydrants. Mayor Turner said he called but did not get a return call.

F. POLICE DEPARTMENT

Officer Coutee said that reports are being done in a timely manner. The units are being maintained as best as possible. Officer Coutee said that they are making a concerted effort to improve community relations and making sure the public knows they are there to serve them. Mr. Robideaux asked to have a discussion about disposing some of the vehicles that are not repairable.

G. TOWN CLERK

Mrs. Tonya Terrell presented the disconnect list and showed that the totaled owed by the people who were disconnected was \$27,227.12. After taking out those people who were on payment arrangements to pay delinquent bills, the total of unpaid utilities was \$10,775 for 57 people. She said this is down from over \$20,000 in December. \$18,406.51 in property taxes were collected in December. Mr. Robideaux asked if she could keep a running total of the utility collections for her next report.

H. TOWN ATTORNEY

Town Attorney Kirk LaCour asked the Council reconsider the executive session. He stated that his legal opinion was that an email passed out to the members of the Council was protected by attorney-client privilege and should be discussed in an executive session. The Council refused to vote to go into executive session. Attorney LaCour then stated that the e-mail was a formal notice that each member of the Council and the Mayor was under investigation for criminal acts. Allegedly, someone violated L.A.R.S. 40:1203.4, 15:548, 22 Louisiana Administrative Code Chapter 13, Title 28 Code of Federal Regulations part 20, 28 C.F.R. §20.33, U.S. Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. §522a), US Code 522 A, 26 U.S.C. § 6103, La. R.S. 47:1508, and two other privacy laws. Attorney LaCour said that violations of these laws also constitutes malfeasance in office, which is a felony. Attorney LaCour said this stems from the possession of the criminal history of a police officer or perspective police officer for the Town of Simmesport. Councilman Bell noted that criminal history can be found online by a simple Google search. Attorney LaCour stated that the Louisiana State Police has given him specific notice that the Town Council has illegally obtained this information. He also said the State Police said they have reason to believe that one or more of the Council has this illegally obtained information and has disseminated it to the public. Councilman Bell then stated that every time we hire an officer and the Council asks for a background check, they are refused. Attorney LaCour then asked Councilman Bell if he had received criminal justice information. Councilman Bell said no, he had only seen what Ms. Gwen (Barr) had brought to the meeting. Attorney then asked again if Councilman Bell had obtained criminal history information. Assistant Clerk Rene Whitmore then interjected and told Councilman Bell that he did not have to be deposed by our town attorney without his own council present. Mr. Whitmore then launched into a heated diatribe about the Town Attorney working against the Town Council and that it had to stop. Attorney LaCour told Mr. Whitmore he appreciated his comments. Attorney LaCour advised the Town Council to save copies of all town related documents both paper and electronic.

ITEM 10: 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 said he thinks Mr. Robideaux does not appreciate the arguing among the Council.

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ITEM 11: PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ITEM 12: 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