

**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
3325 GROOM ROAD, BAKER, LOUISIANA 70714
ZOOM**

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April 11, 2023 - 6:00 p.m.

The City Council of the City of Baker, Louisiana, met in regular session on April 11, 2023, with the following members in attendance at the meeting:

MAYOR

Darnell Waites

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Glenda Bryant

Rochelle Dunn

Brenda G. Jackson

Dr. Charles Vincent

Robert Young

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Waites presided.

The invocation was given by Council Member Dunn.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Young.

DISPOSITION OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Dunn to approve the minutes of the meeting held on March 28, 2023.

Council Member Bryant referenced the previous council meeting, and said she wanted to make sure that the citizens of Baker knew that at this meeting, the auditor, Mr. Akanji, was present. Mr. Akanji was asked a direct question by Council Member Bryant regarding what area of the audit the state looked at. Council Member Bryant stated she did not receive an answer to her question, and she wanted that noted.

The vote was taken.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

RECOGNITIONS

1. Recognize Baker youth members of Interact GBR for their disaster relief efforts (Mayor)

The Mayor recognized the nine Baker youth members of Interact GBR for their disaster relief efforts.

Council Member Vincent recognized Miranda Georgetown-Riley, founder of the Magnolia Rose Foundation for Autism Acceptance, and asked that she come forward and speak about the second annual Rose Run.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Jackson to add Miranda Georgetown-Riley to the agenda.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

Mrs. Georgetown-Riley said April is Autism Acceptance Month, and announced the second annual Rose Run will be held Saturday, April 22, 2023, at City Park. This year's theme is a Color Run. The event is a fundraiser and will feature prizes, a raffle, a vendor village with food for sale as well as resource vendors, a children's sensory lane with learning activities for all children, facepainting, and a DJ. And, as April 22nd is Magnolia Rose's actual 4th birthday, there will be free birthday cake for all.

PLANNING AND ZONING MATTERS

1. Approve Business License Request – 2023-4
Phone Zone
Location – 340 Main Street, Baker, Louisiana
Discussion regarding the agenda items was held.

The motion was made by Council Member Young, seconded by Council Member Dunn to accept the recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission and approve the business license request for Phone Zone.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Update on quality and fair housing in the City of Baker for all tenants, landlords and homeowners (Bryant)
Mission Statement
 - A. To provide a healthy lifestyle through community gardens and exercise availability.
 - B. To provide a safe environment through communication with each other & law enforcement – Police and Fire Departments.
 - C. To provide all neighborhoods with a sense of pride & integrity.

Council Member Bryant read the mission statement. She reminded everyone of Victory Nutrition, a newly opened Baker business. She said they serve healthy shakes, and the teas are delicious. She said she was glad to hear the police department has ordered a defibrillator and asked Fire Chief Pease about the possibility of CPR classes. She recommended the city consider using another Baker business that specializes in such training to provide the CPR classes. Chief Pease stated it would be a matter of procuring funding. Council Member Bryant reminded everyone this is the rainy season, and all ditches should be free of leaves and other debris. She said she received reports that Republic Services missed garbage pick-up in some areas, and their contract is up for renewal in 2024. She said the police and fire departments are going to Mississippi to provide disaster relief services for those affected by the recent tornadoes. She asked that in the future information regarding such activities be shared with everyone. She said many people in the community were unaware of this effort and would have liked to participate, and more participation means more to give to those in need.

2. Discuss rescheduling the city council meeting scheduled for April 25, 2023, to April 18, 2023, due to the LMA Municipal Day Conference being held the same day (Bryant)

The motion was made by Council Member Dunn, seconded by Council Member Vincent to reschedule the city council meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 25, 2023, to Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

Council Member Jackson stated, for clarity, the next city council meeting will be held Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

3. Discuss the City of Baker Community Foundation (Jackson)

Council Member Jackson initiated discussion regarding the City of Baker Community Foundation, asking about their resources, leadership, and purpose. She said after reviewing documentation regarding the group, she had both concerns and questions.

The Mayor stated it is a private organization, a 501(c)(3), with its own president and its own board. He recommended that Council Member Jackson get in touch with the president of the organization.

Council Member Jackson asked what the City of Baker's role is in the City of Baker Community Foundation.

The Mayor stated the city has no role in the organization, it is a private organization.

Council Member Jackson asked if the City of Baker Community Foundation gets any of its financial resources from the City of Baker.

The Mayor said the City of Baker Community Foundation does not get any of its financial resources from the City of Baker, and reiterated it is a private organization.

Council Member Jackson said the address listed for the City of Baker Community Foundation is 3439 Groom Road, Baker, Louisiana, which is also the address of the Baker Chamber of Commerce.

The Mayor said that is where they have their meetings.

Council Member Jackson said she has not yet received the group's bylaws, but she would ask for those again at the next council meeting. She hopes to have the president of the City of Baker Community Foundation come before the council so that they can provide more information on the organization, thereby increasing community awareness and participation.

Council Member Vincent expressed his concerns regarding the presence of "City of Baker" in the documentation he received regarding this organization. He wanted to verify that the City of Baker has no oversight when it comes to this organization, and that they are allowed to use "City of Baker", our name, and use the city's emblem.

City Attorney Ken Fabre said they can use "City of Baker" because it's in the public domain, and they can use the city's emblem because they are located here and have a connection here.

Council Member Vincent said having the city's name and emblem out there leads to misinterpretation of exactly what the city's role is in the organization.

Council Member Jackson asked if it was wise, if it was legal, if it was ethical for a City of Baker employee to be a part of the foundation.

City Attorney Fabre stated that is a question that needs to be referred to the Louisiana Board of Ethics. But, he said he would think not, because it's a private organization, and while public employees do have certain restrictions, they also have a right to live their lives.

4. Book presentation by author Martina Domino (Young)

Council Member Young said leaders are readers, and he met Ms. Domino at a literacy program at Baker Heights Elementary. He recognized author Martina Domino and asked that she come forward to make her presentation.

Ms. Domino stated she is an author and educator who works with children in the Baker school system. She helps teach children how to wash their hands properly, how to cover their coughs and sneezes, and other things they can do to cut down on spreading germs. Her book is entitled *What in the World is the Coronavirus?* and it helps answer questions children have regarding the virus. Ms. Domino said she stresses the importance of reading to students, reminding them that it affects every aspect of their lives. Ms. Domino presented a copy of her book to the Mayor to be placed in the museum. She thanked Council Member Young for his generous donation of copies of her book made to Baker Heights Elementary.

Council Member Vincent congratulated Ms. Domino on being a published author and said having had several works published himself, he likes to swap books with other authors. He presented Ms. Domino a copy of his latest work, one of six he has done, on Scotlandville and the African American experience.

RESOLUTIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

1. Proclamation declaring April 2023 Alcohol Awareness Month in the City of Baker (Vincent)

City Attorney Fabre read the proclamation.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Bryant to accept the proclamation.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

2. Proclamation declaring April 2023 National Child Abuse Prevention Month in the City of Baker (Vincent)

City Attorney Fabre read the proclamation.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Jackson to accept the proclamation.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

3. Proclamation celebrating the Louisiana State University Lady Tigers on being the 2023 NCAA Women’s Basketball Champions – Geaux Tigers! (Vincent)

City Attorney Fabre read the proclamation.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Bryant to accept the proclamation.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

PUBLIC MEETING

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The Mayor announced the Baker Chamber of Commerce is hosting its inaugural golf tournament on Friday, April 21, 2023. He thanked Primerica and Council Member Young for their support of the event.

The Mayor asked Council Member Vincent to speak about the Keep Baker Beautiful event. He announced the city-wide cleanup, part of the Love the Boot effort, will be

Saturday, April 22, 2023, and begins at 8:00 a.m. He said teams are being formed and he encouraged everyone, businesses and residents, to participate. He reminded residents that this is their city, that it is a reflection of us, and it is imperative that everyone do what they can to keep the city free from litter. Council Member Vincent said that is why you will find him every third Saturday out with his boots, grabber, gloves, and trash bags, doing all he can to keep Baker beautiful.

The Mayor announced the second annual Rose Run will be held Saturday, April 22, 2023.

The Mayor announced a concert in the park will be held Saturday, April 29, 2023.

The Mayor announced Lane Regional Medical Center is hosting a chili cook-off on April 29, 2023, and the Baker Fire Department plans to participate.

The Mayor asked Council Member Dunn to speak about BREC summer camp. Council Member Dunn asked that parents continue to register their children for summer camp. She said camp will be held at the BREC gym on Alabama Street this year and funding/scholarships are still available. She said a registration event will be held at City Hall and that registration will be open until camp begins.

The Mayor asked that everyone support the Diontreya Claiborne Foundation by participating in the foundation's annual basketball camp or through charitable donations. The camp is scheduled for July 7th – July 9th this year.

The Mayor thanked the Fire Department for publishing information on fire safety for people with disabilities.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Denise Lavalais, 5308 Rue Jennifer, expressed her concerns with drainage issues in her neighborhood and having water in her home following the rain on April 7th. She said this is the first time in seventeen years that she has had water in her home and the situation with drainage continues to deteriorate. She implored the Mayor and City Council to help her and all the residents of Parc Chaleur and Chemin subdivisions.

Discussion regarding water and drainage issues throughout the City of Baker followed.

Council Member Vincent reminded everyone the second annual Rose Run for autism acceptance is being held Saturday, April 22, 2023. He also reminded everyone the city-wide cleanup is being held that same day. He thanked the Public Works Department for having dirt placed in various locations following the road overlay work.

Council Member Dunn said after much hard work and community involvement a truckload of supplies and food will be brought to Rolling Fork, Mississippi to aid disaster relief efforts in that community tomorrow. She thanked the City of Baker, the Baker Police Department and Baker Fire Department for all their hard work. She said she truly appreciates everyone in the community and thanked them all for their donations of time and resources. Council Member Dunn offered a special thank you to the Cajun Navy for going above and beyond in assisting with the relief efforts and helping to make the trip possible. Council Member Dunn said it is often hard working with her colleagues on the council, but she will continue to strive to move the city forward despite these difficulties. She said she is here to serve the people of the Baker community.

Council Member Bryant reminded everyone to get their updated COVID-19 vaccine. She addressed drainage issues in the City of Baker and said all of the city's water should drain to the Mississippi River. She said whatever needs to be done to accomplish this should be done and city resources need to be allocated to help make this a reality. Council Member Bryant requested a list of the business licenses issued by the city. She said this will help in understanding funds coming into the city and other budgetary matters. Council Member Bryant said it is ok to disagree, but there is a respectful way to do that. She said not voting the same way does not mean you are not working together, because the majority vote wins. Council Member Bryant asked everyone to pray for Belinda Williams

and her family for the loss of her son. She reported Republic Services missed garbage pick-up in several areas last week. She said keeping the city clean is very important to economic development and spoke about the importance of being aware of the type of businesses that come into the city. She said if the city does not expand itself when it comes to economic development it will become a stagnated area. She said the city has to continue to move forward and be competitive with other cities in the area. Council Member Bryant read the following quote, “Strong women don’t have attitudes, they have standards.”

Council Member Young thanked Council Member Bryant for mentioning garbage pick-up. He said he and Republic Services have a good working relationship and he addressed the issues in his district last week. He said he focuses on giving back and helping the students and schools in our community because that is what is important. He said it is imperative that people support Baker schools because if the schools do good, other areas do good. Council Member Young said the children are why he hosts the largest back to school event in the city, it’s all about them. He said as leaders they should always be thinking about their successor and that mentorship is incredibly important. He announced a community meeting is being held on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, in the Municipal Auditorium from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to discuss converting the Buffwood Club to a therapeutic garden for children with exceptionalities. Please contact City Hall if you are interested in attending, as registration is required.

Council Member Jackson gave a special thank you to Representative Barbara Carpenter for helping the children at Park Ridge and Baker Heights have an “eggciting” good time and said it was a pleasure seeing them put all of their eggs in one basket. She reiterated that every voice has the right to be heard, every person has the right to speak, and when you speak, you should only speak for yourself. She encouraged everyone to continue to speak up for what they believe in, but said make sure when you speak, you speak the truth. She said you should be concerned about those who might be deceived or misled if the truth is not spoken.

Council Member Young asked for an update on the requested Attorney General’s opinion. Council Member Bryant received a letter from that office stating it is their policy to not render an opinion when there is pending litigation.

BIDS AND PROPOSALS

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

CONDEMNATIONS

1. 1916 Florida (Mayor)
2. 2235 Chamberlain (Mayor)
3. 1984 Chamberlain (Mayor)
4. White house next door to 1984 Chamberlain (Mayor)
5. 2845 Groom Road (Mayor)
6. 1637 Robinson Street (Mayor)
7. 12979 Wedgewood (Mayor)
8. 2165 Chamberlain (Mayor)
9. 1752 Clark (Mayor)
10. 1905 Alabama Street (Mayor)
11. 4341 Burgess (Bryant)

12. Chamberlain Avenue at John Marks (Mayor)

ANNEXATIONS

REPORTS ON BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

1. Planning and Zoning Commission
2. Annexation Review Committee
3. Economic Development Team
4. Heritage Museum/Related Committees
5. ABC Board
6. Other Special Committees
 - a. Buffalo Festival
 - b. Prayer Breakfast
 - c. Strategic Planning Committee
 - d. Citizens Advisory Board to Law Enforcement
 - e. Main Street District Committee

ADJOURN

The motion was made by Council Member Dunn, seconded by Council Member Young to adjourn.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

CITY OF BAKER

PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

STATE OF LOUISIANA

I, Angela Canady Wall, certify that I am Clerk of the Council for the City of Baker, Louisiana, and that the above and foregoing is a copy of the minutes of a regular meeting of the Council for the City of Baker, Louisiana held on April 11, 2023.

Angela Canady Wall, LCMC
Clerk of Council

**MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HILLCREST MEMORIAL GARDENS
CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA
3325 GROOM ROAD
BAKER, LA 70714
April 11, 2023**

The City Council of the City of Baker, Louisiana, sitting as the Board of Commissioners for Hillcrest Memorial Gardens, met in regular session on April 11, 2023, with the following members in attendance at the meeting:

COMMISSIONERS

Glenda Bryant
Rochelle Dunn
Brenda G. Jackson
Dr. Charles Vincent
Darnell Waites
Robert Young

CALL TO ORDER – Commissioner Waites presided.

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The meeting was called to order and the motion was made by Commissioner Waites, seconded by Commissioner Dunn to approve the minutes of the meeting held on March 28, 2023.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Waites, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NEW BUSINESS

OTHER NECESSARY BUSINESS

1. Monthly Business Report

Niketa King submitted a monthly sales report for March 2023.

The motion was made by Commissioner Waites, seconded by Commissioner Vincent to accept the sales report submitted for March 2023.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Waites, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

2. Other Reports

3. Items Requiring Action

ADJOURN

There was no other business to come before the commission. The motion was made by Commissioner Dunn, seconded by Commissioner Vincent to adjourn.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Waites, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

**CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA**

I, Angela Canady Wall, certify that I am Clerk of the Council for the City of Baker, Louisiana, and that the above and foregoing is a copy of the minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners for the Hillcrest Memorial Gardens held on April 11, 2023.

Angela Canady Wall, LCMC
Clerk of Council

**MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BAKER CONSOLIDATED UTILITIES SYSTEM
CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA
3325 GROOM ROAD
BAKER, LA 70714
April 11, 2023**

The City Council of the City of Baker, Louisiana, sitting as the Board of Commissioners for the Baker Consolidated Utilities System, met in regular session on April 11, 2023, with the following members attending:

COMMISSIONERS

Glenda Bryant
Rochelle Dunn
Brenda G. Jackson
Dr. Charles Vincent
Darnell Waites
Robert Young

CALL TO ORDER – Commissioner Waites presided.

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The meeting was called to order and the motion was made by Commissioner Waites, seconded by Commissioner Dunn to approve the minutes of the meeting held on March 28, 2023.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Waites, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Vincent asked about the application submitted by Phone Zone, saying it did not include a complete residential address. He asked that in the future all applications for business licenses be completely filled out.

OTHER NECESSARY BUSINESS

1. Monthly Business Report
2. Other Reports
3. Items Requiring Action

ADJOURN

There was no other business to come before the commission. The motion was made by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Jackson to adjourn.

**CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA**

I, Angela Canady Wall, certify that I am Clerk of the Council for the City of Baker, Louisiana, and that the above and foregoing is a copy of the minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Baker Consolidated Utility System held on April 11, 2023.

Angela Canady Wall, LCMC
Clerk of Council