

**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
3325 GROOM ROAD, BAKER, LOUISIANA 70714
www.youtube.com/@bakerforward
July 22, 2025 - 6:00 p.m.**

The City Council of the City of Baker, Louisiana, met in regular session on July 22, 2025, with the following members in attendance at the meeting:

MAYOR
Darnell Waites

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Desiree Collins
Rochelle Dunn
Cedric Murphy
Dr. Charles Vincent
Robert Young

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Waites presided.
The invocation was given by Council Member Murphy.
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Young.

***** Public comments will be allowed on all agenda items. Such comments shall not exceed 3 minutes and shall be confined to the agenda item and any proposed disposition thereof.*****

DISPOSITION OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Young to approve the minutes of the meeting held on July 8, 2025.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.
YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None
The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

The motion was made by Council Member Murphy, seconded by Council Member Collins to move item “1. Joshua Stutes, DOTD, to provide an update on Lavey Lane project (Mayor)” and item “2. Update on Groom Road MoveBR project (Mayor)” under New Business up on the agenda so that they fall under Recognitions.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.
YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None
The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

The motion was made by Council Member Young, seconded by Council Members Murphy/Vincent to add item “2. Add 4331 Amerest to the condemnation list (Mayor)” under Condemnations on the agenda.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

The motion was made by Council Member Young, seconded by Council Member Murphy to add item “4. Recognize D-Day (Young)” under Recognitions to the agenda.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

RECOGNITIONS

1. Honoring Pastor DeWayne Gavin of Greater First Church of Baker for 5 years of service (Collins)

Council Member Collins recognized Pastor DeWayne Gavin of Greater First Church of Baker for 5 years of service.

2. *Joshua Stutes, DOTD, to provide an update on Lavey Lane project (Mayor)*

Joshua Stutes, District 61 Engineer Administrator, provided an update on the Lavey Lane project. Mr. Stutes reported that Barber Brothers is doing a great job, the project is going quite well, and that it is on schedule to be completed by September.

A question-and-answer period was held and discussion regarding various aspects of the Lavey Lane project followed.

3. *Update on Groom Road MoveBR project (Mayor)*

Kevin Gravois and Gabby Wright, PEC, provided an overview of the status of the Groom Road MoveBR project. Ms. Wright stated the improvements have been broken into four separate projects – three are MoveBR and one is FEMA (hazard mitigation). The first project is from McHugh Road to Plank Road and will be up for final approval at the Metro Council meeting on August 13, 2025. The second project, from Highway 19 to McHugh Road, has been approved for final design and construction is expected to begin in the summer of 2026. The third project, signal modifications at the intersection of Groom Road and Plank Road, is currently in permitting at DOTD. Once the permit has been approved, the job can go out for bidding and awarding and start construction. The final project, FEMA (hazard mitigation), is from Alabama Street to Johnson Street and will be submitted to FEMA next week.

A question-and-answer period was held and discussion regarding various aspects of the Groom Road MoveBR project and related drainage issues followed.

4. *Recognize D-Day (Young)*

Council Member Young surprised the mayor – recognizing him and wishing him a happy birthday.

PLANNING AND ZONING MATTERS

RESOLUTIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

1. Resolution adopting the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for the year ending June 30, 2025 (Mayor)

The resolution was read by Jana Rogers.

Discussion regarding the agenda item was held.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Murphy to adopt the resolution.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

2. Resolution of the Baker City Council authorizing the mayor to execute and sign all agreements required in the application and acceptance of a grant award pertaining to the Carbon Reduction Program federal grant (Mayor)

Daryl Blacher provided an overview of the resolution.

The resolution was read by Daryl Blacher.

Council Member Vincent asked that the verbiage of the resolution be amended to include “with council awareness” in the last paragraph. He stated council members should be made aware of what is being signed with regard to the city and the city’s obligations prior to action being taken.

Discussion regarding the agenda item and Council Member Vincent’s concerns followed.

Ms. Blacher stated the following corrections should be made to the resolution – the word form should be from, and it should read City of Baker, not City of Baton.

Discussion regarding the agenda item and Council Member Vincent’s concerns resumed.

The motion was made by Council Member Murphy, seconded by Council Member Young to adopt the resolution with the corrections noted by Ms. Blacher.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Young

NAYS: Vincent

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 4-1.

3. Resolution acknowledging that the mayor will execute a contract for legal counsel (Mayor)

The resolution was read by Jana Rogers.

Council Member Vincent stated he cannot support this resolution, saying the city’s charter requires the city attorney to be a resident of Baker. He said he feels the charter would prohibit Ms. Boykin from being the city attorney, as she is a resident of Baton Rouge.

The mayor stated there are no attorneys in the city who want the position of city attorney. The mayor said the resolution does not say “city attorney” – it says contracting out for legal services.

Discussion regarding the city’s need for legal services and staffing of the legal department was held.

Dr. Toni Jackson expressed her concerns regarding the vagueness and legality of the agenda item and asked that the council consider tabling the item until such time as they have more specificity and greater detail regarding the contract.

Discussion regarding the city’s need for legal services and staffing of the legal department resumed.

The motion was made by Council Member Murphy, seconded by Council Member Dunn that the mayor will execute a contract for legal counsel, so that the city council and the city will be covered.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Council Member Collins initiated discussion regarding the specifics of the contract with Ms. Boykin. The mayor said specifics have not been discussed, but reiterated the city’s need for legal services.

Dr. Jackson suggested the council change the resolution’s verbiage to say that the mayor be allowed to enter into negotiation and discussion regarding a contract for legal services, and once said negotiation and discussion has been completed submit the contract for council approval, thus giving the mayor the authority to execute the contract at that time. She said by adopting the resolution as it is currently worded, the council is granting the mayor authority to execute a contract that does not exist, thus working backwards.

Discussion regarding the proposed changes followed.

The motion was made by Council Member Murphy, seconded by Council Member Dunn to amend his previous motion to state that the mayor will go into negotiation and discussion for a contract and will bring it back to the council before execution.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.
YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Young
NAYS: Vincent
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None
The motion passed with a vote of 4-1.

- 4. Proclamation declaring July 2025 Group B Strep Awareness Month in the City of Baker (Vincent)
The proclamation was read by Jana Rogers.

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

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.
YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None
The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Joshua Stutes, DOTD, to provide an update on Lavey Lane project (Mayor)
This agenda item was previously addressed.
- 2. Update on Groom Road MoveBR project (Mayor)
This agenda item was previously addressed.
- 3. Introduce Ordinance 2025-6, regulations regarding automobile repair work and oil changes in residential and subdivision areas and to provide for other matters regarding to the same (Mayor)

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Murphy to introduce Ordinance 2025-6.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

4. Introduce Ordinance 2025-13, an ordinance to regulate unauthorized camping, lodging, and/or squatting on public property and to provide for other matters regarding to the same (Mayor)

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Murphy to introduce Ordinance 2025-13.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

5. Schedule work session to discuss the selection of auditor (Mayor)

The motion was made by Council Member Murphy, seconded by Council Member Vincent to schedule a work session to discuss the selection of an auditor on Wednesday, August 6, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

6. Schedule work session to discuss Article VI Section 24-203 and 24-205 of the Baker Code of Ordinances (Mayor)

The motion was made by Council Member Dunn, seconded by Council Member Murphy to schedule a work session to discuss Article VI Section 24-203 and 24-205 of the Baker Code of Ordinances on Thursday, August 7, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

7. Schedule work session to approve seeking Attorney General opinion on amending Article 6-21 of the City of Baker Code of Ordinances relative to business permits (Vincent)

Council Member Vincent stated this action is a result of his opposing the change in the ordinance regarding the issuance of business licenses in the City of Baker. The ordinance removed the city council from the process, meaning applicants are no longer required to

come before the city council for approval of their business license request. Council Member Vincent feels business license requests should come before the council, saying this allows the city's voice to be heard. He also stated that in order for a business to be taxed in the City of Baker, their business license must be approved by the taxing authority, the legislative branch, of city government. Council Member Vincent also said council involvement in this process takes pressure off of the mayor and his administration. Council Member Vincent would like an attorney general's opinion to verify that what was done, the change in the ordinance regarding the issuance of business licenses, is in accordance with the city's charter.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Collins to schedule a work session to discuss seeking an Attorney General opinion on amending Article 6-21 of the City of Baker Code of Ordinances relative to business permits.

Discussion regarding Council Member Vincent's request and the city's process for the issuance of business licenses followed.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Collins to schedule a work session to discuss seeking an Attorney General opinion on amending Article 6-21 of the City of Baker Code of Ordinances relative to business permits on Monday, August 11, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Vincent, Young

NAYS: Dunn, Murphy

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 3-2.

The mayor recognized Mayor-President Sid Edwards who arrived at the meeting. Mayor-President Edwards said he was just here to visit and to let Baker residents know he is here for them. To assure them he is proud of Baker, he supports Baker and is here to help the city any way he can. Mayor-President Edwards said he is looking forward to meeting with the mayor and council to see how his administration can assist the City of Baker.

PUBLIC MEETING

ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS

1. District 2 announcements (Dunn)

Council Member Dunn announced the Fish & Fun Day, Hooked on Fishing with Families, will be held on Saturday, August 9, 2025, at the park on North Magnolia from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and thanked all the sponsors who have participated so far. She announced a back-to-school giveaway is being held Saturday, July 26, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Municipal Auditorium. She thanked the Buildings and Grounds and Public Works Departments for their work on the walking trail. Council Member Dunn announced work on the baseball field at the park on North Magnolia will begin soon.

2. Announcements/Comments: Thanks to the mayor and Public Works Department for cutting grass, post completion and city assistance in upkeep, thanks for support of back-to-school supplies, etc., upkeep of Lavey Lane (Vincent)

Council Member Vincent thanked the mayor and Public Works Department for cutting grass throughout the city and asked that they not forget Thomas Road. He thanked the participants from District 1, especially Mr. Bobby, for the wonderful back-to-school giveaway held this past weekend. The giveaway was held at four different sites throughout District 1 and was a phenomenal success. Council Member Vincent also expressed his gratitude for the work being done on Lavey Lane.

Council Member Young addressed Mayor-President Edwards saying he may be contacting him for assistance with the walking path next to city hall at some point in the future.

Council Member Collins thanked the participants of Let’s Take a Walk, a regularly scheduled event in District 3 held every first and third Tuesday of the month. Council Member Collins said each week the walk will be held on a different street, and that it provides an opportunity for people to check on their neighbors, address their health, build better friendships, and share resources and information with the community. She announced that the Rotary Club of Baker/Interact of Greater Baton Rouge will provide ACT prep, college tours, and community service initiatives, free of charge, for all interested high school students.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The mayor asked that council members check their emails to ensure they receive all the information being disseminated.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

CONDEMNATIONS

- 1. Add 6204 Molino to the condemnation list (Mayor)
The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Murphy to add 6204 Molino and 4331 Amerest to the condemnation list.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

- 2. Add 4331 Amerest to the condemnation list (Mayor)
This agenda item was previously addressed.

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 Murphy to adjourn.

The mayor called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, 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 July 22, 2025.

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
July 22, 2025**

The City Council of the City of Baker, Louisiana, sitting as the Board of Commissioners for Hillcrest Memorial Gardens, met in regular session on July 22, 2025, with the following members in attendance at the meeting:

COMMISSIONERS
Desiree Collins
Rochelle Dunn
Cedric Murphy
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 Murphy to approve the minutes of the meeting held on July 8, 2025.

Commissioner Vincent asked about the status of renaming the cemetery in honor of Pete Heine. Commissioner Waites said the city is waiting for the new signage to come in.

Commissioner Waites called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, 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
2. Other Reports
3. Items Requiring Action

ADJOURN

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

Commissioner Waites called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, 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 July 22, 2025.

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
July 22, 2025**

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 July 22, 2025, with the following members attending:

COMMISSIONERS

Desiree Collins
Rochelle Dunn
Cedric Murphy
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 Murphy to approve the minutes of the meeting held on July 8, 2025.

Commissioner Waites called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, 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
2. Other Reports
3. Items Requiring Action

ADJOURN

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

Commissioner Waites called for public comments or questions.

Vote was called for.

YEAS: Collins, Dunn, Murphy, 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 of the Baker Consolidated Utility System held on July 22, 2025.

Angela Canady Wall, LCMC
Clerk of Council