

# Jury to request remaining Spring Bayou funds be used for dredging

By TERRY LABORDE

The June 10 meeting of the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury included several small discussions over several items. One of the bigger items discussed was a motion concerning the remaining \$52,000 in funds left available for the Spring Bayou project.

Benny Bordelon, president of the Spring Bayou Restoration Team, thanked the jurors for all their assistance in recently getting carp into Spring Bayou for hydrilla control. With the money left over from the grant (to purchase the carp and electronics) obtained by former Senator Dr. Don Hines, Bordelon requested

the money be applied to dredging parts of the channel to clear out slits in the spoil banks where sediment sealed passages.

Later in the meeting, Juror Mark Borrel presented a resolution that the remaining \$52,276.22 be used for dredging. A 404 permit will be applied for by the Louisiana

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for the dredging. A request for a one year extension with the Louisiana Department of the Treasury was made to extend the project through June 30, 2009.

Concerning a Brouillette community walking trail project, Juror Mark Borrel announced the Red River Waterway Commission has agreed to fund the construction of the walking trail with a grant for \$25,655. The property is being surveyed and details are being worked out.

In other business, Ann and Keith Bordelon addressed the Police Jury concerning an incident on May 31 at the Mansura Recycling Center. According to discussion, while Bordelon and his young son were disposing material someone else drove in and Bordelon asked that person for a lawn mower and bicycle he was dumping.

An employee approached Bordelon and after words that

included profanity by the employee in front of the youth, the employee locked Bordelon and his young son inside the facility for a half hour. Law enforcement was called and Bordelon left without the items. Bordelon said he went to dump more items and another altercation erupted.

Police Jury President Mickey Romano explained the rules and regulations concerning material after entering the facility that must be followed. In the afore mentioned case the material had never left the other person's truck. The district attorney's office is working on precise wording and new rules are to be posted at the facility. According to Romano, once material enters the gate it will become the property of the Police Jury.

Ann Bordelon classified the circumstances that happened to her husband and son as false imprisonment. Romano assured the Bordelon family the employee has been disci-

plined and he will no longer lock people in the facility.

Paige Rabalais updated the jurors on the Marksville Farmers' Market taking place every Saturday in June on Mark Street at the courthouse beginning at 8 a.m. She was pleased to announce the success of the first Saturday event as evidenced by a huge crowd and many vendors.

Esther Coco Boe of the LSU AgCenter on Hwy. 1 in Mansura was present to announce the options available at the newly opened facility. She introduced her co-workers and handed out literature concerning the facility including meeting space available for rent.

John Bunning from Diamond Disposal was present to give a formal welcome to the jurors elected last fall. Bunning said different employees had been placed on trucks after reports of dumpsters not being completely emptied in the Bunkie area. The local office for the garbage service is in Cottonport.

## Resident demands to see Simmesport zoning map and ordinance

By VINSON MOUSER

The Simmesport Town Council held a meeting Monday, June 9, and held a lengthy discussion with a resident over a proposed zoning ordinance and map.

Burton Mayeux approached the council asking questions about the new proposed zoning ordinance. Mayeux was particularly interested in the map. He asked, "Who is going to approve the map?"

It was explained to Mayeux the zoning map would be proposed to the council by the zoning committee and ultimately the council would decide whether to approve the map.

It was pointed out to Mayeux the town was amending an existing ordinance from circa 1966.

Mayeux then asked, "Is there an existing old map circa 1966?" It was explained to Mayeux it really didn't matter what the map looked like because it was the text of the ordinance that was being amended. Mayeux insisted, referring to the map "Can you produce it for me?"

Mayeux said he had requested a signed copy of the verbiage of the ordinance and supporting map eight months ago. Mayor Fontenot said, "We didn't find anything. We gave you everything we had."

Town Attorney Bart Hebert informed Mayeux he knew of his situation, adding, "There isn't a map that would allow you to do what you want to do. You would have to request a variance."

Again Mayeux requested to see the map. It was explained to Mayeux by Attorney Hebert that everything was preliminary. He reminded Mayeux it was the ordinance being amended to apply to a new proposed map, not the map being amended.

Mayor Fontenot explained when the new map is presented to the council from the zoning committee, there will be a public forum to discuss the map and ordinance.

Mayeux requested to be notified of the zoning board meetings so he could attend if possible. He said he would handle his business at the zoning board meeting.

Once again Mayeux requested a signed copy of the ordinance circa 1966 and the map.

Mayor Fontenot again explained to Mayeux the town was unable to find a copy of the map. He said, "We even sent someone to the courthouse!" Councilman Kenneth Marsh reiterated, "We don't have it!"

Mayeux asked the council, "You don't see a legal problem with this?" Hebert replied there were numerous instances of documents being lost or destroyed. As examples he pointed to courthouses burning down and floods where documents were accidentally destroyed.

Following Mayeux, Mayor Fontenot pointed at this reporter and said, "I want you to bring a message to your boss."

Fontenot asked whether the council would be allowed to write an anonymous letter for publication in the newspaper. He complained about anonymous letters being written to the newspaper which he said were destroying the town. The mayor complained that the paper was holding up progress. He also complained about the column, Alphonse Sez, which runs in the Sunday Avoyelles Journal.

Mayor Fontenot asked if, following the conclusion of the lawsuit with Canadaville, he could write a letter to the paper where he could explain his side of the story. He said he would sign the letter.

The reporter asked Fontenot not to put him in the middle of something he had no control over. He said he only covered stories he was sent to as directed by Bunkie Record editor Garland Forman and had no control over editorial policy. He added

if Mayor Fontenot had a problem he should talk to Forman. The reporter did say that he would deliver the message to Forman.

The next item discussed by the council was the problem of an unsafe tree near a school on private property. Council members expressed concerns that the tree could fall on the school.

Hebert said the council could not make someone remove their property. He did add the person who owns the tree is responsible if it falls over and damages someone else's property.

Mayor Fontenot suggested the tree could be declared a public nuisance and cut down.

In response, Hebert suggested the council contact the landowner and ask if the town could remove the tree.

Chief of Police John Moreau reported that 28 traffic tickets and seven criminal tickets had been written since his appointment. He also informed the council there had been eight arrests.

Moreau recommended hiring Juan Leger and Cornell Walker, Jr. to the police department. He also recommended hiring Randy Rowe and Joshua Hebert full time as of July 1 and Wayne Dupuis and James Minox part-time as of July 1.

The council amended the budget for fiscal year 2007-08, as well as approving the 2008-09 budget. A motion passed unanimously to accept the amendment to the 2007-2008 budget as previously discussed in a public hearing. A motion was made and passed unanimously to accept the proposed 2008-2009 fiscal year budget as previously presented in a public hearing.

Following the approval of the budget, Mayor Fontenot said, "We are good to go for the six months I am going to be here, then after that, good luck people."

## Trash, budget and water meter readings discussed in Moreauville

By TERRY LABORDE

A lengthy discussion at the June 9 Moreauville Council meeting was held concerning drainage in the village and the trash that ends up in storm drains after heavy rains. Mayor Lionel Bordelon instructed his crews to keep all storm drains clear and if residents put trash in ditches, the village crews are to put the trash back inside yards and they are to call the Police Jury for "white-good" pickup.

Mayor Bordelon suggested the town consider running covered pipe in all ditches of Main Street to empty into Bayou Des Glaises. Another option considered was to construct a holding cell that could be pumped after a flash flood.

Councilman Reginald Ducote suggested talking to land owners adjacent to bayous leading from the sections of lower elevation to allow for the clearing and maintenance of canals/ditches to ensure the removal of excess water.

In another issue, complaints were heard concerning inmates cutting grass on private property, including a church. No one claimed to be supervising the inmates when the grass was cut at the church, but Eric Gormson stated he was the supervisor who caught an inmate with a cell phone. Ducote requested the village employees work only on public property.

Chris Riche presented his problems with his water bill again to the council. This lengthy discussion centered on the point whereby Riche's water bill would alternate between readings of 10,000 gallons per month to 32,000 gallons of water used per month. Apparently, another water meter had been placed on Riche's property behind the old water meter and both were showing the diverse readings.

Council members and Riche argued back and forth about the numbers on the meters corresponding to usage over the past five months. Riche claimed a plumber, found no leaks at his home after repeated visits, but said the old meter leaked. Mayor Bordelon showed meter readings by village employees corresponding to the amount of usage.

After more back and forth bickering, Mayor Bordelon announced in disgust, "I'm out of here. Y'all do what y'all want." He didn't leave the meeting room but quit talking. Council members Kenneth Farbe and Ducote agreed to have an employee remove the meters in Riche's yard and install a brand new meter. It was decided the meter would be monitored for three months and then previous billing would be evaluated which was stat-

ed to be \$400.

Next, the issue for the failure to turn in the application for a sewer grant emerged again (see story page 1). Residents from the audience requested information on when the last grant was received by Moreauville. Mayor Bordelon stated none were received in recent times.

Riche returned to the meeting room again to get clarifications on what he had to pay to prevent having his utility services (water, sewer, and gas) from being cut off. This led to Farbe showing where Mayor Bordelon had already made adjustments to Riche's bills. Mayor Bordelon stated Riche should be charged for the usage in the amount of 10,000-gallons per month instead of the large billings of 32,000-gallons. Riche was also concerned about his gas bills over the previous five month period which were not being paid per agreement with the mayor until the water bill issues were solved.

Farbe and Ducote stated Riche should pay the bills as recorded by the meters, then after the brand new meters were installed and monitored for three months, an average would be taken to make comparisons over the last five months.

Mayor Bordelon allowed Fred Bartram from Precision Inspection, LLC to update the council concerning their work in the inspection of the water towers. Both the 125,000 gallon and the 50,000 gallon elevated towers were inspected and the larger tower underwent a wash-out.

Bartram said the interior coating inside both towers were cracking and peeling. Other items he gave attention to were the lack of a safety climb inside the tower and the need to replace many bolts holding the joints together.

"The interior is what causes the problems with the water. The interior is the most important item," Bartram concluded. At this time, the large tower is operational and the smaller tower is awaiting results from DHH testing.

Lucy Coco voiced complaints about vehicles parking adjacent to La Maison de Fleuri. Police Chief Scott Lemoine told the council the road is a state highway and signs are placed only at the discretion of DOTD. She was also concerned with littering after receptions and events at the property owned by Eddie and Jeanette Knoll of Marksville.

Only two bids were received for the purpose of preparing audits for the fiscal year 2007-2008. The council approved the \$11,250 bid from Ducote & Company over the \$11,990 from Kolder Champagne

Slaven & Company.

Once sales tax money is collected, Police Chief Scott Lemoine received permission to put \$6,750 into a bank CD.

The council approved the 2008-2009 budget proposals for the town. Farbe suggested the council delay approval until the executive session later in the meeting in order to discuss raises for employees. Mayor Bordelon noted amendments could be made. After the executive session, Farbe and Councilman Oscar Goody made a resolution for a 3% across the board pay raise for employees.

"Cost of living and performance objectives for salaries were considered for salaries," Mayor Bordelon said. "The price of gasoline and the cost of insurance were also major items in the budget. The sewer system, which is over 30-years old, will need repairs over time.

"We are utilizing sales tax funds for repairs of the sewer system," Mayor Bordelon continued.

Ducote stated the council should consider a new computerized system for the village to work more efficiently with their software. Ducote also announced fireworks are a possible consideration at next year's Louisiana Farm Festival.

Ducote was stern with his presentation concerning sidewalks in the town. He stated the issue has been presented numerous times and always falls on the back burner to higher priorities such as the sewer system.

"We need to do something," Ducote said. "Things are just not getting done. I know we have priorities with the sewer system, but it looks bad when the weeds grow over the sidewalks. I'm just asking to work on the sidewalks whenever possible."

According to Eric Gormson who supervises inmate labor, hiring two good laborers would be a better solution to accomplish more work in the village. Gormson supervises two to four inmates on work details.

Mayor Bordelon read from a FEMA letter concerning re-certification of the levees in Avoyelles. According to the mayor, the levees would be inspected and areas found to be below acceptable height will be built up.

Village officials will obtain information from technicians concerning the operation of the town's natural gas generator which is not in operation.

It was announced Moreauville will hire James Bordelon as the contractor to relocate the utility lines on the Highway 114 bridge that crosses the bayou so that the bridge can be dismantled.

## Marksville police nab drug suspect in Wal-Mart "Lost and Found" incident

By DANNY GAUTHIER

At the June 11 Marksville City Council meeting, Marksville Chief of Police Newman Greenhouse reported the arrest of a drug suspect. The suspect was arrested after

returning to the customer service area of the Marksville Super Wal-Mart seeking a cloth bag he had lost in the store.

Michael R. Alexander, 23 of Alexandria, was arrested on May 31

in the parking lot of the business and charged with a variety of drug-related offenses.

According to the report filed by arresting officer Sgt. Kevin Hill of the Marksville Police Department, a Wal-Mart customer saw Alexander drop a "grayish black" cloth bag on the floor in the store's customer service area and turned the bag over to store employees. The store manager examined the bag's contents, and saw what she believed to be illegal drugs and contacted the police.

Chief Greenhouse said his officers were already on the scene when Alexander re-entered the store and asked about his cloth bag.

Sgt. Hill's report says Alexander was apprehended in the parking lot as he was getting into a car, at which time he attempted to give a large amount of cash to a female companion.

Alexander was arrested and transported to the Avoyelles Parish Jail where he was booked with possession of schedule II drugs with intent to distribute, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of marijuana. In addition to the drugs and paraphernalia, police also confiscated \$1,505.05 in cash.

Sgt. Hill was assisted by Marksville police officer Victor Greenhouse and Tunica-Biloxi tribal police officer Darren Luneau.



Vehicles surround the Main Street entrance of the Hessmer Police Department on Friday, June 13. Hessmer Police Chief Mack Villemarette was inside of the building and, according to police reports, had threatened to end his own life in the police station. See the story on the front page of today's paper.

Photo by Tiffany Daurzat

# 3x10.75 Stihl