City of Lake Charles

326 Pujo Street
P.O. Box 1178
Lake Charles, LA
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Meeting Minutes

City Council

Tommy M. Bilbo, Jr., Donald W. Fondel, Ronnie Harvey, Jr.,
Matthew Vezinot, Stuart Weatherford, Matt Young
Council President: Craig Marks

Wednesday, October 1, 2025 | **5:30 PM** | **Council Chambers at City Hall**

AGENDA FOR REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 1, 2025 TO BE TAKEN UP IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION NO. 150-97, RULES FOR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

CALL TO ORDER - President Craig Marks, presiding
INVOCATION - Tommy M. Bilbo, Jr.
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Craig Marks

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Stuart Weatherford, Matt Young, President or Presiding Officer Craig Marks, Ronnie Harvey Jr., Donald W. Fondel, Tommy M. Bilbo Jr., and Matthew Vezinot

Absent: 0

Also present were Mayor Marshall J. Simien, Jr., Russell J. Stutes, Jr., City Attorney, John Cardone, City Administrator and Renee' P. DeVille, Clerk of the Council.

The monthly financial reports for September, 2025 were provided to the City Council members by the Department of Finance. The reports include the Budget to Actual Revenues and the Budget to Actual Expenditures.

President Marks stated that Item 7 was being deferred to the November 5, 2025 regular city council meeting and that Item 16 was being removed until a later date that had not been determined.

The Council recognized and welcomed the Jack & Jill of America, Inc. organization of young teens that attended the meeting and there was a short presentation explaining the organization.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

A motion was made that this item be approve the minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Weatherford, Young, Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Against: 0

Absent: 0

PUBLIC NOTICES

Russell J. Stutes, Jr., City Attorney read in the Public Notice announcing the City's intent to call an election to be held on April 18, 2026.

5. 213-25

An ordinance authorizing the City of Lake Charles to enter into a cooperative endeavor agreement with the North Lake Charles Economic Development District ("District") for the purpose of appropriating funds totaling $650,000 over a four-year period to assist with the operations of the District and further providing office space for the District, and to amend the budget as necessary.

Marzetta Landry, 1435 10th Street, Lake Charles, LA, treasurer of the North Lake Charles Economic Development Board reserved her right to speak. State Representative Wilford Carter, Sr., District 34, stated that the idea is to take surplus property and build low and medium income wind resistant homes to be put back into commerce. The plan is to apply for grants to build the homes although it will cost the City a start-up cost. Mr. Vezinot's concern was that it may be a duplication of services from the Chamber or Alliance. Fitzgerald Darbone, 2523 Hagan Street, Lake Charles, LA, presented a slide showing how Baton Rouge operates and the cost it takes to fund the board is not enough. Shantel Willis, 2725 Alice Street, Lake Charles, LA, current Chair of the North Lake Charles Economic Development District, appointed by Senator Stine, introduced the current board members, Marzetta Landry, Carl Ambrose, Tommy Senegal and one other board member who they need to replace. She further clarified that there was a Board prior to this Board but it is not the same one. She stated the goal is to have a director and a grant writer. Mr. Vezinot stated that his only concern is that the city funds the SEED Center and others and wanted to know if they reached out to them. Mr. Bilbo stated that he felt it was a good idea that needed to be considered and he would support it. Matt Young proposed committing to a one year agreement for $200,000, and reassess after one year to allow them to create a plan and hire a grant writer. Mr. Vezinot seconded that motion. Mr. Weatherford stated that the Housing Authority is in place to add low to moderate housing. He further explained the difference with the Morganfield District and incremental financing. Mr. Fondel stated that the area is so depressed that businesses do not want to locate there and the federal government understands that so that is why they give grants for the area. After consideration the council voted as follows on the amendment.

A motion was made that this item be amended. The motion failed by the following vote:

For: 3 - Weatherford, Young, and Vezinot

Against: 4 - Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, and Bilbo Jr.

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 20394

Mr. Stutes urged the council to put some kind of time frame in place just in case the legislative auditor comes back to look at it. Mayor Simien agreed to establish a cooperative endeavor agreement to incorporate that suggestion. Mr. Weatherford stated that he was uncomfortable approving without seeing a business plan. Mr. Stutes requested an amendment to the item to amend the budget as necessary. Mr. Marks made the motion to add allowing the finance department to amend the budget as needed which was seconded by Mr. Harvey. After the consideration the council voted as follows.

A motion was made by President or Presiding Officer Marks, seconded by Harvey Jr., that this item be amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 6 - Weatherford, Young, Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, and Bilbo Jr.

Against: 1 - Vezinot

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 20394

A motion was made that this item be adopted as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 4 - Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, and Bilbo Jr.

Against: 3 - Weatherford, Young, and Vezinot

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 20394

15. 408-25

A resolution considering the former Capital One Tower site, along with property owned by the Greater St. Mary Community Development Foundation located on Goos Boulevard as options for the Indoor Sports facility, such selection conditioned upon applicable State and Federal funding partners' approval of the site.

Samuel Tolbert was called first but he was not present so Henry Mancuso, 858 Kirby Street, Lake Charles, LA spoke on behalf of himself and Samuel Tolbert. Mr. Marks stated that Pastor Tolbert had sent every councilman and the Mayor a letter in regards to the matter. Henry Mancuso stated that he was against using the Capital One site because it could be used for something else and there was better property that could be used. Pastor Tolbert is making a donation of 7.5 acres of property to be donated by Greater St. Mary Community Foundation located on Goos Boulevard. State Representative Wilford Carter, Sr., supports the project staying in Goosport and utilizing the property that is being donated. Kyle Edmiston, 1205 N. Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles, LA, CEO of Visit Lake Charles, read out a resolution adopted by Visit Lake Charles Board in support of the Capital One location. He clarified that Visit Lake Charles has not offered any financial incentive for any location. Nathaniel Allured, 231 Harrison Street, Lake Charles, LA, representing the Chair of the Downtown Development Authority Board, Chair of the Visit Lake Charles Board, Project Champion for the Strong Downtown Project within the Just Imagine SWLA plan, in favor of the Capital One site and feels it would be the greatest impact for the city. Mr. Harvey stated that part of the reason for qualifying for the grant was that it was submitted in the Fitzenreiter Road location. Mr. Weatherford stated that there will be daily activity there versus having the amphitheater in that location although he had not seen the studies for either of the sites. He further stated that the Event Center and Golf Course have lost money for years but this would generate revenue that could be used at other facilities. Gene Thibodeaux, 3910 Marie Court. Lake Charles, LA, representing RENEW Lake Charles also representing Keith DuRousseau, and stated there are three locations that are currently being looked at and their preferred site was Capital One to build a conference center with a privately owned hotel. The Capital One site is located in an opportunity zone and the parking and infrastructure are already available. Chance Shoemake turned in a card but had left prior to being called to speak. J. D. Wood, Sports Facilities Company, prepared the study that was presented to the council a year ago. He stated that for the Fitzenreiter Road site, the City would have a slight profit by year five in the $8,000-$10,000 range perspective. He further stated that all sites looked at were profitable. Steve Parker, 1225 Country Club Road, site director at Lotte Chemical, USA and vice chair of the Lake Area Industrial Alliance was requested by Jim Rock to speak in support of the downtown location. He stated their believe is that the sports complex would help attract and retain workers in the area because of the central location and it may be used as a safety shelter and recovery center as a resiliency hub during a disaster. Jenell Brignac Guillory urged the Council to come together because Mr. Harvey presented this project to them at three community meetings. Rachel Lancon, 1414 Reid Street, Lake Charles, LA would like to see in the downtown Lake Charles location because there are restaurants and families that live downtown. Leslie Fain, 1215 Kirkman Street, Lake Charles, LA would like to see the sports complex downtown for walk ability and proximity to restaurants, banks, live music and other entertainment. Fitzgerald Darbone, president of the African American Chamber of Commerce, 2523 Hagan Street, Lake Charles, LA presented a portion of the agenda meeting and stated that if we pay more than the property is worth that we will be in trouble for misappropriation of funds. He presented a second presentation requesting that the North Lake Charles Economic Development District expand to combine both projects on the lakefront to give back 2% to District A. Sara

Judson, 1722 Enterprise Boulevard, represents Just Imagine Southwest Louisiana Plan and stated that master planners were hired for a resiliency plan for Cameron and Calcasieu Parish. The three locations of where the regional sports complex would be placed include strong downtowns, waterfront development and also the community resilience hub. She further stated she is in favor with the placement of the sports complex being located in the downtown area. Samuel Booker turned in a card to speak but left prior to being called. Latricia Dunn, 1103 Athalee Street, Lake Charles, LA in favor of Fitzenreiter Road location and requested Mayor Simien go back and negotiate with the property owner. Mr. Marks stated that we are trying to build a regional facility and would be dependent on refurbishing a parking garage and still need extra parking. Samuel Tolbert offered the donation that may or may not allow something to be built over the transmission lines and the other challenge is that it would need to be built up since it is located in a flood zone. Mayor Simien stated that the money has to be spent by August, 2027. Mr. Fondel requested an amendment to add the Greater St. Mary Community property on North Goos Boulevard, be included with the Capital One site. Matt Young stated that he would not recommend the complex be located in a neighborhood setting due to the McMurray Park situation in Sulphur. Mr. Harvey presented a presentation of the Bryan, Texas Legends Center which is the model that the city is considering building. Mr. Harvey requested that there be a complete exhaustion of the Fitzenreiter Road project and initiate a meeting with the owner with the city administration and the Mayor to the table and a third party arbitrator and to have the first two council members that volunteer to sit down and have a hard conversation before making a final decision and consider the donation of the Greater St. Mary Foundation and the Capital One site. Mr. Fondel seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was as follows:

A motion was made that this item be amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 4 - Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, and Vezinot

Against: 3 - Weatherford, Young, and Bilbo Jr.

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 193-25

Mr. Marks called up Item No. 2 and began discussions but no vote was made. John Cardone stated that they voted on the amendment as approved but not as amended.

A motion was made that this item be adopted as amended. The motion failed by the following vote:

For: 3 - Marks, Harvey Jr., and Fondel

Against: 4 - Weatherford, Young, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 193-25

Russell Stutes, Jr., City Attorney, stated that one of the people who voted in favor of the amendment, Mr. Fondel, Mr. Vezinot, Mr. Marks or Mr. Harvey could make a motion to reconsider the vote on the amendment, then there would have to be a vote to reconsider and you would have to vote on the amendment again. The council member would need to be someone on the prevailing side of the amendment to make the motion. Mr. Vezinot stated that he understood that the motion was to look at all of three sites again and he felt that had one that so his vote was to say no let's look at the sites but he got very confused because they had discussed so many different things, but if the council wants his vote to stand as it is, it really doesn't matter his opinion because all they are doing is looking at the sites, and delaying the inevitable. Mr. Vezinot made a motion to reconsider which was seconded by Mr. Young. The vote was as follows.

A motion was made that this item be Reconsidered. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 4 - Weatherford, Young, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Against: 3 - Marks, Harvey Jr., and Fondel

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 193-25

Mr. Fondel made a motion to include the property proposed by Greater St. Mary Foundation and the Capital One site be considered, but was withdrawn at the request of Mr. Harvey. Mr. Harvey made a motion to make an amendment to revisit the Fitzenreiter Road project, have a meeting with the owner as previously explained, but also be open to the donation from the Greater St. Mary Foundation and look at all of the logistics that will be entailed with the Capital One project. So basically taking a week or two to look at all three projects making sure to exhaust everything we can with the Fitzenreiter project. Seconded by Mr. Fondel. The vote was as follows:

A motion was made that this item be amended. The motion failed by the following vote:

For: 3 - Marks, Harvey Jr., and Fondel

Against: 4 - Weatherford, Young, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 193-25

Mr. Fondel proposed an amendment to include the Greater St. Mary Foundation property along with the Capital One site property. Seconded by Mr. Harvey. The vote was as follows.

A motion was made that this item be amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 4 - Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, and Bilbo Jr.

Against: 3 - Weatherford, Young, and Vezinot

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 193-25

A motion was made that this item be adopted as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 4 - Weatherford, Marks, Harvey Jr., and Fondel

Against: 3 - Young, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 193-25

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. 802-24

An ordinance ordering demolition and authorizing the City of Lake Charles to enter into an agreement for demolition of a structure located at 1814 Easton Street, Willie Lafleur and Josephine Lafleur, owners.

Mr. Harvey deferred this matter for thirty days until the November 5, 2025 regular council meeting but the owner was given the date of November 19, 2025 by the legal department to return to the meeting. She was present at the meeting, but became ill prior to the matter being heard. The vote was as follows.

A motion was made that this item be Deferred. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Weatherford, Young, Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Against: 0

Absent: 0

2. 902-24

An ordinance ordering demolition and authorizing the City of Lake Charles to enter into an agreement for demolition of a structure located at 410 North Simmons Street, Pamela Marine Swain, owner, subject to a tax sale to the State of Louisiana.

Robert Hester, Building Inspector, gave a report as to the condition of the structure and Russell J. Stutes, Jr., City Attorney, presented photographs and documentation showing proof of service which were made part of the record. Pamela Swain, 410 Simmons Street, Lake Charles, LA turned in a card to speak but left prior to the item being called. Mr. Harvey recommended deferral to the November 5, 2025 regular council meeting which was approved by the following vote.

A motion was made that this item be Deferred. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Weatherford, Young, Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Against: 0

Absent: 0

3. 239-25

An ordinance ordering demolition and authorizing the City of Lake Charles to enter into an agreement for demolition of a structure located at 1610 Graham Street, Allen J. Mitchell, owner.

Robert Hester, Building Inspector, gave a report as to the condition of the structure and Russell J. Stutes, Jr., City Attorney, presented photographs and documentation showing proof of service which were made part of the record. There were no requests to speak on this item. Mr. Harvey recommended deferral until the November 5, 2025 regular council meeting which was approved by the following vote.

A motion was made that this item be Deferred. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Weatherford, Young, Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Against: 0

Absent: 0

4. 347-25

An ordinance ordering demolition and authorizing the City of Lake Charles to enter into an agreement for demolition of structures located at 513 South Prater Street and 515 South Prater Street, Georgiana Thomas Mayo and Simon Thomas, Jr., owners.

Robert Hester, Building Inspector, gave a report as to the condition of the structure and Russell J. Stutes, Jr., City Attorney, presented photographs and documentation showing proof of service which were made part of the record. Mr. Hester stated that the owner had requested normal delays. Mr. Harvey recommended time delays of 30/60 which were approved by the following vote.

A motion was made that this item be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Weatherford, Young, Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Against: 0

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 20395

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL ACTION

6. 346-25

An ordinance accepting the lowest responsive and responsible bid and authorizing the City of Lake Charles to enter into an agreement to purchase Roadbase Limestone Aggregate per specifications, for use by the Public Works Department.

A motion was made by Mr. Fondel to accept the recommended bid from Apeck Aggregate Supply in the amount of $10,926.00 delivered and $95,260.00 picked up.

For: 7 - Weatherford, Young, Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Against: 0

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 20396

7. 387-25

An ordinance creating the positions of Chief of Administration and Chief of Operations within the Administrative Division of the Lake Charles Fire Department, and to provide for the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities for such positions and other related matters.

This item was deferred at the beginning of the meeting until the November 5, 2025 regular city council meeting.

8. 388-25

An ordinance authorizing the City of Lake Charles to accept Kramer Court, Rutledge Court, Fletcher Court and Helmsdale Court in Autumn Crest, Phase 2 Subdivision, including public right-of-ways, drainage, water and sewer lines, sewer, and traffic control devices, for ownership and maintenance by the City of Lake Charles. The City of Lake Charles will not take ownership of the detention pond(s).

A motion was made that this item be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Weatherford, Young, Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Against: 0

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 20397

9. 389-25

An ordinance authorizing the renewal of the Professional Services Agreement between the City of Lake Charles and The Picard Group.

A motion was made that this item be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Weatherford, Young, Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Against: 0

Absent: 0

Enactment No: 20398

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS MAY BE ADOPTED BY CONSENT

10. 404-25

A resolution authorizing the City of Lake Charles to adopt the Lake Charles Safety Action Plan as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation Safe Streets and Roads for All grant initiative.

This item was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: 194-25

11. 402-25

A resolution setting date for public hearing and consideration of the Lake Charles Planning & Zoning Commission's decision to deny a request for a Variance in order to eliminate the required permanently installed buffer fence around dumpster, within a Mixed Use Zoning District, at 2604 Lake Street.

This item was adopted on the Consent Agenda. The hearing date was set for the November 5, 2025 regular council meeting.

Enactment No: 195-25

12. 407-25

A resolution setting date for public hearing and consideration of the Lake Charles Planning & Zoning Commission's decision to deny a request for a Variance in order to construct four duplex dwelling units (8 units total) while 1) maintaining an existing driveway encroaching required 15' bufferyard along east property line and 2) constructing a driveway less than 150 ft from the nearest intersecting street, within a Neighborhood Zoning District, at the southeast corner of East Street at Bilbo Street.

This item was adopted on the Consent Agenda. The hearing date was set for the October 15, 2025 regular city council meeting.

Enactment No: 196-25

13. 403-25

A resolution authorizing the City of Lake Charles to advertise to receive sealed bids for Project No. CP3414 - Southwest WTP Back Up Power Improvements.

Mr. Weatherford was appointed chairman.

Enactment No: 197-25

Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Weatherford, Young, Marks, Harvey Jr., Fondel, Bilbo Jr., and Vezinot

Against: 0

Absent: 0

14. 410-25

A resolution by the City Council of the City of Lake Charles to delay any further action relative to the former Capital One Tower site being chosen as the location for the Indoor Sports Facility until certain conditions have been satisfied.

This item was adopted on the Consent Agenda.failed

THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCES ARE FOR INTRODUCTION BY CONSENT AND WILL BE READ INTO THE RECORD THE DAY FOLLOWING THIS MEETING AT 9:00A.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS IN CITY HALL

16. 369-25

An ordinance amending Section 5-203(14)(c) of Chapter 24 of the Lake Charles Zoning Ordinance relative to Facade Building Materials by removing “in (14)(b)(1)”.

This item was removed from the agenda until a later date. It was inadvertently added to the agenda.

17. 406-25

An ordinance amending Section 20-67 of Chapter 20 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Lake Charles to establish a School Zone along the 3500 Block of Patrick Street with all of the appropriate signage and pavement legends extending between one (1) to two (2) blocks from the University United Methodist Church of Lake Charles Day School perimeter and to establish crosswalks at all established school crossings.

Introduced as read into the record on the consent agenda by Renee' P. DeVille, Clerk of the Council.

18. 405-25

An ordinance accepting the lowest responsible bid and authorizing the City of Lake Charles to enter into an agreement for Project No. CP3414 - Southwest WTP Back Up Power Improvements.

Introduced as read into the record on the consent agenda by Renee' P. DeVille, Clerk of the Council.

19. 409-25

An ordinance amending both Sec. 20-78 and Sec. 20-132(b) of Chapter 20 of the City of Lake Charles’ Code of Ordinances prohibiting parking on the East side of Jan Street and designating this area as a tow-away zone.

Introduced as read into the record on the consent agenda by Renee' P. DeVille, Clerk of the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m. The next regular scheduled meeting of the City Council is set for October 15, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

I, RENEE' P. DEVILLE, do hereby certify that I am the duly qualified and acting Clerk of the Council of the City of Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana.

I further certify that the above and foregoing constitutes a true and correct copy of the Minutes of a meeting of the City Council of said City, held on the 1st day of October, 2025.

WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my official signature and impressed hereon the official seal of said City, this 6th day of October, 2025.
s/Renee P. DeVille, Clerk of the Council.

I, RENEE' P. DEVILLE, do hereby certify that I am the duly qualified and acting Clerk of the Council of the City of Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana.

I further certify that the above and foregoing constitutes a true and correct copy of the Ordinances adopted at a meeting of the City Council of said city held on the 1st day of October, 2025.

WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my official signature and impressed upon the official seal of said City, this 6th day of October, 2025.
s/Renee' P. DeVille, Clerk of the Council.

The City of Lake Charles fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Americans with Disabilities Act, and related statutes, executive orders, and regulations in all programs and activities. The City operates without regard to race, color, or national origin. Any person who believes him/herself or any specific class of persons, to be subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI and/or Americans with Disabilities Act may by him/herself or by representative file a written complaint with the City of Lake Charles. The City's Title VI Coordinator/ADA Coordinator may be reached by phone at (337) 491-1440, the Mayor's Action Line at (337) 491-1346, or contact the appropriate Department Head.