Mayor Miceli opened the Special Meeting of December 7, 2017 at 6:00 pm.

The City Clerk led the pledge of allegiance.
The City Clerk called the roll.
In Attendance were:
Mayor Miceli, Councilman Baudier, Councilman Benton, Councilman Huete, Councilman Johnston, Councilman Wheeler, City Clerk Nicole Lee, Police Chief Walker, Fire Chief St. Cyr, CPA Linda Lulue, City Attorney Gilbert Buras arrived at 7:25 pm.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS: She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and thanked the staff for decorating the building.

ADDRESS THE COUNCIL
Louis Skaggs, is a 50 year resident – spoke on the budget – everyone knows we have a good police dept. – best group is this one including our chief of police. People don't realize that every officer faces death every day – give them whatever they need – not a blank check – give them what they want if it is verifiable – bad people are out there – the police come out and put their lives on the line – we should give them whatever they want – but no blank checks. Try your best to give them what they want.
A motion was made by Councilman Wheeler and seconded by Councilman Baudier to grant more time.
YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
MOTION PASSES
Mr. Skaggs continued saying, remember if you are a shift worker you put your head on your pillow and you can rest easy because the police are out there. Give them what they want.

Mae Jean Cazenave – Oak Ave. – said that for the past 3 years – the council has failed to pass a budget before the end of the year. Now they are attempting to raise a tax for the police – she asked that they wait until the election next year so the new members on the council can decide on a tax. Ms. Cazenave also spoke on the Carolyn Dr. rezoning. She asked why is the rezoning being done at a special meeting since this council has repeatedly said they would not vote on important matters at a special meeting. She asked if the citizens were notified about the meeting? She is against the rezoning.

Tracy Whittle, Gordon – spoke about the proposed millage – the police have not received a raise in several years. They have lost 16 officers because of pay issues. We train them and they leave. Pay was actually decreased because of health insurance costs. Some claimed 0 exemptions to take home the most money. They are dedicated and loyal.

Robert Johnson, Riverside Dr. sent an email but some did not receive it. He said the 2013 millage for police failed because it was not dedicated to the police dept. The council needs to make sure the millage money is additional to the current revenues – people need to be sure the money will go to the police dept. He wonders if the millage should be for all first responders – including fire & police. He is not trying to diminish police needs but the fire dept. needs help too. He suggests a marketing campaign to the voters to advertise the election.

Jason Bruzik, Stoneleigh, the language of the millage says it can only be used for salaries for the police department in support of the officers. Drug related crimes are growing in Harahan and they lead to violent crimes. Our department has stopped the drugs and stopped the violence. He said the city is No. 3 in police dept. deaths for 2015. Harahan was voted the safest city in Louisiana and the 2nd safest. The NOPD gave a 10% raise; Jeff. Parish is giving a raise – everyone is getting a raise – except
Harahan. The millage is for salaries. To support the dept. we have to do something. The advisory committee researched costs. A motion was made by Councilman Wheeler and seconded by Councilman Baudier to grant more time.

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None

MOTION PASSES

Mr. Bruzik continued saying he researched nationally & the median pay was $60,000 a year and we are not even close. How will we retain experienced police officers – we want old cops – they have the experience to do the job. We are a small town and that makes it special.

RESOLUTIONS

The following Resolution was offered unanimously by the Council.
The clerk read the resolution in its entirety.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 2017 – 23

A resolution ordering and calling a special election to be held in the City of Harahan, State of Louisiana, to authorize the levy of a special tax therein, making application to the State Bond Commission in connection therewith, and providing for other matters in connection therewith. (5 mils for the police department)

Public Hearing

Chief Tim Walker – spoke on the comments just made. I live here because it is safe. We have an oasis – we take a lot for granted. We haven’t had a raise since 2013 – there are no opportunities for details. Health Ins. cost keep going up – possibly 20% this year. They will be working for ins. only. We have a good staff. He wants the millage passed.

Jason Bruzik, Stoneleigh – the millage will be put before the voters and he hopes it will be a unanimous vote. Even if it passes – the money won’t be collected until 2019. Put it to the voters and let them decide.

Council Discussion

Councilman Johnston said that it is dedicated to salaries – don’t take money from other line items.

Councilman Wheeler – said she hopes the new administration doesn’t do that. Councilman Benton – likes that the millage is dedicated to salaries – however, the ordinance up for adoption gives the chief a lump sum budget – it that passes – there will be no line item for salaries so the millage could not be dedicated to salaries.

Councilman Johnston – he agrees with Mr. Bruzik – this just allows the public to vote on the matter.

A motion was made by Councilman Johnston, seconded by Councilman Baudier to adopt the resolution.

The Mayor called for the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None

RESOLUTION PASSES

ORDINANCES FOR APPROVAL

PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 2017 – 16 – Deferred on 10/19/2017

This Ordinance was offered by Councilman Baudier and seconded by Councilman Huete.

An Ordinance approving the Re-zoning of 6915 Jefferson Highway, Lots, 5-4, B-5, B-6 and D-1-A, Tract C, Soniat Plantation Subdivision, City of Harahan, Parish of Jefferson, State of Louisiana, from R-1 to C-1.

PUBLIC HEARING

Herb Swallow, Carolyn Dr. said he is against the rezoning. He has come to all the meetings but many neighbors could not come – over 200 names on the petition against
it. Even if they don't come out of the property on Carolyn Dr. they will park on Carolyn. Sewerage and parking on Jefferson Hwy. is still a problem.

Barbara Butera, Carolyn Dr. the parking is already a problem – it is literally one lane because of the parking. She asked about the agreement that it would revert.

Councilman Wheeler said the council received a draft the past Monday – sent to city attorney 5 weeks ago – Tuesday – the city attorney answered the proposal – we got a final draft today – she has amendments – there will be a motion to defer.

Councilman Johnston – plans to offer a motion to defer.

Ms. Butera said there is too much commercial that is empty – don't rezone residential property to commercial – it is not needed & shouldn't be done.

Eric Chatelain – he agrees with Ms. Barbara about the parking but it's the residents' fault for closing in their carports. The entire city has parking problems. There is not enough parking in lots of places. Don't penalize the business owners.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Councilman Johnston said he wanted to walk the neighborhood but had to wait for the proposal – now he can do that. He will move to defer the vote.

Councilman Huete asked who requested the draft and asked about the time line – is there an internal time line?

Councilman Johnston said the draft will be ready for the Dec. 21st council meeting.

Councilman Wheeler said the original draft took 5 weeks and the meeting is only 2 weeks away – she is upset it took 5 weeks. She has quite a number of questions; she asked what is a standard restaurant.

Ms. Lewis, attorney for the applicant said this is the finalized version.

Councilman Wheeler said there is a floor amendment.

Councilman Huete said she didn't care what new language was added, she would vote for the rezoning.

Councilman Johnston said he will defer.

Mayor Miceli – asked Mr. Buras about the amendment.

Councilman Wheeler – don't put the draft up on the website – it is not complete.

A motion as made to defer the matter to the December 21st meeting was made by Councilman Johnston and seconded by Councilman Wheeler.

YEAS: Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler
NAYS: Baudier
ABSENT: None
MOTION PASSES

Councilman Baudier said we should be voting on this tonight. It's a travesty that the applicants have to jump through this many hoops.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion regarding Harahan Police Department invoices, Incode access and military leave.

Councilman Wheeler asked about the invoices paid without his signature.

A councilman left the room and the Mayor called a 3 minute recess.

The meeting was called back to order.

Councilman Wheeler again asked about Incode access; military leave & legal & auditing invoices.

The Mayor explained that several changes were needed to the payroll forms the city gets from the police dept. because they are inadequate; military time sheets from HPD leads to guess work – they don't meet state or legislative guidelines – they must be updated.

Chief Walker argued that several offices are in the reserve – 1 officer was called up – in order to get paid there are forms that need to be signed – by law he gets 2 weeks paid leave if he wants to take it – he opted not to take it – he was out of the country for 4 months and he received direct deposited salary the entire time and then had to wait to find out how much he had to pay back to the city. The HR dept. was the problem.
The Mayor said we can agree that payroll is complex – we can address it with expertise – the absence of a time sheet is not the way to change the process. We need to...
Chief Walker interrupted and said there was an email sent to HR – the man was oversees – he could not sign his payroll sheet.
The mayor said again that the forms need to be updated – they have been constantly inadequate.
Councilman Wheeler said you told chief the forms were inadequate – the officer said he did not want to be paid – HR was notified by email.
Chief Walker said that emails were constantly sent saying that he did not want to be paid.
Mayor Miceli said that communication needs to be adequate and internal controls need to be improved. I sent a letter to that affect to the chief. The amount of errors prior to this administration is horrible – improving the forms to give the information accurately needs to be done.
Councilman Wheeler said that payroll sheets are signed so how could they be paid without a signed payroll sheet. You never answer our questions.
The mayor told Councilman Wheeler that no one appreciates the way you speak to the public.
Councilman Wheeler said that without a time sheet, I would not pay an employee.
Councilman Huete – recommended that at some point there has to be an ownership of the problem – it could be your administration. You telling the chief that it is his problem is not the answer.
Councilman Benton suggested they send in a time sheet stating he did not want to be paid.
Chief Walker said that now we scan them and then drop off the time sheets & get a receipt. He asked about Incode access and said he is not going to meet alone with the Mayor.
Mayor Miceli said hers was the first administration to give him access to Incode.
Chief Walker said you took access away from all departments.
Tracy Whittle said that Paige Pipitone saw that I had full access to all departments and then it was taken away. We asked for full access to all departments.
The Mayor said you led everyone to think you don’t have access to Incode but you do have it.
Chief Walker said he wants access to all departments so he can find mistakes.
The Mayor said that communication is the problem – you have access to Incode.
Chief Walker said you want us to perform your work.
Mayor Miceli said we are about to do an upgrade on Incode – you will be able to input electronically and do away with paper sheets that create problems.
Chief Walker said the Mayor wants them to do their work & would not be entering the information electronically. He wants access to read only Incode for all departments. If we had access – we can catch mistakes. He is still being charged for CRI, Accounting & Legal bills. He has asked for changes on the invoices and have received no answer.
Mayor Miceli began to explain that he requests information from CRI, the accountant and Mr. Buras but...
Councilman Wheeler interrupted and said that all invoices are signed except for those 3 invoices.
Mayor Miceli said that purposeful miscoding is illegal and the Chief demanded that the purchase of the cars be paid for from the salary line item. That’s illegal.
Chief Walker brought up Ms. Lulue’s salary again. He asked how the Mayor justifies that payment. He accused the Mayor of stealing $116,000 in 2016 from the police dept.’s budget.
Councilman Wheeler again asked why all invoices are signed off on except for the 3 contested invoices. (CRI, Linda, Buras)
Mayor Miceli said that it’s money the Chief spent by requesting their services. The police dept. is not an independent entity – it is part of the city.
Chief Walker said you have problems with my staff.
Mayor Miceli said she did not have problems with his staff, but you do have problems with my staff.

Mayor Miceli called for a 3 minute recess at 6:43 p.m.
The meeting was called back to order at 6:43 p.m.

ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Miles Gill, Magnolia, this council faces challenges – the curve at Elwood Blvd. & Jefferson Hwy. was bad and he crashed his Honda motorcycle with many injuries – and while not life threatening, it caused many surgeries yet he serves in the reserves without problems. Needs someone from city to look at curve at Jefferson Hwy. and Elwood Blvd. – curve should not be 35 mph.

Mayor Miceli said that while it was not within the city limits she will help him write a letter to the DOTD to get them to make changes.

Mr. Gill said that Elwood Blvd. need to be restriped and also the curve in Harahan to avoid accidents.

Thomas Budde, Stoneleigh – comments about payroll discussion – although retired he was responsible for payroll for over 700 employees – he had a cardinal rule – if no time ticket is sent in – you don’t get paid. Most payroll depts. spend time following up with employees – never pay without time sheet. Everyone makes mistakes – not meant to be mean or cruel – payment without time card it’s a mistake done by HR. There is no form that can fix that. The time sheets may be antiquated – and the time sheets need to be revised – the HR dept. needs to do that – the administration needs to fix it.

A motion was made by Councilman Wheeler seconded by Councilman Benton to grant more time.

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION PASSES

Mr. Budde continued, the improvements need to come from the administration. Budgets are guidelines; line item budgets – he lives by it. Purchases by police chief, if no funds are available he will be over budget. Overpaying for accounting services or legal services – no difference – some line items are overpaid by $100,000 – how can one department overspend by $100,000 and another department can’t buy a car from his line item. He thanked all city employees – when a dept. needs help – figure a way to do what they want to know. I may have a misconception over the issue. Why is it appropriate to overspend in only one department?

Mr. Buras came in at 7:25 pm – The Mayor asked him to expound about the time sheets.

Mr. Buras said that one officer was out on military leave, but checks were continued to be cut – the Chief said he went to HR about the salary – the time and attendance records that the police turn in are not adequate. No time sheets were turned in for the officer. He asked for the time sheets and where is it marked that the person is on leave – the information is not on the time sheets. The city needs a consistent record of where the person is. The time sheets need to have the leave or a suspension noted on the time sheet for the records.

Councilman Wheeler asked how is he supposed to turn it in when he is out of the country.

Mr. Buras said the officer isn’t supposed to turn it in – his appointing authority was supposed to turn it in. It’s not the HR Dept.’s job to figure out who is being paid – the records of the department’s personnel needs to be accurately accounted for – not by turning in a signed time sheet.

Chief Walker said he sent an email and takes exception to that and he feels it was done on purpose.

Mr. Buras replied that emails are not sufficient – the time sheet must reflect the employee’s status.

Councilman Huete said Mr. Buras gave his opinion but she doesn’t understand why he is mad at the chief.

Mr. Buras replied that this matter is taking away time that he could use to be doing productive things for the city. This is the war between the Mayor and the Chief – this is a problem of how the record is done. There is no form – they just did not turn in a time sheet. He suggested the city redo the payroll sheets so that everyone’s whereabouts is accounted for along with their work time.

Councilman Wheeler said she doesn’t understand how he got paid for 3 months.
Mr. Buras said the officer also asked that his supplemental pay be spread out to avoid taxes. You can't ask the payroll record to be phonyed up. They should come and change their W-2 – that's the record that is needed. The proper way is to change the withholding – for every paycheck if necessary.

Councilman Johnston asked how does an officer get paid without a time sheet. Mr. Buras said that everything is set up automatically on the computer and that the time sheets must be changed to reflect the needed information. Councilman Johnston said to pay some one for 4 months without a time sheet – that's crazy.

Mayor Miceli commented on the other question – invoices for professional services. Councilman Wheeler said that all invoices are signed except CRI, Buras & Linda – why the exclusion?

Mr. Buras said there is fault on both sides – city attorney is a service the city has to provide and he has to be paid – which pocket it comes out of doesn't matter. There is no authority for the chief to sign off on the invoice – it's the Mayor's job to pay the bills. He does not have a right to sign the check – whether he signs the invoice or not – it does not matter.

Councilman Wheeler said it was standard policy to sign off on the invoices. Chief Walker asked why did he have to pay for Mr. Buras to be at the council meeting.

Tracy Whittle said if we had the invoice – we could have caught the error.

Mr. Buras said that everything should be perfectly transparent.

Councilman Wheeler said we all want that.

Mr. Buras said that government can't be held up with minutiae – the bills must be paid. Councilman Wheeler said the chief needs all the invoices – why isn't everything accessible.

Mayor Miceli asked Councilman Wheeler to come when they do payroll & when they do the bills. Put everything on the computer – would like to do that for everyone.

Councilman Wheeler asked how do city hall employees get paid.

Mayor Miceli said they have time cards and punch a clock.

Chief Walker said he is asking for access to Incode to read about all departments.

Mayor Miceli said he pulled the wrong report and didn't realize it.

Chief Walker said that everyone including his secretary went to Texas for training on Incode – he needs read only access.

Jason Bruzik – everyone has said what I want – Incode is public access.

Mayor Miceli asked him to come to city hall and look at the computer.

Mr. Bruzik said he wants want to see it at home in his boxers – it's public record. Why isn't it accessible to the world on the internet.

Mr. Buras – not required by law – the technology does not exist to do that.

Mr. Bruzik said that incode does have a link to the internet.

Mr. Buras asked if there was a fee?

Mr. Bruzik said yes there is – it costs $5,000.

Mayor Miceli said that the interference of day to day operations is ridiculous. She is working with a bare minimum staff. She said the Incode upgrade which hasn't been done in many years will be done in January and they are going "live" with no training due to lack of funds being allocated. Everyone has full read access and then Ms. Lulue is asked for information that take hours to research.

Mr. Bruzik argued that the Mayor doesn't want everyone to know where the money is going.

Mayor Miceli said it takes a level of education to understand the software.

A motion was made by Councilman Wheeler seconded by Councilman Baudier to grant more time.

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None

MOTION PASSES

Mr. Bruzik continued saying it is public record – it should be available to all dept. heads and there is no fee for that – if you did that – we would have some level of transparency.

Fire Chief St. Cyr jokingly said he wants access to the police dept. Incode since he could get a new set of tires for the fire truck that way.
The City Clerk said she hasn't had access to Incode financials since she returned from maternity leave.

Mayor Miceli answered that this is the first time you told me that. Mr. Brzuzik said the city clerk is responsible for signing off on the audit. Who approved the audit?

Mayor Miceli said I approved the audit. Mr. Brzuzik said that she is breaking the law.

Mayor Miceli disputed that.

Eric Chatelain - some questions that come up are answered but some are not. Mr. Gregory had a conversation with the Mayor, he is curious about sewer repairs that are on-going right now. Streets are being cut up all over his neighborhood. He questioned the repairmen who said they don't know why they are doing this.

Mayor Miceli said that there has been a rain delay and that the work is on-going to upgrade the sewer system that has been neglected for many years.

Mr. Chatelain said the council is poorly prepared at the meeting. Everything from the November meeting was deferred - nothing is voted on. It is mind boggling. Mr. Buras made a comment about police payroll sheets and putting military leave on the form. If you don't put in a time sheet - you don't get paid.

A motion was made by Councilman Wheeler seconded by Councilman Baudier to grant more time.

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler
NAYS: None

MOTION PASSES

Mr. Chatelain continued by saying to have the chief and his secretary make changes to the time sheets. Signing an invoice does not mean it gets paid - give him the invoices- if he refuses to sign it must be paid anyway.

ADJOURN

A motion was offered by Councilman Johnston seconded by Councilman Benton to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 pm.

The Mayor called for the vote, it was as follows:

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler
NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION PASSES

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:02 p.m.

BUDGET HEARING

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 pm

Ms. Lulue said that no questions about the budget were brought to her attention.

Police Dept.

Chief Walker said there were proposed budgets from the Mayor and from him with explanations and asked if there were any questions from council. There were no questions from the council.

Mayor Miceli asked about salaries.

Ms. Lulue said a column of what was actually budgeted was provided.

Tracy Whittle didn't agree with the actual figures for 2015, 2016. She asked for an email if there is a late bill - this would prevent hostility.

Ms. Lulue said that some companies invoice late - at year end - books don't hard close until the audit.

Ms. Whittle said they don't know when things are being charged - it's hard to keep track.

Ms. Lulue said she projects the expenditures that may come in after the end of the year.
Mayor Miceli said they got pieces of the audit at the 27th of June for approval and Ms. Lulue had caught some of their errors.

Ms. Lulue said she spent a lot of sleepless nights trying to get finished. She caught errors in the audit.

Chief Walker asked why stay with CRI if the audit was wrong.

Ms. Lulue said that if an amendment was adopted at the end of the year it would have been corrected but the council did not adopt it.

Mayor Miceli said the amendment was put up 3 times but the council refused to adopt it. Passing budgets and amendments at year end is crucial to determine the ending fund balance.

Chief Walker said if he had known, he could have spent the money left in the 2015 budget. He said they figured they were $161,000 under budget, Ms. Lulue said they were $75,000 under budget but CRI turned in the audit with the dept. $66,000 over budget.

Councilman Wheeler said it was proposed that money be taken away from the Police Dept. but we disagreed. If money is allocated - & they are not given approval to spend - if there is an average - it goes into the kitty.

Chief St. Cyr told Ms. Lulue that if the council adopts the budget - the money is allocated by the council - if I give an invoice - a purchase order is issued is it an encumbrance and then the bill is paid and shown as expense. It should be simple to request an end of month. One of his vendors has to be harassed for invoices.

Tracy Whittle said that CRI billed the police dept. $15,000 - that's why they want the invoices.

Chief St. Cyr asked if Incode matches the budget run with the excel run. Ms. Lulue said no it's different.

Chief St. Cyr asked if they could get an encumbrances report monthly for all depts. budget reports may not be totally accurate.

Mayor Miceli said that no budget was adopted in 2014 for 2015 - Incode was not upgraded - previous budgets were not done in the proper format. Now the budget has been straightened out - but if a budget is not passed on time - the accountant has to take care of closing out old year. It won't be perfect, if not on time. Budget must be adopted on time.

Councilman Wheeler - questioned - a lot of line items being overspent - amendments will be adopted in December but the 2018 budget won't be adopted.

Councilman Benton asked her what problem do you have if we adopt 2018 and then amend.

Councilman Wheeler the 2017 budget was passed but overspent in many line items - I don't think this will go anywhere. I don't understand how line items can be overspent.

Councilman Benton said that adopting 2018 does not affect 2017.

Councilman Wheeler said the city needs to live within the line items - I have no intention of voting for 2018 if the questions for 2017 aren't answered.

Mayor Miceli said that the council under budgeted some line items deliberately. You can't expect professionals to work for nothing.

Councilman Wheeler said if you are hiring an employee - they work for the pay.

Mayor Miceli said the city has ordinances that counter state law - we had to fight to get a tax sale. We are obligated to have a tax sale. Some things are mandated to be paid. Our attorney...

Councilman Wheeler said nothing will be answered and offered a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Huete.

YEAS: Baudier, Benton, Huete, Johnston, Wheeler
NAYS: None

MOTION PASSES

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

A. The following matter involving pending litigation may be considered
(Court, Case, Number, Parties):
2. Suzanne K. Scalise vs. City of Harahan LA, Anne Gordon, Louise Slayden,
   U.S.D.C., Eastern District of Louisiana, No. 2:13-cv-01397
4. Wood Materials LLC v. Wood Resources LLC v. City of Harahan, 24th JDC,
   Case 761-783, Div. "K"

B. The following matter involving prospective litigation for which formal written
   demand has been made may be considered.
C. The following matters involving discussion of the character, professional
   competence, or physical or mental health of:

Name: