



## **Notice of Hammond City Council**

### **Special Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, August 31, 2020 at 5:30pm**

**Michael J. Kenney Center, 601 W. Coleman Ave. Hammond, LA**

**I. PRAYER: Councilman Andrews**

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLIANCE Councilwoman Gonzales**

**III. CALL TO ORDER: Councilwoman Carlee Gonzales called Special meeting to order at 5:30 pm**

**IV. ROLL CALL: Kip Andrews (P), Carlee White Gonzales (P), Devon Wells (P), Sam DiVittorio (P), Steve Leon (P)**

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for respect and to follow the rules and procedures that's outlined in the agenda and there will be a 3 minute time limit. She then turned the meeting over to Councilman Devon Wells.

**Councilman Wells**, asked everyone to respect each other and everyone is entitled to an opinion and they have the right to voice how they feel.

**Councilman Andrews**, give everyone courtesy and respect

**V. Discussion of the booking room video**

#### **Public Comments**

**Louise Bostic, 112 Elm Drive Hammond**, asked who took the video and why?

**Councilman DiVittorio**, there are surveillance cameras in the booking room

**Jermaine Luckett, Baton Rouge La.**, video shows rules were not followed and he stated he thinks during investigation the video was hidden and the City job is to protect the Citizens. As leaders we should be held at a higher standard.

**Rev. Brenda Campbell, 15665 Darson Street Ponchatoula**, was a resident of Hammond for about 20 yrs., stated she doesn't get involved with things unless there is a problem and there is a problem. She stated enough is enough and when she looked at the video as an Ex Police officer that was a little too much and it went too far this man was still handcuffed. She will fight for justice and thanked the Council for having the forum.

**Marilyn Dunn, Hammond**, concerned what's going on in the world and what's going on in our Community and here to show support. It does not matter who took the video the problem is the Citizen that was arrested was not treated correctly.

**Kelvin Cryer, 613 Campo Street, Hammond**, this has to stop no accountability the Citizens don't have effective way to report when there's a bad police encounter. Issues with accountability and transparency.

**Stanley Ledet, 1109 Audubon Drive, Hammond**, did not watch the video tired of watching us being slaughtered and denormalized and if you find this as an excuse to where this is acceptable you are part of the problem. If you are not doing your part as a human being you are part of the problem this has to stop. Police need to be in the community.

**Betty Surrey, 47297 Shady Acres, Tickfaw,** thanked Councilman Wells and Councilman Andrews for bringing this as an issue. Suggest to look at every policy and procedure that was in place governing the protocols that every police officer was expected to follow on the night this occurred specifically booking room protocols and procedures and what to do with contraband or personal property that is taken from a subject. The Citizens of Hammond deserve a fair and transparent police department.

**Alton Carter, 406 J W Davis Dr., Hammond,** why don't the police ask questions when they get on the scene. He is a victim of police brutality.

**Calvin Gallo, 1007 Natchez, Hammond,** as it states a picture is worth a thousand words this video is worth a thousand words our voices have been silenced for so long. If you don't see anything wrong with this video you are part of the problem.

**\*\*\*\*Video of Booking Room Incident was played\*\*\*\***

**Councilman Wells** stated as you seen the video this is the reason, we're here tonight to address this issue.

**Jim Wells, 41035 Rue Chene, Ponchatoula,** born and raised in Hammond left and came back. Finally seen the video and guess police brutality makes you police chief.

**Christine Monistere, Hammond,** stood before Council almost 2yrs., ago concerning this issue. Mayor was aware of this video at the time. She stated she saw 6 blows to the face and watched officers make jokes, drag a man body across the floor and kick a man all on video. This should be re-opened and investigated.

**Janice Carter Beard, 806 Natchez Street, Hammond,** you should not reward a man who violated civil rights by promoting him. On every job there are job descriptions to follow and the job of a police officer is to protect and serve.

**Alton McCraney, 204 Maryland Street, Hammond,** appalled of what he saw on the video and people should be handled with dignity. Its time to stand up and its time for a change this video is unacceptable.

**Todd Calmes** thanked the Council for the meeting and thanked the police. Asked the Council was this the video shown when the Council approved the Chief position, was this video provided during investigation and did you all see the video, were you all aware that the NAACP was told there wasn't a video, in the video did you view the part were he was struck with a closed fist, punched, grunting in each and every punch no person deserve this treatment. People should be held accountable and there should not be a promotion.

**Mike McClanahan, Baton Rouge, NAACP,** if asked how he feels about the video he's seen worse video by the Hammond Police. He stated bad police should be turned in and the police Chief should be elected. He stated bad behavior should not be rewarded and he must be held accountable and need to get rid of bad police.

**Eugene Collins, Baton Rouge, NAACP,** organization was told full video did not exist. A human was treated like a dog and it should be investigated to the fullest extent. If you do not get this under control it is a matter of time, we sue do not let one bad apple cost this City money. We have full confidence that you all will take care of this.

**Sandra Weary, 17477 East Park Ave., Hammond** first thing that comes to her mind is to pray when something happens. Beating a dead horse will not solve anything we seen the video and the next thing is to do is decide what's going to be happen fighting, and hating is not going solve anything. Once you decide what your going to do if you punish this person do it openly. Get a committee together that will bring someone from here that knows the community and the community knows their character. The black community needs to be heard for the good of the community. There is much discussion.

**Kenneth Albritton,** people are dead because of cops and the so call protocol the system needs to be reformed. Stated he wants change and peace but cannot with these types of police.

**Rodney Perrin** watched the video and need to talk about accountability everybody needs to be accountable.

**Trenell Williams, Hammond,** it is about the uniform that we wear

**Margaret Ratcliff, 43511 Willa Villa Road,** Kendrick has a family, people that love him. Stated she was not here to be angry at no one and the officers that were involved we pray for you all we not mad. What was done was wrong. She stated I thank you all for everything that you do good and everything you all did bad, but justice will prevail.

**Lisa Dangerfield, Hammond** stated she posted this video on her Facebook page 3yrs., ago., but was clipped. She stated she lost respect for Chief when she saw him punching this guy on the video. This was wrong and not acceptable you should not put hands on someone in handcuffs and we will no longer stand for police brutality in this City.

**Osa Betts Williams, 700 Natchez St., Hammond,** lived in Hammond all her life this video disturbs her and if this were an isolated incident then maybe we could move on but, its not. I will not say that I do not have respect for all police officers. It's time to have a Citizen committee for hiring a police officer its time for us to elect a police Chief let the people select. Stated she's fed up with black violence and the madness has to stop. Police officers need to be checked before hired and if you have issues get checked.

**Kelly Rockwell, Hammond,** asked what the charges were, was he on drugs, and was there something we did not see?

**Steven Quinn, Hammond,** saw a man handcuffed, punched, tased, treated like animal, then kicked in his groin.

**Alisia, Ponchatoula** the police are to protect, and he was detained already. Open to what you have done because right is right and wrong is wrong.

**Oscar Dantzler, Jr. Hammond,** need more involvement with our government, leadership, and politicians to get involved in our community to every aspect. He stated he takes his hat off to our law enforcements because we do have good police officers all police officers are not bad. All men should be treated fair and equal. The Mayor hand picked Bergeron the police chief should be elected position.

**George Sullivan, Hammond,** was the first to see the video because I served on the Civil Service Board that the Mayor ask him to serve on and did not find fault what the police did we have the greatest group of officers and fireman in this community we need to show appreciation. We need to communicate because somewhere there is a communication problem if this was brought to you contact the Mayor, or Director of Administration. Mr. Sullivan stated the Mayor and Director of Administration new about this during the Civil Service Board meetings there was action taken but, not the way it was betrayed on tonight.

## **VI. Making an investigation into the Mayor's appointment of the Police Chief.**

### **Public Comments**

**Jacquelyn Taylor, Hammond,** asked since this was under investigation all these years and just having a meeting now why nobody did anything about it. Do the right thing because you all serve us.

**Jermaine Lockett,** Baton Rouge, reviewed the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics and stated this requires an investigation.

**Councilman Wells,** Council members received information packet and everything in this packet concerns the investigation and the public can request this and the Council did not have any of this information and the clipping everyone seen that's the same clipping the Council members seen. The decision that we made was on what we heard and type of man he was with officers speaking on his behalf.

**Councilman Leon** there is a multitude of issues that need to be look at and there is no magic wand to make this go away tonight. Greatly appreciates the input and asking to be patient and give us time.

**Councilman Andrews,** received multiple phone calls, text messages, and individuals stopping by his church to talk to him. Stated he's not here to point fingers but, it was said that I have a personal vendetta against the police department which is not true goal is to make sure the right thing done when citizens want to be heard. It's not a black thing or white thing it's the right thing. I have nothing against the Chief personally I voted against him because the City had just given a large amount of money and the City was headed down the same road. I felt I did not have the appropriate time to vote on issue of police Chief.

**Mayor Panepinto** thanked everyone for attending and we came to listen. There was an investigation by the retired Chief. Retired chief was a retired FBI agent he looked at it and sent it to the FBI. The FBI did nothing Stewart was concerned about the kick, so it was sent to the Civil Service Board. In the end the kick was overturned, and I wanted to give 60 days for the kick. Then the Chief at that time resigned and he wanted a local Chief someone that knew the culture, someone to do what's right thing, someone that wanted better training, changing mindsets. The video was investigated and is being re- investigated by FBI. Stated he met with the NAACP locals and Chief Bergeron answered questions is there a learning curve for this yes there should be change and trying to move in a better direction.

**Tracie Wells, Hammond**, Councilmembers are elected and she has listened to the news and read many different reports that stated you as Council have no authority to hire or fire that this is the administrative job which per the Charter is correct. On the agenda is the booking room video and whether to initiate an investigation according to the Charter you will need (4) votes whether to investigate. When Council was sworn in and asked to choose the Chief by this administration within 3 months you were not shown a video, not told whether not the investigation was complete. Mayor said the investigation was done by the FBI did you all get a clearance letter from the FBI, the packet that you received was there a clearance letter in there saying all had been cleared if not it was not complete investigation by the FBI know the rules do not accept what the administration tell you without documentation. The Mayor has the authority to remove and to hire you have authority to ask the Mayor to remove you make that decision. This is not about the black race or white race it is about the human race. We the people have a voice and it will be heard.

**Councilman DiVittorio**, thanked officers and thanked all the public who had the courage to come up and speak. When sworn into office it was a big rush to hire a police chief and he was one of the one's that said we need to slow down because this decision is a big decision to make placing someone at the s the highest ranking position. After watching this video was very disappointing and this thrown down our throat so fast and thanked all good officers.

**Councilwoman Gonzales**, thanked everyone for coming out and a lot of her constituents reach out to her by emails, phone call or text message. These types of forums are important and she's glad to hear from the community. The Council needs to know what you want because we represent you and hope to keep this going being participants is our City government.

**Councilman Wells** received many phone calls, and emails from many concern Citizens white and black. It will be very disappointing if we don't move forward with this issue as a Council, we seen the video along with the citizens for the first time we can no longer use the excuse I have not seen. The Council does not have the authority to fire the chief or ask him to resign but the Mayor has the authority. The lack of concern from the Mayor shows he does not care about the community and this is not a good example for the community. Mayor hid the video from the council and there needs to be an independent investigation and will vote on the September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Council meeting.

**V. ADJOURN: There was a motion by Councilwoman Gonzales and second by Councilman Andrews to adjourn the meeting. All members were in favor to adjourn the meeting and the meeting was adjourned.**