

In and about Washington

Here are items from the May edition of the *In and about Washington* newsletter

Council will vote on new water, sewer rates

The Town Council is considering raising water and sewer rates to a point that the utility system is no longer losing money. A public hearing is planned before the regular May meeting and an ordinance will likely be introduced then.

The changes were recommended after a study by the Louisiana Rural Water Association (LRWA) and have been endorsed by a local advisory commission chaired by council member Rogers (Rock) Malveaux. "If we had done this 12 or 15 years ago, we wouldn't be in the predicament we are in now," Malveaux said. Rates were last adjusted in 2001

. The town charges "considerably less" than what it must spend to produce potable drinking water, treat waste water, and repair and maintain the system, the LRWA found.

Washington currently serves 553 residential customers with 119 out of town, and 31 commercial clients, 11 out of town. The average household uses 4,319 gallons of water each month; businesses average 6,199 gallons.

"This is something we absolutely have to do," according to Mayor Dwight Landreneau. "Now, we cannot qualify for an improvement grant because we do not make a profit." The added revenue would generate just enough profit to meet the funding criteria for needed outside revenue, he said. Natural gas rates will not be changed.

By-laws proposed for cemetery foundation

Proposed by-laws have been prepared for a Washington Cemetery Foundation "to provide financial support to preserve and enhance the cemetery grounds, headstones, monuments and burial structures" of Washington's three cemeteries,

They provide that the foundation will "work to preserve, maintain, restore, and improve" the cemeteries "with financial support, direct or indirect," and set up a volunteer board to oversee "all the business and affairs of the organization." Attorney Jeffrey Coreil is acting as chairperson. The foundation will be set up as a tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

Maintenance money donated

An anonymous donor has agreed to pay for regular maintenance of the Cedar Hill Cemetery, Old Church Landing Cemetery (also known as the Yellow Fever Cemetery), and Hebrew Rest Cemetery (shown). The Town Council has accepted the bid of Young Lawn Service of Opelousas of \$900 per month for the work.

Donors have also pitched in to fund cleaning and maintenance of the walking path at the festival grounds on Veterans Memorial Boulevard.

Resolution opposes tax collection change

Washington has gone on record in opposition to legislation that would transfer collection of sales taxes from local authorities to the Louisiana Department of Revenue.

All sales taxes in St. Landry are now collected and distributed by a division of the parish school board. The resolution proposed by the Louisiana Municipal Association and adopted by the Washington Town Council says it should stay that way.

It argues that local collection agencies are directly responsible to local elected officials but that the state revenue collector is appointed by the governor, raising “great uncertainty” about how responsive he or she would be to local concerns.

The resolution urges St. Landry legislators to “vigorously oppose” the measure.

Town alerts available via email, text

You can receive timely coronavirus and other alerts about Town of Washington affairs via email or text message.

Go to the town website at <https://www.townofwashington.la/> and look for a block on the right of the screen that includes the option, “Subscribe.” Simply click on that and enter your data.

The Town will also post agendas and minutes of Town Council meetings.

Old records to be digitized

The Town Council authorized Mayor Dwight Landreneau to move forward with the donation of old Town records to the UL-Lafayette archives, where they will be preserved and be made available on websites.

Parcel to be annexed

An ordinance to annex a piece of residential property will be taken up at the next council meeting. The property has been included in the town boundary on maps and other documents for years but that has never been officially annexed. The proposal will be on the May agenda.

Building to be sold

The Town plans to sell the building at the corner of Washington and St. Mitchell streets as excess property. It is being used to store things that can be discarded or moved elsewhere, according to Mayor Dwight Landrieu.

Volunteers needed to cut grass

With the growing season in full swing, the mayor is asking for volunteers to help cut grass. Volunteers need to fill out a form at Town Hall. Aside from the practical effect of grass cutting, the volunteer hours can be counted as part of the matching funds the town needs in applying for grants for maintenance and other purposes.

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