

SHELLY HORTON JR
MAYOR



STEPHANIE SULLIVANT-COLLIER
CAO/ TOWN CLERK

TOWN OF BENTON

LOUISIANA

REGULAR SESSION

MINUTES

TOWN OF BENTON

MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024, 6:00 PM

The Town of Benton Council met in regular and legal session on the 11th day of March 2024, at 6:00 p.m., in the Benton Council Chambers, Benton Town Hall, Benton, Louisiana. Mayor Shelly Horton called the Regular Session Meeting to order. Invocation by Alderman Manning and Pledge by Alderman Friday. Stephanie Collier, called the roll, with all members as follows:

Alderman Jackie Carr – PRESENT
Alderman Tiffany Manning – PRESENT
Alderman Ron Jones – PRESENT
Alderman James Friday - PRESENT
Alderman Wayne Cathcart -PRESENT

A motion by Alderman Cathcart seconded by Alderman Friday to approve the agenda. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

A motion by Alderman Jones seconded by Alderman Carr to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

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OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS

A motion by Alderman Friday seconded by Alderman Manning to adopt Resolution 2 of 2024 Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PERSONS FOR THE LCDBG PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Town of Benton desires to obtain Louisiana Community Development Block Grant (LCDBG), Local Government Assistance Program (LGAP), Disaster Recovery Unit (DRU), and Community Water Enrichment Fund (CWEF) funds; and

WHEREAS, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000(d) and Executive Order 13166 require that recipients of federal funds take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access by persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP Persons);

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following Language Access Plan for Limited English Proficiency Persons is adopted for use by the Town of Benton to comply with requirements for federal funding;

**2024 State of Louisiana
Town of Benton
Language Access Plan for Limited English Proficiency Persons**

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I. Introduction

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000(d) and Executive Order 13166 require that recipients of federal funds take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access by persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP persons). The Town of Benton is a recipient of federal funds for a portion of its programs and, thus obligated to reduce language barriers that can preclude meaningful access by LEP persons to Benton's Programs. The Town has prepared this Language Access Plan (LAP), which defines the actions to be taken to ensure meaningful access to agency services, programs, and activities on the part of persons who have limited English proficiency.

In preparing this LAP, the Town of Benton conducted a four-factor analysis, considering (1) the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the Town or its federally funded programs, (2) frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the Town's programs, (3) nature and importance of the program, activity, or service to people's lives, and (4) resources available and costs. The Town will review and update, on an annual basis, this LAP in order to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs.

II. Description of Covered Program(s)

The Town of Benton administers the following federal and state grant program(s):

A. Louisiana Community Development Block Grant Program (LCDBG)

The LCDBG Program is a federally funded (HUD) program which provides grants to units of local government in non-entitlement areas for the development of viable communities by providing a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. Grants are made to these communities for primary needs such as potable water, water for fire protection, sewer, streets, and economic development activities.

B. Local Government Assistance Program (LGAP)

LGAP funds are used to assist units of local government for needed infrastructure and long-term capital improvements in rural areas. The LGAP Program is designed to fill the gaps where there are no federal or other funds available to assist a unit of local government with an identified high priority need. Priority is given to those projects which identify and resolve basic human health and safety needs.

C. Disaster Recovery Unit (DRU)

HUD CDBG Disaster allocations dedicated to recovery from Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, and Isaac. These funds have and continue to be allocated to recovery in the storm-impacted areas.

D. Community Water Enrichment Fund (CWEF)

The purpose of the Community Water Enrichment Fund (CWEF) is to assist units of local government with funding for needed infrastructure and long-term capital

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improvements for potable water projects in rural areas. The CWEF Program is designed to fill the gaps where there are no federal or other state funds available to assist a unit of local government with an identified high priority need for potable water improvements. Priority is given to those projects which identify and resolve basic human health and safety needs.

III. Four-factor Analysis

The following four-factor analysis will serve as the guide for determining which, if any, language assistance measures the Town of Benton will undertake to provide access to the covered programs for LEP persons.

- A. Number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the Town of Benton or its federally funded programs. Per the 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, the Town's population is 2,230. Approximately 95.7% of the Town's population speaks English, and 4.3% speak a language other than English. 2.3% of the Town's population speaks Spanish or Spanish Creole, and 1.9% speak other Indo-European languages and 0% speak Asian and Pacific Island Languages. No other ethnicity has a sizeable limited English proficiency. The table below shows the LEP percentages for each of the above mentioned languages.

Language 1 (name)	Population That Speaks a Language Other Than English	LEP Number	LEP % of Total Benton Population
Spanish/Spanish Creole	52	26	2.3%
Other Indo-European	43	0	1.9%
Asian and Pacific Island	0	0	0%

1. LCDBG – Eligible applicants to the LCDBG program are non-entitlement communities in Louisiana, which includes the Town of Benton.
2. LGAP – All Louisiana municipalities and parishes are eligible to apply for funds excluding the HUD entitlement cities: Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Bossier Town, Kenner, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, New Orleans, and Shreveport.
3. DRU – The DRU translates actions plans into Vietnamese and Spanish based on census data for impacted areas.

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4. CWEF – All Louisiana municipalities and parishes are eligible to apply for funds excluding the HUD entitlement cities: Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Bossier Town, Kenner, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, New Orleans, and Shreveport.
- B. Frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the programs
 1. LCDBG – Throughout the history of the LCDBG Program the Town has not encountered a LEP person.
 2. LGAP – There are no direct beneficiaries of the LGAP; all funds are granted to local governments.
 3. DRU – DRU does not have any record of encounters with LEP persons.
 4. CWEF – There are no direct beneficiaries of the CWEF Program; all funds are granted to local governments.
- C. Nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program
 1. LCDBG – While LCDBG programs deal mostly with public infrastructure, there is some direct benefit to the beneficiaries of sewer and water hook-ups on private property. Gathering of income data in order to determine income level can result in contacting a LEP person(s). Also, CDBG has a Citizen Participation requirement in order for the Town to identify the community development needs and priorities. It will be necessary to ensure proper communication in order to complete these tasks.
 2. LGAP – There is no direct benefit in this program.
 3. DRU – DRU has various types of programs and participates in direct benefit activities. Also, CDBG has a Citizen Participation requirement in order for the Town to identify the community development needs and priorities. It will be necessary to ensure proper communication in order to complete these tasks.
 4. CWEF – There is no direct benefit in this program.
- D. Resources available and costs to the recipient
 1. LCDBG – Documents determined to be a vital will be translated when contact is made with an LEP person and a language is identified. If necessary, the document will be faxed or emailed to a telephone interpreter for immediate translation by phone. Language assistance measures will be determined as needed upon initial contact and language identification. Also, written translation is available through computer software.
 2. LGAP – No resources are needed, as there are not documents produced which are necessary for public viewing.
 3. DRU - Documents determined to be a vital will be translated when contact is made with an LEP person and a language is identified. If necessary, the document will be faxed or emailed to a telephone interpreter for immediate translation by phone. Language assistance measures will be determined as needed upon initial contact and language identification. Also, written translation is available through computer software.

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4. CWEF - No resources are needed, as there are not documents produced which are necessary for public viewing.

IV. Actions to be taken by the Town of Benton

After careful consideration of the four-factors identified above, the Town of Benton will take the following actions:

- A. The Town has appointed the following Language Access Coordinator to serve for all programs:
 - 1. Stephanie Sullivant-Collier, Town Clerk, 105 Sibley St, Benton, LA 71006.
- B. The Town's LAP will be distributed to all the Town's office employees.
- C. All Town office employees and the Language Access Coordinator will maintain and be trained to use an I Speak Language Identification Document for use during encounters with LEP persons. After the appropriate language has been identified, the Town's Receptionist will contact the Language Access Coordinator for further instructions. If the need to access services is identified either by phone or email, the Town's staff shall immediately contact their Language Access Coordinator who will take appropriate action to ensure meaningful communication.

A motion by Alderman Friday seconded by Alderman Manning to adopt Resolution 3 of 2024 Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT RESIDENTIAL ANTIDISPLACEMENT AND RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Town of Benton has received approval of a Louisiana Community Development Block Grant Program for fiscal year 2021 and 2022 and

WHEREAS, the LCDBG Program requires that all grant recipients adopt by resolution a Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Benton hereby adopts the attached Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan.

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A motion by Alderman Friday seconded by Alderman Manning to adopt Resolution 4 of 2024 Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

ROCK REED WWTP WPPE

19939

BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Benton Rock Reed WWTP informs the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality that the following actions were taken by Town Councilmen:

1. Resolved the Municipal Water Pollution Prevention Environmental Audit Report for January 2023 to December 2023 which is attached to this resolution.

2. Set forth the following actions necessary to maintain permit requirements contained in the Louisiana Pollution Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) permit, Number LA0038784 A.

To continue being good environmental stewards by maintaining our wastewater treatment plant and continuing required analytical analysis in accordance with our current LDEQ permit.

A motion by Alderman Friday seconded by Alderman Manning to adopt Resolution 5 of 2024 Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

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Palmetto WWTP WPP

19939

BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Benton Palmetto WWTP informs the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality that the following actions were taken by Town Councilmen:

1. Resolved the Municipal Water Pollution Prevention Environmental Audit Report for January 2023 to December 2023 which is attached to this resolution.
2. Set forth the following actions necessary to maintain permit requirements contained in the Louisiana Pollution Discharge Elimination System (LPDES)) permit, Number LA0102890 A.

To continue being good environmental stewards by maintaining our wastewater treatment plant and continuing required analytical analysis in accordance with our current LDEQ permit.

A motion by Alderman Cathcart seconded by Alderman Jones to authorize Mayor Horton to negotiate with SBA on a agreement on the property lease. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Mayor Horton stated that at the next meeting we will submit the Ordinance to be introduced and set for public hearing for the water rate increases. Here is what was suggested by Balar who did the rate study.

Residential Inside City: Increase Flat Rate from \$7.00 to \$8.75 (+\$1.75)

Commercial Inside City: Increase Flat Rate from \$7.00 to \$9.00 (+\$2.00)

Residential Outside City: Increase Flat Rate from \$10.00 to \$14.50 (+\$4.00)

Commercial Outside City: Increase Flat Rate from \$10.00 to \$14.75 (+\$4.25)

The council agreed and agreed to move forward.

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A motion by Alderman Jones seconded by Alderman Carr to approve the month to date financials and budget updates. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Mayor Horton gave a brief update on all current projects such as the spray park and the issues with the slab and they had to completely repour the entire slab and the rain has set them back, but they still plan on the project being completed before summer. The street project is complete. The sewer project is still in progress.

A motion by Alderman Friday seconded by Alderman Jone to adjourn. Mayor Horton called for any comments, there being none the following votes recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

COMMENTS

ADJOURN REGULAR SESSION

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