

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 4, 2023**

The Council of the Parish of St. James, State of Louisiana, met in regular session in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent, Louisiana on Wednesday, January 4, 2023, at 7:05 p.m., following the public hearing.

On roll call, the following were recorded present: Council Members Alvin St. Pierre, Jr., Jason Amato, Ryan Louque, Mason Bland, Clyde Cooper, Donald Nash, and Chairwoman Vondra Etienne-Steib.

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Council Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Ingrid Bergeron, Human Resources Director; Eric Deroche, Emergency Preparedness Director; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Rick Webre, Operations Director, and Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor.

The Honorable Vondra Etienne-Steib, Chairwoman, duly convened the Council of the Parish of St. James, State of Louisiana, and stated that the Council was ready for the transaction of business.

Councilman Amato offered the invocation and Councilman St. Pierre led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque the minutes of the December 21, 2023 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque, the minutes of the December 21, 2022 regular meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT'S MONTHLY REPORT

The Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for November 2022 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Bland.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the Council:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Good evening, everyone.

- Despite the freezing temperatures, the lighting of the bonfires was a success. There was a great turnout, and it was awesome to see this tradition continue.
- I would like to congratulate the Lutcher High School Football Team on winning their 9th State Championship. I know the tremendous amount of hard work these young men put in, and it's showed in the way they played. This was an awesome game! Congratulations to the coaches and players on their successful season.
- On today, St James Parish received two Cooperative Endeavor Agreements from the State.
- We received a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement from facility planning and control for repairs to the dock at the Blind River Boat Launch. The Department of Operations will submit engineering and design cost estimates from High Tide Consultants to Facility Planning. Once approved, the preconstruction conference and the bid will be advertised. And again, I'd like to thank Speaker Clay Schexnayder for taking the lead on acquiring one million dollars of Capital Outlay funding for this project.
- Again today, St James Parish also received a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement from Facility Planning and Control for the West Shore Risk Reduction Connection Levee. This levee will connect the two ring levees. The total Capital Outlay allocation for this project is \$18 million, and we currently have 1 million dollars already in cash waiting to be used for design, surveying, and geotechnical services. Parish crews will begin clearing and grubbing the spoil bank along the M-2 and the Lateral 4 canals in the first quarter of 2023 to make way for this new project.
- Today, St James Parish was approved for \$80,000 under the Local Government Assistance Program. This funding will be used to enhance the fuel systems by upgrading fuel storage tanks on the East and West Banks of the Parish. This project will not require a match and will have no impact on the parish's budget due to this grant.
- Today St James Parish was awarded the Public Service Commission Energy Efficiency Grant in the amount of \$49,000. This funding will be used to replace all lighting in the Parish Admin building with LED lighting. This project will not require a match and is being accomplished at no cost to the Parish as well. Over 10 years, this project will save us over \$72,000 dollars.
- During the freeze, we received no damage to St James Parish's water infrastructure facility. While our infrastructure received no damages, unfortunately severe damage was sustained to private infrastructure on the customer side of the meters, which caused substantial loss to water volume and pressure. Drastic measures had to be taken to replenish the system, which caused some residents on the East Bank to lose water for up to 5 hours. I would like to thank our St. James Parish Utilities Department workers who worked tirelessly all weekend long, Christmas Eve day, and Christmas day itself and during the nighttime, sacrificing time with family and friends to keep our water supply going for the residents. I would also like to thank the Town of Lutcher for sending us water, which greatly assisted in supporting our water system efforts.
- Funding has been awarded and design is complete for constructing a new water clarifier at the East Bank water treatment plant. We are waiting on approval from DHH so we can begin. Right now, we currently have the ability to produce 800,000 gallons of water per day at the Convent site, and with the new clarifier we will be able to produce 2 million gallons per day, at the Convent site. The site on the West Bank produces an equal amount.
- Mr. Webre gave each council member a draft of the contract to amend the ordinance on building rentals for their review.
- This concludes my report. God bless each one of you here tonight and your families ,and Bless St. James Parish.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

PRESENTATIONS

- Lutchter High School Football Team was recognized and congratulated for winning the 2022 LHSAA Prep Classic Division II (Non-Select) State Football Championship. A plaque was presented.
- Stacy Lyons, Manager of Government and Public Affairs Office for CN Railway, provided an update on the train derailment that occurred on November 2, 2022. She then answered the Council member's questions.
- Pastor Charles Oatis, Sr. was not in attendance to be recognized on his installation as Pastor of Highway Baptist Church.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

OLD BUSINESS

Update of drainage study for Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – working on the back of Mimosa Street. Half of the canal near the Good Children Hall has been complete. The back of Ellis Street is blocked.

ORDINANCE 22-20, AN ORDINANCE INSTITUTING A SEWER FEE FOR THE TREATMENT OF WASTEWATER FROM, AND THE MAINTENANCE OF THE SEWER SYSTEM IN THE PARKVIEW ESTATES SUBDIVISION, having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted.

After Councilman Bland stated that there was a typo in the 6th paragraph, he stated that it should read “the next term of office will begin at noon on the second Monday of January following the general election. Council Bland offered motion to amend and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a roll call vote showing, Louque, Nash, Bland, Cooper, and Etienne-Steib in favor, and Amato and St. Pierre against, the motion carried. **ORDINANCE 22-21, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE COMPENSATION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**, having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a call vote showing, Cooper, Louque, Bland, Nash, and Etienne-Steib in favor, and Amato and St. Pierre against, the ordinance was adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 23-01, A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE LUTCHER HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM ON WINNING THE 2022 LHSAA PREP CLASSIC DIVISION II (NON-SELECT) STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-02, A RESOLUTION COMMENDING PASTOR CHARLES OATIS, SR. ON HIS INSTALLATION AS PASTOR OF HIGHWAY BAPTIST CHURCH, IN VACHERIE, LOUISIANA, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-03, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JANUARY 6, 2023 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-04, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-05, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #6 FROM TBT CONTRACTING, INC. OF LA, FOR THE EAST BANK RECREATION FACILITY, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE 23-01, AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH AND DEFINE THE ST. JAMES PARISH VISIBLE PRECINCT BOUNDARIES AND POLLING LOCATIONS, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was accepted and ordered filed with the Secretary for public inspection and publication of Notice of Public Hearing, which was scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 18, 2023, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie, and at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 1, 2023 in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE 23-02, AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH AND DEFINE THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was accepted and ordered filed with the Secretary for public inspection and publication of Notice of Public Hearing, which was scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 18, 2023, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie, and at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 1, 2023 in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

INGRID BERGERON – She said she will be reaching out to the council regarding council representation on the COA and CBG Boards. She provided a brief update of the kitchen project.

FELIX BOUGHTON – Began closing out 2022, should take about 60 days and will provide an update on preliminaries.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre thanked Flo Dumas for attending the meeting. He congratulated Latcher High School Football Team on their championship and LSU and Tulane on their success. He expressed condolence to the family of George "Scrap" Hymel. He requested ant treatment at the parks. He said it is good to see progress being made on the West Shore Project. He wished everyone a Happy New Year.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato congratulated the Town of Latcher and Town of Gramercy officials, they took their Oaths of Office tonight and wished them the best of luck. He also congratulated LHS coach on their championship. He wished everyone a Health Happy New Year.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque said he didn't receive calls about gas issues during the cold event and said the upgrade to the infrastructure was paying off. He inquired when the work on Bourbon Canal would begin, and he also said that it is good news on the West Shore Connector Levee.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland thanked Victoria for the social media updates during the holidays and during the freeze event. He expressed appreciation to the Parish President for providing an update on the East Bank clarifier. He extended condolence to Councilman Louque on the death of his grandmother. We wished everyone a Healthy and Happy New Year.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper expressed condolence to the family of Barbara Taylor and Regina Oubre Octave.

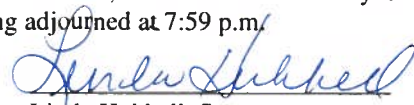
COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash requested an update on the Senior Center building. Mr. Webre indicated that the consolidated plat for the multipurpose building is going to DDG and the purchase agreement is in the hands of the seller of the Diamond Center. Councilman Nash also inquired about the gas tap on Hwy 3127. Mr. Webre indicated that they are waiting on one document. Councilman Nash informed Mr. Webre of a bad hole in the road on Hwy 644, near Wagapak.

CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib had no comment.

President Dufresne clarified to Mr. Laddie Roussel, information that was in an ad in the paper against the Council, that St. James Parish will provide clay for St. John and Ascension Parish levees. He stated for the record that "we don't own a dirt pit, we are not providing clay to anybody, so the Parish is not providing anything, for accuracy".

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary