

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MAY 11, 2021**

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 Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Ryan Larousse, Assistant Director of Operations; Ingrid Leblanc, Human Resources Director; Eric Deroche, Emergency Preparedness Director; and Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor.

Councilman Amato offered the invocation and Councilman Cooper led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Honorable Alvin St. Pierre, Jr., Chairman, 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.

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash, the minutes of the April 28, 2021 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib and seconded by Councilman Amato, the minutes of the April 28, 2021 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 March 2021 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

- Over the last two days, we have experienced another bout of heavy rainfall with nearly 13 inches of rainfall in the last two days. The National Weather Service predicts another 2 to 4 inches of rainfall for our area through tomorrow morning. Crews have been out both Monday and today in boats on both banks of the parish inspecting outfalls and checking for downed trees or other debris in our waterways potentially blocking flow. In addition, our crews have been riding throughout the parish to clear catch basins in advance of the rain and in between rain bands.
- We currently have several pumps in operation to assist with drainage and waterflow. These include 2 weir pumps, 1 tractor pump and a 6 inch diesel pump at the South Vacherie Weir, as well as a tractor pump at Molaison and the west bank landfill.
- Our crews will continue working diligently to check our parish waterways and drainage infrastructure to identify any areas of concern and mitigate any problems. We will continue to remain dedicated to finding additional drainage solutions for problem areas just as we have done over the last year to make major and successful improvements to our drainage infrastructure. I would like to say thank you to all parish employees who continue working hard for our residents in bad weather conditions.

EOC:

- You may have seen some of our recent informative videos and flyers on our social media pages this week regarding National Hurricane Preparedness Week which takes place the second week in May each year.
- This year our EOC staff and our PIO have teamed up to create a public outreach campaign to ensure our residents are informed and armed with information on how they can best prepare themselves and their homes this storm season.
- All of this information and more is available on our parish website under the Emergency Preparedness page. Stay tuned for more to come later this week.

Department of Human Resources:

- The Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs has approved our plans to reopen the Elderly Senior Center on May 24, 2021. Our DHR team is excited and eagerly await the return of our precious seniors and what better month to re-open then during Older American's Month.

DHR is celebrating few national and statewide events the month of May:

- **Including Older American Month.** May is National Older Americans Month. The theme "Communities of Strength", focuses on how older adults have built resilience and strength over their lives through successes, failures, joys, and difficulties, with a special emphasis on the power of connection and engagement in building strong communities.
- *In recognition of Older American Month, DHR and St. James Parish would like to pay tribute to Edith Melancon and Lillian Preyan as the two oldest living residents of St. James Parish. Ms. Melancon being the oldest by 3 months. The information on the oldest living residents was provided through data from the voter's registration and St. James Parish Area Agency on Aging registered seniors list. If there are any other living residents 100 years and older that we have missed, please contact DHR at 225.562.2305, We will recognize them at the next council meeting social media outlets.*
- Week of May 17th will be recognized as "Try Transit" week. This is a statewide initiative through the Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development (DOTD). DHR Transit truly "Keeps the Parish Rolling", by connecting individuals to employment, education, and other resources. Throughout the week of May 17th, transit staff will be handing out giveaways and offer fun activities to encourage people to ride the bus as well as thank current riders for using the service. Everyone is invited to "Try Transit". To schedule a ride, please contact the transit department at 225-562-2352.

- Finally, there are more than 1000 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across the nation. All share an anti-poverty mission that helps empower families. The Department of Human Resources is the designated local Community Action Agency of St. James Parish. During the month of May, DHR will highlight and celebrate the life changing, impactful work CAAs are committed to do each day. DHR staff will be hosting a biannual staff meeting throughout the month of May. The theme this year is focusing on staff capacity building and development. Trainings in staff sensitivity, stress management, and other mental health issues that can impact the workforce will be conducted throughout the month.
- Additionally, DHR, in partnership with the greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, will host a Food Drive at the Welcome Senior Center on May 20th and Tuesday May 25th at the Convent Senior Center. The residents will receive a 30 lb. Food Box will include meat, dairy and produce. Its drive thru only must be a resident of the parish.

Recreation:

- On the recreation department is now accepting full team applicants for the Men's Adult Softball League which will begin May 24th. The league will take place at Paulina Park. Anyone interested in registering a team can call our recreation offices.
- Our parish corn hole league is wrapping up with final games on May 17th.
- Youth baseball is still taking place with teams playing on the East Bank at Lutcher Park on Tuesday & Thursdays and at South Vacherie Park on the Westbank on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Operations

- Crews have been riding each evening to locate non-operational street lights and a report will be put together and sent to Entergy within the next few weeks.
- Our Highway 643 Drainage Mitigation project is still in the design phase, with T Baker Smith currently working on a more efficient design which will allow for a quicker project not requiring utility lines to be moved.
- I had mentioned last council meeting the Paulina gas infrastructure project was complete. However, while in the process of condemning the old PVC lines, there were loops discovered that were previously unknown to our utilities crews which caused four residents to temporarily lose gas. Over the weekend, crews made four new services and gas was restored to those 4 residents.
- This week, Barber Brothers will be mobilizing equipment to begin asphalt patchwork throughout the parish, weather permitting. In the next few weeks, council members will receive the operations recommended list of priority roads for preservation or full renovation.
- We are expecting a geotechnical engineering survey to be complete within the coming weeks of the South Vacherie Levee. In the meantime, we plan to deploy aqua dams on approximately one thousand feet of the levee to provide surge protection for this upcoming hurricane season until permanent repairs can be made to the levee.
- A few updates in District 5:
 - The District 5 drainage study is in the planning stages now. An update will be provided at our next council meeting regarding a timeline for the survey.
 - The District 5 multipurpose building has been cleaned up with old construction materials removed from the site. The concession stands and bathrooms are nearing completion and expected to be operational in mid-to-late June.

PUBLIC COMMENT - No public comments were received on agenda items that required a vote.

PRESENTATIONS – None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS - None

OLD BUSINESS

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – working to identify an appropriate route.
- Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update – going to look at buildings in surrounding Parishes with Architect on May 21st.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 21-93, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE MAY 14, 2021 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-94, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-95, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING JUNE 2, 2021 AS PAUL KELLER DAY IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-96, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING A DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY FOR THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL IN THE EVENT COUNCIL SECRETARY IS ABSENT AND UNAVAILABLE TO ACT IN THIS CAPACITY, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

Councilman Bland made the following comments: Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. To our St. James Parish Residents, you are not alone. Now more than ever after this past year of quarantine, we need to find ways to stay connected with our community. No one should feel alone or without the information, support and help they need. Help us spread the word through awareness, support, and advocacy. Today I invited members of the Lutcher High School Hope Squad to our meeting, where these courageous young adults stand up bravely with their peers in which these students are trained to actively listen so that they can help peers who are struggling with mental health issues such as depression and thought of suicide. I applaud

this group for stepping up in a tough environment such as high school to make a difference! Additionally, within the local group, Alex Foret and Ashlyn St. Pierre have been appointed to the National Hope Squad. With that today, I make a motion to declare May as Mental Health Month as Thanks to these courageous high school students and to bring awareness this cause.

RESOLUTION 21-97, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING MAY 2021 AS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-98, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF MAY AS COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-99, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR KITCHEN EQUIPMENT FOR TITLE IHC NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES ELDERLY PROGRAM, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-100, A RESOLUTION AMENDING CONTRACT WITH TRIO COMMUNITY MEALS PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS ELIOR NORTH AMERICA'S CORP, D/B/A BATEMENT COMMUNITY LIVING FOR FOOD SERVICES TO SENIOR CONGREGATE AND HOMEBOUND MEAL NUTRITION PROGRAM, was offered and moved adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-101, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF MAY AS OLDER AMERICANS MONTH IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-102, A RESOLUTION TO PROCLAIM MAY 17-23, 2021 AT "TRY TRANSIT" WEEK IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-103. A RESOLUTION REJECTING ALL THE BIDS RECEIVED FOR THE HWY 642/HUMBLE STREET – INDUSTRIAL STREET TO S. ANGELLE STREET, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-104, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR INTERIOR RENOVATION FOR THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE PROJECT, was offered and move for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE 21-06, AN ORDINANCE AMEDNING SECTION 114 OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES TO INCREASE WATER RATES FOR THE USERS OF THE ST. JAME SPARHS WATER DISTRICTS 1 AND 2 was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Nash and was seconded by Councilman Amato. 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 Wednesday, May 26, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ERIC DEROCHE – Thanked Meredith for her help with the videos. He also thanked Ryan Donadieu for everything he did with the videos.

INGRID LEBLANC – Acknowledged Paul Keller and the many services that came under his leadership.

FELIX BOUGHTON – Started the process to access the American Rescue Funds. Requested to adopt a resolution to pay specific invoices prior to Council approval, due to timing differences with certain bills.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato thanked President Dufresne and everyone for meeting regarding the I10 interchange lighting project. He inquired about a proclamation for Juneteenth. President Dufresne stated it will be on the next agenda. Councilman Amato welcomed Courtney. He inquired about redistricting and the next steps to move forward.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque suggested to have the work order report look ahead into the bigger work orders, about two weeks out. He expressed his frustration with Entergy.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland thanked the Hope Squad for attending the meeting in support of Mental Health Month. He said some residents are taking on water and will do a work order for each property.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper congratulated Courtney. He requested a condolence letter to the family of Jackie Ferchaud Levy. He inquired about the status of the light-up stop signs. He said the solar light at 3219/3127 is not working. He said the grass on the Sunshine Bridge service is road is very tall, and he inquired if a fence will be installed around the water park at the District 5 park.

COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib congratulated the 2021 graduates. She sent condolence to the Ferchaud-Levy family. She thanked State Rep. Ken Brass, Senator Ed Price, and anyone else who

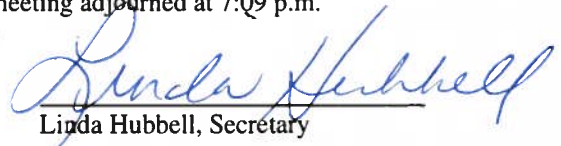
was instrumental in getting money coming to St. James Parish. She requested to have question and answer information for the process and distribution of tarps, sandbags, etc., for hurricane season.

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash inquired about having sand available for those experiencing flooding. Mr. Deroche said that they do not pre-stage sand. Councilman Nash requested engineering design from the back part of N. Rosary to Spruce regarding drainage. Mr. Larousse indicated there are studies for these areas and will forward them. Councilman Nash requested to have some digging done in the back of Maple Street. He requested the status of the culvert on Hwy 643. Mr. Larousse indicated that a plan is being presented to DOTD now. He asked to move forward with putting an additional outlet at Falgoust St. going across to Ricky Road. President Dufresne gave kudos to the operations crew for managing the weir level.

CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE – Chairman St. Pierre welcomed and thanked Courtney. He said Gramercy Recreation District is working some activities with the Parish. They are working toward the census. The meeting was scheduled for tonight because of the Police Jury Association Convention this week. He acknowledged Tommy Martinez, from Sen. John Kennedy's office, for attending the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib and seconded by Councilman Bland and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary