

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JUNE 23, 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 Vacherie, Louisiana on Wednesday, June 23, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Rick Webre, 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 Bland led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Honorable Vondra Etienne-Steib, Vice-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.

### **MINUTES**

On a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Amato, the minutes of the June 9, 2021 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 Nash, the minutes of the June 9, 2021 regular meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

- I want to begin my report tonight by mentioning how thankful and blessed St. James Parish is to have missed any major impacts from Tropical Storm Claudette. Several surrounding Gulf States were not so lucky, and our thoughts and prayers are with them.
- This is an important reminder for us all that Hurricane season is here, and we must remain alert and prepared for any tropical systems that may come our way. As part of our preparedness efforts, our EOC staff recently hosted a hurricane training for our employees. During this training, staff members walked through a storm simulation identifying key objectives and actions during the preparation, response, and recovery stages of an event.
- This allowed for open dialogue and feedback amongst our staff as we walked phase by phase through a storm related event. Thank you to our Emergency Preparedness Director, Eric Deroche, and your staff for putting this training together. I am very confident in our employee's dedication to our residents and our ability as a parish government to prepare and respond.

### **OPERATIONS**

- On yesterday, we opened bid for the second phase of Humble Street project, which includes North and South Angelle Streets. This is a \$1.2 million dollar project and the funds we secured from the Interior Drainage Hazard Mitigation Grant. Work can be expected to begin in the next couple of weeks.
- Issued a task order for the enhancement of the clarifier at the East Bank water treatment plant.
- We successfully closed the Molaison sewer LCDBG grant and we do not have to pay back the \$800,000.00, now we are in conversations with the OCD to request the sanctions against us be lifted so we can become eligible again to receive more grants monies.
- We started maintenance on the levee in South Vacherie at the weir. We identified areas that needed attention and we are making necessary improvements as fast as we can.
- We issued a task order to High Tide for David Planation subdivision behind Sandwich World for drainage mitigation.
- The road patch work is ongoing on both the East and West banks of the Parish.
- We are currently working on major drainage outfall canals in the Magnolia area and excavation is nearly complete.
- We applied herbicides to the Baytree community canal and we will be excavating obstructed areas to improve drainage in the area, and this area will also be included in the 5<sup>th</sup> District drainage survey currently underway.
- 5<sup>th</sup> District concession stand is near completion.
- The West Bank reception hall landscaping has been completed and was donated by Formosa. Formosa also donated the sign and also new landscaping at the West Bank Library.
- We currently installing playground equipment at the Gramercy park and we contracting the splash park.
- We issued a task order to DDG for conceptual design for the West Bank Multipurpose building.
- We issued a task order again to Meyers Engineering for subdivision inspections.
- Two weeks ago, we hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony to recognize the newly renovated District 4 Park in Convent. I want to thank Councilman Bland for putting this effort together. This Park was much needed in this area to provide children a safe place to play and enjoy with their families. The basketball courts, covered seating areas, splash park and playground equipment would not have been possible without generous donations from our industry partners including Nucor, Associated Terminals, and Mosaic.
- On tomorrow, if the weather allows it, I will take part in a site visit with the Army Corps of Engineers to discuss the options for our alternative alignment and connecting the two current proposed ring levees as part of the Westshore Levee project.
- I want to provide an important announcement: our trash collection contractor, Waste Management, has recently made some changes to the collection days in our unincorporated areas on both our East and West banks. Waste Management is performing this action to improve route and waste service efficiencies. They have also added an additional truck for collection. All Collection Day changes will go into effect on July 5th. Residents located in

the Town limits of Gramercy and Lutcher will not have any service day changes and will remain on Monday/Thursday pick up. All West Bank residents will be collected on Tuesday and Friday.

- ✓ On Hwy 3125 from Hwy 70 to and including Admiral's Landing and North Nobile areas will be picked up on Tuesdays and Fridays. Also, on Tuesday and Friday will be the Hwy 642 area including Longview and Bourbon subdivisions.
  - ✓ From Hwy 642 West along Hwy 44 through Convent, pick will now be up on Monday and Thursday.
  - ✓ From Hwy 642, going East, toward the Town of Lutcher, along Hwy 44, picked up on Tuesday and Friday.
  - Our GIS team has created a map which identifies the new collection days by zone which will be available on our website beginning June 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - Additionally, Waste Management has mailed postcards to each resident alerting them of their new trash pickup day as well as placing a formal notice in the local papers beginning tomorrow, June 24<sup>th</sup> as well.
  - Residents with questions may call our Citizen Service Center for more information at 225-562-2500.
- Hopefully these changes will help with the disruptions our residents have been experiencing with trash pickup.

#### **DHR:**

- Our Department of Human Resources has several available programs open to residents currently. Two of these include Emergency Food & Shelter Assistance and Financial Assistance. Individuals who have experienced a documented financial hardship or economic emergency in the last 90 days and who can provide required documentation are eligible to apply for assistance. More information about these programs can be found on our parish website.
- Unfortunately, DHR was not awarded the Youth Build Grant during this grant cycle. DHR has a contingency plan to operate a small program that will mirror the Youth Build program design through other funding opportunities. DHR will reapply for the Youth Build grant program during the next open application process.
- In partnership with the 5th District Summer Camp program, DHR will be providing meals for all camp participants and camp staff for the final week of the camp activities. Support for this program was made possible through CSBG Cares funds.

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

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

Javon Butler and Andrea Hollins with SeLah Productions shared information of their mentoring program.

Mr. Glen Millet, Chairman, presented the Planning Commission's annual report.

#### **APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**RESOLUTION 21-142, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING JANET JOHNSON AS A DISTRICT 6 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

At this time Councilman Bland made a motion to amend to add a resolution appointing a person to fill the vacancy in District 4, due to the death of Jonnie Shorty, Sr. Councilman Nash offered a second, and after a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the motion carried.

After Councilman Bland explained that this position will be filled until a special election can be held to fill this vacancy, he offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 21-143, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING LAVERNE MCKINLEY TO FILL THE VACANCY OF CONSTABLE FOR THE 4<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT OF ST. JAMES PARISH, STATE OF LOUISIANA**, was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – no new update
- Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update – the land for the proposed building is currently designated for the fire department. Will meet with DDG for more in depth conversations about the building.. The Hospital is anticipating a response on the purchase of property.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION 21-144, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JUNE 25, 2021 PAYROLL**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-145, 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 Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-146, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT BETWEEN ST. JAMES PARISH AND TOWN OF GRAMERCY AND TOWN OF LUTCHER AND SOUTH CENTRAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION FOR REDISTRICTING**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-147, A RESOLUTION SCHEDULING A BOARD OF REVIEW FOR SEPTEMBER 15, 2021**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-148, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF FORET CONTRACTING GROUP, LLC FOR THE INTERIOR RENOVATIONS OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-149, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH UNIQUE CONSTRUCTION, LLC FOR THE EOC RESTROOM RENOVATIONS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and was seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-150, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH MMR CONSTRUCTORS, INC FOR SECURITY CAMERAS AND RELATED ACCESSORIES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-151, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT AND/OR DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, CAA TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH XP SYNERGY COMPANIES TO PROVIDE COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC AWARENESS, AND MARKETING RESOURCES FOR ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-152, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT AND/OR THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES TO SUBMIT FUNDING APPLICATION AND TO NEGOTIATE AND SIGN COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT(S) WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HOUSING PRESERVATION GRANT TO IMPLEMENT A HOUSING RESTORATION INITIATIVE IN ST. JAMES PARISH IN THE YEAR OF 2021**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-153. A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING JUNE 18, 2021 AS A ST. JAMES PARISH HOLIDAY IN OBSERVANCE OF JUNETEENTH DAY**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-154, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH TIGER DEMOLITION INC. FOR DEMOLITION OF BLIGHTED PROPERTY**, was offered and move for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-155, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH UNIQUE MAINTENANCE SERVICES, LLC FOR LAWN MAINTNANCE OF BLIGHTED PROPERTY**, was offered and moved for adopting by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

Councilman Nash requested to table A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH SUGARVIEW ESTATES SUBDIVISION – PHASE 1, based on not enough information to the council. After a brief discussion, Councilman Bland offered a second, and after a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the motion carried.

President Dufresne requested to table A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH TRI-STATE CONSULTANTS FOR TRAINING SERVICES AND CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE PERMITTING DEPARTMENT to allow his staff to continue negotiations process in order to obtain the best, most cost-effective terms. Councilman Bland offered a motion to table with Councilman Nash offering a second. After a unanimous roll call vote, with St. Pierre and Louque absent, the motion carried.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**FELIX BOUGHTON** – The 2020 annual audit is substantially complete. The audit presentation will be at the June 7<sup>th</sup> council meeting. We budgeted a 10% reduction in revenues, and after a quick conversation with the Assessor, it appears we will not have to take the reduction.

**RICK WEBRE** – had no comment.

**ERIC DEROCHE** – reminder that the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update meeting is next week.

**INGRID LEBLANC** – had no comment.

#### **COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT**

**COUNCILMAN NASH** – Councilman Nash requested the status of the culvert on Hwy 643 and the cleaning of canals. He said the owner of property of Ricky Road has agreed to give a right of way to install a culvert instead of spraying.

**COUNCILMAN COOPER** – Councilman Cooper requested the status of grass cutting along the service road at the Sunshine Bridge. He said we need to get Entergy to make sure electricity is cut off on blighted property. Requested the Entergy Rep. attend a meeting to discuss a reporting process, he had a situation with a live down power line.

**COUNCILMAN BLAND** – Councilman Bland requested a condolence letter be sent to the family of Jonnie Shorty, Sr. He thanked Meredith for her efforts with the ribbon cutting in the District 4 park. He thanked those residents who attended and asked residents get involved. He stated the Union Convent area needs grass cutting. He inquired about an agreement with the railroad company to jet culverts under the railroad.

**COUNCILMAN LOUQUE** – Councilman Louque was absent.

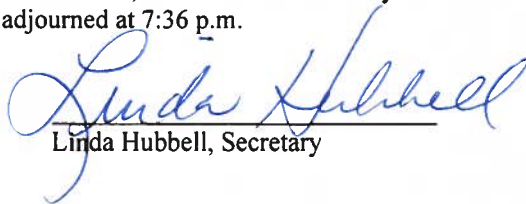
**COUNCILWOMAN AMATO** – Councilman Amato thanked everyone who worked with him on the I-10 Interstate lighting project. A resolution is forthcoming to approve with DOTD, making it official. He requested, for the next meeting, an update of the environmental review.

**CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE** – Chairman St. Pierre was absent

**VICE-CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB** – Vice Chairwoman Etienne-Steib said she voted yes to table the Sugarview resolution but stated she feels it is in the best interest of the Parish to be able to manage and maintain any sewer project. Requested a condolence letter be sent to the family of Betty Foster and Jonnie Shorty, Sr. She inquired about the rental policy of the parks. She said we need to clean up St. James Parish, especially in Magnolia and she inquired about signs previously purchase by the beautification board. She thanked all members of boards that serve without pay.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary