

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JULY 7, 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 Wednesday, July 7, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

On roll call, the following were recorded present: Council Members Jason Amato, Ryan Louque, Mason Bland, Donald Nash, and Chairman Alvin St. Pierre, Jr. Council Members Clyde Cooper and Vondra Etienne-Steib 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 Nash 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 June 23, 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 May 2021 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, Mr. Chairman. Good evening everyone. I hope that each of you and our community had a happy, safe and festive Fourth of July weekend.

Many of you may know, Mr. Dudley Leblanc from Assumption Parish who has worked with our local VFW for many years and made a significant impact on our community, passed away over the weekend. I would like to offer my condolences.

Last week, Myself and Director Webre escorted a team of engineers with the US Army Corps around flood prone areas of our parish including a boat tour down canals and inland waterways along the powerlines. It was imperative for this group to see firsthand the challenges we face in our drainage and to better understand the importance of securing an alternative alignment for the proposed Westshore levee system in our Parish.

Also last week, I attended a Restart Celebration at Occidental in Convent as they celebrated their facility operating at full capacity for the first time since the onset of Covid. This is great news for many of our residents who are employed by this facility and for our Parish as our economy continues growth and recovery following the impacts of 2020.

Over the weekend on Saturday, I attended a rescheduled Juneteenth celebration held at the Lucher library. I'd like to thank Marlisha Williams and Rondell Joseph for planning this event and for working diligently in our community and with our Youth.

Myself and my staff have participated in a series of meetings regarding the potential establishment of a cultural district in our Parish. This will allow for tax incentives to individuals interested in revitalizing historic buildings and businesses along our town's main streets. We welcome input from council members and the public on this and look forward to further discussion on the matter.

I would like to Congratulate Mr. Paul Aucoin, Chairman of our Economic Development Board for his recent award, the C. Alvin Bertel award given by the World Trade Center in New Orleans. This award is presented each year to an individual who has made significant contributions to the Louisiana Port and Maritime Community. Mr. Aucoin is also currently serving as the Director of the Port.

I want to provide a quick update on our environmental impact study being conducted by Atlas. I have emailed each Council member a copy of the status report by our consultant and look forward to its completion by the end of the month.

**DHR:**

- Our Department of Human Resources was recently approved for another year of operations funded 100% through CARES funds for Transit Services. This will cover all expenditures such as transit salaries, supplies, fuel, oil, insurance, and vehicle maintenance.
- Our senior centers are averaging 10 people per day and have now been open for a full month. DHR plans to add new activities to the senior centers including things like jewelry making, floral making and puzzle activity.
- Also, DHR will be hosting outreach events to educate seniors on **The Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) program**. These will be held at each senior center to encourage and assist Medicare beneficiaries to apply for programs that will help to lower the costs of their Medicare premiums, copayments, and prescription drug cost. Seniors can save up to \$900 in benefits if qualified.

**Finance:**

- Our new health insurance went into effect July 1<sup>st</sup>. Our employees and retirees have expressed sincere gratitude and thanks for both the savings received and increased benefits.

- Additionally, you will hear from our auditors tonight, as they present a summary of our audit report for the 2020 fiscal year. I'm proud to say we have concluded our audit process with no findings.

**Emergency Preparedness:**

- Our Emergency Preparedness Department is continuing to move forward with the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update and anticipate the plan's completion by the deadline. As part of this update process, the team has launched a public survey to gather input about public perception of hazards in the parish. The survey results will be utilized in the development of the plan. Anyone interested in taking the survey can visit the home page of our website at [www.stjamesla.com](http://www.stjamesla.com).

**Communications:**

- Our communications team recently launched an Instagram page for St. James Parish Government. This is to increase our viewership across a wide range of popularly used platforms. We can now be found on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.
- In addition to our social media presence expansion, our website redesign is coming along as scheduled and we are anticipating the new website to launch in September of this year.

**Operations:**

I'd like to provide a few updates on some of the many ongoing projects.

- I'm happy to note the Drainage Mitigation Project in Magnolia is moving along well despite the large amount of rain our area has received in the last month. Within the next few weeks, crews begin clearing the front side of the tracks.
- The Humble Street Phase 2 project will continue moving forward with a notice to proceed after tonight's council meeting.
- The District 5 concession stand should be complete by the end of this month.
- The East Bank Recreation Facility has been engineered and currently being advertised for bid.
- The West Bank Recreation Facility requires a task order to develop conceptual drawings of the new facility and property negotiation is still ongoing.
- The Gramercy Recreation District splash park and playground equipment is in construction.
- I'd also like to address some residents concerns regarding the dock at the Boat Club. I know this has been of concern for many of our residents. Our Operations crews will begin to remove the old and damaged docks in preparation for replacement. We have an item on the agenda tonight to advertise for bids for the bulkhead and dock improvements project at the boat club. I hope this puts residents concerns at ease.
- As a reminder, this past Monday began the new trash collection days by Waste Management. An enormous effort was made to share this information in all forums to ensure our residents were aware of this change. However, anyone needing more information or need to identify the route schedule for their area can visit the home page of our website where we have created a map outlining the collection days. As always, our citizen service center is always available to answer questions. Hopefully this improves the service interruptions many residents have been experiencing.

I will end my report with some exciting news about the Pumpkin Patch. The Pumpkin Patch will be returning this year! I'd like to thank the many, many years our Lions Club solely put on this great event and their dedicated service to our community. Due to Covid-19 and declining age of Lions Club members, leaders within the organization expressed the inability to continue organizing this event. We have agreed for St. James Parish Government to take over organizing and operating the pumpkin patch at our welcome center. I know that this event is something our children look forward to each year and we wanted to be sure the tradition is continued. The Lion's Club will still host their annual 5k run in conjunction with the Pumpkin Patch and with a one-day fall festival that we are exploring the possibility of hosting as well. We are still in the early stages of planning and will have more information as soon as possible.

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

**PRESENTATIONS**

Matt Jewel, St. Charles Parish President addressed the Council about Parishes Advocating for Coastal Endurance (PACE) and the Parish President's Association and how being active members in these organizations can benefit St. James Parish.

Tommy Naquin with Postlethwite & Netterville presented the 2020 Financial and Compliance Audit report.

Mr. Glen Duncan shared information of the Louisiana State Flag and presented a new Louisiana State Flag for display.

Donavon Duffy with Meyer Engineers shared information regarding the design and function of the new treatment plant in Molaison and Melanie Caillouet with Providence Engineers shared information on the design of the SugarView Subdivision sewer infrastructure. After the presentations, a discussion took place. Mr. Duffy and Ms. Caillouet answered questions from the Council and Parish President.

**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS** - None

**OLD BUSINESS**

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – will have a meeting with the plant manager in two weeks.
- Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update – DDG is still working on the design.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION 21-156, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JULY 9, 2021 PAYROLL**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-157, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and

seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-158, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR DRONE DETECTION AND RELATED ACCESSORIES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-159, A RESOLUTION TO REJECT BIDS FOR LIMESTONE AND RIP RAP**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-160, A RESOLUTION TO REJECTING ALL THE BIDS RECEIVED FOR FILL SAND, MISSISSIPPI RIVERSILT-BATTURE, AND CLAY**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-161, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR SAND, SOIL, AND AGGREGATE**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-162, A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT BID AND ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH LA CONTRACTOR ENTERPRISE, LLC FOR HWY 642/HUMBLE STREET DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS-INDUSTRIAL STREET TO SOUTH ANGELLE STREET PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-163, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO A MOSQUITO CONTROL CONTRACT WITH MOSQUITO CONTROL SERVICES, LLC**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-164, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO ACCEPT AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH FORET CONTRACTING GROUP, LLC FOR THE INTERIOR RENOVATIONS PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-165, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT EXTENSION WITH DRC EMERGENCY SERVICES FOR DEBRIS REMOVAL**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-166. A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT EXTENSION WITH TETRA TECH FOR DEBRIS MONITORING**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-167, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT EXTENSION WITH MATHERNE'S MARKET FOR EMERGENCY FEEDING**, was offered and move for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-168, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARISH PRESIDENT PETER DUFRESNE TO SIGN A RENEWAL CONTRACT WITH ELECTRONIC BUSINESS SYSTEMS, INC.**, was offered and moved for adopting by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-169, A RESOLUTION TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR THE BLIND RIVER BOAT LAUNCH BULKHEAD AND DOCK IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman Nash made a motion to revise the CEA to change the reimbursement amount to \$90,000 and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a roll call vote showing Bland and Nash in favor, Amato, Louque, and St. Pierre against, and Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the motion failed. Councilman Amato then offered a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION 21-170, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT BETWEEN ST. JAMES PARISH AND SUGARVIEW ESTATES SUBDIVISION -PHASE 1**, as presented and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a roll call vote showing Amato, Louque, Bland, and St. Pierre in favor, Nash against, and Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-171, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SIGNING OF REVISED AND/OR NEW TITLE III BUDGET BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS AND THE ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2021-2022**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-172, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO SELL MOVABLE SURPLUS PROPERTY AT A PUBLIC AUCTION**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-173, A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF WORK PERFORMED BY FELICIANA WELDERS, INC., IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CERTIFICATE OF SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION, FOR THE PAULINA GAS INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT-PHASE 2 PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Cooper and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**INGRID LEBLANC** – will re-advertise kitchen equipment at the next meeting.

**FELIX BOUGHTON** – the budget process began today, and an email was sent requesting input and gave deadlines. He said he requested suggestions to make the process better but said this will be his 35<sup>th</sup> governmental budget and said he believes St. James Parish has one of the best processes in the State because the process starts at the legislative level, works it way back down to the administrative level, then full circle back to the legislative level. He said Mrs. Waguespack probably came up with the process and said it is one of the better ones in the State.

**COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT**

**COUNCILMAN AMATO** – Councilman Amato said he is looking forward to getting the Environmental Audit report. He said it was a great job with the profile of St. James Parish in the audit presentation. He recognized Mr. Tommy Martinez who attended the meeting and thanked him for his support. He indicated that the Lutchet Mayor and Council are appreciative of the call center and how the Parish supports the residents of Lutchet, especially with tree removal.

**COUNCILMAN LOUQUE** – Councilman Louque had no comment.

**COUNCILMAN BLAND** – Councilman Bland requested an update of the renaming of Central Project St. to Central Crossing Street. Received an update on the bike path for both East and West Banks and as soon as he hears back on the grant award he will let everyone know so they can place the contract on the agenda to move forward with the project.

**COUNCILMAN COOPER** – Councilman Cooper was absent.

**COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB** – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib was absent.

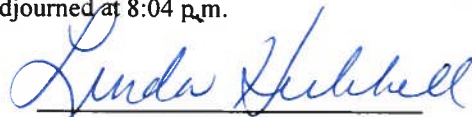
**COUNCILMAN NASH** – Councilman Nash requested an updated of the Hwy 643 culvert repair for the next meeting. He also inquired about the levee project and said the canals look good.

**CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE** – Chairman St. Pierre congratulated the Council Secretary for becoming the Vice-President of OPAO, Organization of Parish Administrative Officials. He thanked Mr. Webre for the meeting invite with the Corps and said he was sorry he couldn't attend. He said Gramercy Recreation is moving ahead, new splash park and playground, and the new ADA park is coming also. He thanked Mrs. Leblanc for her help.

President Dufresne thanked the Council for their professionalism displayed this afternoon, and their willingness to agree to disagree. Councilman Bland agreed with President Dufresne.

**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 8:04 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary