

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 3, 2022**

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, August 3, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

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, Department of Human Resources Director; Eric Deroche, Emergency Preparedness Director; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Rick Webre, Operations Director, and Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor. Mr. Vic Franckiewicz, special counsel, was also in attendance.

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 Cooper led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Amato the minutes of the July 20, 2022 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Nash the minutes of the July 20, 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 June 2022 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Louque.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the Council:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Good evening, everyone.

- I'd like to begin by reminding everyone that Covid-19 still exists. Please be aware and follow guidelines if you or anyone close to you are experience symptoms, please protect yourself and especially our seniors.
- Market Days have been a huge success so far. We have hosted 2 events this summer, and the next Market Day will be on August 13th from 8am to 1 pm. Our Parish recently lost The Ferry Landing to a fire, a huge loss for our community. The Ferry Landing as well as some of their vendors and local small businesses and organizations will have products for sale at the Market Day. I'd like to invite you all to come out and support our businesses.
- Right now, we have 86.5% of St James Parish Employees that reside inside the parish. We have 33 out-of-parish employees, but half of those have family ties here, which brings our ratio up to 94.7% of employees that either live in St James Parish or have family ties here.
- The Parish does have multiple current job openings. For more information, please visit our website to apply.
- I would like to congratulate Linda Hubbell on a very successful OPAO Conference. The conference was very beneficial to all who attended.
- Last week I hosted a Town Hall along with Councilman Nash with many Vacherie residents to update them on the status of the senior center.
- This weekend Emily Loupe was crowned Miss St James Parish, and Cali Boudreaux was crowned Teen St. James Parish. I would like to congratulate both young women on their accomplishments. I know they will make us proud this year.
- The Department of Operations installed a new culvert on Highway 643. This culvert will help in preventing flooding west of Highway 643 up to 644. The work was performed by in-house drainage crews and was completed ahead of schedule. Highway 643 is now open to traffic.
- The roofs on both water treatment plants in Convent and Vacherie that were storm damaged by Hurricane Ida are nearing completion. Convent is at 80% complete and Vacherie is about 65% complete.
- Pump number 1 at the Vacherie Pumping Station has been removed and is being remanufactured by Associated Pumps. Two-week completion time is anticipated.
- Recent rain showers have caused minor delays in the David Plantation subdivision drainage project. Culverts have been ordered and received by most residents, and work will resume weather permitting.
- A roadway patching quote is expected to be advertised before the end of the month. This will allow needed patchwork to be completed ahead of crack sealing and preservations. Road rehabilitation will follow soon after.
- Drainage channels have been cleared along the entire length of the Baytree community canal to the St. James canal. Additionally, the drainage channel on Oubre Street Number 2 is complete, with Oubre Number 1 in progress. After communicating with Facility Planning and Control, the contract for surveying and task order number 2 has been tentatively approved for processing.
- The natural gas metering station in Grand Point is on schedule to begin replacement on August 11. This work is being completed by Gulf South Pipelines.
- The Interconnect Agreement for the metering station in Vacherie on Highway 20 has been executed with Acadian Gas Pipelines, with surveying being scheduled next.
- The Convent water plant clarifier project is scheduled to advertise for bid by the end of August or beginning of September.
- Piles have been driven, geotechnical surveys have been completed, and concrete forms are being constructed for the new DHR building in Lutchet.

- Red iron and external metal sheeting has been completed on The East Bank Recreation Building and it is now an enclosed structure. Work continues on all interior infrastructure. Soon it will be ready to host biddy basketball.
- Final coordinations are being made between Operations, High Tide Consultants, and DHH for the approval and completion of a new location for the St James Parish ARC. An in-house crew will ensure ADA compliance for the FRTC that will be a tentative location for the West Bank Senior Center.
- I am pleased to announce that we will be bringing back our Pumpkin Patch this year. The event will be held October 3-9. On the 8th, the Pumpkin Patch will combine with our St James Parish Market Day.
- I would like to extend my formal congratulations to West St James Farm Bureau, our July Small Business of the Month. The Economic Development Board was proud to recognize this outstanding local business and recognize their hard work and dedication to the people of St. James.
- Louisiana's River Parishes and American Cruise Line have entered a new partnership. American Cruise Lines will be adding the River Parishes as a destination on their cruise line, with a dock right here in Vacherie at the old ferry landing. This partnership is a cause for celebration as it will potentially bring many tourists to our parish and provide additional income to our local businesses.
- The Emergency Preparedness Department is working to create a Training Division. IT and Personal are working together to implement a strategy for the creation of this team.
- Yesterday, Governor Edwards and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness announced an Additional \$253 million to make Hurricane Ida Parishes more resilient. St James Parish will receive a combined total of \$8,241,681. This includes the money Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.
- As I come to a close, I'd like to remind each of you that we are quickly approaching the peak of hurricane season. Please take all precautionary steps you can, and ensure you have an emergency plan and kit ready in the event we are impacted by a storm.

God bless everyone here tonight, and God bless St James Parish. This concludes my report.

President Dufresne then answered the Council Members questions.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

PRESENTATIONS – None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilman St. Pierre offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 22-160, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING STEVEN BOURGEOIS AS A DISTRICT 1 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD.** Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building – no additional update.

Update of drainage study for Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – Councilman Nash requested to have the area behind Maple Street cleaned.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 22-161, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE AUGUST 5, 2022 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 22-162, 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 Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-163, RESOLUTION AMENDING THE MASTER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH CRESCENT ENGINEERING & MAPPING, LLC FOR THE ST. JAMES PARISH 2022 ROAD REHABILITATION PROGRAM TO INCREASE THE CONTRACT AMOUNT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-164, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID RECEIVED FOR HYDRAULIC EXTRICATION TOOLS FROM MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY SERVICES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

After Mr. Vic Franckiewicz explained the ordinance and the Council Members questions were answered **PROPOSED ORDINANCE 22-08, AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A MORATORIUM ON CERTAIN COMMERCIAL SOLAR FACILITIES BY AMENDING SECTION 82-25 OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES,** was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Amato 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, August 17, 2022, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ERIC DEROCHE – Our first permanent PW (FEMA claims) were approved and obligated for the repairs to the weir in South Vacherie. We are still progressing with the other PWs. FEMA has raised the threshold for small projects to large projects to \$1 million, which should make the reimbursement process easier for some projects.

FELIX BOUGHTON –The bid threshold increased from \$30,000 to \$60,000 effective August 1st. Budget requests are needed by August 19th. Parks and Recs will be an issue next year. American Rescue Plan allocated \$4.1 million last year for utility infrastructure improvements, we received half of that allotment last July and should receive the last installment within the next 30 days.

RICK WEBRE – We will be changing the process for the way we bid projects. He then provided an explanation.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre expressed appreciation for the work done at Gramercy Park. He said the David Plantation project is moving forward, and he requested Mr. Webre go with him to Ferrera Canal to look at it to move forward.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato congratulated Mayor Patrick St. Pierre, Alderman Batiste and Alderman St. Pierre on their re-election, and wished best of luck to those who are running in the upcoming election. He said the Town of Lutchter approved the bonding of \$1.75 million of taxable hurricane recovery revenue bonds and he thanked the Parish Administration for their assistance.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque said he received a property complaint about tall grass at Dollar General on Hwy 3125. Mr. Webre provided a status of the gas system grant funding, per Councilman Louque request. Councilman Louque said he received issues about garbage pickup and inquired if a notification was received from Waste Management. Mr. Webre said he had one after the fact that was presented to the call center.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland informed everyone that South Central Planning will attend the August 17th meeting for the redistricting alternative presentation, adding that they had their committee meeting this evening. He inquired if the litter abatement crew were helping to put work order in on abandoned blighted houses and tall grass complaints. He requested assistance from the Parish Administration to help push DOTD with the repavement of Hwy 44 from Airline to 642. He expressed his frustration with mobile work order system, and Mr. Deroche will look into the issue.

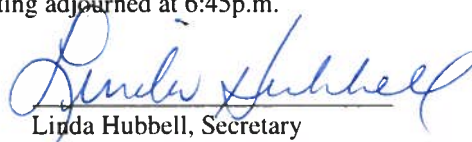
COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper requested the status of the light at Hwy 3219/3127. Mr. Franckiewicz gave a brief update of the litigation of the District 5 building per Councilman Cooper's request. Councilman Cooper inquired about the ceiling fan for the District 5 pavilion, and he requested a timeline for the moratorium. Councilman Amato stated March 2023.

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash said he was very impressed with the pride that the employees have doing the work on Hwy 643. He inquired if the additional \$106,000 include additional work at the weir.

CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib requested a status of the covering for basketball court at the Magnolia Park. Mr. Webre said they are looking to cut cost and will keep her updated. She requested a condolence letter to the family of Rhonva Jackson. She thanked the businesses and everyone who helped to make the last bookbag/school supply give-a-way a success. She said she is partnering with the District 1 Aldermen to hold another one on August 13th in Gramercy.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Louque and carried, the meeting adjourned at 6:45p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary