

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 26, 2022**

The Council of the Parish of St. James, State of Louisiana, met in regular session in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie, Louisiana on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, at 6:00p.m.

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

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.

The Honorable Jason Amato, Vice-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.

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

**MINUTES**

On a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre the minutes of the September 12, 2022 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 September 12, 2022 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:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, everyone.

- State of the Parish Reports were mailed out to all residents last week. Additional copies can be obtained here at the Vacherie annex, both library branches, the Courthouse, and the Welcome Center.
- Yesterday our team attended Party with the Pumpkins, hosted by St. James 4-H. If the costumes were a good indicator, we can count on having many future firemen and police officers.
- I would like to congratulate Mr. Ken Guidry and the Keep St. James Parish Beautiful Board for receiving the Circle of Excellence award from Keep Louisiana Beautiful for professional development, commitment to the affiliate network, and the implementation of programming resulting in long-term community improvement.
- The Operations Department is coordinating with DOTD to obtain updates on the HWY 20 Bridge project. Due to substantial delays, the contractor for this project is currently being assessed with liquidated damages by DOTD in the amount of \$4,500 per day and is disqualified from bidding on new work with the state until this project is resolved. I spoke with Representative Brass earlier today and we are lining up a meeting with DOTD and the Highway 20 taskforce, tentatively set for November 3<sup>rd</sup>, to get the latest update on moving this project forward. Gulf Coast Precast is contracted to supply the concrete piling for the project but can only allocate three piles per week. Even if all current issues were resolved immediately, construction on the project would not be complete until late next year.
- According to DOTD representatives, the HWY 20 Temporary Bridge is in very safe condition. Due to the high volume of heavy traffic during the sugar cane harvest, the angle clips that hold the roadway structure against the pilings have shifted a little. Next week the roadway structure will be jacked and shifted and repositioned. Even in its current state this bridge is designed to exceed the load bearing capacity of current traffic conditions. Just to be clear, the temporary bridge is safe for travel and DOTD will be correcting it more permanently, very soon.
- Today, DOTD also completed the patchwork on HWY 643 that parish crews had cut for a drainage project. Drainage will continue in South Vacherie as scheduled. Crews are inventorying material in the laydown yard on the West Bank, and planning for construction has begun.
- After some modification from the Operations Director, ODC will accept the rate study completed by our operations department. This will allow funding from the Water Sector Grant to be allocated for bidding and construction.
- On November 2, 2022, a meeting is scheduled with both municipalities to begin developing projects for the eight-million-dollar Hazard Mitigation Grant. GOHSEP has extended the deadline for submittal to February 2023. Engineering will be required for this function.
- Operations personnel have submitted current and new capital outlay requests for St. James Parish Government that is due by November 1, 2022. The St. James Parish legislative delegation has been contacted and letters of support have been received. A briefing on these projects will be provided at the next council meeting.
- The Buddy Whitney Canal Project is still on schedule to begin in mid-November 2022. Design precast culverts will be delivered materials at that time and LA Contractors will begin construction.
- Waste Management is currently utilizing the West Bank land fill as a lay down yard to begin trash receptacle deployment to the public. This should begin by Mid November and Operations will continue to assist with public outreach.
- A purchase order has been issued to Quality Engineering to begin development of a conceptual drawings and plans for modifications and repairs to the parish Welcome Center, near airline highway.
- The FRTC is being modified to use as a temporary Senior Center. Minor plumbing and ADA compliance issues needed to be addressed and should be ready within the next couple of weeks.
- Due to the high volume of projects that have been accomplished over the past 30 months, the Capital Improvement Plan has become obsolete. The Operations administrative staff is in the process of drafting the next three-year Capital Improvement Plan and will provide the council with a draft copy for assessment.

- Operations administrative staff is reassessing the protocols in which all parks and buildings are rented and reserved. Automated systems were historically not in place when the current processes were developed. The call center and work order system will play a large role in future procedures.
- The concrete floor for the new recreation building in Gramercy has been ground to within a one-eighth inch tolerance, and six basketball goals, the score board, and bleacher, and sprinkler systems have been installed. The new basketball court flooring and markings have been completed, and bleachers will be installed next week. The Operations Department anticipates that this building will be ready for the first biddy basketball game in November. A ribbon cutting ceremony will be scheduled.
- The Department of Human Resources would like to remind you its annual Harvest Fest is tomorrow, October 27<sup>th</sup> at the West Bank Reception Hall for registered seniors participating in our 4 Elderly Services programs. This year's theme is Western, and guests are encouraged to join our seniors in wearing their best western attire.
- Early voting is taking place Tuesday October 25<sup>th</sup> through November 1<sup>st</sup> from 8:30am – 6pm at the Registrar of Voters office in Convent and in Vacherie. You can also vote early at the Lutcher Machine Warehouse on Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup> or Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, from 8:30am until 6pm.
- On Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, the Keep St James Parish Beautiful Board is hosting our Electronic Recycling and Paper Shredding Community event. From 8:30-11:00am, community members can drop off materials at the Winn Dixie Parking Lot in Gramercy.
- On November 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm the Lutcher Library is hosting Astronomy night with Astro-photographer Scott Louque. You can use your own telescope or his telescope, enjoy refreshments, and experience a space VR set.
- The Library will be partnering with Javon Ophelia's ACT Mentorship & Learning for the Performing Arts Program. On Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30-6:30, students in the program will learn about acting, dancing, and attend specialty music sessions. They will be hosting an open house at the Lutcher Library tomorrow night at 6:30pm.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

**PRESENTATION**

Mr. Paul Aucoin and Mr. Steve Nosacka presented the Economic Development Board's Annual Report.

**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS** – None

**OLD BUSINESS**

Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building – a proposed ordinance is on tonight's agenda to move forward.  
Update of drainage study for Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – no additional update.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION 22-205, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE OCTOBER 28, 2022 PAYROLL**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque and Etienne-Steib, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 22-206, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 22-207, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION WITH THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR A GRANT UNDER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FTA PROGRAMS MANAGED THROUGH LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 22-208, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FEDERAL OFF-SYSTEM BRIDGE REHABILITATION PROGRAM**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 22-209, 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 St. Pierre. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 22-210, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION FOR AND ACCEPTANCE OF ACT 170 COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT APPROPRIATION AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT AND/OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN, EXECUTE, AND ADMINISTER SAID AGREEMENT AND ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 22-211, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ADVERTISE AND TAKE BIDS FOR PICKUP TRUCKS FOR ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

After Councilman St. Pierre stated that the Parish President's name needed to be corrected, **RESOLUTION 22-212, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO RENEW AN EXISTING CONTRACT WITH CORRECTHEALTH ST. JAMES, LLC FOR MEDICAL CARE FOR INMATES OF THE ST. JAMES ADULT DETENTION CENTER**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted, as amended.

After President Dufresne explained that this proposed ordinance is to set a public hearing for the purchase of property from the Hospital, **PROPOSED ORDINANCE 22-12, AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BY THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES**, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque and Etienne-Steib absent, 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., Tuesday, November 22, 2022, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

After President Dufresne explained that this proposed ordinance is to set a public hearing for the purchase of the Diamond Center, **PROPOSED ORDINANCE 22-13, AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BY THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES**, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque and Etienne-Steib absent, 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., Tuesday, November 22, 2022, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

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

**ERIC DEROCHE** – the Parish has received notification that GOHSEP's request to FEMA to extend the direct housing program (FEMA trailers) was extended to August 28, 2023. Formal bylaws for the merger of the fire service have been accepted by the committee and will move forward with the articles of incorporation for the St. James Fire Department; Ordinances and Cooperative Endeavor Agreements will need to be amended. Have been communicating with Link Integration regarding the AV systems. Mr. Larousse has been working with High Tide for the hardtops and some equipment needs to be installed before work begins on the counter. Ordinance modifications for the Bonfires have been complete and should be on the next agenda.

**INGRID BERGERON** – the youth mentoring program kicked off today. Will be at the high schools tomorrow and Friday.

**RICK WEBRE** – provided an update on the Parish's CDL certification process.

**FELIX BOUGHTON** – the budget binders were handed out. Sent each council member an email explaining their budget request and he sent a budget highlight sheet.

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

**COUNCILMAN NASH** – Councilman Nash inquired when the Seniors will be moving into the new building. Ms. Bergeron said about two to three more weeks.

**COUNCILMAN COOPER** – Councilman Cooper offered a motion to amend the agenda to allow Mr. Gregory Manning to introduce himself as candidate for Public Service Commission. Councilman Nash offered a second and after a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque and Etienne-Steib absent, the motion carried. Mr. Manning then introduced himself as a candidate for Public Service Commission, District 3. Councilman Cooper requested a condolence letter to the family of Roy Melancon.

**COUNCILMAN BLAND** – Councilman Bland requested a condolence letter to the family of Mr. Roy "Fatty" Kliebert.

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

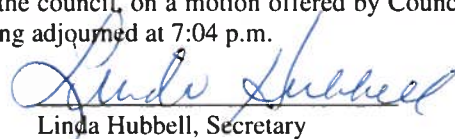
**COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE** – Councilman St. Pierre said Mr. Fatty was a good man and will be missed. He reiterated that Quality Engineering will be doing surveying in the Welcome Center area. New lights have been purchased for the walking track at Gramercy Park. He "tipped his hat" for the work done with the budget. He said that solid waste, elderly and EMS, criminal court, and the youth center will be affected due to sales tax.

**CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB** – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib was absent.

**COUNCILMAN AMATO** – Councilman Amato expressed gratitude for the State of the Parish pamphlet and said it was a nice surprise to see the bonfires with the bridge on the cover, adding that this picture is getting to be well known. He recognized former State Representative Mr. Roy Quezaire for attending tonight's meeting.

#### **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 Bland and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary