

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 5, 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, January 5, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Council Secretary; Ingrid Bergeron, Human Resources Director; Ryan Donadieu, Assistant Director of Emergency Preparedness; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Rick Webre, Operations Director and Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor. Peter Dufresne, Parish President and Eric Deroche, Emergency Preparedness Director joined virtually.

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.

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

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

The first agenda item was the election of a new council chairman. Legal Advisor Koenig explained the process for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair. Chairman St. Pierre then stated that he appreciated the camaraderie, hard work, and transparency from the Council and Administration and said it made his job as Chairman easier. He opened the floor for nominations, he then placed the name of Councilwoman Etienne-Steib for Chairperson. After determining that no one else would be placed in nomination, Chairman St. Pierre closed nominations and called for a roll call vote. On a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque absent, Councilwoman Etienne-Steib was elected Council Chairwoman and will serve for the next two years. Councilman St. Pierre then congratulated Chairwoman Etienne-Steib and stated that she is the first woman to chair this council. Thereupon, Chairwoman Etienne-Steib assumed the chairmanship position.

Chairwoman Etienne-Steib thanked everyone. She then opened the floor for nominations to the position of Vice-Chairman. Councilman Cooper placed the name of Councilman Amato in nomination. After determining there were no further nominations, Chairwoman Etienne-Steib closed nominations and called for a roll call vote. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque absent, Councilman Amato was elected Vice-Chairman.

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Nash, the minutes of the December 22, 2021 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Bland, the minutes of the December 22, 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 November 2021 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Bland.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the Council:

- Congratulations to Madam Chair. Good evening, everyone.
- I hope that everyone had a blessed and safe Christmas and New Year. I am excited to begin another year of progress and hard work in St. James Parish.
- I want to start my report tonight by discussing the latest surge in the Covid-19 pandemic. I, myself have been impacted by this new variant which is why I am safely quarantined at home for just a few more days.
- While the new variant is more mild than the delta variant in terms of symptoms and severity, it is far more contagious than the delta variant. I am asking everyone to again be mindful of your choices, quarantine if you have symptoms or have been exposed to a positive case of Covid-19. Please wear a mask and social distance to avoid potentially spreading this variant.
- As always, vaccines remain available at the parish health unit in Vacherie and at the hospital.
- This week, testing efforts have been increased to meet the surge in needs for tests. The Louisiana Department of Health is providing free PCR testing at the Lutchter Senior Center and at the health unit in Vacherie. The Testing site at the Lutchter Senior Center will be open thru Saturday, January 8th, from 8 am – 4 pm. The Health Unit testing site will be open thru Friday, January 7th, from 8 am – 4:30 pm.
- I encourage you if you are experiencing symptoms to please visit one of these locations to get a test. Results should come back within 24 hours and will be sent via text and email.
- Our EOC has requested another week of free testing from the state and hopes to make an announcement once it has been approved.
- Again, please take all precautions necessary to stop this very contagious variant of Covid-19.
- God bless each and every one of you and God bless St. James Parish.
- This concludes my report.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

PRESENTATIONS - None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

OLD BUSINESS

District 5 Alternate Access Route – no additional update

Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building – a task order was issued to Cypress Surveying to have the portion of property surveyed.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 22-01, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JANUARY 7, 2022 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-02, 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 Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-03, A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PARISHWIDE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-04, A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE CONTRACT WITH GSA CONSULTING ENGINEERS TO A MASTER CONTRACT WITH MCKIM & CREED, INC. FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION SERVICES NOT TO EXCEED \$500,000, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman St. Pierre. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-05, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH T. BAKER SMITH, LLC FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque absent, the resolution was adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE 22-01, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF AND SALE OF EIGHT MILLION DOLLARS (\$8,000,000) TAXABLE HURRICANE RECOVERY REVENUE BONDS OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA; AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER MATTERS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Louque 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 Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

RYAN DONADIEU – he reiterated that with up-tick in covid cases, testing is being provided at the Lucher Senior Center, and said Mr. Deroche has requested an additional week of testing. He said they are in daily contact with the hospital.

INGRID BERGERON – she indicated that they are taking appointments for LiHeap applications beginning Monday the 10th and encouraged residents to call if interested and to see if they qualify for assistance. This is for past due amounts or arrears due to the pandemic and/or hurricane Ida. She congratulated Chairwoman Etienne-Steib and Vice-Chairman Amato. Councilman Bland asked about going on private property to demolish homes that are not livable now, through FEMA. Mr. Donadieu indicated that FEMA gave some approval, but it is case-by-case. Ms. Bergeron said they are working out the details for residents who need bins, through funds they received from their partner agencies. She indicated that they are in the process of hiring two case managers to help residents with hurricane recovery and said they will try to do public outreach videos to get the information out.

FELIX BOUGHTON – congratulated Chairwoman Etienne-Steib and Vice-Chairman Amato and said he hopes they have a more productive 2022, more normal than 2021. He wished everyone Happy Holidays.

RICK WEBRE – he also congratulated Chairwoman Etienne-Steib and Vice-Chairman Amato. He said he and his staff are available if needed. He said Byron E. Talbot won the bid for the David Plantation hazard mitigation project.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre congratulated Chairwoman Etienne-Steib and Vice-Chairman Amato, and he thanked Rick for the conversations on the David Plantation project, which came in under budget.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato congratulated Chairwoman Etienne-Steib. He requested a meeting for the school side project. He congratulated #13 Jontre Kirklin for a good job representing Lucher and St. James Parish last night. He said he looks forward to making great things happen in 2022 and wished everyone a happy healthy New Year.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque was absent.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland said he is working to extend the lease for Romeville Park. He said he is still working on the centralized recreation board.

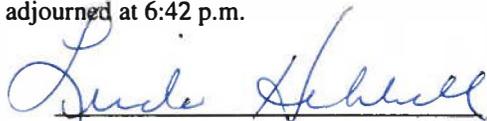
COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper congratulated Vice-Chairman Amato and Chairwoman Etienne-Steib. He asked when the 5th District Building books will be returned to Ms. Theresa. Mr. Webre will follow up. Councilman Cooper asked what's the timeline to waive permit fees for electrical damage due to storm damage. Mr. Webre said that was stopped but will take them case-by-case. Ms. Bergeron said they may be eligible for permits through their grant.

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash congratulated Chairwoman Etienne-Steib and Vice-Chairman Amato. He inquired about the lighting on Highways 643 and 644. Mr. Webre said he will work with them to get an update. Councilman Nash also inquired about the work on the bridge. Mr. Webre said as soon as they can get a meeting, he'll provide an update. Councilman Nash inquired about the senior citizen center. Mr. Webre said he didn't have an update. Councilman Nash requested a status of the canal cleaning. Mr. Webre said they are still working on it.

CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib thanked everyone for the confidence to be the next Chair. She pledged to do the very best that she can to help lead the parish and administration to the next level. She thanked Councilman St. Pierre for his leadership and she thanked her husband for attending the meeting tonight and for supporting her.

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 6:42 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary