

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 19, 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, January 19 2022, at 7:00 p.m., following the public hearing.

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, Human Resources Director; Eric Deroche, Director of Emergency Preparedness; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Rick Webre, Operations Director. Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor, joined virtually. Thomas Hessburg, Attorney, 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 St. Pierre led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Bland the minutes of the January 5, 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, Madam Chairman. Good evening, Council. Good evening, everyone.

- I want to start my report tonight by mentioning the possibility of winter weather that is forecasted to impact our area this week. It is possible that a wintry mix including sleet and freezing rain will begin on Thursday evening and remain through Friday morning. I want to encourage residents to take precaution now to prepare their utilities and homes for potentially freezing conditions. A list of actions you can take are available on our website home page at stjamesla.com.
- Please remember to avoid traveling on icy roadways if possible.
- Covid-19 testing at the Lutcher Senior Center will continue on Friday of this week, January 21 from 8 AM – 4 PM. Additional testing and vaccines are available weekly at the health unit in Vacherie Monday thru Friday from 8 AM – 4:30 PM. I encourage residents who are experiencing symptoms or who have not yet been vaccinated to take advantage of these resources available and continue to reduce the spread of Covid in our community.
- This week, we celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. I was fortunate to attend a wreath laying ceremony in Lutcher on Monday to honor the life and legacy of Dr. King. It is my hope that we can continue to come together as a community and spread hope, love, and acceptance in keeping with Dr. King's message.
- I would like to take a moment to thank Mr. Paul Aucoin for his diligent service to St. James Parish and the Port of South Louisiana over the many years. Mr. Aucoin has also remained heavily involved with our Economic Development Board and his service to St. James Parish does not go unrecognized. He has officially retired from the port and passed the reigns over to Mr. Paul Matthews who will assume his role.
- Moving on to discuss some of our operations updates, I would like to remind everyone on the Covid-19 impact on our ability to receive vehicles. The last new vehicles delivered were in the fall of 2020, none were received in the year 2021, and it will possibly be another 8 months, at the earliest before we receive vehicles.
- The Humble Street Phase Two drainage project is progressing well. All material has been manufactured and is on site. Concrete impregnated cloth lining has been installed in the drainage channel between HWY 3125 and Industrial Street. One forty-eight-inch culvert that has collapsed will be replaced under St. James Street by parish crews. Approximately 100 feet of main truck line, one basin, and final grade remains to complete the project.
- The 2022 road rehab program has begun. RMI is currently assessing parish roadways and will submit the results for review by the end of the month. RFQ's for engineering services will follow.
- Sealed bids were opened for the David Plantation drainage project with the lowest responsive bidder being Byron Talbot Contractors. Contracting, a pre-construction conference, a notice to proceed, and a public meeting will follow prior to construction.
- Bid opening for the new DHR building that was scheduled for January 21, 2022, was extended to February 2, 2022, at 2:00 PM to allow sub-contractors time to submit proposals to the prime contractors.
- Ongoing parish drainage projects include Clearing and grubbing of channels are ongoing throughout the parish. Channels on Spruce, Terre Haute, and Magnolia are in process. Drainage crews are also clearing fallen trees west of Manresa. Operations will take FEMA and NCRS on an inspection tour of the Vacherie Canal to inform FEMA of the hazards of fallen trees on parish channels. This inspection has the objective of approving federal funding to allow parish crews to lease equipment and removes trees from parish waterways.
- The Operations Department has purchased one pickup truck from federal surplus, refurbished an older pickup truck from the fleet, purchased two vehicle mounted, one cubic yard self-dumping bins, and is preparing to place the litter abatement crews into service. All of this was accomplished for under \$9,000 and should be in service by Mid-February.
- The Operations Department will be contracting with an electrical engineer to determine the feasibility of placing generators on the HVAC chillers at the courthouse.
- Fuel Cloud, an automated fuel monitoring and dispensing system, has been installed on parish fuel pumps on the east and west banks.
- Quotes have been received for park lighting repair for Gramercy and Lutcher Parks that will be paid for using insurance and FEMA funding.

- Recreation crews have begun to identify inoperative streetlights throughout the parish. This data will be submitted to ENTERGY for repair.

This concludes my report.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

PRESENTATIONS – None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilman Cooper offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 22-06, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING WELMA JACKSON, JR. TO THE DISTRICT 5 RECREATION BOARD**. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman Cooper offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 22-07, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING DARRELL WHITTINGTON TO THE DISTRICT 5 RECREATION BOARD**. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

District 5 Alternate Access Route – waiting a response from Ergon. Hoping to have an update for the next meeting.

Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building – an agreement to the portion of land to purchase was reached. In the process of getting the change made and getting an appraisal.

Councilman St. Pierre offered a motion to adopt **ORDINANCE 22-01, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE 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**, with the changes stated at the public hearing. Councilman Amato offered a second. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted, as amended.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 22-08, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JANUARY 21, 2022 PAYROLL, 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 22-09, 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, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-10, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH BYRON E. TALBOT CONTRACTOR, INC. FOR CONSTRUCTION SERVICES FOR THE DAVID PLANTATION DRAINAGE PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-11, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT AND/OR THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION AND SIGN A CONTRACT ON BEHALF OF ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT A YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION PLUS COMPONENT IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-12, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH CHASON CUMMINGS FOR DEBRIS REMOVAL OF BLIGHTED PROPERTY, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

FELIX BOUGHTON – The December finance report will be delayed until March.

RICK WEBRE – Crews are preparing for the winter event and asked the public to conserve water. A meeting with DOTD for the Hwy 20 bridge is scheduled for February 4th.

ERIC DEROCHE – Met with the vendor to start the planning of the upgrade of the AV and Microphone system in the chambers. Have been in constant communications with the Weather Service, GOHSEP, and DOTD.

INGRID BERGERON – Received an additional \$270,000 from United Way making the total \$570,000 for long term recovery.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash inquired about the culvert on Hwy 643. Mr. Webre indicated the new preliminary design should resolve the issue and will submit it to DOTD. Councilman Nash also inquired about cleaning of the canals. Mr. Webre said he will be taking FEMA and NCRS on a tour of the Vacherie Canal.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper requested condolence letters be sent to the families of Anita Mae Lewis, Charlotte Shepard Anderson, Marie Mitchell Lewis. Councilman Cooper said a speed limit time-zone sign is missing from one side of the road at St. Louis Academy. He asked if the Parish could put a sign at the dump as to what materials can or can't be received.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland said the current lease for Romeville is through 2033 and the school board is ok with the current lease. He said he will take pictures of work that need to be done and coordinate with operations. He said he will work to get a new Romeville Park sign. He requested an update of the Hester Post Office.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque had no comment.

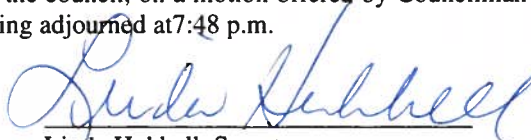
COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato said there is still debris that needs to be pickup and inquired a response for residents and businesses. Mr. Webre said they will need to come up with a matrix of what the truck can pick up, adding there is a limit to what the truck can pick up. President Dufresne said that the parish picks up tree limbs/branches not the tree. Councilman Amato inquired about construction debris pickup. Mr. Webre said they have advertised and will continue to advertise that the Parish cannot pick up C&D, their contractor should dispose. Councilman Amato requested a survey of the laterals.

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre thanked the council for approving the David Planation resolution. He thanked Rick for working to move a few issues forward. He requested a letter to Paul Aucoin for his service. He said another \$430 million dollars was received for the West Shore project.

CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib inquired about the lighting situation. Mr. Webre said the recreation crews are beginning to mark those that are out and will provide a report to Entergy.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary