

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 2, 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, February 2, 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, and Chairwoman Vondra Etienne-Steib. Councilman Donald Nash was absent.

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

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 St. Pierre the minutes of the January 19, 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 Amato the minutes of the January 19, 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:

- Last week, myself and several council members traveled to Washington to meet with our congressional delegation on Capital Hill. We had several many meetings that were all well received, and I look forward to seeing our efforts come to fruition.
- We learned that Westshore project received an additional 450 million which brings the project cost to just over 1.2 billion. This is great news for St. James, as we have been lobbying hard to adopt an additional alignment for St. James that would serve us better than the flap gates.
- In addition, the Corps of Engineers Chief Engineer signed a Chief's Report for the estimated \$1.6B Upper Barataria Basin Study, identifying a 30.6 mile levee that would protect many communities from Raceland to Luling, including St. James Parish.
- Yesterday we completed the closing for the 8 million dollars to replenish our operating monies so we can continue providing services to our residents without any interruptions. According to our bonding attorney our process was as smooth as he's ever seen and we are ahead of many other parishes in the same situation. I am very pleased to be able to work with our local First American Bank to meet our community needs. It's very important to me to work locally whenever possible.

I have many updates in Operations...

- Engineering is complete for the LA HWY 643 drainage Project. T. Baker Smith has submitted a permit request to DOTD to begin construction. The operations department will obtain construction quotes once permitting is approved by DOTD.
- An interconnect agreement between Gulf South Pipeline and St. James Parish Utilities has been executed to install the natural gas pay point in Grand Point area. Electrical power has been established at the site, and the operations department is waiting for an invoice from Gulf South to remit payment for construction to begin. Construction is estimated to begin in the Summer Of 2022.
- An interconnect agreement is in development between Acadian Gas Pipeline and St. James Parish Utilities to install the natural gas pay point in South Vacherie. All surveying is complete, and land acquisition from the hospital has been recorded. A permit has been applied from through DOTD to place a culvert under HWY 3127 to gain access to the site. Coordination has been made with contractors for design and installation. Construction is estimated to begin in the Summer Of 2022.
- The operations department has received estimates in the amount of \$48,000 for directional boring and installation of a four-inch gas line from N. Nobile Street to Admiral's Landing along HWY 3125. This line will serve residents of admiral's Landing as well as allowing St. James Parish Utilities to service a new industrial customer in that area. Additionally, Gulf South Pipeline has a tap on its pipeline north of HWY 3125 adjacent to admiral's landing that they are willing to allow St. James Parish Utilities to tap into. Consequently, this tap will facilitate a third purchase point on the east bank of the parish and would drastically enhance the natural gas supply on the east bank of the parish.
- The operations Department also received the roadway assessment from Material Resources Incorporated. Results of this assessment indicate significant edge failure damage as predicted from Hurricane Ida. The 2021-2022 road rehab program will be divided into three categories: preservation, mill-patch-overlay, and edge failure repair. Edge failure repair will be submitted to FEMA to develop a project work sheet under Category C.
- Capital outlay funding for the HWY 3127 widening project has been approved by the state bond commission. The operations department and the finance department will be working closely with the Division of Administration and Facility Planning and Control to process the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement required for this action. Design of this project will soon follow.
- Bids have been accepted for the David Plantation drainage improvement project. A pre-construction meeting and notice to proceed will be conducted next week, and a public meeting will be scheduled by mid-month.
- The Humble St. Phase two project is progressing well. Driveway pouring is underway and final grade will follow. The Operations Department has asked the engineer and the contractor to assess the installation of concrete lining

on the channel that extends from HWY 3125 to St. James St east of the apartment complex. The cost of this additional work will be covered by the grant.

- Geotechnical evaluation is underway for the convent water treatment plant clarifier. Bids are expected to begin advertising by the end of February. This project is funded by the first round of the American Rescue Act.
- The survey is being modified for the Vacherie Multi-Purpose building to capture from Health Unit Drive to HWY 3127. This will assist the engineering in building placement.
- Bids were received for the construction of the new DHR building. The lowest responsible bidder was Betco Inc. at \$2,018,428.
- Materials were ordered for the east bank recreation facility in July of 2021 and have still not been received. Demolition is underway on the interior of the building and coordination is being made with the contractor to begin surface work for foundation.
- Sixteen new roll-off bins, a new roll-off truck, a new grapple truck, and two surplus trucks with one cubic yard self-emptying bins will be added to the current fleet to form the new solid waste division. Job descriptions have been developed and advertising for litter abatement crews will begin by the end of the month.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

PRESENTATIONS

Renee Ring was not in attendance at this time, so this presentation was moved after New Business.

Dru Hymel was not in attendance to address the council regarding the blighted property ordinance.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

RESOLUTION 22-13, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING WAYNE WAGUESPACK TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, ST. JAMES PARISH HOSPITAL SERVICE DISTRICT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

District 5 Alternate Access Route – the company does not desire to allow the access route.

Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building – the survey was altered to better place the building on the plat. A meeting has been coordinated with the surveyor and architect to ensure their maps agree and the building fits on the property.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 22-14, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE FEBRUARY 2, 2022 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Nash absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-15, 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 St. Pierre. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Nash absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-16, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF ITA TRUCK SALES AND SERVICE, LLC FOR ONE (1) 2022 INTERNATIONAL HX620 SB ROLL-OFF TRUCK FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Louque offered a second, the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-17, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF WASTEQUIP MANUFACTURING COMPANY LLC FOR SIXTEEN (16) 30 CUBIC YARD ROLL-OFF CONTAINERS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-18, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH MEYER ENGINEERING, LTD TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES FOR DAMAGES SUSTAINED FROM NATURAL DISASTERS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Nash absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-19, A RESOLUTION REJECTING ALL THE BIDS RECEIVED FOR THE CONVENT AND VACHERIE WATER PLANT ROOF REPLACEMENT PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-20, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE READVERTISEMENT AND RECEIVING OF BIDS FOR ROOF REPLACEMENT FOR THE VACHERIE AND CONVENT WATER TREATMENT PLANTS AS A RESULT OF DAMAGES CAUSED BY HURRICANE IDA, was offered and move for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-21, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR A NEW TRUCK MOUNTED JET RODDER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF OPERATION, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 22-22, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT AND/OR THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES TO SIGN FUNDING APPLICATIONS, SUPPLEMENTS, AND ONE-TIME FUNDING APPLICATIONS FOR THE ST. JAMES PARISH DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHWAP) INCLUDING APPROPRIATE ASSURANCES, AGREEMENTS, CONTRACTS, AMENDMENTS, AND REVISIONS IN ORDER FOR ST. JAMES PARISH TO ADMINISTER EXISTING OR LIHWAP PROGRAM FUNDS IN THE YEAR 2022, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Nash absent, the resolution was adopted.

After a discussion, Councilman Bland offered a motion to table A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE CONTRACT WITH TRIO COMMUNITY MEALS PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS ELIOR NORTH AMERICA'S CORP. D/B/A BATEMAN COMMUNITY LIVING FOR A 10% HYPERINFLATION INCREASE FOR FOOD SERVICES TO SENIOR CONGREGATE AND HOMEBOUND MEAL NUTRITION PROGRAM to the next meeting to allow time to review the contract. Councilman St. Pierre offered a second. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Nash absent, the motion carried. Councilman St. Pierre suggested to give notice of cancellation if we are comfortable that we will have everything in place within the next three months.

RESOLUTION 22-24, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION OF LOWELL ROUSSEL TO ALLOW CONSTRUCTION OF POLE BARN FOR AGRICULTURAL USE IN A RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREA, 2218 HIGHWAY 44, PAULINA, LOUISIANA (ITEM #22-03) UNDER THE ST. JAMES PARISH LAND USE ORDINANCE, WITH CONDITIONS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Nash absent, the resolution was adopted.

At this time, Renee Ring, Program Manager and Veda Bailey, Crisis Counselor, presented information regarding the LA Spirit Crisis Counselor Program of South Central Louisiana Human Services Authority, focusing on the emotional aspect of (a natural disaster) Hurricane Ida. Ms. Ring and Ms. Bailey then answered the council member's questions.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ERIC DEROCHE – received official word today from FEMA and the State that our Hazard Mitigation Plan has been finalized and accepted and we are good for 5 more years. He said that will be key and critical because of this disaster, adding St. James Parish is anticipating anywhere between \$10-\$15 million in hazard mitigation funds that we will not need to apply for. They will automatically be appropriated to the parish for projects that are identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

INGRID BERGERON – she added to the Hurricane Recovery efforts, stating that we are part of a coalition now with Lafourche, Terrebonne, and Jefferson Parishes, working together to help each other with recovery.

FELIX BOUGHTON – said we have received, \$2.6 million from FEMA, insurance, and donations, regarding funding for Hurricane Ida.

RICK WEBRE – met with members of GOHSEP, FEMA, and consultants last week. They toured the Vacherie levee to show them what was indicative of our waterways in the Parish. Because of that meeting, we submitted a request to declare that as part of Category 8 debris removal, as least for Vacherie Canal to get that reimbursed to us so we can start clearing that major debris. We are working to get all the channels reopened.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre stated that they had a good trip to Washington. He spoke with Senator Kennedy's office today to discuss the resiliency study. He thanked Dennis Hymel and Kevin Byer who assisted them and attended the meetings in Washington. He thanked the Council for accepting the bids for the David Planation project. He said he will try to set up a pre-construction meeting with the citizens. He thanked Mr. Webre and Mr. Larousse for discussing District 1 projects.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato said he had a meeting with the Lutchter coaching staff and they expressed appreciation for the use of our facilities. He requested a copy of the DHR building to share with the Town of Lutchter. He inquired about a resolution for the fire department. Mr. Deroche said the resolution to advertise was sent to the Council Secretary for the next meeting. Councilman Amato asked to be updated about the positions. Mr. Deroche said they will be classified as EOC Responders. They are running into challenges to get credit for them. Councilman Amato wished Happy Belated Birthday to the Parish President.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque reiterated the comments from sParish President and Councilman St. Pierre about the Washington trip. He said they are optimistic about the levee alignment.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland inquired about the reopening of the ARC. Ms. Bergeron said they received approval from State that they will approve the use of the West Bank Reception Hall as a temporary location, with stipulations. She said the staff has been communicating with each ARC family members and she wants to know if there are any issues. The ARC board will meet with DHR to discuss their long-term plan. She indicated that they could not move the ARC until the State approved it because there is a licensing requirement. Councilman Bland said he wanted to reiterate that storm debris can no longer be placed on the side of the road, it needs to be brought to the dumps for disposal. He stated that there are 6 streets that remain unpassable for busses, three are in District 4. He asked that the school board work with the Parish to get whatever needs to be facilitated to get the streets reopened.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper said he received calls regarding streets lights and requested an update from Entergy. Mr. Webre indicated that Parish crews are marking them and will turn the report over to Entergy. Councilman Cooper inquired about cleaning of drainage ditches near Baytree and Barras Streets. Mr. Webre said a crew was sent out this morning, but it was too wet. They will send an excavator out to clean north and south of the tracks, inspect it, and see if we can do anything to help clear it. He said they may have to work with the railroad to get it jetted. Councilman Cooper requested an explanation of change made by the State regarding sq. ft. of property and asked if any are grandfathered. Mr. Webre said he will get the specs emailed to Councilman Cooper. Council Chairwoman indicated that Mark Johnson, with Entergy, will be at the next meeting to provide an update on lighting.

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash was absent.

CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib thanked LA Spirit for attending the meeting and sharing their information, adding they are a great asset to our community. She also stated that trip to Washington was very beneficial and said she feels they will get the things that they are working toward. She thanked Ms. Senecca Boudreaux for her input for the Washington meetings. She wished Parish President Happy Birthday.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Amato and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Linda Hubbell, Secretary