

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MARCH 1, 2023**

The Council of the Parish of St. James, State of Louisiana, met in regular session in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Covert, Louisiana on Wednesday, March 1, 2023, at 6:37 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, 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 Louque led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES**

On a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Bland the minutes of the February 15, 2023 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre, the minutes of the February 15, 2023 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:

- Myself along with Ms. Ingrid, DHR Director, will be participating in a community forum for St. James Parish residents hosted by Capital Area United Way (CAUW) on tomorrow, Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The United Way Parish Road Show will provide details and insights on how investments are impacting the St. James Parish Community.
- Our DHR staff have invited some current, and past clients to join them in attending the United Way Women Empowering Women Resources and Seminar event. This event will be held on March 8, 2023, and if anyone is interested in attending, please contact DHR at 225-562-2305. Transportation will be provided, and participation in this event is free.
- As we observed Black History month, the senior centers hosted their annual Black History program. It was a huge success with over 62 seniors in attendance.
- I also attend the Black History Month Program which was titled Color Me With Love at St. James High School yesterday. The students did an incredible job with all of their performances.
- Effective today; March 1<sup>st</sup>, seniors will have an additional hour to spend at the senior centers enjoying individual and social activities with their friends. The transit buses will begin picking up seniors from the centers at 2:00 pm instead of 1:00 pm. This will give the seniors more time to enjoy the tv and exercise rooms, as well as engage in free brain teaser activities such as, puzzles and card games. In addition, the centers will be open for Poker Keno (Po.ke.no) groups and other groups that would like to gather at the center. For more information, please contact DHR elderly services team.
- Our baseball registration is open for ages 4-12, and we've already had a great response. Registration is open until March 10<sup>th</sup>, please encourage youth in your districts to participate as this truly is an excellent program.
- Pickleball is a new sport that will be added to our recreation program. Pickleball games will be open play at our new recreation building from 5-8pm on Monday nights. Please encourage your residents to come out and play. Games will start on March 13<sup>th</sup>.
- We received an additional \$138,000 dollars from FEMA for additional building repairs from Hurricane Ida. As all repairs have been completed, these funds are reimbursement for our expenses in repairing our buildings.
- Syngenta donated 43 pallets of super sacks sandbags to St James Parish. These are one-ton sand bags that can be installed with heavy machinery and will be stored in our parish for future flood fighting efforts.
- On March 11<sup>th</sup>, we will hold our first market day of the year from 8:00am-2:00pm. I know we have many local vendors signed up to sell art, crafts, and homemade goods. Please stop by and support these small businesses.
- To increase our natural gas supply to the South Vacherie area, a natural gas purchase point is being installed by Highway 20 and 3127. The metering station and all piping has been manufactured and installed and Acadian Natural Gas Pipeline will complete the hot tap in mid-April of 2023. This will drastically increase natural gas pressure and volume to South Vacherie. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> natural gas infrastructure improvement project conducted by this administration over the past 36 months.
- St James Parish has received American Rescue Plan Act funding to install automated gas and water meters. A pilot program was conducted 3 years ago, with successful results. Phase 1 will be to install the communications infrastructure with meter installation to follow.
- The Romeville Grandpoint natural gas loop project is underway and will integrate the two natural gas systems on the East Bank of the parish creating redundancy and increasing gas supply. This should significantly help in reducing any interruptions in our ability to supply natural gas. This project will take place at the intersection of Highway 42 and 44.
- St James Parish utilities is close to receiving the permitting required to install the East Bank water clarifier. This will dramatically increase the water producing capacity at the Convent water treatment plant from about 800,000 gallons to roughly 2 million gallons. It should resolve the water supply issues that we have been experiencing during winter storms. This has been in design and development, and under a grant application process for approximately 3 years.

- The 2023 road preservation program has begun. Crack sealing rolled over from the 2022 program will be conducted by mid-March. Bio seal and mastic sealing will begin soon. Contracting for the 2023 road rehab is underway and design should be complete by the end of March.
- The 643 drainage project is progressing well, and all concrete basins have been poured and the remainder of the culverts are being installed.
- Today was the final walkthrough for the Buddy Whitney canal drainage project. This project is substantially complete with only final grade and grass seeding remaining.
- The spruce street drainage project is approximately 80% complete. Concrete catch basins are the last items to be completed.
- A drainage project is being assessed to address issues on North and South Rosary Streets in South Vacherie. This will be a complex project and will take time to plan and execute.
- All feeder channels to the Vacherie canal have been cleared of vegetation and the Vacherie canal weir gate is currently undergoing maintenance.
- The 2023 vegetation and herbicide programs have begun. Crews have begun on the Veteran's bridge today and will begin normal rotation next week.
- The DHR building in Lutchter is approximately 60% complete, windows are being delivered to seal the structure and then we will begin working on the interior.
- St James Parish has been approved for the Local Government Assistance Program to purchase new fuel tanks with increased capacity for the East and West Banks.
- New batting cages are currently being installed at Paulina Park, the 5<sup>th</sup> district park, 6<sup>th</sup> district park and the 7<sup>th</sup> district park.

God bless everyone here tonight, and your families.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**PRESENTATIONS**

1. Amber Borne was recognized and received a plaque for her reign as Louisiana Cotton Festival Queen LXVII.
2. Andrew Neely, 13340 John C. Street, expressed his frustration with the Parish abatement cleanup, drainage and streets.

At this time, Councilman Nash offered a motion to amend the agenda to allow Mr. Eric Gravois to speak. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and after a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried.

3. Mr. Eric Gravois, 13450 Redbud Street also expressed his frustration with drainage in his neighborhood. He also spoke about the cleanup of the house fire on Highway 643.
4. Jesse Daze with Postlethwaite and Netterville presented St. James Parish with the GFOA's Certification of Achievement for Excellence In Financial Reporting for Fiscal Year ending December 1, 2021.
5. Kalen Levy, 21462 Judge Becnel, introduced himself and informed the Council that he has planned the free K. Levy Festival on May 13, 2023.
6. Kendall Taylor provided information about the Salute First Youth and Male Mentoring Program.

**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**RESOLUTION 23-37, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING DR. RANDALL POCHE TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOSPITAL SERVICE DISTRICT OF ST. JAMES PARISH**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman St. Pierre offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Update of drainage study for Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – No additional update.

Update of land acquisition for the multipurpose building – Land has been secured and there is a meeting set up with the Hospital discussion of preliminary design, structure, and building placement.

**ORDINANCE 23-03 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 26, CIVIC AND CULTURAL FACILITIES AND AFFAIRS TO REPEAL SECTION 26-1 - PARISH RECEPTION HALL; USER FEES ESTABLISHED; TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR USE; REPEAL SECTION 26-2 – ST. JAMES PARISH WELCOME CENTER PAVILION AND GROUNDS; USER FEE ESTABLISHED; TERM AND CONDITIONS FOR USE; REPEAL SECTION 26-4 – CONVENT COMMUNITY CENTER, AND TO AMEND CHAPTER 74, OFFENSES AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS, TO REPEAL SECTION 74-3 - RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE USE OF RECREATIONAL PARKS AND TO REPEAL RESOLUTION 10-70, RELATING TO DISTRICT 6 PARK AND TO CREATE CHAPTER 27, ST. JAMES PARISH RECREATION PARKS AND FACILITIES, SECTION 1, RULES AND REGULATIONS**, after undergone the hearing process, was having undergone the hearing process, was then offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION 23-38, A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AMBER BORNE ON HER REIGN AS LOUISIANA COTTON FESTIVAL QUEEN LXVII**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 23-39, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE MARCH 3, 2023 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 23-40, 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 23-41, A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE CONTRACT WITH HIGH TIDE CONSULTANTS, LLC TO \$750,000 FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE PROJECTS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Ama. After a roll call vote showing, Louque, Cooper, St. Pierre, Nash, Amato, and Etienne-Steib in favor, and Bland against, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 23-42, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH QUALITY ENGINEERING AND SURVEYING, LLC**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a roll call showing Nash, St. Pierre, Cooper, Amato, Louque, and Etienne-Steib in favor, and Bland against, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 23-43, A RESOLUTION REJECTING ALL THE BIDS RECEIVED FOR THE GRAMERCY PARK RESTROOM/CONCESSION PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 23-44, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR TWO 5,000 GALLON DOUBLE WALLED FUEL TANKS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 23-45, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF LOUISIANA, DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION (DOA) IN AN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP FOR THE PURPOSE OF FUNDING ST. JAMES WATER'S WATER SECTOR PROGRAM PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN ALL CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS IN CONJUNCTION WITH SAID AGREEMENT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 23-46, A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF WORK PERFORMED BY MORECORE ROOFING, LLC OF LOUISIANA, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CERTIFICATE OF SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION, FOR THE VACHERIE AND CONVENT WATER TREATMENT PLAN ROOF REPLACEMENT PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 23-47, A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF WORK PERFORMED BY TBT CONTRACTING, INC. OF LOUISIANA, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CERTIFICATE OF SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION, FOR THE EAST BANK RECREATION FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 23-48, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH CRESCENT ENGINEERING AND MAPPING, LLC FOR THE 2023 ROADWAY REHABILITATION PROGRAM**, 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 23-49, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE 23-04, AN ORDINANCE REPEALING ORDINANCE 10-20 ADOPTED BY THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL, STATE OF LOUISIANA, ON DECEMBER 1, 2010 EXCLUDING THE SALES, COST, OR LEASE OR RENTAL PRICE OF MANUFACTURING MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT FOR IRON AND STEEL MILLS LOCATED IN ST. JAMES PARISH FROM THE PARISH'S ONE PERCENT (1%) LOCAL SALES AND USE TAX LEVIED BY ORDINANCE C-81-7, AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER MATTERS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH**, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre. 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., on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

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

**INGRID BERGERON** – reminded everyone about the United Way Road Show on tomorrow.

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

**COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE** – Councilman St. Pierre had no comment.

**COUNCILMAN AMATO** – Councilman Amato said he participated in the Buddy Whitney walk through project, and he thanked everyone associated with the project. He said he is glad to see the moving forward with the fuel tanks.

**COUNCILMAN LOUQUE** – Councilman Louque inquired about when drainage work on the East bank would begin. Mr. Webre indicated in about a month.

**COUNCILMAN BLAND** – Councilman Bland inquired about grass spraying and ditch digging. Mr. Webre said it began today. Councilman Bland also inquired about the work by CN Rail in Paulina. Mr. Webre said they will put in an additional culvert.

**COUNCILMAN COOPER** – Councilman Cooper requested condolence letters to Dorothy Rome Adams, James Armstead, and Karl Mitchell. He inquired about the bus turn around on Oubre Street #1 and the ditch clean up on King View Street. He informed every one of the Mosaic open house tomorrow.

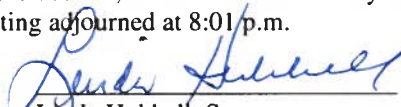
**COUNCILMAN NASH** – Councilman Nash inquired about an update on the senior citizen building. President Dufresne said they will talk about it at 2pm meeting tomorrow. He also inquired about an update on the bridge. President Dufresne said there is no update. Councilman Nash the Parish for work being done in District 7 pertaining to drainage and road rehab. He said the drainage issue on Redbud Street is on private property.

**CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB** – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib congratulated the Finance Director and team for the Certificate of Excellence. She thanked both Mr. Levy and Mr. Taylor for being instrumental in saving our youth. She extended her condolences to all the bereaved families in the area.

Councilman Bland inquired if we did anything to accept the Bellevue Lakes last project, and asked to get the ball rolling on that project?

**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 8:01 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary