

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JUNE 7, 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 Convent, Louisiana on Wednesday, June 7, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

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

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

The Honorable, Jason Amato, 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 Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque, the minutes of the May 24, 2023 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 April 2023 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Cooper.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the Council:

- The Grand Point boat launch has begun its waterway debris removal process. The Launch will remain closed to the public from 6:30a.m on Mondays through 4:30p.m. through Thursdays until cleanup is completed. However, it is fully open on the weekends. Please remind your residents of this important project and let them know that all vehicles must be removed by 6:30a.m. on Monday mornings until the work is completed.
- Last Thursday, the railroad put up a sign on Rev. Dr. Thomas Scott Street that the road would be closed on the following day. As soon as we heard about it, we stepped in and asked the railroad to delay the closure until residents could be properly notified. At this time, we are still working with them to plan a new date for the closure and will make sure residents are properly informed and have time to prepare accordingly.
- Last Friday we had a scheduled power outage at the courthouse to begin the process of installing a new generator. During Hurricane Ida when we were without power for three weeks, our generator wasn't sufficient to power all the needed utilities. We are upgrading our generator system to better supply power to the building during a natural disaster, and to prevent expensive damage such as mold that can occur.
- Our men's softball league will begin games on next Monday. This is a great summer activity for our residents, and I'd encourage all who can to take part. We will also be hosting a co-ed cabbage ball league this fall, more information will be released soon.
- Bids for the East Bank clarifier open next week on June 15th. Unfortunately, we discovered there is a 48-week lead time on the materials needed for this project. While we had previously anticipated that construction will take approximately 6 months to complete, the project will now be wrapping up next fall.
- The natural gas purchase point on the West Bank for South Vacherie is scheduled to be online soon. Acadian Pipeline is on site, and will weld a saddle onto the pipeline tomorrow, and will finish the tap by Friday.
- The North and South Rosary drainage project funding pre-application was submitted to statewide flood control grant program, and we are waiting on verification it will be funded by DOTD and we should here back in a couple of weeks.
- Interviews were conducted with the top two companies competing for the automated gas and water meter contract. Design of the infrastructure was evaluated, as well as the communication infrastructure for all meters, and fittings and product tests were conducted with both companies in multiple locations. A decision will be announced within the next two weeks.
- A pre-construction meeting was held today for the Romeville-Grandpoint gas loop. Construction will begin within two weeks.
- At 6:45 this morning, our Director of Operations Rick Webre noticed a large amount of illegally disposed tires on LA 3125. After coordinating with the St. James Parish Sheriff's Office, trustee crews removed 191 tires from that location and transported them to the parish transfer site. A solid waste supervisor took the tires in a roll-off container and will properly dispose of them. St. James Parish Government along with the Sheriff's Office is actively looking to find a solution to this problem and to hold all responsible parties accountable.
- Asahi-America held the grand opening for their new facility last week in District 3 in Paulina. I attended the ribbon cutting, along with Councilmen Louque, Amato, and St. Pierre, and it was great to see the new facility for this company be completed. Some of you may know that they were previously located in Gramercy, however this new site is much larger and allows for an increase in operations.
- The Department of Human Resources held the first two of their Community Action Week celebrations today and yesterday. These meet and greet events invite our residents to celebrate 50 years of the Community Action Agency's success in our Parish. There is one more event tomorrow at the Convent Community Center at 10:00am. If you were not able to attend the first two, I highly recommend stopping by the last of the celebrations tomorrow.
- I also attended an Ag Extension Agent event at the Fast Food Farm in coordination with LSU-Ag. Service. All of the agents were very impressed with the Farm, and were amazed that we have this resource available to all of

our young kids. Mrs. Denny will be hosting a free agriculture educational STEAM experience on July 12th. Please encourage educators you know to take advantage of this local resource.

- Arkema donated four trees to us in honor of Earth Day. These trees will be planted at the Welcome Center.
- The library also now has its own social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram. Please give them a follow and continue to use our website to stay informed on Library activities.
- Our next Market Day event will be on June 10th. Please come out and support our parishes' small businesses at this event.
- Several of the Department of Human Resources Youth Summer Camp Partnership Program Camp began this week and are off to a great start. There are two more camp sessions starting on June 19th.
- As all of you know, we are officially in Hurricane Season. Our Emergency Preparedness Department and all of St. James Parish Government works year around to make sure we stay prepared for any natural disasters that could occur. At the last council meeting we signed pre-storm contracts to make sure we can quickly deploy needed resources, and we have another on the agenda tonight. We've also been holding internal preparation meetings with employees, and meetings with external partners like Entergy and GOHSEP. Our goal is to stay prepared, so we don't have to get prepared. I'd like to remind everyone to please take the steps needed to prepare you and your family for hurricane season.
- God bless each of you here tonight and God bless St James Parish.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Tyrell Braud introduced himself then stated that he is running for Parish President.

Mr. Jeff Wiley did not attend the meeting.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS -None

OLD BUSINESS

Update of drainage study from Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – Councilman Nash asked, regarding Pool Street, to have a standby pump incase old pumps aren't working during a storm. Mr. Webre indicated that they are already planning, Pool St., Maple St., Coteau St. putting valves on all the covers that go into that levee.

Update of West Bank Multi-Purpose Complex – still in the design phase of the technical aspects of the Senior Center and Multipurpose building.

Bellevue Lakes Development and Drainage Update – coordinating with two engineers to request from the developer to put higher capacity pumps on the lift station to prevent issues with the sewer.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 23-121, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JUNE 9, 2023 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-122, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-123, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT FOR DISASTER SERVICES MATERIAL HANDLING AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT BETWEEN DRC EMERGENCY SERVICES AND ST. JAMES PARISH, AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN, EXECUTE, AND ADMINISTER SAID AGREEMENT AND ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-124, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT, PETER DUFRESNE, TO SIGN A RENEWAL CONTRACT WITH ELECTRONIC BUSINESS SYSTEMS, INC., was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-125, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH LIFE HOUSE STAFFING FOR TEMPORARY STAFFING, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-126, A RESOLUTION OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL APPROVING LOUISIANA SUGAR REFINING, LLC FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE INDUSTRIAL TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAM, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-127, A RESOLUTION OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL APPROVING ASAH/AMERICA, INC. FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE INDUSTRIAL TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAM, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-128, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #1 FROM TBT CONTRACTING INC. OF LA FOR THE VACHERIE LIBRARY ADDITION PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-129, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO ACCEPT THE BID AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH BARRIERE CONSTRUCTION CO. INC FOR THE FY 2023 ROADWAY REHABILITATION PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-130, A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE NEWS EXAMINER-ENTERPRISE AS THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-131, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SIGNING OF NEW TITLE III SCHEDULE OF FUNDING BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS AND ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR JULY 1, 2023 TO JUNE 30, 2024 PROGRAM YEAR, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-132, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ACCEPT THE TERMS AND AGREEMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF DOTD VEHICLES FOR THE OPERATION OF TRANSIT SERVICE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-133, A RESOLUTION TO COMPLETE THE BID PROCESS FOR A 2016 FORD BUS 12 PASSENGER, 2 WHEELCHAIRS FROM POINTE COUPEE COUNCIL ON AGING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$30,000, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre and Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE 23-07, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 91-6, AUTHORIZING THE CONTINUATION OF HEALTH BENEFITS FOR RETIRED EMPLOYEES, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous vote, with St. Pierre 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., on Wednesday, June 21, 2023, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

FELIX BOUGHTON – He indicated that the Fiscal Year that the School Board is closing, June 30th, they collected over \$1 million from a sales tax audit.

RICK WEBRE – He and project manager, Dustin Falgoust, met with the contractor for the Blind River boat launch yesterday. They will begin to put the temporary bridge in a few weeks and should be completed by August. Should be able to bid the dock project afterward. We have put in an application for the North Rosary drainage project. Finished Bourbon Canal yesterday and it was much worse then we thought. They are on M2 Canal working toward Lutchter. As soon as completed with M2 and lateral 4 canals will move back to the West Bank to take care of Coteau Canal, Brazan Canal, and Bayou Lassigne.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre was absent.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque had no comment.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland said the bathroom has been out for bid. He said he needs a new sign for the District 4 park. He requested a quote for black topping the District 4 parking lot. He requested an update of the FEMA/travel trailer deadline on personal property. Ms. Bergeron indicated that the deadline for work is August 1st, but they may extend the deadline for trailers. He inquired about the house on Water Tower Street. Ms. Bergeron said the family did receive a dumpster, that it was sitting on their property for about 45 days but they weren't ready to do the work. She said a dumpster was delivered today and another will be delivered tomorrow.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper said Ms. Leblanc, Troy Carter's office, the Lean Group, and RISE attended the meeting for the 5th District area. He said a \$500,000 grant was awarded to St. James Parish, preferably the 5th district, for an environmental monitoring system. He said he and President Dufresne attended the solar panel meeting, adding there was a good turnout.

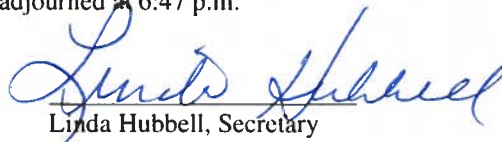
COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash said there is a bad hole on the back part of Apricot Street. He requested to have the trees pickup up on Highway 644 in Vacherie. He asked if a letter had been sent to the family of the house that burnt near the park. Mr. Webre said yes, and that it is a long process.

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

VICE-CHAIRMAN AMATO – Vice-Chairman Amato reminded everyone that Rostan Services will be at the next council meeting to provide an update on Hurricane Ida recovery. He said the Town of Litcher is looking to return to twice a week service and will probably have to revise our ordinance.

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 6:47 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary