

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JUNE 9, 2021**

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 9, 2021, at 6:09 p.m., following the public hearing.

On roll call, the following were recorded present: Council Members Ryan Louque, Mason Bland, Clyde Cooper, Donald Nash, and Chairman Alvin St. Pierre, Jr. Councilwoman Vondra Etienne-Steib was absent, and Councilman Jason Amato was not in attendance for roll call.

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

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

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.

**MINUTES**

On a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Bland, the minutes of the May 26, 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 Cooper, the minutes of the May 26, 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 April 2021 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Nash.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening everyone.

- I will begin my report tonight by providing a quick update on a few meetings we have recently held, especially those regarding mitigating flood waters in our parish.
- Last week, my staff and I met with officials from Ascension Parish and the Pontchartrain Levee District to discuss regional surge protection for our areas. It's important for us to come together as a region to discuss drainage and floodwater solutions to benefit all of our parishes rather than working against each other.
- Additionally, I have had meetings with the Pontchartrain Levee District regarding the Westshore Levee Extension project and the need for connecting the two proposed ring levees currently identified in the project for our parish.
- The PLD, Army Corps of Engineers, CPRA and state agencies will host a groundbreaking ceremony for the Westshore Project on Monday, June 21<sup>st</sup> at the Reserve Relief Boat Launch in St. John Parish.
- I would like to assure our residents that we are taking an aggressive approach to solving surge protection issues, backwater flooding and drainage mitigation in the parish and we will continue to push for funding and projects that will create solutions to the problems we have faced.
- Additionally, we recently had meetings with DDG to discuss the beginning stages of the west bank multipurpose building which will provide us with an estimated footprint for the space we will need in order to allow us to work with the hospital on land acquisition.
- Tomorrow, Thursday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at 10 am we will host a ribbon cutting ceremony for the District 4 Park in Convent. The public and all local officials are invited to participate in this event and to recognize the improvements made to recreation in the area.
- This week, our summer college student program started. The student workers have been divided among many of our parish departments where they will gain valuable job experience and knowledge.
- Additionally this week, our new employee and retiree health insurance provider has begun hosting a series of informational meetings with our employees to explain the details of our new insurance benefits and I am confident that this change will be positive for our employees.

**DHR:**

- As a reminder, our senior centers reopened a few weeks ago with a daily average of around 15 participants. For seniors not yet ready to gather in a group setting, our Department of Human Resources will be conducting a drive through meal pick up event. For more information on the pick up meals, residents can contact any of our local senior centers.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - No public comments were received on agenda items that required a vote.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Andrea Hollins, with SeLah Productions did not attend the meeting, due to an emergency.

Buddy Boe, River Parishes Tourist Commission introduced the new Executive Director, Mr. Jay Robichaux.

Kevin Belanger with South Central Planning and Development briefly explained the deadline and the process with redistricting. He then answered the Councilman's and President Dufresne's questions.

**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

Councilman Louque offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 21-127, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING BRENDA MELANCON AS A DISTRICT 3 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD.** Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-128, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING CAMELLA LANDRY AS A PARISH PRESIDENT'S REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – had a discussion last week with South Louisiana Methanol and is looking at an area next to Communi/Freetown Street, still need further discussion with Ergon.
- Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update – no new update.
- **ORDINANCE 21-07, AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZING ADMINISTRATION TO PAY CERTAIN ACCOUNTS PAYABLE INVOICES PRIOR TO COUNCIL APPROVAL**, having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Amato and Etienne-Steib absent, the ordinance was adopted, as amended.

Councilman Jason Amato arrived and assumed his seat on the Council.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION 21-129, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JUNE 11, 2021 PAYROLL**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-130, 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, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-131, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE A JOINT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ST. JAMES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD AND THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL FOR THE COLLECTION OF SALES AND USE TAXES FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1, 2021 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2022**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-132, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FROM PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING FIRMS FOR THE EAST BANK CLARIFIER AND FILTER REHAB PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-133, A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF WORK PERFORMED BY NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS, LLC (NCMC) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CERTIFICATE OF SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION FOR THE MOLAISON SEWER FACILITY PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-134, A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF WORK PERFORMED BY BENTON-GEORGIA, LLC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CERTIFICATE OF SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION FOR THE PAULINA GAS INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS – PHASE 1 PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-135, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT TO ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF GRAMERCY FOR ROAD REPAIR/OVERLAY**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-136, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT TO ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF LUTCHER FOR ROAD REPAIR/OVERLAY**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-137, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL TO ENTER INTO AN INSURANCE CONTRACT WITH STANDARD INSURANCE COMPANY TO PROVIDE SHORT AND LONG TERM DISABILITY AND OTHER VOLUNTARY EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND TERMINATE AGREEMENT WITH COMBINED BENEFITS ADMINISTRATORS, INC.**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and was seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-138, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH FRANCIS HORTICULTURE SERVICES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SPLASH PARK AT THE GRAMERCY RECREATION PARK**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-139. A RESOLUTION FOR ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL TO ENTER INTO AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH ST. JAMES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD FOR THE 5<sup>TH</sup>**

**DISTRICT SUMMER CAMP**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-140, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF H. DENNIS VACUUM TRUCK SERVICE**, was offered and move for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-141, RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF MMR CONSTRUCTORS, INC.**, was offered and moved for adopting by Councilman Amato. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

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

**ERIC DEROCHE** – our current Hazard Mitigation Plan is set to expire in October 2021. The previous administration opted out of the State's contract with SDMI and opted for the \$45,000 grant with a 25% match. We will now be in a time crunch to get the new plan approved by FEMA, if not submitted/approved by October 2021 we will no longer be eligible for hazard mitigation grant dollars for the 5-year cycle.

**INGRID LEBLANC** – Averaging about 15 seniors visiting the centers.

**FELIX BOUGHTON** – the annual audit is being wrapped up and the findings will be address at a future meeting. We will soon begin working on the amended budget and the 2022 budget. He said the timeline for the FG study is by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

**RICK WEBRE** – has a new format for his operations report. The road rehab report has been sent for review. He said the CEA given between the Parish and Sugar View Estates is for your information. Chairman St. Pierre stated that he will pass out a copy of the ordinance that is related to the CEA.

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

**COUNCILMAN AMATO** – Councilman Amato said he could not attend the banquet due to his participation in a LA Transportation Authority meeting at the State Capital in Baton Rouge. He thanked Speaker Clay Schexnayder and Rep. Brass for their efforts to increase road overlay projects in St. James Parish. Hopefully, they will come before the Council at some point and recap the Session for us. He said he submitted a work order for the Lucher oxidation pond.

**COUNCILMAN LOUQUE** – Councilman Louque thanked the Administration for the work done to the Paulina Gas Infrastructure and asked if we could publicize the project. He requested an update on Admiral Landing's ditch and bank stabilization on Nicole Street. He said the operations report looks good.

**COUNCILMAN BLAND** – Councilman Bland said he is getting great feedback regarding the call center, adding that not everyone is aware of the service. He said the ribbon cutting for the District 4 Park is tomorrow morning at 10am, and added that it was rewarding to see about 25 kids using the park today. He thanked DOTD for road improvements of Hwy 3214. He inquired about a security camera at the District 4 park.

**COUNCILMAN COOPER** – Councilman Cooper requested a letter of condolence to the family of Clinton Melancon, a member of the District 5 Recreation Board. He requested information/status of the following: when will the State cut the grass at both bridges, installation of speed bumps, District 5 building, and the District 5 baseball field. He said the renovations at the park are going good.

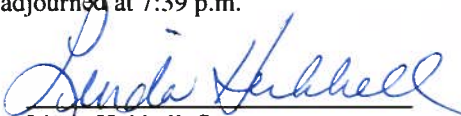
**COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB** – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib was absent

**COUNCILMAN NASH** – Councilman Nash said the power failures on Highways 643 and 644 have been corrected. He requested the status of Maple Street drainage, culvert on Hwy 643, drainage on the back part of Spruce Street, and security at the weir

**CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE** – Chairman St. Pierre stated that the Small Business Banquet was great and thanked Mrs. Audrey for her work with Economic Development. He expressed appreciation for the work being done at the Welcome Center and the grass cutting on Hwy 3125. He said Mr. Mitchell is looking for a building to hold his industrial training, if anyone has a building to lease, please contact Mrs. Leblanc in DHR. He said the Regional Flood Protection meeting with PLD and Ascension Parish was a very good meeting. He thanked Mr. Webre for the work being done at David Planation and for the operations report, said it is very in-depth. He indicated that he handed out the ordinance for the sewerage and asked the council to review it. He is hoping to get the resolution for the redistricting at the next meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Cooper and seconded by Councilman Bland and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary