

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JULY 20, 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, July 20, 2022, at 6:10 p.m. immediately following the public hearing.

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

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Council Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Shanitra Jasmin, Transportation Supervisor; 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 Cooper offered the invocation and Councilman Louque led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES**

On a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Nash the minutes of the July 6, 2022 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 Louque the minutes of the July 6, 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 Chair. Good evening, Council. Good evening, everyone.

- Covid rates seem to be increasing in the Parish so please be mindful and let's protect our seniors from possible exposure.
- We have completed our second Market Day. This month was a huge success with over 30 vendors and a lot of participation.
- This past Thursday, I met with Zapp's/UTZ officials and chief executive officers. Mr. Nosacka and I, along with Representative Brass, Senator Ed Price, SCPDC, LDEQ, and a few others to put our best foot forward to ask them to reopen to bring the jobs back to St. James Parish. We seem to have made some significant headway.
- The parish does have multiple current job openings. For more information, please visit our website to apply.
- Sales tax is down again, and we are continuing to make necessary changes to avoid overspending.
- We will receive the interconnect agreement between Acadian Gas Pipeline Co. and St. James Parish for the Natural Gas Pay Point on the Westbank the 1<sup>st</sup> week of August. Acadian Gas Pipeline met on-site for the installation of a high pressure tap, and High Tide Consultants is finalizing design. Once the tap is complete, the bid process will begin for fabrication and construction of the metering station.
- Material required for the David Plantation drainage project was delivered today. Delivery of fill material and deployment of our in-house drainage crew is scheduled for Monday July 25, 2022.
- Operations is meeting with Aaron Elisar with DOTD this week to review the plan for Hwy 643 Drainage Mitigation. Work will be performed with in-house drainage crews which will deploy after completion of the David Plantation project.
- Task Order #1, to preserve roads by ways of rejuvenating fog seal, crack sealing, mastic surface treatment, and HP fog, was issued to Material Resources, Inc.
- Crescent Engineering is compiling a list for patch work to be quoted by mid August. Crescent is also compiling the road rehabilitation bid packet which should be ready by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter.
- Task order #1 was issued to Crescent Engineering for the Facility Planning & Control (FP&C) 3127 widening project.
- The bid packet for the Convent Water Plant Clarifier is being finalized and advertising will begin in August.
- The hurricane damaged roof repairs for the Convent and Vacherie Water Plants are substantially complete. Work was completed by MoreCore Roofing.
- Gulf South Pipeline will be on-site August 11<sup>th</sup> for the Natural Gas Pay Point installation on the East Bank.
- Please visit our Facebook page to be up to date with our library activities. Our libraries host great events and crafts during the summer. Boating/ATV safety classes, art classes, and cake decorating are just a few examples.
- American Cruise Line will begin off loading passengers at the West Bank ferry landing for the first time on Tuesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully this is the beginning of much needed tourism in St. James Parish.
- I'd again like to remind everyone that we are beginning to reach the peak of hurricane season and now is the time to be sure everyone has an emergency plan and kit ready in the event we are impacted by any storms during the remainder of this season. Let's all remember Hurricane Ida, it was only 48 hours from the time it originated to the time it made landfall. Ask yourself if you are ready for a hurricane to hit within the next 48 hours.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following provided comments on agenda item #4 under old business (Resolution implementing a moratorium on the approval or permitting of all solar farms in St. James Parish)

Tripp Roy, 60 Maryland Dr, New Orleans (DESRI)

Yovanka Daniel, 4809 Jefferson Hwy, Jefferson, LA (Entergy)

Gail LeBoeuf, 758 N. Ezidore, Gramercy, LA

Justin Kray, 2433 Orzaga St., New Orleans

### **PRESENTATIONS**

- Ms. Dana Groover presented the St. James Parish Housing Authority's annual report.
- Miss Maddie Young was recognized and presented with a plaque for winning Very Special Miss Louisiana.
- Kevin Lancaster addressed the council about blighted property in his neighborhood. Mr. Webre then provided an update of the work that had been done to the property.

### **APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

Councilman Cooper offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 22-153, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING GENEVA LANDRY AS THE DISTRICT 5 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH LIBRARY BOARD**. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building – No additional update. Still waiting on the new appraisal.

Update of drainage study for Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – Still on the radar. We need to get the major drainage completed before moving into that area.

**ORDINANCE 22-07, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE III, SECTION 2-86 “KEEP ST. JAMES PARISH BEAUTIFUL BOARD”**, having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Amato absent, the ordinance was adopted.

Councilman Nash offered a motion to take **A RESOLUTION IMPLEMENTING A MORATORIUM ON THE APPROVAL OR PERMITTING OF ALL SOLAR FARMS IN ST. JAMES PARISH** from the table. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and after a unanimous roll call vote, with Amato absent, the motion carried. The resolution then failed for lack of a motion.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION 22-154, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JULY 22, 2022 PAYROLL**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Amato absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 22-155, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Amato absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 22-156, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR AUTOMATED COLLECTION AND TRANSPORTATION OF RESIDENTIAL SOLID WASTE**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Amato absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 22-157, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #4 FROM TBT CONTRACTING, INC. OF LA FOR THE EAST BANK RECREATION FACILITY**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Amato absent, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 22-158, A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE NON-DISCRIMINATION PROGRAM FOR ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY-TRANSIT DIVISION**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Amato absent, the resolution was adopted.

After a discussion and President Dufresne answering the Council Member's questions **RESOLUTION 22-159, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH AM-PM SERVICES FOR TEMPORARY STAFFING**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a roll call vote showing St. Pierre, Cooper, Louque, and Etienne-Steib in favor, Nash and Bland against, and Amato absent, the resolution was adopted.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**FELIX BOUGHTON** – In our first year in office we did a salary equity study, we receive one from Ascension Parish Government. That study compared every position, it compared those salaries to what industries are paying, and our positions that were below market value were move up to market value. Additionally, with COVID, and sales taxes lower, we've given cost of living raises three years in a row. We started the budget process today and you will receive some timelines from me. We will have challenges due to sales tax, and we will feel the full brunt of losing the Shell refinery for property taxes. We will need to make serious decisions on parks and recreation, elderly, and solid waste.

Councilman St. Pierre made comments on sales tax collection.

President Dufresne indicated there were excessive expenses due to COVID and Hurricane Ida. He said thanks to this administration and this team, they have done so much inhouse and renegotiated every contract that came upon his desk, adding, that this administration will have saved the taxpayers \$8.4 million by the end of his first term. He said

he is proud of the business mentality that was brought to St. James Parish Government and how much this administration has worked for the council and for the residents. He said with the cuts that we will be experiencing from the Shell closure, he doesn't know how much more they can do and still continue to provide the level of service to our resident but will continue every day to do the best job that we can and be as fiscally responsible as we can with the taxpayer's money.

Councilman St. Pierre said that if the Parish could be a part of the tax collection process to please ask us. He said hiring two internal auditors to work for the parish is not the route to go, adding that we need to get people who will go out and work for their money.

SHANITRA JASMIN – she said the transit department will be reducing out of parish services effective August 1, 2022 due to gas inflation and fleet shortage. She indicated that out of parish services will be on the first and last Tuesday of every month for errands/shopping, it will not affect medical, educational, or dialysis.

ERIC DEROCHE – informed the council that they received a jump drive for mandatory Cybersecurity training. The PO was issued for the AV upgrade in the Council Chambers and a kickoff meeting has been scheduled.

### COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash had no comment.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper requested a condolence to the family of Shirley Mitchell. He requested a letter of appreciation to Zeb Meyhew for his service to the Economic Development Board. He inquired if all Bidy Basketball will be played at the Gramercy Recreation facility. President Dufresne said yes, until we get the building on the West Bank. He also inquired is the Parish has anything in place with the School Board for biddy basketball practice.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland reminded everyone to start your work order by calling 225-562-2500. He requested a letter of condolence to the family of Albert Thomas Laiche Sr. He was a founding member of the St. James Volunteer Fire Department and thanked him for his years of dedication to our community. He said he is still working on the recreation board and said they still haven't had the meeting with each Council Member to discuss the needs of each park.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque had no comment.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato was absent.

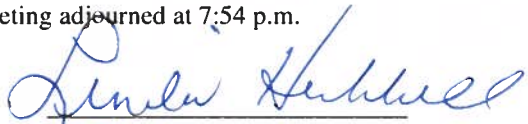
COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre said the work at David Plantation was a great job. He said he is hoping that we can something together and move in another direction with sales tax collection.

CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib said she appreciated the dialog about AM-PM services and said she is pro-hiring St. James Parish and said she understands the difficulty in filling some positions. She joined Councilman Cooper with the condolence letter to the Mitchell family, and to the Sowell family.

President Dufresne reiterated that the AM-PM contract is not an attempt to not hire St. James Parish people, it's simply another tool that we will use to help draw from a bigger pool of candidates. He added that this administration is committed to hiring St. James Parish residents first, if qualified to do the job.

### 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 7:54 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary