

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JULY 24, 2019**

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 24, 2019, at 7:12 p.m., following the public hearing.

On roll call, the following were recorded present: Council Members Alvin St. Pierre, Jr., Jason Amato, Ralph Patin, Clyde Cooper, Vondra Etienne-Steib, Eddie Kraemer, and Chairman Ryan Louque.

Those also in attendance were: Linda Hubbell, Secretary; Timmy Roussel, Parish President; Michelle Octave, Chief Administrative Officer, Julie Gilbert, Assistant Director of Finance; Blaise Gravois, Director of Operations; Ryan Donadieu, Interim Director of Emergency Preparedness; Lennorah Williams, Assistant Director of Human Resources; and Cody Martin, Legal Advisor. Mr. Vic Franckiewicz was also in attendance.

Councilman Amato offered the invocation and Councilman Kraemer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Honorable Ryan Louque, 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 Amato and seconded by Councilman Patin, the minutes of the July 10, 2019 public hearing were approved as distributed and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman Kraemer and seconded by Councilman Patin, the minutes of the June 10, 2019 regular meeting were approved as distributed and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Roussel provided this report:

- 1) I want to take a few minutes to thank everyone engaged with any of the preparations with Hurricane Barry. God must have been with us as we found ourselves blessed. Thank you, Lord! No heavy or devastating rains or winds. Not even backwater, which history has it where we were always plagued with it. We did have power outages that reached up to 980 residents without power at its highest point. Entergy did a fantastic job getting us back up and running. The twice daily conference calls from NWS and GOHSEP was certainly advantageous and helped work out as a foundation for our FB and publicly daily reporting that took place at 11 am and 5 pm. The intermediate email alerts and update reports coming from Department of Emergency Preparedness received a lot of praise and compliments during and after the event. Thanks, Ryan Donadieu and staff, for making that happen. Setting up the various sandbag sites, cleaning up of downed trees as they fell onto our roadways, securing and having the pump & weir station on the Westbank operational in the ready position, among a list of other important items, thanks to Blaise and the Operations staff for their part in all of this. Thanks also to Ingrid LeBlanc and her DHR staff for readying a shelter at the Lutcher High School Gym. Again, thank God for not having the immediate necessity of opening it.
- 2) We received correspondence from the United States Postal Service that will be read in a few minutes by our Council Secretary. It is great news to learn that we will again have a Post Office in the 5<sup>th</sup> District. The same service is expected as our citizens enjoyed in the past. However, a site has yet to be determined.
- 3) Only yesterday we received correspondence from Director of GOHSEP, Director James Waskom that FEMA has approved our application for our East Bank Drainage Improvements. The total project cost is \$4,425,007. The approved project scope of work consists of replacing existing undersized and deficient culverts with new and appropriately sized culverts. The project involves approximately 26,500 linear feet of culverts replacements along 30 streets on north and south side of Hwy 3125 spanning municipalities of Lutcher & Gramercy and the community of Paulina, St. Elmo, Grand Point and Convent. This work is to provide increased gravity drainage capacity. I would like to thank Chairman Richard St. Pierre and the East Bank Drainage Task Force, Mr. Kyle Jones, Mr. P.J. Hahn and Director Waskom, Casey Tingle and their staff at GOHSEP for making the very important project a reality. It's another good day in St. James Parish!
- 4) I have a few reminders for you:
  - There is a training for Small Businesses tomorrow, Thursday July 25<sup>th</sup> at the Lutcher Library from 10 – 12 noon. The subject matter is "Understanding the Revolving Loan Process" sponsored and facilitated by SCPDC.
  - There's a Chamber Perks Social at Oak Alley Plantation scheduled for August 1<sup>st</sup> beginning at 8 am
  - There will also be a "Business to Business Network Breakfast" at the St. James Parish Hospital on August 8<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8 am.

**Thank You ... May God Bless you; may God bless all of St. James Parish! Semper Fi !!!**

**PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comments were received from the public.

**CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**

The letter received from the United States Postal Service on the final decision regarding St. James Main Post Office located at 5525 Hwy 18, St. James, Louisiana 70086-7173 was read aloud by Secretary Hubbell.

A summary of the appeal letters received from Lisa Jordan, Director of Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, on Wanhua's Land Use Permit was read aloud by Secretary Hubbell.

At this time Chairman Louque stated that an additional correspondence was received from Wanhua in reference to their Foreign Trade Zone. Chairman Louque requested a motion to amend the agenda to include this correspondence. Councilman St. Pierre offered and moved to amend the agenda. Councilman Amato offered a second, and after a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried. Councilman Kraemer offered and move to have the

correspondence read. Councilman Patin offered a second, and after a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried. Secretary Hubbell read aloud the letter received from Wanhua on their Free Trade Zone subzone application.

#### **APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS** - None

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

The following updates were provided:

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – no new update. Continue to research funding.
- Hwy 3125 Left Turn Lane Concept – waiting response from DOTD to schedule a meeting.
- Lutcher 3rd Street Drainage Improvement Assistance Request – Mickey met with Ike and Patrick, the Parish will assist, and it needs to be added to the schedule.

**ACTION ON THE APPEAL OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S APPROVAL OF WANHUA CHEMICAL US OPERATIONS LLC'S LAND USE APPLICATION.** Chairman Louque indicated that Wanhua communicated a request to consider tabling this consideration until the August 7th meeting.

Councilman Kraemer stated, based on all of the information we received in the last month, he agreed with what Lisa Jordan said, that the Planning Commission didn't have a lot of that information when they made their decision. He said he would like to take action and remand this back to the Planning Commission so they can review all of the information and make a new recommendation to the council.

Councilwoman Etienne-Steib said she agreed with Councilman Kraemer to send it back to the Planning Commission for their review.

Chairman Louque said the FTZ has the potential to be a big economic factor of consideration. He said the Planning Commission was fully left out, and if Wanhua chooses to waive any of the taxes or enter into an agreement where we receive all taxes fully due, the planning commission wasn't afforded the opportunity to evaluate it.

Councilman Amato said he could support sending it back to the Planning Commission with one request: that a full proper respect for the quorum is exhibited in every meeting. He added that they are doing a great job for us.

Councilman Cooper said it needs to be reviewed again by the Planning Commission. He said he listened attentively to those speaking and had concerns for those in favor and for those against and wants the council to take those things into consideration. He said those that spoke for it spoke about economic impact, the tax impact, and the safety impact. He said those that spoke against, spoke about health and safety concerns for the community, depreciation of property, and the lack of opportunity for economic gain. He said we are on two different landscapes when it comes down to industry cooperating with the community and those are some strong arguments that we need to take into consideration with this matter.

Mr. Vic Franckiewicz said, for clarification for procedural legal purposes, technically, right now, this is a decision on appeal before the Council. When you remand it back, it goes back to the Planning Commission. He told Councilman Kramer that one of the words used "recommendation" from the Planning Commission, that technically the original decision of the Planning Commission on May 20th was not a recommendation, it was a real live decision that then got appealed. He asked Councilman Kraemer to clarify if his intent was to just get advice from the Planning Commission for you to consider the appeal further or are you sending it back for a new decision, which then either party, whatever that decision is, could appeal. Councilman Kraemer said he makes a motion that they remand it back to the Planning Commission to consider the new information presented in the appeal and render a new decision. Mr. Gravois informed everyone that the Planning Commission meeting is Monday night, but the agenda has already been set since this past Monday. He said it will be brought to the next meeting at the end of August. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and after a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER TO REMAND THE WANHUA LAND USE APPLICATION TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH PLANNING COMMISSION FOR RECONSIDERATION.** Chairman Louque indicated that this agenda item is moot, since it was covered in previous action.

**RESOLUTION 19-151, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JULY 26, 2019 PAYROLL,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre. After a unanimous roll call vote the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 19-152, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Patin and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 19-153, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH TO ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH PAULINA PACKERS BANTAM FOOTBALL AND AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE SAID COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Kraemer. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 19-154, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH TO ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH VACHERIE RAMS BANTAM FOOTBALL AND AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE SAID COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Patin offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 19-155, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO NEGOTIATE, SIGN, AND SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TO CONTINUE**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM TO SUPPORT EDUCATION AND CAREER READINESS AMONG YOUNG AT RISK ADULTS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Kraemer. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman St. Pierre offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 19-156, A RESOLUTION COMMENDING MR. A. J. LAICHE FOR HIS YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PARISH AS A MEMBER OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD**. Councilman Patin offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 19-157, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMENDMENT NUMBER 2 CONTRACT FOR A PARISH WIDE RECREATION MASTER PLAN FROM CSRS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman St. Pierre offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 19-158, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ACCEPT A COST ESTIMATE FROM DUPLANTIS DESIGN GROUP FOR THE HISTORICAL BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre. Councilman Kraemer offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

An **EXECUTIVE SESSION** convened at 7:50 p.m., on a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried. Members of the Council, President Roussel, Blaise Gravois, Legal Advisor Cody Martin, along with Mr. Franckiewicz withdrew to an adjoining chamber to receive a status report from counsel regarding the litigation styled *Genevieve Butler, et al, versus St. James Parish, et al*, pending in the 23rd Judicial District Court, St. James Parish, Louisiana, Docket No. 39,413, Division 'C'. All returned at 8:04 p.m., and the regular session was reconvened. Chairman Louque informed the public that no decisions were made.

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

**COUNCILMAN KRAEMER** – Councilman Kraemer asked for an update on the light on 3127/3213. Mr. Gravois indicated that in Rep. Mr. Brass' report, it showed where he was trying to get \$150,000 funding from the state. Mr. Gravois said they are just waiting now for the funding to get approved. He said once it gets approved, they will use that money and move forward.

**COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB** – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib had no comment.

**COUNCILMAN COOPER** – Councilman Cooper indicated that the water is not draining in front of Mr. Larry Melancon's residence, and the ditches need to be dug on Communi and Dennis Streets. He said the Business Directory was put together very well. Councilman Cooper said on the 27th, beginning at 4:00 p.m., they are having the Oliver Cooper, Sr. Day. He commended President Roussel for putting it together to honor his accomplishments. Councilman Cooper asked Mr. Gravois to let him know where on the list is the 5th District splash park.

**COUNCILMAN PATIN** – Councilman Patin had no comment.

**COUNCILMAN AMATO** – Councilman Amato thanked everyone for the efforts with the GOHSEP funding for the East Bank drainage. Councilman Amato asked President Roussel if this was their 3rd award. President Roussel said that if you count GOMESA, it's actually 4. He said, in the announcement today, they received \$4.425 million from FEMA/GOHEP, \$1.5 million from DOTD for the laterals on 3125, \$8.5 million with PLD through Capital Outlay, and approximately \$7 million from GOMESA funds, for a total of \$21.25 million, that we received word of, in the last month and half. President Roussel indicated they have a meeting with CPRA to ask for help with the project. Councilman Amato said he will get with Mr. Gravois about moving the Lutchter Fire Sign. Councilman Amato expressed appreciation to the Parish team for a great job during Hurricane Barry.

**COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE** – Councilman St. Pierre thanked Mickey for the work at Gramercy Recreation. He said the Gramercy Mayor would get with Mickey to put some of that fence around the entrance of Central Canal. Councilman St. Pierre said he didn't see a work order for the catch basins on Magnolia and Pine Streets and requested an update. Mr. Gravois stated it is in the scope of work. Councilman St. Pierre expressed appreciation for the updates and the work everyone did for the storm.

**CHAIRMAN LOUQUE** – Chairman Louque had no comment.

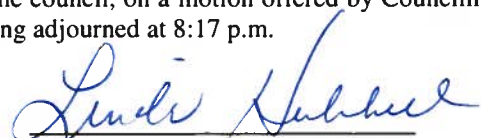
#### **DIRECTOR REPORT**

**RYAN DONADIEU** – Thanked everyone for the assistance offered during the storm. He made special remarks to the operations team for clearing the roads quickly.

**BLAISE GRAVOIS** – He said when the event started, they had a meeting and decided to communicate, not only to the council, but to the employees and residents. He thanked his employees for their hard work during the weather event.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Kraemer and seconded by Councilman Cooper and carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary