

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 2, 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, August 2, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Council Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Rick Webre, Operations Director; Ingrid Bergeron, DHR Director; Eric Deroche, Emergency Preparedness Director, and Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor. Special Counsel Marty Maley was also in attendance.

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

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash, the minutes of the July 19, 2023 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Nash, the minutes of the July 19, 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 June 2023 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the Council:

- Good evening, everyone.
- I am pleased to share that the natural gas purchase point for the West Bank is finalized and fully operational. This is the ninth major natural gas project this administration has finished in the last three years, including Bourbon Subdivision, Highway 642 gas main, East Bank metering station, Longview subdivision, Romeville gas loop, Reverend Thomas Scott, Highway 642 to North Nobile, and Highway 643 to Sugar Estates. These projects have cost in excess of 4.5 million dollars, which was funded by the utilities surplus and was not bonded out. We are currently considering and planning three additional gas projects including Molaison, Judge Becnel, and the Angelle Street Gas Loop.
- On today, we started to re-advertise for bids for the automated water and gas meter project for all of St. James Parish.
- The questionnaire for the Angelle Gas Loop went out to residents this week. If the majority of the residents choose to participate, it would be approximately \$1,500 gas impact fees per service connection, plus regular fees to construct this project.
- We will not be renting the West Bank reception hall after January as we are modernizing the building. This will take approximately 30 days to complete.
- On August 1st, the Watershed Steering Committee Proxy informed us that a new change to the Louisiana Uniform Construction Code is in place. All new residents in Special Flood Hazard Areas must be one foot above the base flood elevation. Our chief building official South Central Planning is responsible for ensuring that all new residents comply. I am pleased to share that we are already practicing this by Parish Ordinance, as we require residents to be at least six foot, or one foot above the base flood elevation.
- On yesterday, we submitted a Community Rating System application for recertification with the National Flood Insurance Program. This acts as a guidance to enhance flood loss reduction and helps residents protect their homes. A positive rating helps us to improve flood insurance rates. We anticipate hearing back about the certification in the next few months.
- We are continuing to work toward the new water plant clarifier on the East Bank and this project is moving along. This clarifier will address most of our critical water infrastructure needs, and greatly increase our capacity to produce water. Currently, we are producing approximately 800,000 gallons a day and this should increase our capacity to roughly 2 million gallons per day.
- The 2023 Road Rehab Program is now underway, and a list of streets is being provided to all council members.
- The DHR building in Lutchter is now considered substantially complete. This process allows the contractors about 2 more weeks for any additional final items on the punch list.
- We have ordered two manual transfer switches for the West Bank Reception Hall and the St. James Parish Recreation Center to allow mobile generators to be used during a disaster situation. The Recreation Center transfer switch will be installed on Monday, and we are scheduling the Westbank Reception installation with Entergy.
- Our Co-ed cabbage ball season has begun and is off to a great start. We have about 9 teams participating.
- The Recreation Department will be offering full-body workout night classes on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in August, starting next week. These classes are free for members or \$10 a class for non-members.
- Registration for our soccer season is open now through August 25th. We've already had 100 children sign up. Please encourage families in your districts to participate.
- The DHR writing and drama camp with local artist K.Levy has concluded. Students enjoyed learning and being mentored in the arts and sciences, and even wrote and produced their own play during the program. It was great

to see so many local upcoming artists, and the partnership was a success. Hopefully we can continue to grow the art in our communities, and this is a great addition to our recreation program.

- Our next Market Day is on August 12th, from 8:00am-2:00pm. I'd like to invite you all to attend and support our local vendors.
- I met with Paul Mayho and his family today, owners of the TPP Plaza in Vacherie, located right down the road, on Hwy 20, from where our new Recreation Center will be located. We discussed growth for the future of Vacherie, and his goals for bringing new businesses and jobs into our area. He currently has several business spaces available that could be used as a restaurant, office space, or event center. I am looking forward to the continued growth and development coming to the West Bank of St. James Parish.
- I sent out a letter this week reminding our local businesses of the Restore Small Business Loan Program. Local businesses can qualify for up to \$250,000, and only have to pay back 60% of this loan. Applications will be accepted through December 31st, 2023. The South Central Planning & Development Commission contacted me today to share that they have seen many new applicants apply following the mail out, and I am confident that we will have many more local businesses take advantage of this opportunity.
- This concludes my report. I would like to offer our prayers and sympathies to Father Mark Beard and his family. He was killed in a car accident a couple of hours ago.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PRESENTATIONS

RESOLUTION 23-162, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING AUGUST 17, 2023 AS RSVP VOLUNTEER DAY IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman St. Pierre offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted. A plaque was presented to the Retired Senior Volunteer Representatives, who each said a few words of thanks to the Council and Administration for their support.

A plaque was also presented to Chloe Bernice Campbell for her crowning as Very Special Miss Louisiana Teen Queen.

Mike Bourgeois with Duplantis Design Group made a presentation regarding the future Multipurpose Building and Senior Center. He said they are in the early part of schematic design and the images will continue to develop over the next few weeks. He said they could add the new firehouse and draft images of what the hospital has planned. He said the priority is the Senior Center and then the Recreation Center. He added that they are still in the programming phase, as they understand what the Parish wants out of the buildings. He said they are doing their due diligence, integrating their consultants and getting prices regarding Geotech, investigation of the sites, investigating drainage and sewer. He said they still have around 4 to 5 months of development and ready to receive bids late January/early February, and hopefully start construction in March. He then answered the Council's questions regarding square footage, aesthetics, restrooms, and the location of the buildings.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS -None

OLD BUSINESS

Update of drainage study from Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – began working on the back part of Forrestall. A briefing of the ditch on the west side of Pool Lane will be received tomorrow.

Update of West Bank Multi-Purpose Complex – information was presented during Mr. Bourgeois presentation.

Belleve Lakes Development and Drainage Update – 2 temporary turnarounds will be placed until they complete the buildout. When the buildout is complete it will make a circle that will not require a turnaround. Mr. Webre said the Parish now has an IBC inspector; a team will be created to inspect subdivisions as they are being constructed. They are working with the engineering company to get all the data points that Councilman Bland requested. Councilman Bland inquired what the developers plans are for drainage by the pond. Mr. Webre said he needs to verify that the volume of water they are putting in the pipe is able to come out on 3125 and are waiting for the data point to verify.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 23-163, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE AUGUST 4, 2023 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-164, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-165, RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #1 FROM J.P. CAVALIER CONSTRUCTION, LLC FOR THE VACHERIE ANNEX COUNCIL CHAMBER RENOVATION PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-166, A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE CONTRACT FOR EMR ELEVATOR SERVICES, LLC TO EXTEND THE CONTRACT BY ONE (1) YEAR AND INCREASE CONTRACT PRICE FOR COURTHOUSE ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE SERVICES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-167, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH VETERANS CONSTRUCTION, LLC FOR THE DISTRICT 4 PARK RESTROOM PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-168, A RESOLUTION REJECTING ALL PROPOSALS RECEIVED FOR THE AUTOMATED WATER METER INFRASTRUCTURE (AMI) SYSTEM PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-169, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE FOR SEALED BIDS FOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FROM INTERESTED AND QUALIFIED FIRMS TO SUPPLY AND INSTALL RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL WATER AND GAS METERS WITH NEW AUTOMATED METERING INFRASTRUCTURE (AMI) FOR THE UTILITIES DEPARTMENT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-170, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH GULF SOUTH ENGINEERING AND TESTING, INC., was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-171, A RESOLUTION RENEWING THE CONTRACT WITH TRIO COMMUNITY MEALS FOR FOOD SERVICES TO SENIOR CONGREGATE AND HOMEBOUND MEAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR 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 Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-172, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SIGNING OF THE REVISED BUDGET BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS AND THE ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2022-2023, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-173, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SIGNING OF REVISED AND/OR NEW TITLE IIIB, II-C-1, IIIC-2, III-D, IIIE, NSIP, PCOA, MIPPA AND OTHER CONTRACTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS AND THE ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2023-2024, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

At this time Councilmen Amato and St. Pierre thanked Mr. Deroche for the work they are doing with the Acadian Ambulance contract.

FELIX BOUGHTON – Started the 2024 budget process and said Council Members can begin to send in their request.

Councilman Bland and St. Pierre provided feedback regarding the online recreation registration. Councilman Bland also asked Mr. Webre to look into closing out the 2020-2022 work orders that he submitted.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash requested an update of the Bayou Chevruel bridge replacement project from Rep. Brass, Senator Price, and Aaron Elizar, with DOTD at an upcoming council meeting.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper had no comment.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland thanked the Council for moving forward with the District 4 restroom. He thanked the administration for the response to his request for black top at the District 4 park. He said he sent a request to the District 4 residents for their ideas for the budget.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque asked for an update on completing the gas line at 642. Mr. Webre said they are waiting on flaggers from CN.

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

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

COUNCIL VICE-CHAIRMAN AMATO – Vice-Chairman Amato reminded everyone that school would begin tomorrow, and he wished everyone a safe and successful year. He also asked everyone to keep Father Mark Beard in their prayers.

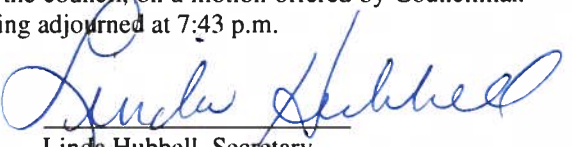
Councilman St. Pierre reminded everyone that qualifying for election is next week.

An **EXECUTIVE SESSION** convened at 7:08 p.m., on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre. After a unanimous vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the motion carried. Members of the Council, President Dufresne, Special Counsel Maley, and Arthur Landry withdrew to an adjoining chamber to receive a status report from special counsel concerning 2:20-cv-03154-GGG-MBN Roussel v. Berkley Insurance Company

and 2:20-cv-02981-GGG-DMD Gravois v. Berkely Insurance Company, and related matters. All returned at 7:42 p.m. Vice-Chairman Amato stated that no action was taken.

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 Bland and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.



Linda Hubbell, Secretary