

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 4, 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, August 4, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

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

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

Councilman Amato offered the invocation and Councilman Louque 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 Nash and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib, the minutes of the July 21, 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 June 2021 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening Council, Good evening everyone.

- Unfortunately, I will begin my report again tonight with more news about the 4th wave of the Covid-19 pandemic we are experiencing.
- I met again this week with our hospital administrators to better understand the situation here locally and I'd like to share some of that important information with all of you and our residents.
- As we all know, the Delta variant is much more contagious than what we have seen during the initial outbreaks of Covid-19. This highly contagious variant has now put the most extreme strain yet on our statewide hospital system. We have now taken tremendous steps backward in our recovery and progress in fighting Covid-19. Here in St. James, our rural hospital only has 25 beds and ordinarily transfers all critical or serious patients to one of the larger regional hospitals for specialized care unavailable at a local level. However, those larger hospitals who have the specialized care physicians and equipment do not have room to take any more patients with current waitlists for ICU beds nearing 30 plus people. This means, our residents, our family members, and our friends who might contract the virus and suffer severe symptoms requiring critical care, might not be able to receive that care as quickly as it is needed.
- Our hospital has made some changes to their vaccination efforts to provide quick service and convenience. Residents are now able to visit the hospital's medical plaza clinic Monday thru Friday from 10 am to 2 pm and from 3 pm to 5 pm to get vaccinated. No appointment is necessary. I urge our unvaccinated residents if you are able to be vaccinated to please do so.
- This week, effective today, Governor John Bel Edwards has reinstated a statewide mask mandate until September 1st when indoors. I ask our residents to be mindful of social distancing, to consider the governor's request to wear masks and get vaccinated.
- In more positive news, last week, both myself and Mrs. Vondra Steib attended a groundbreaking ceremony that was held for the Westshore levee project. While there is still more work to do, St. James Parish's portion of this project, the beginning of the project marks a monumental moment in regional flood protection history.
- I have continued conversations with the Corps of Engineers and the Pontchartrain Levee District, and I am confident that we will come to an agreement and solution for our portion of this project to better protect our residents.

DHR:

- Our Department of Human Resources has been receiving positive feedback on the services provided at the ARC including the field trips and picnics clients have been able to take through the center. Staff will continue to develop ways to improve and service our residents.
- The ARC also received an appropriation from Act 119 in the recent legislative session in the amount of \$50,000 for building improvements and assistance with construction costs.

Emergency Preparedness:

- Our EOC staff continues to meet with Stephenson Disaster Management Institute for the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update and is on track to meet the submission deadline before the Plan's expiration in September.

Operations:

- Operations staff are coordinating with Gulf South Pipeline to increase the gas pressure on the east bank with installation tentatively set for November of this year
- The gas pay point land acquisition for the west bank on Hwy 3127 is currently being surveyed for negotiations with the hospital and expected by the end of August.
- Quotes have been received for the Longview Subdivision natural gas lines at around \$122,000. An agenda item for contracting will be on the next council meeting agenda this month.
- Operations recently hosted a public meeting for the Humble Street Phase 2 project with plans to continue public outreach throughout the project. The vendor provided information regrading drainage basin manufacturing delays due to covid-19.

- The South Vacherie levee project is continuing even with the delays we've experienced due to the frequent rainfall our area has received. Our crews are doing an excellent job making these levee improvements to protect the residents in South Vacherie. This project should be completed soon.

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

PRESENTATIONS

Chairman St. Pierre acknowledged Mr. Glenn Duncan, and said that at a previous meeting Mr. Duncan presented St. James Parish with the new State flag for the Council Chambers. Mr. Duncan presented St. James Parish with another State flag for the West Bank Chambers.

At this time Chairman St. Pierre stated that we had resolutions, recognizing the Sugar Queens, on the agenda and asked the Council Secretary to read them aloud so the presentations could be made. After each was read, they were adopted.

President Dufresne presented Anna Katherine Roussel a plaque for her accomplishment as being crowned Miss Teen Queen.

President Dufresne also presented Hailey Marie Detillier a plaque for her accomplishment as being crowned Miss Queen.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS - None

OLD BUSINESS

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – no new update.
- Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update – attended the fire department meeting last night to explain the project and asked for their support.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 21-184, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE AUGUST 6, 2021 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-185, 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 Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-186, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID AND AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A PUBLIC WORKS/CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT WITH TBT CONTRACTING, INC. OF LOUISIANA FOR THE EAST BANK RECREATION FACILITY RENOVATIONS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-187, A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING ANNA KATHERINE ROUSSEL ON HER RECENT CROWNING AS THE MISS TEEN QUEEN, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-188, A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING HAILEY MARIE DETILLER ON HER RECENT CROWNING AS THE ST. JAMES PARISH MISS QUEEN, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

FELIX BOUGHTON – this Friday is the deadline to submit capital requests to Rick. Non-capital requests need to be sent to me.

RICK WEBRE – showed a video of the Vacherie Canal levee maintenance project.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato proposed that the tall grass ordinance be revised to possibly shorten the duration for chronic landowners. He congratulated the Sugar Queens and said he is looking forward to seeing them representing our Parish. He thanked Ms. Petty for everything she does with the pageant.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque congratulated the Queens and said he is looking forward to them representing the Parish. He said his budget requests were sent to Rick and he appreciates all the work being done in his District.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland was absent.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper requested a condolence letter be sent to Allen Washington's family. He inquired about attendance for Coastal Zone members. He also inquired about road rehab. Mr. Webre stated that bidding should go out in about 30 days.

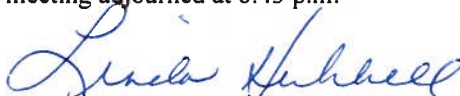
COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib congratulated the Queens. She said she had the opportunity to participate in a community give-away with Melissa Chriss with Toys for Tots. She said she has over 200 book bags and school supplies and asked Councilmen Cooper and Nash to assist with distribution on August 22nd.

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash also congratulated the Queens. He said he and Mark Johnson had the opportunity to ride through the South Vacherie to look at some of the telephone poles that have deteriorated, adding that a work order will be submitted to have work done this year. He requested a status of the culvert on Hwy 643. Mr. Webre said the engineer is transferring to another firm and they are coordinating. Councilman Nash said two areas of the Bypass drainage canal needs to be sprayed. He indicated that he will probably put money in the budget for a gas main study in the South Vacherie area. He said a wonderful job was done on the weir and thanked the crews. He thanked Mr. Webre for keeping them updated on project in their Districts.

CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE – Chairman St. Pierre congratulated the Queen and said he looks forward to them representing the Parish, and he wished them good luck. He said a request was received from Scott Angelle to pass a resolution in support of resuming federal offshore leasing in the Gulf of Mexico. He said 4½” of rain fell in Gramercy yesterday. He stated that Gramercy Recreation has a new splash park, and the new playground equipment is in place and will try to coordinate an opening ceremony.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib and seconded by Councilman Louque and carried, the meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary