

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 16, 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 16, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

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

The Honorable, Vondra Etienne-Steib, 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 Amato offered the invocation and Councilman Nash led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Amato, the minutes of the August 2, 2023 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. Good evening, everyone.
- First off, I would like to congratulate our Council Chair Ms. Etienne-Steib who is unopposed for District 6.
- Last week I attended the funeral services for Father Mark Beard. While he was only in St. James Parish for two years, he made a profound difference in our parish and left a lasting impact. I'd also like to acknowledge that our District 2 Councilman Jason Amato gave the eulogy for Father Mark and did a phenomenal job commemorating his life and legacy.
- I'd like to extend my condolences to our employee Adrien Thompson, her mother Rosemary Broden passed away this week. Our thoughts and prayers are with her and her loved ones.
- Residents in the Angelle Loop area have through the end of August to respond to the natural gas survey that our Operations Department sent out to gauge interest in the gas loop project. 35 surveys were sent out so far and we are waiting favorable responses so we can continue to move the project forward.
- The 2023 road program is nearing completion, the contractors are doing punch list items to make minor corrections.
- For the 2024 road rehab program, we received one million dollars in state capital outlay funding, and the line of credit was submitted to begin the process of expending those funds.
- We met today with Gulf South Engineers to look at rewriting some ordinances regarding quality control with subdivision developments in St. James Parish and to ensure the Parish accepts quality infrastructure for subdivisions.
- St. James Parish Department of Operations is coordinating the final details to complete a jack and bore under the Union Pacific Railway.
- The right of way and servitude is being obtained that will allow crews to excavate a drainage channel along the western border of the Magnolia Heights Subdivision. This project will coincide with the jack and bore project under the Union Pacific Railroad.
- St. James Parish Government received a 1 million dollar grant for round one of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative. This revenue will be expended to extend the drainage trunk line in South Angelle Subdivision.
- Bids for the East Bank Clarifier came in for over a million dollars above the estimated cost for the project, on Friday the Department of Operations appeared before the State Water Sector Commission and requested an additional 1.15 million dollars to cover these additional costs. After the presentation from our team, and with the assistance of Matt Spradley and his firm, the Commission agreed, and awarded St. James Parish the additional 1 million dollars.
- The DHR building is substantially complete, the contractors are completing their punch list and the building will be finalized in early October.
- The DHH review of the SMA Kitchen will be within the next week. We're greatly anticipating this project being finalized and being able to improve our meals on wheels service for our home bound seniors.
- Please mark your calendar for the 50 Shades of Pink Senior Fashion Show on October 18th in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness. The event will be held at the West Bank Reception Hall.
- On yesterday, DHR and the EOC held a meeting with pastors and civic leaders of our community to coordinate volunteer disaster groups following a hurricane. The event had a great attendance, and we are looking forward to advancing these efforts with local churches.
- On tomorrow, St. James High School is hosting the Salute 1st Inauguration starting at 9:00a.m. For those of you who are not familiar with the Salute 1st program, it assists our young men in becoming responsible adults and is run by Dr. Kendall Taylor. I'd like to remind all of our council members that you are invited to attend this exciting event.
- The manual transfer switch for the St. James Parish Recreation Center has been installed, and we are scheduling the Westbank Reception installation with Entergy.
- To date, we have had \$12,812,361 in expenses coded to Hurricane Ida. Between insurance and FEMA, we have received \$12,301,261. This means we have a difference of \$511,000. FEMA has approved \$7,040,423 to date, and we have already received \$5,220,096 of those approved dollars. \$1,670,062 is unpaid and still going through

the FEMA process. All these figures do not include any expense for the replacement for the Vacherie Senior Center or the North Vacherie Old Main Fire Station on the River Road, which will only increase our FEMA reimbursement.

- I'd like to remind you that we are approaching the peak of Hurricane season, along with the anniversaries of Hurricane Ida, Gustav, Ike, and Katrina. Please remember that with Hurricane Ida we only had 48 hours of notice to prepare. All hurricanes that have formed in the Gulf of Mexico in the last decade have made landfall as a major hurricane along the coast. Please be prepared and have your first 72-hour kit ready to protect you and your family.
- We received \$27,000 from FEMA for sewer lift station and water tower damage.
- We also received \$162,000 in reimbursement from FEMA for fees we paid to Rostan Solutions. As of today, we are ahead of schedule of most jurisdictions for hurricane recovery funds. However, there is still work to be done, which includes our previously mentioned buildings.
- I'd like to remind all of our residents that the entire State of Louisiana is under a burn ban right now. Please be mindful of this and follow all guidelines.
- We just received \$267,300 for a pre-paid gas program that the council approved 2 years ago. This payment was for six months, so we should get another check in approximately six months.
- I'd like to remind you that the Recreation Department will be offering full-body workout night classes on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in August. These classes are free for members or \$10 a class for non-members.
- Registration for our soccer season is open through August 25th. We've already registered 170 children. Please encourage families in your districts to participate.
- Last week I attended Chamber Perks at the St. John Parish Sheriff's Office. This event is an opportunity to connect with local businesses and organizations in our region, and I am looking forward to St. James Parish hosting a Chamber Perk event in the future at our new Recreation Center.
- Through a partnership with the St. James Parish Library and the Student Association of the Society of Wetland Scientists at LSU, we have glass recycling now available at multiple locations in the parish, including right here at the St. James Parish Administration Building. The program just expanded to include one plastics, and aluminum cans. The glass that is donated is taken to Glass Half Full in New Orleans and transformed into sand to be used in coastal restoration projects.
- I recently spoke at the Homebuilders Association of Greater New Orleans membership meeting for St. John and St. James Parish. I was able to share with them about progress being made on the St. James Parish Natural Gas, Water Infrastructure and Westshore Protection Levee and invited them to pursue investing in St. James Parish.
- On Saturday I attended the Miss St. James Parish Pageant, I'd like to congratulate our new Miss St James Parish, Kami Hymel and our new Teen St. James Parish, Briley Holley.
- Our August Market Day was on Saturday and was a successful event. I'd like to invite you to mark your calendar and attend the next event on September 9th.
- This concludes my report. God bless each of you and your families tonight, and God bless St James Parish.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

PRESENTATIONS – None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS -None

OLD BUSINESS

Update of drainage study from Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – no additional update.

Update of West Bank Multi-Purpose Complex – DDG is working on the final revision and it should be ready in two weeks.

Bellevue Lakes Development and Drainage Update – no additional update.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 23-174, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE AUGUST 18, 2023 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous vote, with Bland and Cooper absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-175, 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 St. Pierre. After a unanimous vote, with Bland and Cooper absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-176, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AN OPT IN FORM FOR THE STATE RUN TEMPORARY HOUSING PROGRAM UNDER LOUISIANA REVISED STATUTE 726(F)(3)(B)(iii)(aa), was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous vote, with Bland and Cooper absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-177, A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE CONTRACT WITH LIFE HOUSE STAFFING TO A NOT TO EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$150,000 FOR TEMPORARY STAFFING SERVICES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous vote, with Bland and Cooper absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-178, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE FOR SEALED BIDS FOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FROM INTERESTED AND QUALIFIED CONTRACTORS TO PROVIDE NUISANCE ABATEMENT REMEDIATION SERVICES FOR THE PROVISION OF MOWING, DEMOLITIONS, AND DEBRIS REMOVAL FOR THE ST. JAMES PARISH CODE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM, was offered and moved adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ERIC DEROCHE – We are continuing to work with Acadian Ambulance, gathering information from other jurisdictions so we can move forward with our contract renewal. We began updating the spreadsheet for security cameras and we should have that information to the council within the next month.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash requested the Council Secretary send a letter to DOTD in reference to potholes on Hwy 644, next to N. Oak Street and on Hwy 20, next to Wag-a-Pak. He inquired about a catch basin near First American Bank. Mr. Webre said it is on the list. Councilman Nash also requested a letter be sent to DOTD for caution lights near the school on Hwy 643/644.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper was absent.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland was absent.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque expressed thanks to the Department of Human Resources for assisting a resident in his District. He said he met with Operations and received updates on the Nicole Street canal bank repair and the gas line bore under the railroad.

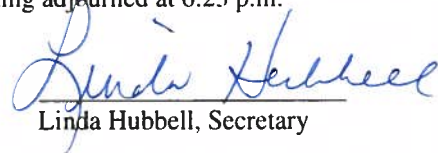
COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato congratulated Council Chairwoman on her re-election. He said he spoke with Ms. Dana Groover today and she was appreciative of the work being done at the Brooks Apartments on drainage and the parking lot asphalt. He requested a letter be sent to Life House Staffing inviting them to make a presentation at an upcoming council meeting.

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre also congratulated Councilwoman Etienne-Steib on her re-election. He wished everyone luck in the election process. He said that sales taxes are down and that it was suggested by the Finance Director that no additional recreation projects be added to the 2024 budget, due to the lack of sales tax.

CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib thanked the residents of District 6 for allowing her to serve them. She expressed condolences to anyone who may have loss a family member.

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 Amato and carried, the meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary