

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 27, 2023**

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, September 27, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Council Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Ryan Larousse, Assistant Operations Director; Darnell Jones, DHR Field Operations Manager; Eric Deroche, Emergency Preparedness Director, and Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor. Victor Franckiewicz, Special Counsel was also in attendance.

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 Bland led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash, the minutes of the September 13, 2023 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque, the minutes of the September 13, 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, Madam Chair. Good evening, everyone.
- I'd like to start off by congratulating our Miss St. James Parish Queen Kami Hymel for being crowned the 80th Louisiana Queen Sugar. Kami is also a member of the St. James Parish Economic Development Board and I know she will represent St. James Parish and the sugar cane industry well.
- I'd like to offer my condolences to the family of Helen Scott. Ms. Helen was the oldest resident in St. James Parish at 105 years old. Her funeral is tomorrow at Golden Grove Baptist Church. The motorcade is tomorrow at 12:30, starting at the Gramercy Town Hall.
- At this time, we are actively monitoring the saltwater intrusion occurring in the lower Mississippi. This is caused by a lack of rain up north, weakening the flow of the River. Both GOHSEP and the Army Corp forecast indicate that saltwater intrusion may or may not reach Jefferson Parish by the end of October, which is as far as the forecast goes. There's no way of determining if this will impact St. James Parish, and as of now we are thing that it will not.
- Late this afternoon, the State Fire Marshall announced that starting this Friday at 5:00p.m., parishes will have the option to opt out of the statewide burn ban. Our fire departments, emergency preparedness department, and other officials are discussing the impacts to St. James Parish and will be making a decision soon about the burn ban in St. James Parish.
- I coordinated with Entergy to host a community meeting this past Monday for community members to meet with Entergy and hear directly about recent outages and planned infrastructure improvements. Residents were able to express their frustrations, and Entergy took notes and is committed to making infrastructure improvements.
- There's a balance of \$60,000 in the 2023 Road Rehab Budget, which will be used for crack sealing in David Plantation.
- On Monday we resumed work clearing waterway debris from major drainage canals on the West Bank now that water levels are higher.
- Operations, DHR, and I will be meeting with DDG tomorrow to review designs for the Senior Center, located in Vacherie. This project is moving along and will be a reality in the nearby future.
- The West Bank Reception Hall generator was tested and is ready to operate in the event of a natural disaster.
- Substantial completion will be filed this week for the Romeville gas loop. This allows for redundancy in case of emergency situations.
- All residents residing in a state RV or state supplied shelter will be mandated to sign up for disaster case management starting on October 1st, if they aren't already signed up. The state has contacted residents to let them know.
- The St. James Parish Retired Teachers Association hosted the District 2 Louisiana Retired Teachers Association (LRTA) meeting last week. 180 teachers visited from St. James Parish, Assumption, Jefferson, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. John, and Terrebonne.
- I'd like to congratulate Salad Station on their very successful grand opening. It's always good to see new businesses popping up in St. James Parish.
- Last Thursday we hosted our very first Chamber Perks event with the River Region Chamber of Commerce at the new Recreation Center. The Chamber said it was their best attended event this year, and it was great to see so many of our local businesses networking and learning about local opportunities for businesses.
- The Tourist Commission held their quarterly meeting at Boat Club last week. Two of our local businesses spoke, The Ferry Landing Two Vintage and Makers Market and PJ's Coffee. I shared with attendees about our new multipurpose building and senior center coming soon to Vacherie, as well as many tourist attractions we have right here in St. James Parish. I also shared with the group the progress is still moving forward on the river boat dock at the old Vacherie ferry landing, that will be done by the American Cruise Ship terminal, and we are looking forward to more tourists in St. James Parish.

- Cypress Grove Montessori School held a ribbon cutting for the new track, which was donated by Shell. The track is a wonderful addition to the school, and the children were very excited about using it.
- The Quarter 4 Meeting sponsored by the River Region Chamber of Commerce will be at the West Bank Reception Hall.
- On October 10-15th, we will be hosting our annual Pumpkin Patch. Fieldtrips will be held during the week, with a fall fest and market day on the 14th and 15th. Our Pumpkin Patch 5k Fun Run registration opened today, which will be taking place on Saturday the 14th. We have also secured 1000 solar eclipse sunglasses, so participants can enjoy watching the solar eclipse that's taking place on the 14th right at the Pumpkin Patch. Please encourage your residents to come out and enjoy the festivities.
- Biddy Basketball Registration opened this week, please encourage local children in your district to participate. We have a great program and our teams have won the national championships multiple times.
- God bless each of you and your families tonight and God Bless St. James Parish. This concludes my report.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PRESENTATIONS

Latorya Howard, with Indulge Smokehouse addressed the Council regarding a variance for an alcohol license which is across the street from the daycare center. Ms. Howard said she was told to put the request for the State license on hold until after this meeting.

At this time, Chairwoman Etienne-Steib requested Ms. Mitt, with Angelique's Baking Co. to the podium so that legal advisor, Adam Koenig, could address both since it was the same concern. Mr. Koenig indicated that the Parish Ordinance prohibits the license to be granted within 300 feet from a facility that is mentioned, the daycare. He said the Parish ordinance mimics the State Statute that prohibits business within 300 feet from several different facilities. Ms. Mitt said she has communications from the State they will be going by the parish ordinance. She said door to door they are more than 300 feet, it's the property line that cuts it short. Councilman Bland said the Council will need more information from the ATC before they could make a decision. President Dufresne said he spoke with an ATF agent and was informed that they would take into consideration, not a guarantee, if the Parish Council would agree to grant a variance. Councilman Bland said a possible revision to the ordinance may be necessary.

Mr. Gary Fulton and Peter Cazeaux, with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality presented an overview of the air monitor device for the Welcome area on the West Bank. He said they have received their grant from the EPA and are proceeding with purchasing the equipment. He listed what the air monitoring station will monitor for, he showed a map of the potential location, which should be centrally located, easily accessible, secure, minimal charge for rent, power and communications, and minimal structures. He showed a picture of what the device looks like both on the inside and outside. He indicated that the data will be posted on LDEQ's website. He answered Councilman Bland's question about the duration saying it will be there for 3 years and after that time they will seek additional funding or remove the station. Councilman Cooper inquired about the data on the reports. Mr. Fulton said they will be monitoring the data full-time and personnel will be dispatched if necessary. Councilman Nash inquired if the Parish would be receiving the data. Mr. Fulton said the data will be available on the website. Councilman Louque inquired if the monitor would affect the permit side. Mr. Cazeaux said he didn't know and would get back. Mr. Fulton answered Councilman St. Pierre's question about data history being stored. Mr. Fulton indicated it will be stored on the website. Councilman Cooper commended LDEQ for putting the device in the area and he thanked Representative Carter and everyone who had a part to have monitor placed in the community.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilman St. Pierre offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 23-195, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING SHELTON SMITH TO THE GRAMERCY RECREATION BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-196, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING ROXANNE JACKSON CHILDS TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, ST. JAMES PARISH HOSPITAL SERVICE DISTRICT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

Update of drainage study from Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – began clearing Coteau and Clock Canals on Monday. Councilman Nash said he will request funding for a study to strengthen the levee.

Update of West Bank Multi-Purpose Complex – will be meeting with Duplantis Design Group tomorrow finalize the drawing for the senior center and multi-purpose recreational facility.

NEW BUSINESS

The first item under new business was the hearing and consideration of the appeal of Koch Methanol land use application approval, Planning Commission Item No. 23-25. On behalf of Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, representing Beverly Alexander, RISE St. James, Inclusive Louisiana, and the Mr. Triumph Baptist Church, student attorneys, Andrea White and Charlotte Phillips presented their appeal. Mr. Josh Wiggins, Plant Manager of Koch Methanol St. James, presented information regarding their projects. Kimberly Terrell, Environmental Law Clinic provided the rebuttal.

The following provided comments opposing the Koch Methanol Project:

Lisa Jordan, 6329 Freret St., Ste 130, New Orleans, LA 70118

Pippin Frisbie-Calder, 1723 Ursulines Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70116

Clara Potter, 6329 Freret St. New Orleans, LA

Adam Dohsenwend, 3733 W. Lakeshore Drive. Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Scott Eustis, 935 Gravier St. Ste 700, New Orleans, LA 70112
Shamell Lavigne, 8581 Hwy 18, St. James, LA 70086
Anne Rolfes, 3216 Canal St. Louisiana Bucket Brigade, New Orleans.
Gail LeBoeuf, 758 N. Ezidore Ave., Gramercy, LA 70052
Myrtle Felton, 8222 Pleasant Hill St., Convent, LA 70723
Barbara Washington, 8191 Pleasant Hill St., Romeville, LA (provided a written comment in her absence)
Kimberly Terrell, 6329 Freret Street, New Orleans, LA

The following provided comments in favor of the Koch Methanol Project:

George Nassar, 5390 Canatella St. Convent, LA
Lee Granier, 22701 Oak Street, Vacherie, LA
Randall Isles, 18065 Terraceside Drive, Prairieville, LA 70769
Wesley Chenier, 19819 Hwy 644, Vacherie, LA
Jacob Errington, 5666 LA 44, Convent, LA 70723
Sherry Bell, 19917 Hwy 544, Vacherie, LA

The following Council Members provided comments:

Alvin St. Pierre, Jr., Donald Nash, Mason Bland, and Clyde Cooper.

At this time Councilman Bland offered a motion to reject the appeal and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

RESOLUTION 23-197, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-198, 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, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-199, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH GOHSEP FOR WILDFIRE SUPPORT GIVEN TO BEAUREGARD PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-200, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF BUNKER GEAR SPECIALISTS FOR THERMAL IMAGERS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-201, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH DESIRE LINE, LLC FOR PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SERVICES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a vote showing St. Pierre, Amato, Cooper and Nash in favor, and Louque, Etienne-Steib, and Bland against, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-202, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH DESIRE LINE, LLC FOR COMMUNITY PLANS, CODE AMENDMENTS, AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN SERVICES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and was seconded by Councilman St. Pierre. After a vote showing St. Pierre, Amato, Cooper, and Nash in favor, and Louque, Bland, and Etienne-Steib against, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-203, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #2 FROM TBT CONTRACTING INC. OF LA FOR THE VACHERIE LIBRARY ADDITION PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous vote, the resolution was adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 82-25(E), 82-25(H) AND 30-53(D) OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES; ENACTING NEW SECTION 82-26 PROVIDE SOLAR ENERGY FARM FACILITY STANDARDS FOR DEVELOPMENT; AND REPEALING SECTION 82-25(O) REGARDING LIMITATIONS ON COMMERCIAL SOLAR FACILITIES, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre. After a vote showing St. Pierre, Amato, Louque, Bland, Cooper, and Etienne-Steib in favor, and Nash against, the ordinance was accepted and ordered filed with the Secretary for public inspection and publication of Notice of Public Hearing, which was scheduled for 6:00 p.m., on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent and on Wednesday, October 25, 2023 in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – None

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash had no comments.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper requested a letter of condolence for the family of Mr. Landry Dennis. He thanked the residents of 5th District and St. James Parish, Koch Methanol, Tulane Law, Rise, Inclusive and the other groups involved with the decision that was needed for Koch Methanol.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland had no comments.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque had no comments.

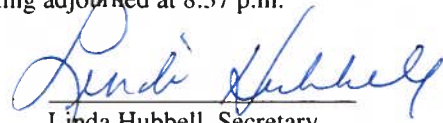
COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato reminded everyone that early voting begins on Saturday. He said Ms. Childs will make a wonderful addition to the Hospital Board, and he requested a thank you letter be sent to Ms. Bailey for her service on the Hospital Board.

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

CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Chairwoman Etienne-Stieb had no comments.

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 8:37 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary