

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2020**

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, September 30, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

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

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Richard Webre, Operations Director; Ingrid Leblanc, Human Resources Director; Eric Deroche, Emergency Preparedness Director; and Cody Martin, Legal Advisor. Marty Maley was also in attendance.

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

The Honorable Alvin St. Pierre, 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 Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque, the minutes of the September 16, 2020 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:

- In the last several weeks, in the Paulina area, we've been experiencing a lot of power outages, and Entergy has been working diligently to resolve the issues. They have come to the conclusion that they have equipment failures. Late today I receive a phone call from Entergy's lineman and indicated that they have found the problem. There was an exposed ground wire on one of the main transmission feeder line coming into the community. One of the ground wires were cut, or the staples came loose, so when the wind would blow it would swing the cables and cause power outages, with no way to detect it.
- I met with PLD and the Corp of Engineers and we are actively pursuing alternative alignment to better protect the entire East Bank of St. James Parish.
- Two weeks ago, I was asked about the requirements for reopening our bars. Our Parish must be at 5% positivity rate for two consecutive weeks. On Friday, September 18th, we were give the okay to opt in to Phase 3 reopening by the Alcohol and Tobacco Commissioner, but after conflicting numbers from the Louisiana Department of Health that same afternoon, the ATC then forced us to rescind the orders, and stated we were not at 5%, we were at a 5.1%.  
I've stated before that if the decision was left up to me, I would reopen, but unfortunately, I do not have that authority. Late this afternoon, I was informed by the State that we may be eligible, again, to opt in this afternoon. So, tomorrow before I opt into the ATC Commission, I will reconfirm all the numbers, so they don't rescind the opt in request again.  
We are encouraging everyone, especially healthy individuals to get tested to keep our numbers below the positivity rate. We are encouraging all negative COVID test results to help our percentage to stay below the 5%. The Welcome Center will serve as a free, drive through, self-swab COVID testing site from October 5<sup>th</sup> through October 9<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please spread the word in hopes of everyone getting tested.
- As of today, 56% of St. James Parish have taken the 2020 Census. You should have all received a flyer in the mail this week or at the end of last week that the Parish sent out, as a last-ditch effort encouraging residents to participate in the 2020 Census. Yesterday, it was announced that the deadline has been extended until October 5<sup>th</sup>. There is still time, and we must capitalize on these last few days and get everyone counted properly and take advantage of the resources.
- Early voting begins on Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup> through Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup> (excluding Sundays) from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Convent Courthouse and the Vacherie Annex. On Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup> you will also be able to vote at the Machine Warehouse in Lutcher. Due to the renovations being done in the Convent Courthouse, the Registrar of Voters office has moved to the second floor and voting will take place in the Council Chambers.
- Regular aerobics is starting back up tomorrow from 8:30-9:30 a.m. and will continue every week as normal-Tuesday/Thursday, 8:30-9:00 schedule.
- Next Friday Yoga will start back up every Friday from 8:30-9:30.
- Because of the success of the summer cornhole league, the Recreation Department will be hosting a fall cornhole league. Sign up on October 12<sup>th</sup> at the blind draw tournament at the West Bank Reception Hall or call 562-2337.
- The Lutcher Library's meeting room will reopen as a public meeting space on October 5<sup>th</sup> with limited capacity. Call the Lutcher Library for more details, 869-3618. The library is also starting their Virtual Escape Room; they have not released the date just yet but will very soon. They also just partnered with the ARC for Virtual Craft sessions and have Virtual Story hour on Wednesdays.
- We have a total of 526 businesses in St. James Parish that renewed occupational licenses this year and included in that number are 37 new businesses. The new Business Directory has been uploaded to the Parish website and each council person should have a hard copy in front of them.
- The St. James Parish Technology Center (located behind Lutcher High School) will be hosting the NCCER CORE, a 9-week training on Tuesday and Thursdays from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. NCCER Core Certification tells employers that the range of employment enhancing skills that meet industry standards have been obtained. To enroll or find out more information, go to rpcc.edu.
- The Bayou Chevreuil Boat Launch will be closed all day on Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup> for DOTD to finish the underground utilities.
- And lastly, just so you all are aware, I will be recommending to the Council at the next meeting that Trick-or-Treat proceed as normal. I believe it's is time for our community to feel some sense of normalcy!

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**PRESENTATIONS**

Kenneth Simon spoke about the gas service issue in Grandview Estates (Nobile Street). Mr. Webre provided details of the identified problems, and President Dufresne thanked him for representing his community and asked for patience as they work through the project.

Raymond Joey Fonseca, 275 Hwy 631E, Des Allemands, 70030, of Outlaw Kattfish, spoke about what the quality of Lac des Allemands water and seafood if a pellet release discharges into the St. James Canal by Formosa Plastic's facility.

Prior to Judge Gravois' presentation, Chairman St. Pierre stated that the reason his name is next to the agenda item, is because some time ago they decided that anyone with any political affiliation that wants to address the council, the Chairman presents them to the Council.

Judge Jude Gravois addressed the council as a candidate for Judge for the 5<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals.

**CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED** - None

**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS** – None

**OLD BUSINESS**

- **District 5 Alternate Access Route** – Trying to schedule a meeting for next week with Mr. Brass and Mr. Price.
- **North Vacherie Railroad Culvert Upgrade Project Status** – The project will be done in phases. Phase 1 is to apply herbicide, Phase 2 will be clearing and grubbing, and Phase 3 will be culvert work along the Magnolia area on 5 or 6 different streets, at the same time we are working to obtain the permits to jack and bore under the railroad tracks. Phase 1 will begin in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of this year and continue on to next year.
- **Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update** – a meeting has been scheduled to have discussions about the multipurpose building project.

**RESOLUTION 20-201, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE REVISED INDUSTRIAL EXEMPTION VALUE IN THE 2020 ASSESSMENT VALUES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION 20-202, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE OCTOBER 2, 2020 PAYROLL**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-203, 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, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-204, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH POSTLEWAITE & NETTERVILLE FOR PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT SERVICES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, and the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-205, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION FOR AND ACCEPTANCE OF FISCAL YEAR 2020 STATE HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM (SHSP) AND ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT AND/OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN, EXECUTE, AND ADMINISTER SAID AGREEMENT AND ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, and the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-206, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE CHANGE ORDER FROM UNIQUE CONSTRUCTION, LLC FOR THE REMODEL OF THE THIRD FLOOR, AND ADMINISTER ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, and the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-207, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH PG CONSULTING, LLC FOR CERTAIN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-208, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION WITH THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR A GRANT UNDER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FTA PROGRAMS MANAGED THROUGH LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-209, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION FOR AND ACCEPTANCE OF FISCAL YEAR 2020 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANT (EMPG) AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT AND/OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN, EXECUTE, AND ADMINISTER SAID AGREEMENT AND ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-210, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ADVERTISE AND ACCEPT BIDS FOR RIPRAP AND 54" ARCH CONCRETE PIPES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

After a lengthy discussion, Councilman Louque offered a motion to deny the Industrial Tax Exemption Application #20190076-ITE. **RESOLUTION 20-211, A RESOLUTION OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL DENYING INDUSTRIAL TAX EXEMPTION APPLICATION #20190076-ITE (PRAXAIR'S STEM METHANE REFORMER PROJECT) AS PRESENTED BY THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

An EXECUTIVE SESSION convened at 7:53 p.m., on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried. Members of the Council, President Dufresne, and Marty Maley withdrew to an adjoining chamber to receive a status report from special counsel concerning St. James Parish Government and Berkeley Insurance Company and related matters. All returned at 8:43 p.m., and the regular session reconvened. Chairman St. Pierre informed everyone that no decisions were made.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**RICK WEBRE** – The document I gave you is the 2020 projects that we want to complete by the end of the year. We discussed Bourbon Street Subdivision, we want to do the Humble Street drainage project, and we discussed Magnolia. We have about 5% of the North Bank project left to complete and the Canatella Street drainage is focused for the end of 2020.

**FELIX BOUGHTON** – We are in the middle of the budget process and the goal is to have you a budget to look at by November 1<sup>st</sup>. We are looking at calling the Special Budget meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup>.

**INGRID LEBLANC** – We will do a little fanfare for our Seniors to encourage them, that we are still waiting for them to return in Phase 3. We will go out to them on October 6<sup>th</sup> with a little parade and giving out goodies.

#### **COUNCIL MEMBERS REPORT**

**COUNCILMAN AMATO** – Councilman Amato asked if the Lucher Basketball Court project is on schedule? Mr. Webre indicated that they are about to pour the footings and had to relocate one electrical wire today, but it is moving along. Councilman Amato inquired about the environmental study. Mr. Martin said a meeting with Bliss Higgins needs to be put on the calendar.

**COUNCILMAN LOUQUE** – Councilman Louque said he is still getting notified from residents when the power blinks and reports it every single time. He said he is happy that Entergy is working toward a resolution. He expressed appreciation to the administration for taking the bull by the horn on engineering to try to find the quickest fix for the residents with the gas service issues.

**COUNCILMAN BLAND** – Councilman Bland asked if the work orders from January that transitioned in June got updated in the work order system? Mr. Webre indicated that he thinks they did but he will check on them. Councilman Bland asked if an email had been sent to DOTD about ditch digging with the Levee Board. Mr. Webre yes, but he doesn't have an answer yet as to when they will start.

**COUNCILMAN COOPER** – Councilman Cooper requested condolence letters be sent to Rose Simon Landry and Tammy Chiquet. He said residents are calling him about the ditch/canal near Landry-Geason Road, it is overgrown with vegetation. He requested that the gravel road at the rear of the graveyard, in Moonshine, be looked into because it is rutted up, adding busses and garbage trucks use the road. He asked if the issue on Dennis Street had been looked into? Mr. Webre said he check on it. Councilman Cooper inquired about the process of making temporary repairs to streets. Mr. Webre said that if it is small it can be taken care of in-house. Councilman Cooper said that Mill Street needs repairs.

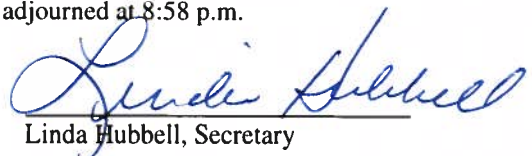
**COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB** – Councilwoman Steib inquired about a ditch cutting schedule, adding she has been getting calls about ditches that need to be dug. Mr. Webre indicated that sometimes they send a crew if it is creating a problem and said he will send her the schedule that he has.

**COUNCILMAN NASH** – Councilman Nash asked that the potholes on Nettie Street and Redbud Street be looked into. He said they did a wonderful job on the Red Falgoust Street project. He inquired about the right-of-way to clear vegetation on the major canals. Mr. Webre indicated that they have not ran into any issues, that they are not getting servitudes, they are just asking for a Right of Entry. Councilman Nash inquired about culvert cleaning. Mr. Webre indicated they have begun on both East and West Banks. He said he doesn't have a detailed schedule but said the ones that are creating problems are the ones they are jetting out. Councilman Nash requested a gas study for South Vacherie. Mr. Webre said the Utilities wants to carve out an area for a booster station.

**CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE** – No comments.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque and carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary