

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 16, 2019**

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, October 16, 2019, at 6:30 p.m.

On roll call, the following were recorded present: Council Members Alvin St. Pierre, Jason Amato, Ralph Patin, Clyde Cooper, Vondra Etienne-Steib, Eddie Kraemer, and Chairman Ryan Louque.

Those also in attendance were: Linda Hubbell, Secretary; Timothy Roussel, Parish President; Michelle Octave, Chief Administrative Officer; Chantal Waguespack, Director of Finance; Mickey Roussel, Assistant Director of Operations; Ryan Donadieu, Interim Director of Emergency Preparedness; Ingrid Leblanc, Director of Human Resources, and Cody Martin, Legal Advisor.

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

The Honorable Ryan Louque, 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 St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato, the minutes of the October 2, 2019 regular meeting were approved as distributed and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Roussel provided this report:

- 1) The NWS is watching the potential for tropical cyclone development in the southwestern/western Gulf of Mexico near the Bay of Campeche. There is a 50% chance of tropical cyclone development over the next 5 days. Of course, we will keep you updated on this system.
- 2) The following dates and times set for Early Voting for the November 16, 2019 Gubernatorial General Election will be as follows:
Saturday, November 2 - 9, 2019 (closed Sunday) all week 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. at the Convent and Vacherie Courthouses
Saturday, November 2 and Saturday, November 9, 2019 only Machine Warehouse, 1611 Lucher Ave., Lucher 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- 3) For an update on the traffic light at the intersection of Hwy 3127 & Hwy 3213: Entergy's vegetation crew and contractors have finished clearing the necessary area to make way to bring power to the new traffic light and their survey team has staked the Entergy-related markers for the project. Yesterday, Entergy called "811, Call Before You Dig", as required by law in order for any other affected utility (i.e. gas, communications, etc.) in this area to mark the locations of any underground equipment that they may have in this area prior to any construction. This should be completed by the end of the week. The estimated timeframe towards completion of the traffic signal is the Thanksgiving Holidays.
- 4) The Keep St. James Parish Beautification Board will be holding their Electronic Recycling Day this Saturday, October 21, 2019 from 8:30 - 11:30 am at the Winn Dixie Parking lot in Gramercy on Hwy 3125.
- 5) DHR's Harvest Fest for our Seniors will take place on Thursday, October 24th at the St. James Reception Center in Vacherie.

Thank You ... May God Bless you; may God bless all of St. James Parish! Semper Fi !!!

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Nosacka, 606 N. Millet St., Gramercy, asked the Council to support resolution #7 in congratulating Michelle. He also encouraged support for and spoke in favor of the intergovernmental agreement with PLD.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT - None

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED - None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS - None

OLD BUSINESS

The following updates were provided:

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – Mrs. Octave indicated that funds are available through the Opportunity Zones and said detailed plans are required. Would like to strategize through our Economic Development Board.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 19-208, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE OCTOBER 18, 2019 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Patin. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 19-209, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib and seconded by Councilman Kraemer. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

At this time a discussion took place on the IGA with PLD resolution: Councilman Kraemer questioned the funds to support this project. Mr. David Boyd, with BKI, explained that the money is there for the base bid (blind river structure/pump station). The contractor will place a bid for alternate 1 (M2 Canal closure structure) as a separate item, then alternate 2 (La Trainnasse closure structure). He said you will be getting 3 bids. He went on to explain

that the funding for the base bid has to be in place, and that alternates 1 and 2 would be funded if there is enough money left. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib stated that the original cost of the project was about \$25M - \$28M and asked why the bid is now lower. Mr. Boyd explained that 2 pump stations at the small crossings were stripped out (roughly \$6M - \$8M) and a double contingency was added, which brought the current total to roughly \$14M - \$16M. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib asked how long it would take to complete the project. Mr. Boyd said about 2 to 2½ years. He further explained that since it is a 2 ½ year process, and right now you have \$14M, the following year, while you are still building the Blind River pump station and closure, you go secure the additional \$2M then you have all 3 closures completed. Councilman Kraemer asked, since the project has been changed from the original and you are doing it in 3 phases and will now have 1 pumping station and 2 closures, did you reengineer the size of the pump(s) needed for phase 1? Chairman Louque asked, since you reduced the cost of the project by taking pump stations out, what if we can't fund the other closures, does it change the modeling in any way and how does it affect our overall protection? Mr. Boyd said Blind River needs the 320, whether the La Trainnasse and M2 160 CSF pump stations are in place or not. He said he did run strictly just with the Blind River pump station in place and it basically bares out the same benefits as having the 2 additional pump stations in there. He added that 320 at Blind River drains one section of the Parish, it doesn't drain further to the east. It would drain the Grand Point area. Chairman Louque asked, if we can't fund alternates 1 and 2, how would that affect the overall protection? Mr. Boyd said that the other 2, that aren't funded, are 100' across, so you would flood fight, adding that you would purchase huge sand bags, fill them up, then put them in the channel/crossing. He said then in the upcoming three years you can ask for money to grow into the project, to compete alternates 1 and 2, install sheet pilings along Airline Hwy, etc. Councilman Cooper asked if DOTD was on board with the sheet pilings? Mr. Boyd said yes, that they had no problem with using the right-of-way. Councilman Cooper asked how far from the Highway would the piling be, and would it have an effect of someone running into it during an accident? Mr. Boyd said it would be way out of the travel lane and would not affect driver safety. Councilman Cooper asked if these projects would help residents with flood insurance. Mr. Boyd indicated it would not. He said a NFIP project would cost half of a billion dollars. Councilman St. Pierre said he has a problem with making the project fit the money instead of the money fitting the project. He said Gramercy is sitting out there with their tails exposed. Central Canal is on Sycamore end that backs up into Gramercy. He said Gramercy does not drain into Blind River, it drains to M2. He said even if you put the gates there, we can't get the water out, it will run high along the railroad tracks. Mr. Boyd said if the water at the surface is 4', that 4' is coming onto your people regardless. He said a little rain event will not affect them as much as the 4' surge that would come in. He said if you have just a gate, you block the 4' before it gets there, block it at 2' and the only thing the people would have to deal with is the little bit of rainfall vs 4' and a little bit of rain fall. Councilman St. Pierre said we need to look at 3 canals, Central, Colonial and Beaver Canals, that can backflow into Gramercy. He said he feels we shouldn't mutilate a project to fit the money. He said the O&M cost belongs us, basically \$200,000 to \$250,000 a year. He said he has a problem with not having enough money to fund a project. He said the \$8.5M is not all us, \$6.17M is still in priority 5 and still has to go through the session. Mr. Boyd said it has already been bonded. Councilman St. Pierre said we are \$2M short and it could grow. Councilman St. Pierre said he asked CPR if this is not a Corp certified project would CPRA fund it, and was told no. Chairman Louque said sustainable flood protection is his first priority. He said he is not rejecting this project and should work the way it is designed. He asked how could we commit to a project without funding identified. He said we have \$2.2M unfunded and asked where is the balance coming from? Chairman Louque said he went to CPRA's office with President Roussel to request additional funding. He said they did not get a firm commitment, just that they would consider it to put in their annual plan. He said he wants to see something committing funds to the is project, fully funded. He said he wants his constituents to know that he does a lot of research. He said that he would like a timeline and a schedule of expenditures for the project. He recommends listing the plans specific funding methods in the agreement, table all funding sources to fully fund the project. He said the 2 identified sources are listed but there still is a funding gap of \$2.4M. He asked what if priority 5 isn't funded next year? Chairman Louque asked can we legally commit to a project that is not fully funded? Mr. Martin said if you can't fund the whole project, then you phase it out. If you only have enough money for phase 1 then you bid that out, then you can bid alternatives and once you have the money, you pay for them. He added, if it lapses, then you go out and rebid phase 2 as a separate project. He said yes, you can, legally. Chairman Louque said there is a threat of losing the Capital Outlay money. Only the \$2.1M is in the fiscal year, the other \$6.2M is in next year's fiscal year. He said the money is not in St. James Parish's name. PLD and the delegation, Senators and Representatives may have put in a request with the intent to spend it in St. James, but at the end of the day PLD can spend these funds on whatever project they choose. He said, technically, we don't have to sign anything for them to start the work. He said our effect tonight has nothing to do with the project. Mr. Martin said, yes, PLD can do what they want with the money, but that is the purpose of the agreement, for them to make a commitment to you, and you make a commitment to them. He said, he thinks, they already approved the form of an Intergovernmental Agreement that commits the funds to St. James Parish. Chairman Louque questioned the "up to 6' protection". He asked if we have anything in writing from DOTD, to attach to the IGA on their commitment to raising the road and/or maintaining the elevation of the road? Chairman Louque indicated that the Corp. is in the process of doing a white paper, asking for guidance through their processes of how to proceed with all this, if they don't do the flap gates. There is a 3 to 4 month timeframe on guidance. He said, what if we start the project and FEMA drops the base flood elevation. Councilman Amato recognized Mr. Richard St. Pierre, taskforce chairman, and thanked Mayor St. Pierre for attending tonight's meeting. Councilman Amato asked President Roussel how many East Bank residents north of Hwy 3125 are in jeopardy. President Roussel replied there are 238 homes. Councilman Amato asked how effective is the West Bank backwater flood protection project? Councilman Kraemer said it is very effective if it is used properly. Councilman Amato said prior council used their wisdom and foresight to implement the project to protect the West Bank of the parish, adding it is the same thing we are trying to do now, looking for FEMA approved projects. Councilman Amato said tonight we have a resolution to sign an agreement with PLD. He said what he doesn't see is "what if hell freezes over"? He said we have funding and support from Senator Price, and he supports Resolution #3. Councilman St. Pierre said they asked for a timeframe from the Corp. and was told by the end of first quarter/beginning of second quarter they would have an answer. He said there are some parallel things going on and that the money doesn't have to be spent tomorrow, it needs to be done before the end of the fiscal year. He said we need to sit back and take a look at this, adding we have parallel things going on, that we may have cushion, at times, the money will still be there. He said he thinks we are rushing it and then we have to find funding from the next administration.

Councilman Amato offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 19-210, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL**

AGREEMENT WITH THE PONTCHARTRAIN LEVEE DISTRICT ON THE AIRLINE HIGHWAY BACKWATER PROTECTION PLAN. Councilman St. Pierre offered a substitute motion to table the resolution until March of next year or earlier, if needed. Councilman Cooper offered a second and after a roll call vote showing, St. Pierre, Cooper, and Louque in favor, and Amato, Patin, Etienne-Steib, and Kraemer against, the substitute motion failed. Councilman Patin then offered a second to the original motion and after a roll call vote showing St. Pierre, Cooper, and Louque against, and Amato, Patin, Etienne-Steib, and Kraemer in favor, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 19-211, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARISH PRESIDENT TIMOTHY P. ROUSSEL TO EXECUTE AMENDMENT NO 1 TO THE AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WITH RAMBOLL US CORPORATION, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Patin offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

After Councilman Cooper requested to add an expiration date to **RESOLUTION 19-212, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING ROSTAN SOLUTIONS FOR THE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND RATES FOR GRANT AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SERVICES,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted, as amended.

RESOLUTION 19-213, A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF WORK PERFORMED BY RES CONTRACTORS, LLC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CERTIFICATION OF SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION FOR THE EDA AWARD NO 08-79-05118, RAW WATER INTAKE PUMP STATION, EAST BANK WATER TREATMENT PLANT, ST. JAMES PARISH, LOUISIANA, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Kraemer offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 19-214, A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND COMMENDING MRS. MICHELLE NAILOR OCTAVE ON BEING APPOINTED AND CROWNED AS MS. EXQUISITE FULL-FIGURED USA LOUISIANA 2019 IN THE LOUISIANA FULL-FIGURED PAGEANT.** Councilman St. Pierre offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 19-215, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE PARISH PRESIDENT OR DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, CAA TO AMEND THE CONTRACT WITH XP SYNERGY TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND JOB READINESS COMPONENTS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM TO MEET THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR REQUIREMENTS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. Councilman Kraemer offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 19-216, A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED REVENUE SHARING FOR LOUISIANA THROUGH GOMESA, WHILE OBJECTING TO THE ALLOCATION OF FEDERAL MINERAL REVENUE TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS; AND SUPPORT OF GOMESA REVENUE SHARING WITH GULF COAST STATES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman St. Pierre offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN KRAEMER – Thanked the Council for supporting the light on Hwy 3213/3217. He said it should be completed by the end of November. He also asked for a projected timeline for completion of the Road Program in District 7. Dow, with PEC, said work would resume on Monday.

COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – She asked when will road work begin in District 6? PEC will provide a schedule. She congratulated Mr. Dufrene on his win.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – He also asked about the Road Program in District 5. Dow said a revised schedule will be sent President Roussel. Councilman Cooper thanked Mr. Mickey for the repair of the rail road. He congratulated Mr. Dufrene and wished best to everyone in the run-off. Congratulated St. James High and expressed condolence to the Harrison family.

COUNCILMAN PATIN – No comment.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – He expressed appreciation for help with the Lucher voting site. He requested an update from Mr. Young on the insurance case, and a review of the land use plan with Mr. Vic and the incoming council. He congratulated Pete Dufrene and said he looks forward to working with him the next four years.

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – He said the tennis court in Gramercy is looking great and will be a good addition for Gramercy Recreation. He requested that Gramercy be included in the initial engineering on the Blind River project. He congratulated Mr. Dufrene and allowed him to say a few words. Mr. Dufrene thanked everyone for voting and said he is looking forward to working with everyone.

CHAIRMAN LOUQUE – He informed everyone that the tentative 2020 council meeting calendar was distributed for review. He said he appreciated the discussion on the IGA, adding he is not opposing the project, he just had concerns with the funding. He asked President Roussel about the railroad crossing at Belmont. President Roussel said he had a discussion with the representative and they want to close two crossings and suggested passing a resolution opposing the crossings.

DIRECTOR REPORT

INGRID LEBLANC – The Elderly Senior Annual Fall Fest is scheduled for October 24th. She congratulated everyone on the past election.

RYAN DONADIEU – Will monitor the storm in the Gulf. Will participate on the NWS conference call and will provide an update afterward. He congratulated everyone on the election and President-elect Dufrene.

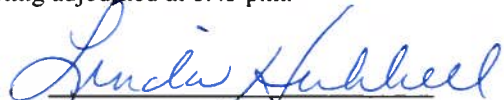
CHANTAL WAGUESPACK – The budget meeting is scheduled for November 20th at 6:00 pm in Vacherie. She congratulated everyone and congratulated Pete Dufrene.

MICKEY ROUSSEL – Congratulated everyone and wished good luck in the run-offs.

MICHELLE OCTAVE – Thanked the Councilwoman Steib for recognizing her. She congratulated all newly elected and President Dufrene. She thanked Flo Dumas with Entergy for have lights installed at the entrance of the Welcome Center. She reminded everyone of the Barn Smokers event on October 26th.

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 8:45 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary