

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 27, 2021**

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 27, 2021, at 6:00 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, Jr.

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Council Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Eric Deroche, Director of Emergency Preparedness; Ingrid Bergeron, Department of Human Resources Director; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Rick Webre, Operations Director; and Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor. Special Counsel Marty Maley, Special Counsel Bruce Mohon and Walter Leger and Mr. Shaw were also in attendance.

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.

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

**MINUTES**

On a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque, the minutes of the October 13, 2021 regular meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

At this time Chairman St. Pierre stated that the Parish President was on his way, running late due to a meeting in Convent. He said that we will move on and catch up to his report in a few minutes.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**PRESENTATIONS**

Kim Terrell, Tulane Environmental Law Clinic addressed the Council about health risk from industrial pollutants.

Caelyn Radziunas, Tulane Environmental Law Clinic addressed the Council about Nucor permit violations.

Paul Aucoin, Executive Director of the Port of South Louisiana provided the Port's annual report.

Paul Aucoin, and Steve Nosacka, presented the St. James Parish Economic Development Board's annual report.

Meredith Conger, St. James Parish Public Information Officer was not in attendance to make the presentation on the Parish's new website.

At this time Chairman St. Pierre requested a motion to deviate from the agenda to allow Jamie Vicknair to provide a status update of the Bonfire Festival. Councilman Bland offered a motion and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried. Jamie Vicknair, President of The Festival of the Bonfires, addressed the council regarding the liability insurance issue related to the bonfire season. She then answered the Council Member's questions.

**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS** - None

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Dufresne presented this report to the Council:

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, everyone.
- I want to start my report tonight with some updates on some of our major ongoing projects.
- The Humble Street drainage project has made additional progress this week with the completion of culvert replacements on St. James Street. Crews will be continuing to move towards North Angelle and begin interior drainage within the next week which will include replacing culverts under driveways.
- The Longview Subdivision gas project is slated to begin in the next coming weeks. This project will tie in with the upgrade of the gas pay points behind the Grand Point Fire station. By making upgrades to the pay point and while adding service lines, we can improve the overall gas service to residents on the East Bank of the parish. Operations staff will coordinate a CEA with Boardwalk pipeline to begin making the necessary upgrades.
- On November 9<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm, Operations staff will host a public meeting at Sandwich World to discuss the upcoming David Plantation Drainage Mitigation project and allow for public input. Residents are encouraged to attend and participate in the process as these much-needed improvements begin.
- On the west bank, crews have reinstalled the permanent pumps on the Vacherie weir levee this week and completed the last 100 feet of releveling of the levee. The quick work on this project alone protected many of our west bank residents from storm surge and flood waters during Hurricane Ida. I am confident that with these final improvements, we will remain safe from future storm related water.
- This week, our Capital Outlay requests were submitted to the Office of Facility Planning & Control. We have resubmitted our Hwy 3127 widening project for additional funds as well as having added a new project this year which will request funding to connect the two proposed ring levees currently part of our portion of the West Shore Levee Extension project.
- On the Hurricane Ida recovery, DOTD announced last week that they will be completing debris removal with a final pass this week on state highways. Once this has been completed, we plan to get approval from DOTD for our contractors to pick up any eligible remaining debris.

- Our Disaster Recovery and Mitigation specialist consultants have begun the process of identifying substantially damaged structures which meet the requirements of the FEMA Reform Act. While doing this, they will also identify residents who would potentially need private property debris removal. We plan to submit this information to FEMA for approval to allow our contractors to remove this as well.
  - We have begun the process of securing a loan to cover our up-front Hurricane Ida expenses until we are able to receive FEMA reimbursement. This will allow us to maintain our services to residents and keep our fund balances in line.
  - Our Disaster Recovery Center located in the Convent Community Center remains open to residents, but will begin operating Monday thru Saturday, and remain closed on Sundays beginning this Sunday, October 31 and moving forward.
  - Many of our residents have begun to receive their gas bills which contain costs incurred during Hurricane Ida. Many of us, including myself, utilized generator power for a significant period of time which has resulted in an abnormally high gas bill for most residents. We ask residents, if you are having trouble paying your bill in full, to please contact our utilities department at 225-562-2500 for further discussion.
  - The St. James Parish Government website relaunched yesterday afternoon with a new design and updated features centered around a customer friendly experience. This project included a complete overhaul of our previous website including content updates on every page to ensure we are providing the most up to date information to our residents. The new website features a streamlined look for easy navigation and quick access. Our Public Information Officer used our website data and analytics to create the new website with our provider, Civic Plus ensuring the most frequently visited pages were featured on the home page and that our website is ADA compliant. You will see, many of our departments now have their own custom web pages built into the main site. Operations, Libraries, Emergency Preparedness, DHR and Recreation now have individualized home pages specific to their functions.
  - We are hopeful that with this redesign, residents will find our website much more user friendly and helpful. Any comments, suggestions or questions can be submitted to Meredith Conger at [publicinformation@stjamesla.com](mailto:publicinformation@stjamesla.com).
  - Moving on to recreation, our Biddy Basketball league will soon begin with registration having opened up this week. The league is open to boys and girls aged 4-12. The registration deadline is November 12th. More information can be found on our website at [www.stjamesla.com](http://www.stjamesla.com).
  - At this time, we are still unable to provide lights on our baseball fields, but we are working to get the damaged lights from Hurricane Ida replaced. Teams can call the recreation office at 225-562-2337 to schedule baseball fields for practices or games.
  - As a reminder, our Parish cornhole league is every Tuesday night at 7 pm at the Recreation Center located at 1735 Deroche Circle in Gramercy.
  - This past weekend, we hosted the Parish Pumpkin Patch at the welcome center for the first time. I am proud to say this event was a tremendous success. I would like to thank all our residents and visitors from surrounding areas who came out and enjoyed this great event. It was truly a sign of normalcy for us to see so many gathered together, enjoying our beautiful welcome center and getting into the holiday spirit. We hope to continue this tradition each year and I'm confident we can grow to make this event bigger and better next year.
  - I hope all of our community's children enjoy Halloween this weekend and stay safe during trick-or-treating.
- This concludes my report. God bless each one of you and God bless St. James Parish.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

District 5 Alternate Access Route – still waiting a response from Ergon.

Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib requested the Council and Parish President work together to get the property purchased. President Dufresne said he received a copy of what the footprint and layout of the facility will look like, and they have what they need to move forward with the purchase of the property.

An **EXECUTIVE SESSION** convened at 7:15 p.m., on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried. Members of the Council, President Dufresne, along with Mr. Bruce Mohon and 2 representatives (Mr. Ledger and Mr. Shaw) withdrew to an adjoining chamber to discuss pending litigation – In Re: National Prescription Opiate Litigation, MDL NO. 2804 (N.D. Ohio). All returned at 7:44 p.m., and the regular session was reconvened. Chairman St. Pierre informed the public that the executive session was information only and no decisions were made.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION 21-232 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL (HEREIN REFERRED TO AS THIS “GOVERNMENTAL UNIT”) TO JOIN WITH THE STATE OF LOUISIANA AND OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS AS A PARTICIPANT IN THE LOUISIANA STATE-LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPIOID LITIGATION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (THE “MOU”) AND ANY SUBSEQUENT FORMAL AGREEMENT NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE MOU, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE SUBDIVISION SETTLEMENT PARTICIPATION FORM(S) IN EXHIBIT K OF THE NATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND THE JANSSEN SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-233, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE OCTOBER 29, 2021 PAYROLL,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-234, 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 Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-235, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FEDERAL OFF-SYSTEM BRIDGE REHABILITATION PROGRAM,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-236, A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE CONTRACT FOR DRC EMERGENCY SERVICES FOR DEBRIS REMOVAL,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-237, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT AND/OR DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TO SIGN A CONTRACT AND ANY OTHER DOCUMENTS WITH THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH FOR THE CITIES READINESS INITIATIVE FY 2022 GRANT FOR REGION THREE,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-238, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT TO ADVERTISE FOR AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR TWO (2) NEW 2022 TRANSIT CONNECT (SMALL VAN),** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-239, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR FOUR (4) MEAL DELIVERY TRUCKS FOR TITLE IIIC NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES ELDERLY PROGRAM,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-240, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #2 FROM LA CONTRACTING ENTERPRISE, LLC FOR THE HUMBLE STREET DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

Chairman St. Pierre indicated that there were formatting errors that were corrected and highlighted. Mr. Maley explained that a pdf was sent to the Council Secretary and when it was converted to a word document, some formatting issues occurred. He pointed out that the word "Council" was misspelled, a "were" was eliminated, a "comma" was eliminated, and "threat and fear" needed correcting. He added the copy that was corrected is the correct one and the one to work on. **PROPOSED ORDINANCE 21-08, AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PAYMENT AND/OR REIMBURSEMENT OF ATTORNEY'S FEES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES INCURRED BY OFFICERS, OFFICIALS, AND EMPLOYEES OF ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT AS A RESULT OF CIVIL LITIGATION AND/OR CRIMINAL PROSECUTION UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES,** was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a roll call vote showing Louque, Cooper, Bland, Amato, Nash, and St. Pierre in favor, and Etienne-Steib 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 Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent and on Tuesday, November 23, 2021 in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

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

**ERIC DEROCHE** – reminded everyone that The Veteran's Day program will be on November 11<sup>th</sup> from 4:30p.m. to 6:30p.m. at Lutch Park. He received an email from the State saying they have extended IA to apply for FEMA until November 28<sup>th</sup>. He said DOTD will not pick up trees with green leaves.

**INGRID BERGERON** – she said the Centers opened this not Monday, not last Monday.

**FELIX BOUGHTON** – he said they are on target to follow the budget schedule. The Special Budget meeting will be either November 30<sup>th</sup> or December 1<sup>st</sup>. Adoption of the 2021 amended budget may to be postponed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in December.

**RICK WEBRE** – he informed the council that the next operations report will include the tracking of grants that are applied for.

#### **COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT**

**COUNCILMAN NASH** - Councilman Nash requested a status of the culvert on Hwy 632. Mr. Webre indicated that a meeting is scheduled with the engineer next week, then will begin working with DOTD to get the permit done to get the project moving forward. Councilman Nash inquired about the cleaning of the canals. Mr. Webre said they are moving forward with the channels that they can get to and still waiting for an answer from NCRS and CPRA for the major water ways.

**COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB** – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib thanked President Dufresne for the clarification of the process with the building. She requested a meeting with Mr. Maley to make sure she is clear with the ordinance.

**COUNCILMAN COOPER** – Councilman Cooper requested a condolence letter be sent for Oscar Pedescleaux, Sr. He requested that status of the speed bump on Baytree Street. Mr. Webre said they will need the petition to remove it. Councilman Cooper also requested information on the trees. Mr. Weber said as soon as DOTD declares their last

pass then it will get picked up. Councilman Cooper said he had a resident call regarding her gas bill. Mr. Webre asked for her contact number and said they will contract her.

**COUNCILMAN BLAND** – Councilman Bland said that he met with Mr. Deroche to discuss the consolidated recreation board. He thanked our crews, contractors, and administration for the work being done. He said Barbara Washington extended an invitation to the Mama Duts All Saint’s Day Celebration at the Pleasant Hill Cemetery on Sunday.

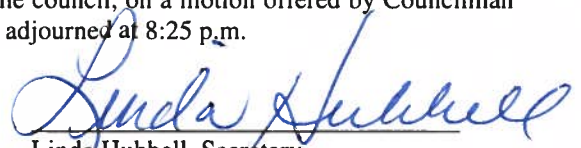
**COUNCILMAN LOUQUE** – Councilman Louque requested to publicize the highway numbers and/or common name for state highway debris pickup.

**COUNCILMAN AMATO** – Councilman Amato inquired about FEMA trailers. Mr. Deroche indicated that there is one in the parish. Councilman Amato stated that St. Peter Chanel is starting to move forward with their temporary classrooms. He said the Lucher Park parking lot lights are out. He inquired about the Town of Lucher timing of the school-side project (Whitney Canal). Mr. Webre said he is waiting on the word to go so he can schedule it.

**CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE** – Chairman St. Pierre said the David Plantation meeting is scheduled for November 9<sup>th</sup>. He expressed appreciation for the grass cutting going on in the canals. He indicated that the baseball lights at Gramercy Park on now gone.

**ADJOURNMENT**

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Cooper and seconded by Councilman Bland and carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary