

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 10, 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 Tuesday, November 10, 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.

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 Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque, the minutes of the October 28, 2020 regular meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT'S MONTHLY REPORT

The Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for September 2020 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

Good Afternoon Everyone and thank you Mr. Chairman.

- First, I'd like to start off by sending my condolences to Mrs. Vondra, her husband, and their family for the loss of her sister in law, Mrs. Sharon Steib. Let's everyone keep them in our thoughts and prayers.
- As many of you know, we found out Thursday that the Shell Refinery in Convent announced they will begin shutting down its operations here in St James Parish. Since 1967, this refinery has provided resources to our parish and has consistently been our largest taxpayer. The consolidation will certainly affect our community, the supporting businesses who rely on it, and the essential services government offers to our residents. Our thoughts and prayers are with the individuals impacted by this, but I am confident that Shell will continue to support our community as best as they can. I am hopeful that with the preservation of the facility, it will once again operate in the future.
- Last Friday I had a meeting with stakeholders to discuss the upcoming bonfire season. In an effort to minimize the crowd, there will two permit meetings: one on Saturday, November 21st and the second meeting will be on Saturday, November 28th. Both meetings will be held at 9:00 a.m. at the old Lucher Fire Station on Louisiana Avenue. Construction of the bonfires may begin on November 28th. If you cannot attend either of the permit meetings, you may pick up your permit from the St. James Parish Welcome Center after the 28th. We understand that some residents expressed concerns about lighting the bonfires due to Covid... we just want to remind everyone that we will have to follow the guidelines for social distancing and just like Halloween and trick-or-treat, you can choose not to participate if you do not feel comfortable.
- DOTD currently has an ongoing litter campaign to help promote litter awareness. DOTD has created three dimensional letters filled with litter in hopes of displaying just how littered our highways are in Louisiana and around our area. These three-dimensional letters will be on display at our Welcome Center later this week and will remain there for 3-4 weeks.
- A few updates from Recreation:
 - Due to high demand, the department has decided to turn on lights Monday through Thursday from 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. The lighting of the fields will happen each week through November 30. There will be no longer be a schedule of practices, as the fields will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please call the Recreation Office for more information, 562-2337.
 - Several residents had concerns about the tennis court lights at Gramercy park. I received word today that the transformer was just repaired, and the lights will again be operational.
 - The fitness center will now be offering afternoon aerobics classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$25.00 per month or \$5.00 per class.
- A few updates from Operations:
 - I'm happy to report the Magnolia Drainage project we previously mentioned to you has now been completed through phase one. Our crews have successfully cleared and grubbed the drainage servitudes from south of the Union Pacific rail lines and applied herbicide to the major drainage channels from the Rail lines to Hwy 3127. We are very pleased to announce the progress of this project and look forward to continuing with the excavation of the canals in the next phase.
 - Recently, The Army Corps of Engineers and the US Coast Guard have planned to dredge the Mississippi River in St. James Parish. During the planning process of this project, it was determined that with Gulf South Pipeline servicing the West Bank of the Parish under the Mississippi River is too shallow, therefore requiring Gulf South Pipeline to abandon those lines. As a result of this, our Operations Division will be working to acquire two new purchase points from an alternate natural gas vendor. These purchase points will cost an excess of a million dollars each, however, the costs will likely be incurred by the State of Louisiana and Gulf South Pipeline. We are confident the new purchase points will enhance the gas service to the West Bank of St. James Parish.

- Our Work order system is working very well with nearly 2,000 work orders closed this year. We recently polled residents who have used this system and are pleased to hear our residents are satisfied with the work order system and its outcomes for their requests.
- Early voting for the December 5th election will begin on Friday, November 20 through Saturday, November 28 (excluding Sundays, November 26 and November 27) from 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. at the St. James Parish Courthouse in Convent and the Courthouse Annex in Vacherie. Voting will take place in the Registrar of Voters Offices. On Saturday, November 21 and Saturday, November 28, the Machine Warehouse in Lutcher will also be a voting location.
- DHR is now accepting donations and applications for the Toy and Coat Drive and will continue through November 30th. Interested applicants can apply in person at the Satellite Office in Lutcher or call 225-562-2329 for more information.
- Landscaping of our senior centers will begin this week. Lutcher Senior Center is first on the list, with the others to follow. DHR did request very low maintenance landscapes and are seeking volunteers to help maintain them.
- We are sponsoring a blood drive this Friday, November 13 at the Lutcher Senior Center from noon to 6 p.m. Donors will receive a free t-shirt and will be screened for Covid antibodies.
- We will have a COVID testing site and the West Bank Reception Hall from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. tomorrow, November 11.
- To honor all those who served our great nation, St. James Parish Government offices will be closed tomorrow, Wednesday, November 11. I will be attending the wreath laying at the foot of the Veteran's Memorial Bridge with VFW members tomorrow morning. Anyone interested, the wreath laying will begin promptly at 9am, all are welcome to attend.
- Last, but not least, I would like to congratulate Council attorney, Cody Martin, for his recent victory in the election for Judge.

PUBLIC COMMENT - No public comments were received on agenda items that required a vote.

PRESENTATIONS

Councilman Nash explained that Mr. Dale Reulet had family obligations and requested to be on the next agenda.

Linda Prudhomme, Port of South Louisiana, along with Julia Fisher-Perrier and Robbie Leblanc, on behalf of Mr. Paul Aucoin, Executive Director, presented President Dufresne with a check for \$1500.00 for COVID relief.

Councilman Amato congratulated Mrs. Prudhomme on her retirement and thanked her for the partnership through the years. Chairman St. Pierre thanked Mrs. Prudhomme for her help throughout the years and wished her a happy and long retirement.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Letter received from Dianne Fanguy, Congregation of St. Joseph, request to rescind the land use approval for Formosa Plastics 14 plant chemical complex was read aloud by the Council Secretary.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

OLD BUSINESS

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – no update
- Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib requested President Dufresne share the document that was received from the hospital so they can see what the tentative agreement is.
- St. James Parish Environmental Study Proposal – this item will be put on hold and removed from the agenda until we know about the Shell Convent facility.

ORDINANCE 20-09, AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BY THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted.

A public hearing for PROPOSED ORDINANCE 20-10, ADOPTING THE FINAL REVISION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA, was set for 6:15 p.m., Wednesday, December 9, 2020, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent.

A public hearing for PROPOSED ORDINANCE 20-11, ADOPTING THE ANNUAL BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JANUARY 1, 2021 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021, PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA, was set for 6:15 p.m., Wednesday, December 9, 2020 in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent.

NEW BUSINESS

A discussion of the 2021 meeting schedule of the St. James Parish Council took place. The two meetings in November will be rescheduled due to payroll falling during the week of a holiday. Councilman Bland questioned Mardi Gras week due to payroll falling during the week. Mr. Boughton said they are good.

Assessor Waguespack spoke of the monetary impact of the closure of the Shell Convent refinery. He said it doesn't affect the money we will get for budget year 2021. In 2022 we will see some severe shortages. They may still have some inventory and said this year they have \$5 million worth of taxable inventory, we have revenue of \$5 million from the inventory. They are still responsible for inventory they had throughout 2020 and said inventory is based upon the previous year of inventory so that will not be as bad as the plant itself if no one purchases it, or even if someone does purchase it, will they purchase it for half of the price, a third of the value. There will be some loss of revenue on the plant itself, loss of value which results in loss of revenue to all the taxing bodies. We have about \$19.3

million of revenue that the plant generates just from ad valorem tax, not to mention the sales tax, which is a severe blow, and said the school district gets most of the sales tax. Going forward we will have to make some budget cuts and hopefully if YCI comes on-line we may see increase inventory.

Mr. Martin asked, on the ad valorem side, if there is a different valuation formula used whether it is an operating or idle plant. Mr. Waguespack said that the infrastructure will still be there so it will be worth an "X" amount of dollars. If a company comes in and makes an offer, it then becomes fair market value. Fair Market Value is defined by the State as what a willing buyer and a willing seller agree on in a market. They have about \$450 million in industrial exemptions, what happens with that? He said it will be up to the owners of the plant to say what they think its worth.

Councilman Louque said, theoretically, you have the opportunity to reassess it at some point in the future. Mr. Waguespack said there are three approaches to value: what it cost to build the plant, the sales comparison approach, and the income approach. If it gets sold, they will need to come back to us for industrial exemptions if they want to expand.

Chairman St. Pierre indicated that Mr. Boughton, working with Mr. Waguespack, provided a spreadsheet broken down by department and millages. He said we will be about \$5.7 million in the hole, as far as the calculations we have now. He said his heart and prayers go out to those affected. He thanked Mr. Waguespack and Mr. Boughton for working together.

Councilman Bland questioned moving millages around. President Dufresne said that needs to be done by a vote of the people, and that we have all of 2021 to figure that out.

Councilman Amato asked if there is a hardship process for payment of property taxes. Mr. Waguespack said that would need to be addressed with the Sheriff.

RESOLUTION 20-231, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE NOVEMBER 13, 2020 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-232, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-233, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXPANSION OF TRANSIT SERVICES PROVIDED BY ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, CAA TO EXTEND THE HOURS OF OPERATION UNDER THE FOLLOWING FTA PROGRAMS MANAGED THROUGH LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-234, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT PETER A. DUFRESNE TO SIGN A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH RIVER PARISH CONTRACTORS, V & M MOTORS CO. INC., AND MOMENTUM BUILDING SERVICES FOR TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-235, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH TO ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH THE RIVER PARISHES CONVENTION, TOURIST AND VISITORS COMMISSION, TOWN OF LUTCHER, TOWN OF GRAMERCY, ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH, AND THE FESTIVAL OF THE BONFIRES, INC. AND AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE SAID COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR 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 20-236, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION WITH CORELOGIC CREDCO, LLC FOR DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES HOUSING COUNSELING PROGRAM FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2020-2021, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-237, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF FORET CONTRACTING GROUP, L.L.C. FOR THE DISTRICT 5 RECREATION PARK KITCHEN AND BATHROOM, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-238, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH DUPLANTIS DESIGN GROUP TO PROVIDE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN SERVICES FOR OFFICE RENOVATIONS FOR THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-239, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH CLOUDGAVEL, LLC FOR CERTAIN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-240, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH FUSIONSTAK, LLC FOR CERTAIN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE 20-12, AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE LEASE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BY THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was accepted and ordered filed with the Secretary for public inspection and publication of Notice of Public Hearing, which was scheduled for 6:15 p.m., Tuesday, November 24, 2020, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Vacherie.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ERIC DEROCHE – Said we are in the cone of error for the 9th time this hurricane season, hopefully Eta stays far away. We continue to monitor and hopefully it stays quiet for the rest of the year.

INGRID LEBLANC – Verified that there is a CEA that was done with a housing company that came before the Council asking for support to help residents who had gone through the housing process to get down payment assistance and the parish received a portion of what the closing cost was. She said the Senior Thanksgiving Drive-by will be on the 18th. Councilman Bland asked how do we get the word out about these services. Mrs. Leblanc said she recently met with a contractor to begin working on a video release.

FELIX BOUGHTON – Informed the Council that he emailed two documents today, one was a Shell analysis, and the other was a resend of budget information.

RICK WEBRE – Would like to set up individual meetings to discuss the 3-year Capital Investment Plan. He provided a brief overview of the draft plan.

At this time President Dufresne thanked his directors, adding we are doing a lot of good/new things for our residents. He also thanked the Council for being attentive to their projects and the way we are handling things, adding they are being as transparent as they can. He said he welcomes and appreciates the healthy discussions and making sure everyone understands what they are doing and the direction they are headed. He encouraged them to reach out to the administration with any questions or concerns. He added that they are up to \$2.2 million in savings since taking office.

COUNCIL MEMBERS REPORT

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato congratulated Judge-elect Martin. He said they are moving forward with bonfire season and received approval to begin bonfire construction. They will continue to monitor the health of the Parish as we move closer to Christmas Eve. He expressed appreciation to everyone for their good work.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque said he was selected and participated in the work order system satisfaction survey and thanked Mr. Webre for reaching out to the residents to get feedback. He requested a list of improvements to see how the system is moving. He questioned if the Acadian Ambulance contract is up for renewal. Mr. Deroche said it expires at the end of the year, they have met with Acadian and will present a resolution soon. Councilman Louque questioned the credit card payment processing and said he didn't notice a change since we authorized a new system. Mr. Webre said they are running two credit card system while in the process of integrating to PayStar. Councilman Louque congratulated Cody.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland requested the status of District 4 park. Mr. Webre indicated the pumphouse should be completed mid-December. Councilman Bland asked if the remaining rocks could be moved to the new park. Councilman Bland said he received another call about a wreck on Legion Lane due to speeding and said the street is too narrow. He asked how we could make Legion (South to North) one way. He said there is a cut across to Burnside St. and make Burnside St. a one way (North to South). Mr. Webre said he will get a traffic study done, Councilman Bland said he has a work order in. Councilman Bland suggested to have the speed bump ordinance looked at. He requested the rules and regulations for rental of the District 4 building. Councilman Bland informed everyone that DOTD had a meeting with the Levee Board and said they are waiting on the Army Corp. to perform annual inspections of the levee and said they are hoping begin ditch digging across Hwy 44 after November 19th. Councilman Bland sent prayers to all Shell employees who are having to go through this rough time. He congratulated Cody on Judge-elect.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper offered congratulations to Cody, elected as Judge. He said there are potholes on Mill Street. He expressed condolence to Mrs. Vondra Steib's family. He asked, pertaining to COVID, will we be doing anything different or will be stay status quo due to the increase in cases. President Dufresne said to the best of his knowledge we are staying status quo and said he is understanding that the school system may be considering some changes to the things they are doing. He said we are staying status quo until the Governor's announcement on December 4th. Councilman Cooper asked if the Parish had increase in cases. President Dufresne said he hadn't received word from the hospital of increased cases of COVID. Chairman St. Pierre said some surrounding parish had increases, we had a decline. Mr. Deroche indicated that LDH sent out a matrix to all schools on how to go about tracking/testing/considered contacts, and said the total number for the month of September for St. James Parish had 54 positives, for October we had a total of 38, and as of November 7th there was a total of 8 in the Parish, and today we had an increase of 5 from yesterday.

COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib thanked the Council and Parish President for their kind words and condolences for the loss of her sister-in-law. She sent out kudos to Mrs. Leblanc and her team for the things they are doing, also Mr. Webre and his department for the things they are doing as well. She thanked Mrs. Linda for helping her navigate through her first Chairing of the Council at the last meeting. She congratulated Cody on his win.

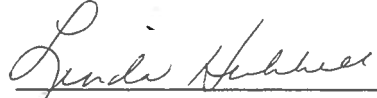
COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash also expressed condolence to the Steib family. He congratulated Cody on his election success. He inquired about the gas infrastructure in South Vacherie. Mr. Webre indicated this is high on the priority list. Councilman Nash also inquired about cleaning ditches on Highways 643 and 644. Mr. Webre said DOTD will let them do it if they can coordinate prior to getting a permit. Councilman Nash inquired about vegetation cleaning on the major canals in South Vacherie in 2021. Mr. Webre said they developed a vegetation division with herbicides.

CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE – Chairman St. Pierre congratulated Cody. He expressed condolence to Mrs. Etienne-Steib's family for their loss. He said they had work at Gramercy Recreation Park today and requested to have items that are laying around picked up. Chairman St. Pierre said that tomorrow is Veteran's Day and asked everyone to thank a Veteran tomorrow.

At this time Councilwoman Etienne-Steib congratulated the local people who ran and was re-elected or won their bid. Chairman St. Pierre congratulated Ms. Barbara Woods, from District 1.

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 8:03p.m.



Linda Hubbell, Secretary