

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 15, 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, February 15, 2023, at 6:20 p.m., following the public hearing.

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

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Council Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Darnell Jones, DHR Field Operations Manager; Eric Deroche, Emergency Preparedness Director; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Rick Webre, Operations Director, and Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor.

The Honorable Vondra Etienne-Steib, Chairwoman, 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 Louque, the minutes of the February 1, 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 Amato, the minutes of the February 1, 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.

- This past Saturday, the Economic Development Board held Coffee, King Cake, and Conversation, a meet and greet with the public. I attended personally, along with several council members and local elected officials. It was great to chat with so many community members interested in helping make progress in our Parish. I would like to thank the staff at Welcome Center for hosting the event.
- Last week I visited Ms. Hebert's second-grade class at Vacherie Elementary School. The students were learning about government in our community, and I shared with them my role as Parish President. It was a great event and great to see so many kids interested in serving our community.
- On February 14th, a meeting was held at the State Capitol between the Speaker of the House, State Legislators, DOTD, and the Louisiana National Guard about the reconstruction of the blind river boat launch and piers. The reason the project has been delayed is the poor condition of the bridge and we can't cross the bridge with heavy equipment and concrete trucks. It was determined the most cost-effective and efficient way to proceed would be DOTD constructing a temporary bridge. The contract will be let this April with construction expected to begin in June.
- Task order number 2 has been issued to Material Resources Inc. for the 2023 road rehab program. Crack sealing has begun, with bioseal and mastic seals to follow this summer. The 2023 road rehabilitation program has been designed by Crescent Engineering. A list of intended roadways has been provided to the Council.
- The Buddy Whitney drainage canal project has reached 80% completion, and a final walkthrough is being scheduled pending completion.
- Operations has received a letter of no objection from the Corps of Engineers for the Romeville-Grandpoint natural gas loop. Geotechnical soil boring is underway, and construction should begin in early March. This is the 3rd infrastructure enhancement project that will significantly increase our natural gas system and ability to provide uninterrupted service to our residents.
- The Operations drainage crew is about 60% complete on the Spruce Street drainage project, in South Vacherie, which will continue through early March.
- The DHR building construction is progressing, and it is both on time and on budget.
- We met today with Quality Engineering to access the first conceptual master plan for the Welcome Center.
- Last week the Department of Human Resources held its Annual Senior Carnival Social, which was a huge success. I would like to congratulate Mr. Kenneth "Butterbean" Travis, who was crowned King of the Krewe of Young at Heart, and Ms. Mary Greenup who was crowned Queen!
- Today was the Department of Human Resources' 18th Annual Black History Program. The program was held at the Lutcher Senior Center and attended by seniors from all over the parish. Ms. JanieVee Henderson was the special guest speaker for the event and gave an inspiring address. It was a huge success, and I was happy to see the great turnout.
- Our February Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which is also known as LIHEAP, call-in was a success. We were scheduled to take up to 200 names, and 196 residents have already registered. The line stayed open all day to accommodate any residents who may have experienced technical difficulties. The next LIHEAP call will be on March 6th. Elderly and non-elderly residents should call (225) 562-2201.
- I am pleased to notify the Council that for the first time in our history, we have been awarded the Government's Finance Officer Association Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting, the highest form of recognition in government and financial reporting. Our auditors will formally present this certificate and accomplishment at our next council meeting.

This concludes my report. God bless everyone here and your families, and God bless St James Parish.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were received from the Public.

PRESENTATIONS

- Jay Robichaux, Executive Director, presented the River Parishes Tourist Commission's Annual report.
- Matt Floyd, Ron Yasurek, and Santino Povenzano with Mosaic presented information regarding their production of purified phosphoric acid for electric vehicle batteries.
- Michael Darcy with DG Fuels introduced himself and the company which will produce sustainable aviation fuel.
- Veronica Vicky Jones introduced herself as a candidate for Judge in the 23rd Judicial District Court.
- Mr. John Brass with Antioch Baptist Church spoke about their Basketball Team.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilman St. Pierre offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 23-21, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING TODD POCHE TO THE GRAMERCY RECREATION BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman Cooper offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 23-22, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING RODNEY JOHNSON TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD**. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

Update of drainage study for Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – Councilman Nash said that based on the current project going on back of North Rosary that it will help the drainage issue; and will clean the canal over time. Mr. Webre indicated that a culvert that runs under Hwy 643 from North Rosary will be replaced. He said there is an outfall that hasn't been cleaned in a long time and a drainage channel that runs from South Rosary through North Rosary to the Vacherie Canal. He said they found on South Spruce Street that a 12" culvert feeds into a 10" culvert that feeds into an 8" culvert so they are replacing everything with 24" culverts.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 23-23, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE FEBRUARY 17, 2023 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

After a discussion regarding the garbage collection fees and sales tax **RESOLUTION 23-24, 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 Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-25, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2023 AS BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-26, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF MARCH 2023 AS NATIONAL KIDNEY MONTH AND THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2023 AS WORLD KIDNEY DAY IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-27, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT, PETER DUFRESNE, TO ENTER INTO AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH ST. JAMES PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE, ST. JAMES PARISH ASSESSOR'S OFFICE, ST. JAMES PARISH CLERK OF COURT, TOWN OF GRAMERCY, GRAMERCY POLICE DEPARTMENT, TOWN OF LUTCHER, AND LUTCHER POLICE DEPARTMENT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

Councilman Cooper exited the chambers.

RESOLUTION 23-28, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION OF ERIC LOUQUE TO ALLOW CONSTRUCTION OF COMMERCIAL BUSINESS IN A RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREA, 3723 DAVIS L. ROAD, PAULINA, LOUISIANA, (ITEM #22-40) UNDER THE ST. JAMES PARISH LAND USE ORDINANCE, WITH CONDITIONS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Councilman Cooper not in attendance, the resolution was adopted.

Councilman Cooper returned and assumed his seat on the Council.

RESOLUTION 23-29, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION OF RENILDA TRENCH TO ALLOW CONSTRUCTION OF COMMERCIAL BUSINESS IN A RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREA, 2069 HIGHWAY 18, VACHERIE, LOUISIANA, (ITEM #22-39) UNDER THE ST. JAMES PARISH LAND USE ORDINANCE, WITH CONDITIONS, 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 23-30, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION OF ASSOCIATED TERMINALS TO ALLOW CONSTRUCTION OF A WAREHOUSE STORAGE BUILDING AND A CLIMATE CONTROLLED WAREHOUSE FOR PERSONNEL OFFICES FOR INDUSTRIAL USE IN A

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREA, 6626 HIGHWAY 44, CONVENT, LOUISIANA, (ITEM #23-03) UNDER THE ST. JAMES PARISH LAND USE ORDINANCE, WITH CONDITIONS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a roll call vote showing, Nash, Cooper, Louque, St. Pierre, Amato and Etienne-Steib in favor and Bland abstaining, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-31, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-32, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE AND ACCEPT BIDS FOR THE VACHERIE LIBRARY ADDITION PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-33, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE FOR SEAL BIDS FOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FROM INTERESTED AND QUALIFIED FIRMS TO ESTABLISH A WATER TANK REHABILITATION AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FOR THE UTILITIES DEPARTMENT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-34, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE FOR SEAL BIDS FOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FROM INTERESTED AND QUALIFIED FIRMS TO SUPPLY AND INSTALL RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL WATER AND GAS METERS WITH NEW AUTOMATED METERING INFRASTRUCTURE (AMI) FOR THE UTILITIES DEPARTMENT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-35, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID FROM CAZENAVE MOTOR CO., INC. FOR 2023 FORD EDGE FOR ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 23-36, A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE REVISIONS TO THE PERSONNEL POLICY GOVERNING ST. JAMES PARISH EMPLOYEES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

FELIX BOUGHTON – The insurance analysis of the buildings is 70% complete. The old GOMESA fund will need to be amended. Sales tax received for 2022 was about \$255,000 less than 2021.

RICK WEBRE – He summarized the road preservation document that was distributed to the council.

Councilman Bland inquired about FEMA trailers. Mr. Deroche said they have a meeting on Friday with the GOSHEP Director.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash asked if there was an update on the Bayou Chevreuil bridge project. Mr. Webre indicated there was none.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper requested a condolence letter for the family of Gabrielle Williams family.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland had no comment.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque thanked the Economic Development Board and the Parish Administration for the King Cake and Coffee event at the Welcome Center on Saturday.

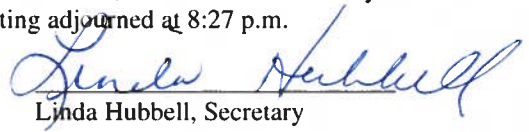
COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato said he and President Dufresne reviewed the draft by South Central Planning regarding the solar farm study. He said the final draft should be available soon, adding there will be recommendations for the Council to consider. He wished everyone Happy Mardi, and he announced his candidacy for the District 81 seat in the Louisiana House of Representatives in the October 14, 2023 election.

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre said the Economic Development Board's function on Saturday had a nice turnout and he said the Queens also attended. He thanked DHR for assisting a resident. He said they are waiting on the location of the utilities to demo the recreation building. He said the new building will be looked at again in the future. He expressed thanks for the recreation ordinance and said he looks forward to the amendment that will protect the Parish's assets.

CHAIRWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib wished everyone a Belated Valentine's Day. She thanked all of the presenters that were here tonight. She expressed condolences to the family of Gabriel Williams, and she reminded everyone that there will be another public hearing on Recreation Ordinance.

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 Louque and carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.


Lynda Hubbell, Secretary