

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MARCH 3, 2021**

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, March 3, 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.

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 Adam Koenig, 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 Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque, the minutes of the February 17, 2021 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 December 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:

- I wanted to first provide an update on the Covid-19 Pandemic in St. James Parish. As of this afternoon, our percent positivity rate has decreased to a 4.30%. After almost six weeks of improvements statewide, Governor John Bel Edwards announced yesterday that Louisiana will move into Phase 3 of reopening and remain in place until March 31st.
 - This means that restaurants, and businesses can operate at 75% capacity.
 - Bars will be allowed to operate at 50% capacity in parishes below a 5% positivity rate.
 - And indoor gatherings are limited to 50% capacity.
 - With this news, we have begun discussions about resuming our recreation facility rentals. We will determine the best route to proceed and more information will be forthcoming.
 - The Ochsner COVID testing site at the West Bank Reception Hall has closed. They will be transitioning to a COVID vaccination site at that location. As more details about the vaccination site are made available, we will put the information out on our social media pages and website.
 - St. James Hospital will begin a transition in the next 2 weeks to provide COVID vaccinations at the St. James Hospital Urgent Care 7 days a week on the East Bank and 5 days a week on the West Bank. The Covid vaccination sites located in parish buildings will close once this transition is complete.
 - We recently added a Covid-19 Information page to our parish website which can be found by visiting stjamesla.com and clicking the covid-19 link at the top of our home page.
- The Arc reopened on Monday, February 22nd and is now in full operation. The staff is currently exploring with parents and caregivers of the ARC clients the option for a 4 -day week instead of the current Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday alternating schedule.
- Our Youth Baseball league registration has been extended another week until Friday, March 12th. You can register your child online by going to the recreation page of our parish website.
- Our parish cornhole league begins March 15th and takes place every Monday night. Anyone interested in participating can register by calling our recreation office.
- Our annual State of the Parish report is nearing completion and expected to be mailed to all residents within the next two weeks. This report and a more detailed version of the mailout and will be available for viewing and download on our parish website as well.
- We recently relaunched our YouTube channel and have begun producing and uploading informative videos for our residents. Our most recent video explains the Citizen Service Center and Work Order System. In addition, a step by step video of how to place a work order online is in production and will be released in the coming weeks.
- I ask that you share with family, friends, and constituents to help keep our residents informed of services we offer and ongoing projects within the parish.
- Last week, our Operations Department and I took part in a substantial completion and start up walk through of the Molaison sewer treatment facility. Residents in the Molaison community can expect crews to begin hooking up homes to the system this week with the plant in full operation in the coming weeks. We are glad to see this project come to a close and I would like to thank Mr. Webre and our Operations staff for acting quickly to complete this project which will result in our saving of \$800 thousand dollars in grant funds.
- Crews are beginning Phase 2 of the Bourbon Country Subdivision gas line improvement project. A pre-construction meeting will be held this week and contractors will begin work next week.
- Other projects recently complete or nearing completion include the Humble Street Drainage Mitigation project, Trudeau Street Drainage project, and Reverend Samuel Jones gas line infrastructure project.
- It was brought to my attention this week that some areas of our parish did not receive garbage pick-up in the last several days. My office has been in touch with Waste Management to determine the delay in pick up. The delay in trash pick-up began with the pause in service due to the recent winter weather event we experienced. Waste Management asks that residents remain patient as they continue to remove trash. Any residents who want to report their address as having missed pick up for 2 or more days please call our citizen service center at 225-562-2500.

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

PRESENTATIONS

Brent Dicharry was not in attendance to present the Recreation Department's Annual Report.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

RESOLUTION 21-36, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING YOLANDA WILLIAMS TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH HOUSING AUTHORITY, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

- **District 5 Alternate Access Route** – a meeting has been scheduled for March 8th with the Parish Administration, Representative Brass, and Senator Price.
- **Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update** – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib indicated that she requested to be on the Hospital Board's agenda for March 8th, but the meeting has been postponed until March 22nd, she will not be available for that meeting. She said she will make another request to get on their agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 21-37, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE MARCH 5, 2021 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a roll call showing Amato, Louque, Cooper, Etienne-Steib, Nash, and St. Pierre voting for, and Bland abstaining, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-38, 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 21-39, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF MARCH 2021 AS NATIONAL KIDNEY MONTH AND THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021 AS WORLD KIDNEY DAY IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-40, 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 Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-41, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH FUSIONSTAK, LLC FOR UTILITY BILLING SOFTWARE, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-42, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF ANDERS CONSTRUCTION, INC. FOR THE REPAIRS AND LIFT OF THE CONVENT RAW WATER INTAKE STRUCTURE, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

At this time Brent Dicharry arrived and presented the Recreation Department's Annual Report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

FELIX BOUGHTON – He said they are almost closed out with CY 2020. He indicated that it was a bad year for revenues, and expenses were up. He said in 2020 they were able to increase our financial position because when the new administration started, on January 13, 2020, they immediately began cost savings measures

RICK WEBRE – He informed the council that the data given for the road program was raw data, adding that the crews are doing homework to be able to present the council with a logical report.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato said the culverts have been dropped off at Marquette Drive so the project should kick back off. He inquired about a bill he received for this COVID vaccine. Mr. Deroche indicated that they should be free, but the Insurance Companies authorized a processing fee that is 100% paid for by the insurance. Councilman Amato sent prayers to Anthony Calcagno, adding that he was a role model, not only as an elected official but as a dad and parishioner.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque inquired about the Blind River Boat Launch project. Mr. Webre indicated that the engineering is at about 60% but it has been put on hold.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland said he would like to rename Central Project Street. He asked Mr. Webre if they had a meeting with Nucor regarding their water intake. Mr. Webre indicated that they did meet but their consumption of water did not drop very much. For long-term they will need processed water from the river or bring in storage tanks to supplement what we are giving them. President Dufresne indicated the two most critical units that need repair are the clarifier on the East Bank and the storage tank on the West Bank. Councilman Bland inquired about the status of Romeville Park, to turn it back over to the School Board. Mr. Webre said they will readdress but are getting close.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper requested condolence letters be sent to the families of Willis Octave and Mae Evelyn Johnson.

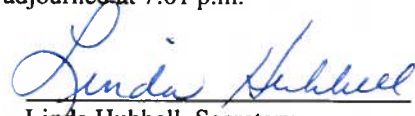
COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib asked if she needed to create a work order to have appliances changed at the Park. Mr. Webre indicated that the facility maintenance crew is currently working on that project. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib inquired about redistricting. Chairman St. Pierre indicated that the census data is needed before proceeding with redistricting.

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash inquired about the change out of the culvert on Highway 643. Mr. Webre said they are looking at a redesign on that one.

CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE – Chairman St. Pierre requested a condolence letter be sent to the family of Anthony Calcagno.

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 7:01 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary