

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON APRIL 15, 2020**

The Council of the Parish of St. James, State of Louisiana, met via video/teleconference on Wednesday, April 15, 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 Amber Shepard, Public Information Office.

Councilman Amato offered the invocation and Councilman Bland 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 Bland, the minutes of the April 1, 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 February 2020 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

- St. Vincent De Paul in Lutchter is offering a free food bank to all parish residents on the first and third Wednesday of every month. Residents can call 225-869-1098.
- Today we had our very successful soft opening of the COVID-19 drive-through testing in Gramercy. Completed a total of 160 test, 111 vehicles came through the line. No one was turned away. Out of the 160 tests completed only 8 were from outside of the Parish. By the time the results come back we should see some really good numbers, as far as if we are flattening the curve, or if the Easter weekend will create a spike in positive testing. 19 of the 160 tests were sent from the VA home in Reserve. We had sent some test kits to the VA home, so those kits were included as well. Tomorrow the site will be open for everyone over the age of 18.
- I would like you to encourage your constituents to come out and get tested if they feel like they may have had a fever, even if it was a few days ago. Although there will be a triage area, the qualifications will be lenient. We have up to 250 tests for each day.
- I was in St. Charles Parish yesterday with Matt Jewell and Jaelyn Hotard for a press conference to discuss the drive-through testing. Region 3 consists of seven parishes and we are very fortunate, in my opinion, that we were able to have one of the two sites out of the 7 parishes.
- I received word today, unofficially, that the State is looking to do a very remote mobile testing site, maybe 6 per hour, and I was thinking maybe for District 5, because they want a very small community. I have no other details, as soon as I know more, I'll let you know. I did try to get a site for the West Bank, but this is the best we could come up with so far. Hopefully we can get it initiated soon.
- The press conference links were shared to our media pages.
- The Parish entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Hospital on the testing site because we needed a physician's license/official person. I didn't want our test results to go out of the Parish. I was trying to do the very best I can to keep everything local.
- We had to sign a medical waste contract. It is minimal and only for the duration of the test site.
- Since I took office, we have been looking hard at our insurance, general liability and property insurance rates. We were able to renew the premium at a cost savings of \$700,000 for the same coverage through our local insurance provider.
- We will be receiving 10,000 masks for our Parish. The State will be receiving 2,075,000, which is 40% of the State's population. The masks are donated by Hanes and are intended to be distributed to the community. I will divide the masks into 7 districts for distribution and we should receive them in a week.

President Dufresne said that when we first did our emergency declaration and had our employees work from home, we thought it was going to be for two weeks. We are now entering into our 5th week. The Governor has declared through April 30th and I don't think we should deviate from that, but to go beyond that, I'm not sure how we can sustain financially. I'm not confident that we will get the 75% back from FEMA. When a hurricane comes and it affects 2 or 3 states, FEMA comes through, but now we are talking about a situation that affects the entire country. I don't think it is out of the scope of reality that FEMA will come back and say we will do 40%. As an administrator and the custodian of the taxpayer's dollars, I will need to get with my team to begin deciding on moving forward beyond April 30th.

Councilman Bland asked for a breakdown of which operations field work is being done. Mr. Webre indicated that they are handing critical infrastructure and that said all offices are open, but in a limited capacity.

Councilman Bland said that he has two roads, that were part of the road rehab project, that have huge potholes. Mr. Webre asked for an email with the information so he can get temporary patches.

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

PRESENTATIONS – None

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED - None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 20-80, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE APRIL 17, 2020 PAYROLL, 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 20-81, 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 20-82, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARISH PRESIDENT PETER A. DUFRESNE TO EXTEND ALL EXPIRING THIRD PARTY CONTRACTS ON A MONTH-TO-MONTH BASIS DURING COVID-19 DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-83, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #1 FROM FRICKEY BROTHERS CONSTRUCTION, INC. FOR THE PARISH WIDE RECREATION MASTER PLAN RENOVATIONS TO THE LUTCHER BALL PARK AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT AND/OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN, EXECUTE, AND ADMINISTER ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

Councilman Bland requested a condolence letter be sent to the family of Paul Keller. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib said she had also requested a condolence letter be sent to Michelle Octave, who lost her sister a couple of weeks ago.

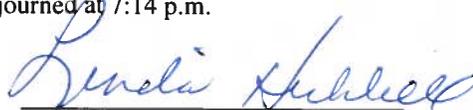
Councilman Nash inquired if there was a way to assist residents who have tested positive, such as fees for turning water off. Mr. Webre indicated they can be handled on a case-by-case basis and will assist any way they can. Councilman Nash also inquired about assisting with someone who has tested positive and is still in the general public. President Dufresne said we need to encourage everyone to be responsible and accountable for their own actions, and said it is a federal offense if you knowingly have a virus and are irresponsibly spreading it. Chairman St. Pierre suggested to speak with the Sheriff or with DHH.

Councilman Nash inquired if there was a way to find out if outside contractors coming into the Parish have tested positive and are still going on the construction site. President Dufresne said we have no way of knowing unless they voluntarily release that information. Councilman Nash said if we are talking about bringing everyone back to work how will we monitor if someone may have tested positive. President Dufresne said that is why they need to meet and “in no way, shape, or form will I jeopardize our employees” and said at some point we will need to make a decision. Councilman Cooper suggested that we put something in place to have the people that you want to come back to work get tested, since we have the facility. President Dufresne said he would recommend to all employees to get tested.

Councilman Cooper asked if tree limbs are getting picked up. Mr. Webre indicated that they are, on both side of the River, and the landfill is continuing to operate. Mr. Webre praised the landfill attendants for doing a fantastic job during a difficult situation.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary