

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JUNE 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 Wednesday, June 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 Tommy Daigle, Legal Advisor.

Councilman Amato offered the invocation and Councilman Cooper 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.

At this time Chairman St. Pierre announce that Mr. Tommy Daigle would represent the Parish tonight as Legal Advisor. He stated that we will discuss the meeting in Vacherie on the 24th and return Old Business and Correspondence agenda items.

**MINUTES**

On a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib, the minutes of the May 27, 2020 regular meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minute dispensed with.

**FINANCE DEPARTMENT'S MONTHLY REPORT**

The Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for April 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:

- o Myself, along with the Sheriff and the Clerk participated in a march on Friday, bringing awareness to the injustice done to George Floyd. The march was very peaceful, respectful, and the message was communicated loud and clear. It's important for all of us to speak out against this type of injustice. Let us continue to pray for the friends and family of George Floyd, and for peace in our Country.
- o The most recent storm event this past weekend was a good trial run for us. Our employees were prepared, and we were ready. Thank God it was only a storm and not a hurricane.
- o We are continuing to make progress on the Molaison sewer project.
- o The Lutcher ball field is now completed.
- o We are working on getting power to the pump station in South Vacherie.
- o We are still moving forward with our East Bank drainage project. We still have a few challenges to work out.
- o All of our COVID testing sites have been closed in Region III. Anyone feeling like they may need to be tested should see their Primary Care Physician.
- o We have decided to open our parks. This includes the splash parks and the parish building rentals. For building rentals, we will be allowing parties using the inside venues to have 50% capacity, as per the Governor's orders. We will also be accepting rentals for tournaments. We ask that teams still call the recreation office to schedule recreation practices. We've gotten good feedback with this process and would like to continue it. We are hopeful that residents will continue to practice social distancing, and to be mindful of their personal hygiene when using our park facilities.
- o We had a successful turnout for the start of our Cornhole League. They will be meeting again tonight for another entry day before the league is officially started. Cornhole tournaments will take place every Monday night under the Lutcher Park Pavilion.
- o Co-ed Cabbage Ball League registration is now going on. Deadline for teams to register is July 2nd, with tournaments starting on July 8th. The tournaments will take place every Wednesday night at the Luther Park.
- o The Library made over 200 activity bags that were given out to our parish youth. These bags are available for pick-up every Monday from either Library at 8:30 a.m. They have also scheduled virtual summer programs that are available on the Parish's website and Facebook page.
- o June is National Homeownership Month, and in recognition of this, DHR has introduced a home buyer's education series, via podcast. The first episode was released today and can be found on the Parish's Facebook page. There will be a new topic each week.
- o Our Senior Centers are still not opened, as per the Governor's orders.
- o We are urging the residents to complete the 2020 Census, as well. An accurate census count is important to secure funding resources that support the needs for our Parish and our residents.
- o Finance has completed the CARES Act application and it has been submitted.
- o The Presidential Primary Election is set for July 11th. Early voting begins next Saturday on June 20th and takes place at the Convent Courthouse and the Vacherie Annex.

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

**PRESENTATIONS** - None

**CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED** - None

### **APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 20-116, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING LAMEKA T. WILLIAMS TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD.** Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman Cooper offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 20-117, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING HARRY JOSEPH AS A DISTRICT 5 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD.** Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman Nash offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 20-118, A RESOLUTION AFFIRMING APPOINTMENTS TO THE KEEP ST. JAMES PARISH BEAUTIFUL BOARD.** Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman Bland offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 20-119, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING JEREMY CATOIRE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD.** He inquired about a stipend for the members of the Economic Development. Chairman St. Pierre indicated that there are a few extra things for that board, such as conferences, a Christmas Party, etc. Councilman Amato encouraged Councilman Bland to attend a meeting and speak with the board members. He indicated that the Board takes pride that they are a volunteer group and said the Board, in the past, has declined compensation. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**ORDINANCE 20-06, AND ORDINANCE CHANGING THE LOCATION OF THE POLLING PLACE FOR PRECINCT 4, PRECINCT 5, AND PRECINCT 6,** having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted.

At this time Chairman St. Pierre requested to deviate from the agenda to discuss past items that were taken off an agenda due to COVID. Councilman Amato offered a motion and was seconded by Councilman Louque. No public comments were received. After a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried. Chairman St. Pierre said the meeting on the 24th is scheduled to be held in Vacherie, and asked Mr. Deroche to explain the occupancy availability. Mr. Deroche explained that after the Council, Administration, and Press attend, there will be 20 spaces available for the general public in Vacherie, and 33 spaces available for the general public in Convent, based on the 50% rule, however, social distancing requirements must still be met, so we will still be limited. Councilman Nash asked what method would be used to determine which 20 would be allowed in. Mr. Deroche said it will probably be first-come first-serve. Chairman St. Pierre suggested that we keep the meeting in Vacherie and said we can talk about it if we run into issues. Chairman St. Pierre then mentioned the proposed ordinance that was on a previous agenda. He said it is up to the Administration, who is working with the Hospital on the immovable property. He asked the Administration to let them know when it will be ready to be put back on an agenda. Mrs. Gail Lebeuf will be invited to make her presentation on the 5 additional cemeteries on the Formosa Plastics site. The correspondence received from Pam Spees will be placed on the next agenda. The Director's update items under old business will also be placed on the next agenda. DHR's annual report will be placed on the July 8th agenda. Councilman Bland said he is concerned about the presentation being on the agenda with the limited amount of space available. Chairman St. Pierre said this type of issue has happened in the past, and we will work through it, as in the past.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION 20-120, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JUNE 12, 2020 PAYROLL,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-121, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES,** 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 20-122, A RESOLUTION COMMENDING MR. C. J. BRACK FOR HIS 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PARISH AS A MEMBER OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY BOARD,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-123, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH SPRADLEY & SPRADLEY, INC. TO PROVIDE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY CONSULTING SERVICES,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-124, A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE *NEWS-EXAMINER/ENTERPRISE* AS THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021,** was offered and moved for adoption by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 20-125, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL TO ENTER INTO INVESTMENT CONTRACT WITH MEEDER INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT TO MANAGE AND INVEST THE PARISH'S ASSETS AND TERMINATE AGREEMENT WITH RELIANT INVESTMENT**

MANAGEENT L.L.C., 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 20-126, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT WITH ENTERGY LOUISIANA, L.L.C. FOR THE USE OF PARISH PROPERTY AS A TMEPORARY EMERGENCY RESTORATION STAGING AREA**, 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 20-127, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH HERITAGE CRYSTAL CLEAN, LLC FOR RECYCLING USED COOKING OIL**, 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 20-128, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH T. BAKER SMITH, L.L.C., TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**, 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.

**INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE 20-07, AN ORDINANCE SETTING AND DESIGNATING THE ADOPTED PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE FOR THE YEAR 2020 LEVIED ON ALL TAXABLE PROPERTY WITHIN THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA**, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Amato. 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., Wednesday, June 24, 2020, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

The next item on the agenda was **UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON THE PATH FORWARD FOR EASTBANK INDOOR BASKETBALL FACILITY**. Councilman Amato said sometime back, President Dufresne and Councilwoman Etienne-Steib kick off the discussion of a Westbank Indoor Basketball Facility and asked where we are on the Eastbank Basketball Facility. He said it's time we get engaged because before we know Bidy Basketball will be here and he wanted to have a good answer for the Eastbank residents. President Dufresne indicated that it is still on the agenda and are actively pursuing it, we just don't have timeline tonight. A discussion then took place regarding various recreation items/activities.

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

**COUNCILMAN AMATO** – Councilman Amato requested a letter be sent, on behalf of the council, to Mr. Judo Roper and Dee Bradford thanking them for their years of service and wishing them a relaxing and healthy retirement. He admired the nice work by everyone with Tropical Storm Cristobal, he thanked everyone for their good work, to stay healthy and asked everyone to love their neighbor.

**COUNCILMAN LOUQUE** – Councilman Louque had no comments.

**COUNCILMAN BLAND** – Councilman Bland thanked the Administration for their great feedback and responses. He thanked Mr. Marrill in Planning and Permitting, adding that he has been receiving many phone calls in that department and Mr. Marrill was very responsive for getting resolutions. He said he will request a meeting to speak about blighted property. He requested a condolence letter be sent to the family of Ms. Lonna Louque. He gave kudos to the library, adding that his kids loved the bags.

**COUNCILMAN COOPER** – Councilman Cooper inquired if the recreation boards can begin to meet. Mr. Deroche said yes as long as they maintain social distancing. He said he heard that the Occidental facility has shut down for three months and asked if they made us aware. President Dufresne said he hadn't received official notification from Occidental. Councilman Cooper asked to keep him updated on the renovations of the building at the park.

**COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB** – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib thanked the Parish President, the Sheriff, and the Clerk of Court for supporting the peaceful march. She then read the following: *I have a platform that I do not make political, but I am struggling with the fact that many people still don't understand what is going on now. As I witnessed the protest over racial injustice, I believe our nation desperately needs healing. Let me be clear on what my platform is and how I want it to show. My goal is to be an instrument of change, help build a more equitable society for everyone, as well as an advocate for programs that empower all people to live with dignity and purpose. Discrimination at any level is wrong. As a wife, mother, and grandmother of a black male I feel hopeless, defeated, exhausted, and tired. How many more black men and women are we going to watch as they are killed in broad daylight. Division within our country runs rampid. Too often we are witnessing alarming incidents of racial violence. Blacks are dying at a disproportional rate from COVID, as well as racism. These disparities are not arbitrary or capricious, they are a result of inequality, due to a lack of social, economic, and political opportunities and resources. Our nation will remain stuck until we redesign the systems that has kept us divided for generations. A housing system that was designed to keep us apart, a criminal system designed to keep black people in check, a financial system designed to keep money out of our hands, an education system that separates rich children from poor, a health care system that leaves too many without basic care, a political system designed to make voting a privilege, not a right. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, now deceased, once said "What people want is very simple. They want an America that is as good as its promise." During these difficult days, I would like the Council to join me in using our voice and resources to fight for what is right. Let us all unite to make America Godly again, and a place where every person has an opportunity to live a life of dignity, good health, economic opportunity and purpose, regardless of race, income, or age. And when that is done we will create an American that is truly as good as its promise.*

**COUNCILMAN NASH** – Councilman Nash requested a few things be added to the maintenance program; culvert on Maple Street needs to be cleaned or changed, the ditches on both Hwy 643 and 644, the vegetation in drainage area on Spruce Street, back side of Terre Haute, and Redbud Street. In addition, we will be doing a clean-up in South Vacherie on Saturday, June 20th beginning at 8:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome to join in.

**CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE** – Chairman St. Pierre encouraged to met with the Directors about your issues. He said the work order system is very impressive and thanked the Directors for meeting with him. Chairman St. Pierre said he is disappointed with the Hwy 3125 project, that the Engineering firm pulled a fast one on them, replacing culverts with the same culverts that were taken out. He added that we are flooding homes at an 8' elevation in Grand Point, adding we need to get water out, not retain it.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**INGRID LEBLANC** – The census workers will be in our area this week and next week. United Way will be distributing about 150 boxed meals to our residents on June 19th at the Convent Senior Center. An email will be sent from DHR regarding a community needs assessment.

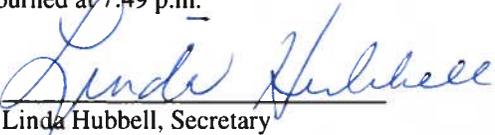
**ERIC DEROCHE** – A vendor will be checking the acoustics in the Council Chambers in Vacherie and will be repositioning the speakers in Convent. Panels will be ordered for Vacherie to reduce echoing. The vendor is looking into the electronic voting system. There were no issues reported with Tropical Storm Cristobal. IT finished with the Council's folder on the DMS drive. USGS installed the wireless level gauge last week, but it hasn't been calibrated yet. Mr. Bland inquired about installing a speaker in the foyer in the event of overflow. Mr. Deroche said he will investigate.

**FELIX BOUGHTON** – the audit is scheduled to be complete by June 30th, the evaluation will be in July.

**RICK WEBRE** – T. Baker Smith is manufacturing and will install the gauge in Harry Town for the South Vacherie weir, to be monitored electronically. The walk-thru in Molaison will be at 11:00. He then spoke about the operations report. He said they in Union moving East toward 642 with the State of Emergency project.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Nash and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary