

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JULY 8, 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, July 8, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

On roll call, the following were recorded present: Council Members Jason Amato, Ryan Louque, Mason Bland, Donald Nash, and Chairman Alvin St. Pierre. Councilman Clyde Cooper was not in attendance during roll call, and Councilwoman Etienne-Steib was absent.

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. Attorneys Vic Franckiewicz and Marty Maley were also in attendance.

Councilman Amato offered the invocation and Councilman Nash 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 Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash, the minutes of the June 24, 2020 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Nash, the minutes of the June 24, 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 May 2020 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

- I hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful, safe, and happy 4th of July weekend.
- Due to the recent rise in coronavirus cases, our Parish offices will remain closed to the public at this time. Our priority is to serve the public so we will be taking appointments and ask our residents to handle business over the phone, whenever possible. This virus is still alive in our State and in our Parish, so we are taking the necessary precautions to protect our employees and residents. The Governor stated today in his briefing that Louisiana has lost all gains made against COVID in June and we are seeing new numbers rivaling the peaks seen in April. It seems like Louisiana and possibly our Parish is going in the wrong direction with this virus...we will remain vigilant. Our case numbers as of today are 418. Please continue to practice social distancing and wear a mask when possible.
- Lamar Dixon in Gonzales opened a free drive through COVID testing site yesterday and will remain open 7 days a week through July 18th. The testing site hours are 8am to 4pm daily. Please pass the word along and get tested if you feel the need.
- I am excited to announce that as of Monday, the St. James Parish ARC employees were enrolled into our system and now the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement officially begins. This means the parish will now be available to meet the needs of the clients and I cannot think of a more deserving group of individuals to extend our services.
- The Highway 20 Taskforce met last week to update us on the progress of the Bayou Chevreuil bridge project. July 15th is the official contract start date. The first phase of the project will include clearing of right of ways and utilities must be moved before on-site construction begins. The detour bridge will not be operational until January. Existing bridge will be used for this sugarcane harvest season.
- After much discussion with the organization leaders and considering how vulnerable our seniors are, the decision has been made to cancel the Lions Club Pumpkin Patch and the Veterans Day Program for this year.
- I hope everyone is staying prepared for the hurricane season. Remember to stay informed by signing up for notification alerts on the Parish's website.
- Our Senior Centers will remain closed until we enter Phase 3.
- DHR is now offering online financial literacy sessions to St. James Parish 2020 high school graduates and college students. Participants will learn money management, credit, budgeting, and savings tips. Upon completion of the program, students will be use a \$250 stipend. To apply, call 225-562-2447.
- Our transit services are still operating at 50% for essential needs only. The Lutchter satellite office in Lutchter is open by appointment only. DHR staff is always available by phone to assist our residents. Please call 562-2442 with any questions.
- This is the current recreation schedule. However, we're still evaluating the current COVID situation, and should this change at any time, we will keep you informed if changes are made.
 - Cornhole will resume on Monday, July 13th.
 - We are excited to announce the completion of the Lutchter Park ball fields. They are now open for practices. The recreation office asks that residents or coaches continue to schedule baseball practices. The co-ed cabbage league is set to begin at the end of July.
 - Because they are a high-risk population, the senior fitness classes at our fitness center have been cancelled until we enter Phase 3.
 - Youth soccer registration is set to begin on July 20th, so be on the lookout for more information on that very soon.

- Our library's summer programs are coming to an end this week and will be closing out their summer reading program next Friday. I'd like to commend the library staff for all their hard work and for the obstacles that were overcome to provide these services for our children.
- To update on a few in the operations department
 - Operations has obtained a proposal from VMCI for vegetation and herbicide management.
 - In District 4, culverts were installed, and the channels were excavated near the Convent projects to alleviate drainage problems that have been occurring.
 - District 4 Splash Park is being removed and relocated, and the Senior Center building is being planned for demolition.
 - A task order has been issued for a stormwater drainage project at LA Hwy 643 and Terre Haute Street area in South Vacherie.
 - T. Baker Smith installed a gauge at the South Vacherie weir to monitor water levels so we can operate the weir more efficiently. A permit was approved to get electricity installed at the pumping station as well.

One last thing...

- Your response matters. Health clinics, Fire Departments, Schools, Roads and Highways, Community Programs all of which depend on a total census count. The census can shape different aspects of our community but only if our parish is properly counted. As of today, only 51% of our parish households have completed the census. Please help us help you and complete the census!

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

PRESENTATIONS

Ingrid Leblanc, Human Resources Director presented the DHR Annual Report.

Councilman Cooper arrived and assumed his seat on the Council.

Sheriff Martin and Julie Scioneaux, Chief of Detectives, presented info regarding the use of golf carts/UTV/ATV on public roadways.

Pam Spees and Gail LeBeouf spoke about the unmarked burial sites discovered in the Parish.

Chairman St. Pierre read the following statement:

"With regard to the continued information we are receiving with regard to the industrial developments within St. James Parish, we would like the providers of said information to know that this Council and administration is reading, reviewing and digesting all of the information being provided and intends to pass the information along to the applicable regulatory agencies which control and govern the subject matter contained within these documents. While COVID-19 has slowed the process, please be assured that the information will be forwarded to the proper agencies."

AS DULY ELECTED OFFICIALS, WE WILL CONTINUE TO UPHOLD OUR CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND ENACT OUR DUE DILIGENCE to the residents of ST. JAMES PARISH.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED - None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

OLD BUSINESS

The following updates were provided:

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – requested a taskforce be formed to push forward with the project.
- North Vacherie Railroad Culvert Upgrade Project Status – trying to get \$1.6M from a CBG grant.
- Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update – in the infant stages of designing the multipurpose building

ORDINANCE 20-08, AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE LEASE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BY THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the ordinance was adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 20-146, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JULY 10, 2020 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-147, 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 Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-148, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF ENGINEERING FOR MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT INCLUDING MOWING AND LITTER PICKUP, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Louque offered a second. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, and the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-149, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE TAKEOVER AGREEMENT BETWEEN ST. JAMES PARISH AND NATIONWIDE MUTUAL INSURANCE FOR THE 2019 PARISHWIDE ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM WITH COASTAL BRIDGE COMPANY, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-150, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT PARISH PRESIDENT PETER A. DUFRESNE, CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL TO SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AGREEMENT WITH THE ST. CHARLES PARISH CONSORTIUM, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-151, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A RENEWAL CONTRACT WITH ELECTRONIC BUSINESS SYSTEM, INC., was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-152, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF NCMC, LLC FOR THE MOLAISON SEWER FACILITY FOR ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib, absent, the resolution was adopted.

After Chairman St. Pierre explained some issues need to be resolved prior to adoption and requested to table the resolution to July 22, 2020, Councilman Louque offered a motion to table A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH SHARPBROS CONSTRUCTION L.L.C. TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, until the July 22, 2020 council meeting. Councilman Cooper offered a second and after a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the motion carried.

After Councilman Bland stated that he had no issues with the expansion, he asked for a commitment from ICS that they will clean out and/or replace and add to culverts for water stream in the construction zone from CMT Terminal to the end of expansion around Ory Street at Stream SGSJ009. After he received the commitment from Josh Gordon, Illinois Central Field Engineer, he asked for the resolution to be amended to include the verbiage. Councilman Bland then offered a motion to adopt **RESOLUTION 20-154, A RESOLUTION TO OBTAIN FINAL APPROVAL FOR THE LAND USE APPLICATION OF ILLINOIS CENTRAL, ITEM #20-08**. Councilman Nash offered a second, and after a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted, as amended.

RESOLUTION 20-155, A RESOLUTION TO OBTAIN FINAL APPROVAL FOR THE LAND USE APPLICATION OF OCCIDENTAL CHEMICAL CORPORATION, ITEM #20-10, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-156, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SIGNING OF REVISED AND/OR NEW TITLE III BUDGET BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS AND THE ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2020-2021, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-157, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH PICTOMETRY INTERNATIONAL CORP. FOR AERIAL IMAGERY, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote with Etienne-Steib absent, the resolution was adopted.

An EXECUTIVE SESSION convened at 7:58 p.m., on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Etienne-Steib absent, the motion carried. Members of the Council, President Dufresne, Cody Martin, Marty Maley, and Vic Franckiewicz withdrew to an adjoining chamber to discuss pending litigation strategy in the matter of *Butler, et al. v. St. James Parish Council, et al.*, Docket # 39685(D) in the 23rd Judicial District Court, St. James Parish; and under La. R.S. 42:17(A)(10) to discuss the opinions of counsel regarding the air quality impact study that is the subject of the pending litigation, which opinions are confidential under La. R.S. 44:4.1(C); and to engage in related communications with counsel in the rendition of professional legal services that are privileged under La. Code of Evid. Art. 506(B). All returned at 8:50p.m., and the regular session reconvened. Chairman St. Pierre informed everyone that no decisions were made.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato asked Mr. Martin if he was working on the IGA on the canal project with the School District and the Pontchartrain Leve District. Mr. Martin said they already have an IGA, that the Parish is only providing labor and equipment, they only need to know when they will be able to get the culverts scheduled. Councilman Amato thanked Mr. Ryan Donadieu and the Administration for the new Blind River gauge. He congratulated Sheriff Willie Martin on his 8th term. Councilman Amato said he, and the President of the Festival of the Bonfires, will meet with President Dufresne and Sheriff Martin in August to discuss Bonfire season with COVID.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque asked if feedback was received about the punch list items on the 3125 project. Mr. Webre indicated there will be 2 punch lists, one for the original scope of work and one for DOTD's additions. No responses were received on engineering deficiencies. Councilman Louque indicated that Bellevue Lakes

drainage is affecting some of the drainage on the south side of the track in District 4 and he is receiving complaints from the back phase of Bellevue Lakes. Mr. Webre indicated that there are 4 lakes in Bellevue. The one in the back and the large center one, there is a little weir on the outfall pipe for the center lake that keeps the water a little higher, which he believes, is causing the back lake to flow backward when you get water higher. He said they ordered a channel gate and will make it a weir, adding they can crank it all they way up to get maximum water flow and will test it to see how it works. President Dufresne said right now there is a fixed device on the outfall pipe that is not easily removable, and said when the flooding starts to happen that is nothing that you can do about it, but if you have one with an adjustable gate on it you can immediately take action. President Dufresne indicated that he and Mr. Webre have a meeting with the engineers and the developers of the subdivision to discuss where we are and what needs to be done to move forward. Councilman Louque said he is still getting complaints about the proposed subdivision off Tupelo Street in the Grand Point area regarding the dirt operation. Mr. Webre indicated that he is working with the attorneys to try to get it resolved.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland said he is glad to see a meeting has been set up for Bellevue Lakes, adding Bellevue is inhibiting drainage and the railroad culverts are inhibiting flow. He thanked everyone for their support on District 4's park lease and said he will be at the site tomorrow for the meeting with the contractor. He said DOTD received an update of the road repave project. He said they will possibly start this week or next week. He said we have all see in the water, in this area, housing taking on water and said he sent tons of emails to keep everything updated. He asked what is the plan after the State of Emergency? Mr. Webre said the vegetation is just about cleared off, but the problem is we have so much inner drainage storm water in the Parish and he is prioritizing. President Dufresne said they are in the process of creating a long-term comprehensive drainage study throughout the Parish, adding his most recent concerns are those residents who are taking in water in the homes, and are addressing those first.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper said he has been receiving calls concerning the culverts underneath Hwy 18, that the water is not draining from the levee. President Dufresne said that nothing could be done until the river stage got below 11', DOTD has deployed resources to the Parish. Councilman Cooper inquired about the speed bumps. Mr. Webre that they will pull the policy and can make it happen, but some things that are stated in the policy need to be accomplished first. Councilman Cooper asked for an update of the 5th District Building. Councilman Cooper also inquired about the project next to YCI. Mr. Deroche said they haven't been able to get the name of the company. Councilman Cooper ask Mr. Webre to look into why the lights weren't put up on the Sunshine Bridge

COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib was absent.

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash said water is starting to accumulate on the road at Hwy 643 and Red Falgoust Boat Launch. Mr. Webre indicated that it will be addressed. Councilman Nash also inquired about the Culvert on 644 near the bank and indicted there is major drainage near Innes and Reulet Development. Mr. Webre ask Councilman Nash to get with him after the meeting.

At this time Councilman Cooper informed the Council that he gave the Secretary a letter he received from RISE St. James, that they sent to the Governor, and asked her to give each of you a copy.

CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE – Chairman St. Pierre thanked for the in-depth report. He said he needs a time frame for the cleaning of the canal and said he will talk about Fererra Canal tomorrow.

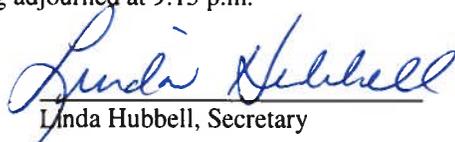
DIRECTOR'S REPORT

RICK WEBRE – we need more functionality with the work order system so the account you have right now will be cancelled and will give you the back-of-the-house system that will give you full functionality.

FELIX BOUGHTON – the audit is complete, and the auditors will make a presentation to the council at the next meeting. He said at the next meeting, we will ask you call an election in December. We have two millages that expire in 2021 so we can piggyback off of the State's election cycle. He said we have another tax expiring in 2024 so we can put that tax on the agenda too and will save an expense of calling an election in 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper and carried, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary