

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JULY 22, 2020**

The Council of the Parish of St. James, State of Louisiana, met via video/teleconference on Wednesday, July 22, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

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

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 Councilwoman Etienne-Steib, the minutes of the July 8, 2020 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Cooper, the minutes of the July 8, 2020 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:

- Per the Governor's update, we will be in Phase 2 for two more weeks. Our offices are still closed to the public at this time, and we are still taking appointments and asking that residents handle business over the phone when possible. This virus is still alive in our Parish, so we are taking the necessary precautions to protect our employees and residents.
- Lamar Dixon in Gonzales still has a free drive-through COVID testing site open through August 5th. This site is open 7 days a week from 7am to 7pm and is open to all Louisiana residents. Please get tested if you feel the need.
- The hospital has organized an appointment only Blood Drive that took place at the Lutcher Senior Center today. It filled up so quickly that they have decided to have another one. It will be on August 5th at the Lutcher Senior Center. This one will also be by appointment only. Details to come later this week.
- The Lutcher satellite office is open by appointment only... DHR staff is always available by phone to assist our residents. Please call 562-2442 with any questions.
- Our Dept of Human Resources is asking residents to complete a Community Needs Assessment. This survey will be used to identify general needs and resources of St. James Parish residents and unique needs relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Results will be analyzed to develop, create, and strengthen services that promote self-sufficiency and economic security. The link to the survey can be found on the parish's website and Facebook pages.
- The summer library programs have ended. We would like to thank everyone who participated, and a special thank you to our library staff for working hard to provide activities to our children despite the circumstances. The library is working on virtual programs to offer throughout the year. Please be on the lookout for those in the upcoming weeks.
- The co-ed cabbage league is now set to begin on July 29th, and youth soccer registration is set to begin on Monday, July 27th, so be on the lookout for more information very soon. Please call the recreation office at 225-562-2300 for any assistance. As of right now, that is the regular scheduled dates unless we receive any further recommendations from the Governor's office or from State Healthcare officials.
- An update on a few projects in Operations...
 - Our new Work Order System is nearing completion and going live tomorrow. Residents will be able to view the progress of their work order online.
 - Hwy 3125 project, we did a walk through with DOTD, Mayor St. Pierre and Mayor Nosacka from the Towns of Lutcher and Gramercy, and council members, along with Command Construction and BKI. They went through several punch list items. Those items are currently being attended to.
 - Hwy 642 turn lane project has begun. Please be mindful of the workers – slow down and proceed with caution through the intersection.
 - The Molaison sewer project – a Notice to Proceed was issued on July 17th.
 - The demolition for the Gramercy swimming pool is currently being rebid.
 - The docking timber are rotten at the SJP boat launch, so we dismantled a portion of it. We're expediting plans to have it repaired as soon as possible.
 - Hwy 643 – a task order was issued to T Baker Smith – waiting on plans to move forward to correct drainage issues.
 - We're moving forward with the road program – we issued a Notice to Proceed to Coastal Construction so the unfinished paving projects that were left for us will resume soon.
 - I'd like to commend our Operations Crews for working very hard addressing drainage issues we've been having throughout the parish.
 - Over the last several months we've had numerous requests to add lighting at the intersection of 3213 and 3127. We're finally moving forward with the lighting project – We should be seeing those results soon.
- We are entering into the peak of hurricane season and we are asking residents continue to keep their yards free of debris, clean catch basins, stock up on essential items, and sign up for parish notification alerts! It's never too

early to be prepared. Our Emergency Preparedness Dept is in constant contact with the National Weather Service and is closely monitoring the disturbances in the gulf.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments were received:

Gary C. Watson, Jr. - via email 165 West 12th Street, Vacherie, LA, 70090
Agenda Items #5 and #6 special election and taxes.

Will the duly elected St. James Parish Council have an opportunity to pass a resolution to include “local sales occupancy taxes” on the ballot for special election? Tomorrow, July 23rd, at 11am, the River Parishes Tourist Commission (RPTC) is scheduled to increase the “local sales occupancy tax” from 2% to 4%.

The River Parishes Convention, Tourist and Visitors District was created by the Louisiana Legislature in Act 104 of the First Extraordinary Session of 2000. The district is defined in Article VI, Local Government, Section 44(2) of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974.

Contrary to popular belief, it’s not a state organization, its “local government.”

- Regarding this tax, notice was not provided in the St. James Parish journal of record.
- The June 2020 meeting agenda did not properly represent the tax increase. [Ordinance 20-01](#) was listed as an “adjustment” not an increase.
- The meeting video, required by law, does not exist. According to [RS 42:23](#), any non-elected board or commission that has the authority to levy a tax shall video or audio record, film, or broadcast live all proceedings in a public meeting.

This does not represent \$10 million. But about \$4 million over the last 3 years or so. Just enough to have a meaningful impact on small businesses in the region.

Chairman St. Pierre stated that the Director of Finance will research the possibility of St. James Parish will be able to do anything with this matter.

Anne Rolfes, 2803 St. Philp Street, New Orleans La, Louisiana Bucket Brigade

We would like you to defer your vote on #4 because we don’t know anything about it. She said they saw it yesterday and was able to see the resolution today and it needs more public input. She said it’s an act that would facilitate Formosa’s construction so it’s quite significant. She said when you all approved Formosa’s facility, we didn’t know then that this would be one of the largest plastics facility in North America – they had not gotten their permits and did not divulge this information to you all, adding that the prior Council approved without knowing that. She said there are significant legal challenges to this facility, challenges to the air permit. There was a request for an injunction filed this week with the Army Corps of Engineers. She said every further approval that y’all do digs the Parish deeper into a hole. She said there is a resolution acknowledging the importance of the Gulf of Mexico, and said this facility, with its plastic pellets that it cannot help from dumping all through the waterways of Texas, largest fine ever--\$50 million Clean Water Act settlement. She ended by saying it’s too complex and important to just throw this resolution up and ok it within 24 hours and expressed appreciation to defer it.

PRESENTATIONS - None

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED - None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilman Nash offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 20-157, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING MARVEL RAPHAEL AS THE DISTRICT 7 REPRESENTAIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD.** Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman Nash offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 20-158, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING WAYNE BECNEL AS THE DISTRICT 7 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY BOARD.** Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

After Chairman St. Pierre explained that the project will be rebid, **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH SHARPBROS CONSTRUCTION L.L.C. TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES** was dismissed

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 20-159, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE JULY 24, 2020 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-160, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-161, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING 2020 AS THE YEAR TO EMBRACE THE GULF AND RECOGNIZE THE GULF OF MEXICO’S IMPORTANCE TO THE NATION, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque. Councilman Nash offered a second and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-162, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO AMEND THE SERVITUDE AGREEMENT FOR UTILITY CORRIDOR WITH FG LA LLC, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-163, A RESOLUTION ORDERING AND CALLING A SPECIAL ELECTION TO BE HELD IN THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA, TO AUTHORIZE THE RENEWAL OF SPECIAL TAXES THEREIN; MAKING APPLICATION TO THE STATE BOND COMMISSION IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER MATTERS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-164, A RESOLUTION ORDERING AND CALLING A SPECIAL ELECTION TO BE HELD IN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO. 2 OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA, TO AUTHORIZE THE RENEWAL OF A SPECIAL TAX THEREIN; MAKING APPLICATION TO THE STATE BOND COMMISSION IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER MATTERS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-165, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT FOR EMERGENCY DEBRIS AND DISPOSAL MONITORING SERVICES BETWEEN TETRA TECH AND ST. JAMES PARISH; TOWN OF GRAMERCY AND TOWN OF LUTCHER AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN, EXECUTE, AND ADMINISTER SAID AGREEMENT AND ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-166, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT FOR EMERGENCY DEBRIS AND DISPOSAL SERVICES BETWEEN DRC EMERGENCY SERVICES AND ST. JAMES PARISH, TOWN OF GRAMERCY AND TOWN OF LUTCHER AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN, EXECUTE, AND ADMINISTER SAID AGREEMENT AND ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

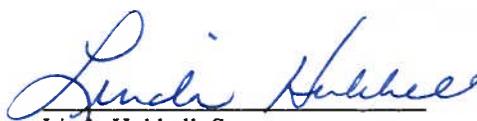
RESOLUTION 20-167, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT FOR EMERGENCY FEEDING AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN, EXECUTE, AND ADMINISTER SAID AGREEMENT AND ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-168, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #3 FROM COMMAND CONSTRUCTION FOR REPAIR TO A WATER LINE, 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 Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, with Bland absent, the resolution was adopted.

At this time Councilman Amato thanked the administration for quickly addressing the safety concern at the Blind River launch, and thanked Mr. Webre for taking care of the QC meeting yesterday on the 3125 drainage project. Chairman St. Pierre indicate that it was a good walk through, and said the list was extensive, but was needed.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary