

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 5, 2020**

The Council of the Parish of St. James, State of Louisiana, met in regular session via video/teleconference on Wednesday, August 5, 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 Cody Martin, Legal Advisor. Attorneys Vic Franckiewicz and Marty Maley were also in attendance.

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 Louque and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib, the minutes of the July 22, 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 June 2020 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Bland.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

- The Governor has extended his orders for 21 more days. We will be in Phase 2 until August 28th. 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 our residents. We are still under a state-wide mask mandate. Bars are closed for on-site alcohol consumption and indoor social gatherings are limited to 50 people under these orders.
- As we approach the upcoming school year, I would just like to wish teachers and students a wonderful and safe school year despite the circumstances.
- The Lucher satellite office is open by appointment only... DHR staff is always available by phone to assist our residents. Please call 562-2442.
- We are still asking residents to complete the Community Needs Assessment. The link to the survey can be found on the parish's Facebook Page.
- DHR is now accepting applications for our caregivers program. You can call 225-562-2372 for more information. The elderly homemaker services will resume on August 17th with limited services available to clients.
- Transit services for the general public have picked up to about 65%, and ridership includes school registration, non-essential medical appointments, employment, and community college rides.
- After wrapping up summer events at our library, the staff will begin planning for virtual classes for adults and other events for our community.
- Youth soccer registration began last week and will end on August 21st.
- An update on a few projects in Operations...
 - As we all know, the Hwy 642 and 3125 turn lane project is underway. Please be mindful of the workers and construction, slow down and proceed with caution through the area. This is a DOTD project and work crews are working diligently to complete it as fast as possible.
 - My administration met with DOTD back in January to begin the scrapping of the edge of the river road. This project was delayed due to the prolonged high water level in the Mississippi River. Once the river levels subsided, DOTD deployed their equipment immediately and began clearing of vegetation along River Road to improve drainage. This project is weather dependent, but DOTD is working as quickly as possible to complete this project.
 - We have graded the evacuation road in Grand Pointe to make it more easily accessible for residents to bypass the construction at the intersection.
 - The Molasion sewer project- The sewer discharge permit has finally been received this week from DEQ. I want to commend our Director of Operations Rick Webre for securing this permit. Had he not been persistent and aggressive in his effort to have this permit reissued, the parish would have been forced to pay back \$800,000 in grant monies to the state. A notice to proceed has been issued, and the project is on target to meet its completion date.
 - I'd like to commend our Operations Crews for working very hard addressing drainage issues we've been having throughout the parish. Our crews are currently working to complete the drainage project along Bank Street... We added additional culverts to extend that drainage artery along Bank St. under the railroad tracks to the dredge boat canal. We also removed collapsed culvert extensions at Hwy 3127 which will allow the dredge boat canal to flow freely. This should significantly improve drainage in North Vacherie.

- The utilities team has installed the panels and transfer switches at the South Vacherie Weir. They are currently trenching to run electrical cables for power at the pumping station. This project should be completed real soon. We'll FINALLY have electricity at the weir.
- As of today, only 52.5% of residents in our parish have taken the 2020 census. You can respond by phone, online, or by mail. Let's get St. James Parish counted properly so we can receive the funding that we deserve!
- We ask that as the peak of hurricane season approaches, 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 prepare. Our Emergency Preparedness Dept is in constant contact with the National Weather Service and is closely monitoring the disturbances in the gulf.
- I'd like to thank all who volunteered and came out to support the dinner at the ARC this past Sunday. Over 1300 lunches were sold and distributed in an effort to support the most deserving residents of our parish.

Mr. Bland said, referring to President Dufresne's comment on the scraping of the River Road project, that they need to monitor the work to make sure they come back to clean out the ditches due to debris falling in the ditches. Mr. Webre said he will follow-up.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

PRESENTATIONS - None

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Chairman St. Pierre explained that a letter was included in the agenda packet. It was written by Elizabeth Calderon and said that Mr. Martin responded promptly, and the July 22, 2020 meeting was held as scheduled.

Chairman St. Pierre informed everyone that Ms. Julie sent the letter and the lawsuit was attached. He indicated that it was included in the agenda packet and it will also be on the Parish's website for viewing.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 20-169, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE AUGUST 7, 2020 PAYROLL, 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 20-170, 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 Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

After Councilman Bland explained that the Park is not in Romeville and the resolution should be amended to read District 4 Recreation, **RESOLUTION 20-171, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH FRANCIS HORTICULTURAL SERVICES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SPLASH PARK IN DISTRICT 4 AND IN DISTRICT 5**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted, as amended.

After Councilman Amato stated that the Town of Lutcher has agreed to reimburse the Parish for 50% of the engineering fees, and said the resolution needed to be amended to include the change, **RESOLUTION 20-172, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF LUTCHER FOR THE MARQUETTE DRIVE DRAINAGE PROJECT**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted, as amended.

RESOLUTION 20-173, A RESOLUTION TO TERMINATE SPECIAL COUNSEL RETAINED FOR THE OPIOID LITIGATION PURSUANT TO ST. JAMES RESOLUTION 18-74 ADOPTED BY THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-174, A RESOLUTION TO OBTAIN SPECIAL COUNSEL FOR OPIOID-RELATED CLAIMS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF APPEAL PROCESS OPTIONS FOR CMT LIQUIDS TERMINAL LLC LAND USE APPEAL, ITEM NO. 20-09, UNDER ST. JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES SECTION 83-25(F), Mr. Webre explained that the Chairman of the Planning Commission would like to have it remanded back to the Commission. Councilman Bland stated that at Monday's Planning Commission meeting, the Commission requested that the decline of the land use permit be brought back to the Planning Commission. He added that he believes more information should be provided before the next Planning Commission meeting. Chairman St. Pierre stated he is also in agreement that it be sent back. Councilman Bland then made a motion to remand a reconsideration of the land use application decision back to the Planning Commission for the August 31st meeting. Councilman Louque offered a second, and after a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried.

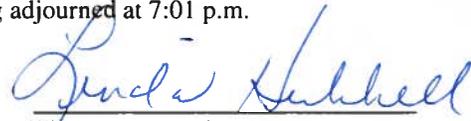
Chairman St. Pierre informed everyone that he received a call in July, regarding the substation in front of Noranda, that work would begin, but wouldn't be communicated, just yet. He said he received an email today from Entergy that said "*Entergy Louisiana will be improving the flood protection at Lucher substation by building new permanent berms to replace the existing HESCO baskets. This project is scheduled to start this week and, barring any unforeseen circumstances, should be completed by the end of year.*" He said he wanted to let everyone know incase you see construction happening.

Chairman St. Pierre reminded the council to fill any vacancies on the Boards and Commissions. He also asked for recommendations to fill the vacancy on the River Parishes Tourist Commission.

Councilman Amato requested, for the next meeting if it's face-to-face. an executive session to receive an update from the Berkley lawsuit. Mr. Maley indicated that he had a discussion with the Parish leadership. President Dufresne said we also need to determine, with the Governor extending the Order for another 21 more days, if the next meeting will be live or if we will need to have another virtual meeting.

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