

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 23, 2021**

The Council of the Parish of St. James, State of Louisiana, met in regular session in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie, Louisiana on Tuesday, November 23, 2021, at 7:03p.m., following the public hearing.

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, Jr.

Those also in attendance were Linda Hubbell, Council Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Eric Deroche, Director of Emergency Preparedness; Ingrid Bergeron, Human Resources Director; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; and Rick Webre, Operations Director. Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor, was absent. Special Counsel Marty Maley was in attendance.

The Honorable Alvin St. Pierre, Jr., 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.

Councilman Amato offered the invocation and Councilman Bland led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque, the minutes of the November 9, 2021 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 Bland, the minutes of the November 9, 2021 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:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Council. Good evening, everyone.

- I'd first like to note, our Parish Government offices will be closed Thursday, November 25th and Friday, November 26th in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday. Both parish landfill transfer sites will close Thursday the 25th but will reopen the following day. Waste Management has informed us, they will be closed Thursday, the 25th as well, but will resume garbage collection Friday, the 26th.
- I would like to thank our community for coming out to honor our Veterans during our annual celebration a few weeks ago. It was so refreshing to see our community gathered together again. We had a wonderful time celebrating those brave men and women who have served our country. Thank you to our parish employees who worked diligently to make this event possible.
- As we continue forward with Hurricane Ida recovery, we are now entering the final stages of debris removal. Our contractors are temporarily paused until Monday, December 6th which will begin the final pass of debris pick up. This pause is to allow residents to place any remaining debris at the roadside for pickup.
- To ensure your debris is removed, we ask that you call our Citizen Service Center to place a work order for storm debris pick up. You will be asked to specify if your debris is storm-related, or part of regular tree trimming pick up service. The Parish Citizen Service Center will be coordinating work orders for storm-related debris removal only for the Towns of Luchter and Gramercy in addition to the unincorporated areas of the parish. Residents may enter a work order by visiting our website at www.stjamesla.com, downloading the St. James Parish App on your smartphone App store or by calling 225-562-2500.
- In our Operations Department, crews are continuing work on several of our major drainage and infrastructure projects.
- We have received over 3,000 cubic yards of reclaimed asphalt from DOTD as a result of the HWY 70 resurfacing project. The reclaimed material is being stored at the Grand Point Fire Station and being applied to the grand point boat launch road. Once complete, the remaining will be applied to the land fill road in Gramercy, Blind River boat launch, and Grand Point Fire Station parking lot.
- Our permitting office is undergoing a reorganization utilizing recommendations of Frank Morris with Tristate Consultants. Permitting staff are currently enrolled in training courses, and a kiosk has been installed for easy public use at the permitting window. In addition, our newest addition to the permitting office is a field representative that will be assisting South Central Planning on all inspections. (Primary duty will be to follow up on all permits issued.) More information regarding online permitting will be announced soon.
- We have continued to work on improving our utilities infrastructure with a contract executed and design begun for the East Bank Water Treatment Plant Clarifier. The first round of the water sector infrastructure grant will be used as a funding source for this project. Operations has also applied for round two of the water sector grant worth potentially five million dollars.
- The East Bank natural gas metering station upgrade is tentatively scheduled for installation in summer 2022 with all legal documentation now received.
- The West Bank natural gas purchase point and metering station is moving forward with a survey of the land conducted and coordination with Acadian Gas has already begun.
- Installation of gas lines in the Longview subdivision is now complete and reconciliation with residents that paid for gas installations on Humble Street is ongoing. Residents of Longview subdivision now have access to natural gas.
- All of these projects play a major role in improving the services we provide to our residents every day.
- On the drainage front, the Humble Street Phase 2 project continues with work having now moved North of St. James Street and extending south to North Angelle. The project is progressing well with ongoing interior culvert replacement.

- We have received the engineering and are currently applying for permitting through DOTD for the HWY 643 project at First American Bank in South Vacherie drainage mitigation as part of the statewide flood control grant.
- Lastly, Operations has issued a task order to Crescent Engineering to design and develop drainage modifications on Hwy 44 east of the courthouse. The project will tie into the Canatella and Trudeau Street projects designed to reduce storm water flooding in the area. The project is tentatively scheduled for Fall 2022.
- Our Department of Human Resources, Elderly Services is hosting its annual elderly Christmas dinner on Thursday, December 9, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the St. James Boat Club. This is event is the first community senior event since the start of the pandemic. To RSVP, please contact your senior center by 12/3/2021. There will be limited seating and all COVID guidelines will be strictly enforced, including masks.
- The Department and Council on Aging received a \$250,000 dollar Hurricane Ida long term recovery grant from Capital Area United Way of Baton Rouge. This grant funds will be used to assist residents in the rebuilding efforts post Hurricane Ida. A long-term committee group will be formed to advise on how to use these funds will be expended based on grant applications submitted. More information will be released in the coming weeks with additional details of the program.
- We would also like to extend our thanks to AmSty for donating 20 Thanksgiving Baskets for our seniors. DHR staff distributed these donated baskets to the seniors on Monday.
- As we continue preparing for the holiday season, we are gearing up for some of our favorite traditions including annual Festival of the Bonfires being held December 9-12 and of course the Lighting of the Bonfires on Christmas Eve.
- This past weekend permits began to be issued for families building bonfires on the levee. Permits are available at the Welcome Center in Gramercy daily from 7:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday thru Friday and from 9:30 am – 4:30 pm on Saturday and Sunday. More information, including a downloadable application can be found on our website at www.stjamesla.com.
- In closing, as we kick off the holiday season this week, I'd like to wish everyone a very happy and safe Thanksgiving. And as a reminder, while we have made significant improvements in our covid-19 case numbers, we know the virus is still here and is very present in our community, we should continue to practice our social distancing where possible to prevent any spread over the holiday season.
- God bless you and God bless St. James Parish.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

PRESENTATIONS

Rene Castro, LA Cooperative Extension Services Chair presented their annual report.

Joshua Manning, with South Central Planning and Development provided information regarding redistricting.

Donovan Duffy with Meyer Engineering, and Kenneth Steib with the Pontchartrain Levee District provided information regarding the Mississippi River Multi use trail.

Representatives from Prism Nutrition was not in attendance to be recognized as the Economic Development Board's Small Business of the Month.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

OLD BUSINESS

District 5 Alternate Access Route – waiting on an answer from the corporate office.

Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building – met with Ms. Pratt from the Hospital. President Dufresne will be placed on the Hospital Board's agenda for the meeting on the 13th to present our footprint structure.

At this time, Mr. Maley read the amendments that were suggested at the public hearing on November 23, 2021. Councilman Louque then made a motion to accept the amendments and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a roll call vote showing, Etienne-Steib against; Louque, Bland, Cooper, Amato, Nash, and St. Pierre in favor, the motion carried. After the Council Secretary read aloud the ordinance with the suggested amendments, **ORDINANCE 21-08, AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PAYMENT AND/OR REIMBURSEMENT OF ATTORNEY'S FEES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES INCURRED BY OFFICERS, OFFICIALS, AND EMPLOYEES OF ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT AS A RESULT OF CIVIL LITIGATION AND/OR CRIMINAL PROSECUTION UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES**, having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a roll call vote showing, Amato, Nash, Louque, Cooper, Bland, and St. Pierre in favor, and Etienne-Steib against, the ordinance was adopted, as amended. Mr. Maley then stated that ; and needs to be added to the end of the WHEREAS paragraphs to clean it up.

NEW BUSINESS

The next item on the agenda was the discussion of the 2022 Council Meeting schedule. Chairman St. Pierre said the meeting in question, the first meeting in November, can still be scheduled for Wednesday, November 9th. He added the only meeting that needs to be rescheduled is the 23rd.

RESOLUTION 21-252, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE NOVEMBER 26, 2021 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-253, 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 Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-254, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF CONTRACTS, CONTRACT AMENDMENTS, OR REVISIONS FOR FUNDS UNDER THE LADOTD TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN SUCH CONTRACTS AND ASSURANCES FOR THE ST. JAMES EB MISS RIVER TRAIL PHASE 1, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-255, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF CONTRACTS, CONTRACT AMENDMENTS, OR REVISIONS FOR FUNDS UNDER THE LADOTD TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN SUCH CONTRACTS AND ASSURANCES FOR THE ST. JAMES WB MISS RIVER TRAIL PHASE 2, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and was seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-256, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF CONTRACTS, CONTRACT AMENDMENTS, OR REVISIONS FOR FUNDS UNDER THE LADOTD TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN SUCH CONTRACTS AND ASSURANCES FOR THE ST. JAMES EB MISS RIVER TRAIL PHASE 3, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

After President Dufresne recommended to reject the resolution because two quotes were needed, **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH MEYER ENGINEERING, LTD TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES FOR DAMAGE SUSTAINED FROM NATURAL DISASTERS,** was rejected on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried.

RESOLUTION 21-257, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ADVERTISE AND ACCEPT BIDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES SATELLITE BUILDING, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-258, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #1 FROM FORET CONTRACTING GROUP FOR THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE RENOVATIONS TO CONSTRUCT A NEW ELEVATOR LANDING, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE 21-09, AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE FINAL REVISION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Nash. 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 Wednesday, December 8, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent.

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE 21-10, AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022, PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and was 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 Wednesday, December 8, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent.

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE 21-11, AN ORDINANCE APPROVING AND ACCEPTING IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SUGARVIEW ESTATES SUBDIVISION PHASE 1, IN SOUTH VACHERIE, LA, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Nash. 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 Wednesday, December 8, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

FELIX BOUGHTON – email budget questions by this Friday. He said that he contacted Mark Johnson with Entergy regarding the streetlights. We will receive a credit for those still not working since the storm, adding that they expect to have them all operational within 4-5 months.

RICK WEBRE – his comments were included in the President' report and added that they exceeded 7100 work orders.

INGRID BERGERON – the official invites to the annual end of year meeting will be emailed tomorrow, including the Senior, Toy and Coat, and other year-end activities.

ERIC DEROCHE – the debris information President Dufresne provided included both the Town of Lutchter and the Town of Gramercy. The MOU with DOTD was approved by Adam, with a minor change.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN NASH - Councilman Nash inquired about the Bridge Project on Hwy 20. Mr. Webre indicated that it is progressing.

COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib wished everyone Happy Thanksgiving.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper also wished everyone Happy Thanksgiving. He inquired about the multipurpose building at the District 5 Park. Mr. Webre said they need to install an icemaker and need to get a permit for the Modad. Councilman Cooper inquired about the other multipurpose building. Mr. Webre said there is a court date in January.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland asked to discuss replacing the chairs. President Dufresne said the correct process was not followed. He said he did not appreciate a project that they have pushed forth, like the bike path, meetings were had without them being present, adding that he didn't know the resolutions were going to be on the agenda tonight. He wished Happy Thanksgiving to everyone.

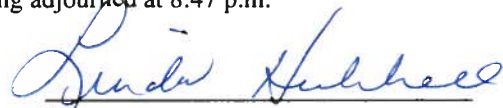
COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque asked to expound on the streetlights that are out. Mr. Webre said he will contact the engineer and follow-up. He wished everyone Happy Thanksgiving.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato thanked the Parish crews and the Welcome Center staff for assisting with the bonfire permits. He thanked Mr. Kenny Steib, with PLD, for their partnership, and he thanked Donovan for the work with the bike path. He also wished everyone a Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving.

CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE – Chairman St. Pierre wished everyone Happy Thanksgiving. He suggested the Council do homework to try to cut the meeting down a little.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Louque and carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary