OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2015

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, March 4, 2015, at 6:30 p.m.

On roll call, the following were recorded present: Councilmen Alvin St. Pierre, Jr., Jason Amato, Terry McCreary, Ralph Patin, Kendricks Brass, James Brazan and Chairman Charles Ketchens.

Those also in attendance were: Angele Rodrigue, Council Secretary; Timothy P. Roussel, Parish President; Michelle Octave, Chief Administrative Officer; Eric Deroche, Director of Emergency Preparedness; Bedar Warren, Director of Human Resources; Chantal T. Waguespack, Director of Finance; Jody Chenier, Director of Operations; and Bruce Mohon, Legal Advisor.

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

The Honorable Charles Ketchens, 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 St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato, the minutes of the February 18, 2015 council meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes were dispensed with.

HEAD START FINANCIAL & ATTENDANCE REPORTS

The Head Start Financial and Attendance Reports for February 2015 were approved on a motion offered by Councilman Brazan and seconded by Councilman Patin.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Roussel began his report by sharing two short stories of two local individuals, Kentrell Morris and Donald Stevenson, who were both provided assistance by programs offered by DHR. He provided the Council with information and/or updates on the following: Ascension Parish Drainage Board regarding drainage and pumping stations; repeal of the inventory tax credit rebate program; the WIA office migrating to our network and phone system; LIHEAP: LDEQ Public Hearing for Yuhuang Chemical on March 12; population update from State Treasurer; Senior Olympics on April 9 at Paulina Park: DHR installation of smoke alarms at homes of seniors; sale of property in Convent from Canatella family; DHR recipient of the WAFB-TV Power of Nine Award for the VITA program; work on rails at Gramercy Park; first meeting of the East Bank Drainage & Flood Protection Task Force; community informational meeting on March 9 at Welcome Senior Center; and recognition of Albert "Puddy" Laiche, who was in attendance, and who retired last month after 33 years of service to St. James Parish.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Norman Marmillion and Dr. Roland Waguespack addressed the Council regarding environmental issues. Mr. Marmillion, owner of Laura Plantation, asked the Council to take action and underwrite or pay for a comprehensive and independent analysis of soil samples in St. James Parish to determine the extent to which the land, water and health of residents has been damaged by the illegal emissions from Noranda. He explained that he is making this request after an article in the Advocate revealed that Noranda, and its predecessor Kaiser Aluminum, has been emitting levels of mercy into the air without a permit for many years, and after receiving a flyer from the parish regarding a violation of the water treatment system. Mr. Marmillion commended St. James Parish for sending this notification to its water customers and said we have a right to know and need to know what is taking place with our water, land and air.

Public comment was received from Davis Desselles, 3396 St. James Street, in Vacherie. He lived in Bridge City before moving to St. James Parish and he commented on the water and the health of him and his wife. Mr. Desselles urged the Council to do what Mr. Marmillion is requesting.

Dr. Waguespack, a local physician residing and practicing at 1108 St. James Street in Vacherie, provided general information on mercury and mercury exposure. He said mercury is a naturally occurring element found in the air, water and soil and the highly toxic form of mercury is methyl mercury, which accumulates in fish and animals that eat fish, and fish and shellfish are the main sources of methyl mercury exposure in humans. Dr. Waguespack explained some symptoms of human exposure to methyl mercury and he provided each councilman with information on mercury poisoning.

John Cummings, owner of Whitney Plantation, addressed the Council regarding mercury from Noranda. He commented on the fifty years of mercury being dumped in the parish and provided information on a village in Japan where residents were exposed to mercury poisoning from an industry there and the health effects on those villagers. Mr. Cummings said we are exposed to the discharges from the chemical plants in the area and LDEQ has not requested soil from here to be tested.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED – None.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

RESOLUTION 15-31, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING CHARLES KETCHENS TO THE ST. JAMES GOVERNMENT HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Brazan and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre after an explanation by President Roussel. The resolution was then unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

ORDINANCE 15-02, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE III, DIVISION 2, SECTION 2-127 OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES RELATIVE TO DOCUMENTS PROVIDED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC; UNIFORM PROCEDURE AND FEES, having undergone the hearing process, was then offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Brazan and seconded by Councilman McCreary. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted.

ORDINANCE 15-03, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 30, CIVIL EMERGENCIES, OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES, ARTICLE III, EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND MITIGATION OF REGULATED AND UNREGULATED MATERIAL INCIDENTS, SECTION 30-68, OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, having undergone the hearing process, was then offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Patin and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted.

Councilman Amato offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 15-32, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF BGS LLC FOR THE LUTCHER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT.** The resolution was seconded by Councilman McCreary and unanimously adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilman Brazan and President Roussel explained that they have received a request from the family of Elton Oubre, local historian, to place his name on the St. James Parish Wall of Honor. As per Ordinance 13-14, the Council then scheduled a Public Hearing for Wednesday, March 18, 2015, at 6:15 p.m., in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie on the nomination of Elton Oubre for inclusion on the St. James Parish Wall of Honor.

Councilman Amato offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 15-33, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING MARCH 16, 2015 AS REALTOR APPRECIATION DAY IN ST. JAMES PARISH.** Councilman Patin offered a second, and the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 15-34, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO APPLY FOR FUNDING FROM THE LOUISIANA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, FY 2014-2015 COMMUNITY WATER ENRICHMENT FUND, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. The resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman Amato offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 15-35, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARISH PRESIDENT TIMOTHY ROUSSEL TO SIGN A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF LUTCHER AND THE NEW CONSOLIDATED ST. JAMES VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR FIRE PROTECTION AND ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS THEREWITH.** Councilman McCreary offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 15-36, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TIMOTHY ROUSSEL TO SIGN A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT BETWEEN ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT AND SOUTH CENTRAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre. Councilman Brazan offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman McCreary offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 15-37, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A CHLORINE BUILDING AT THE EAST BANK WATER TREATMENT PLANT IN CONVENT, LA.** A second was provided by Councilman Amato, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 15-38, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ST. JAMES AREA AGENCY ON AGING BUDGET TO ACTUAL EXPENDITURES FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 2014 TO DECEMBER 2014, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Brazan. The resolution was seconded by Councilman McCreary and unanimously adopted.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE 15-04, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 98, SPECIAL DISTRICTS, ARTICLE III, SECTION 98 OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES, TO DISSOLVE SECTION 98-79 – FIRE SERVICE DISTRICT FOR LUTCHER FIRE DEPARTMENT, TO DISSOLVE SECTION 98-80 – FIRE SERVICE DISTRICT FOR PAULINA-GRAND POINT-BELMONT FIRE DEPARTMENT AND TO CREATE SECTION 98-73 – FIRE SERVICE DISTRICT FOR THE ST. JAMES FIRE DEPARTMENT, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman McCreary and seconded by Councilman Patin. After a unanimous roll call vote with all voting in favor, the introduction of 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., on Wednesday, MARCH 18, 2015, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

COUNCILMEN'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre introduced Marty Maley, candidate for State Attorney General. Councilman St. Pierre commented on the first meeting of the East Bank Drainage & Flood Protection Task Force, which consists of a very diverse group from across the East Bank of St. James Parish. He is anxious to see the consolidation of the two fire departments move forward. In closing, Councilman St. Pierre congratulated the DHR staff on the Power of Nine Award.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato thanked the Council and staff for their efforts in moving forward with the consolidation of the fire departments and he commented on a recent daytime fire and the response. Regarding the East Bank Drainage & Flood Protection Task Force, Councilman Amato commented on a presentation by task force member Richard St. Pierre regarding a storm water master plan.

COUNCILMAN MCCREARY – Councilman McCreary has been working with CN Railroad on crossings and he asked if the parish and Sheriff's office were notified of the closing of Hester Street and no one was notified. He asked that all acceptable methods of payment for utility bills be posted for public knowledge and he asked if we had a percentage of residents using direct pay for payment of utility bills. Councilman McCreary asked Mr. Chenier to provide a list of projects for those drainage culverts that were purchased thus far in 2015. He was unable to attend the recent Rail Authority meeting and contacted the Vice-President of the Rail Authority and will share meeting information with his fellow councilmen once he receives it. Councilman McCreary recognized Sheriff Martin who commented on the inventory tax issue. In closing, Councilman McCreary recognized Fire Association President and Paulina-Grand Point Fire Chief Ryan Louque and Paulina-Grand Point Fire Department President Grady Poche.

COUNCILMAN PATIN – Councilman Patin had no comment.

COUNCILMAN BRASS – Councilman Brass thanked Dr. Waguespack, Mr. Marmillion and Mr. Cummings for expressing their opinion on this important environmental issue. He informed everyone of the Walk a Thon for a young cancer patient on March 14, at 9 a.m., from Magnolia Heights to Church Street and he thanked Sheriff Martin for his assistance. Councilman Brass thanked President Roussel, Mrs. Octave, Mr. Chenier and Mr. Gravois for meeting on the evacuation route project. Upon questioning, Councilman Brass received an update from Mr. Chenier on the Magnolia Heights waterline project.

COUNCILMAN BRAZAN – Councilman Brazan shared his comments on the mercury issue addressed by Mr. Marmillion, Dr. Waguespack and Mr. Cummings assuring them the Council shares their concern, is here to protect their interests and is working with an environmental consultant on this issue and other environmental issues as well. He also commented on the water notifications of the last couple of years and assured the public that the water is safe and Mr. Chenier explained in detail the recent THM violation. Councilman Brazan received an update from Mr. Chenier on the Orange Street culvert.

PRESIDENT ROUSSEL – President Roussel commented on the inventory tax and assured the Council that this is a fight that will be brought to the legislature. He recognized former St. John Parish President Nickie Monica.

CHAIRMAN KETCHENS – Chairman Ketchens extended an opportunity for comments from CAO/Directors. Mr. Chenier informed the Council that the Coastal Zone Board annual report was in councilmen's folders since the chairman was unable to attend the previous council meeting and present the annual report. Chairman Ketchens thanked Secretary Rodrigue, Mrs. Octave and Mr. Deroche for their assistance in the completion of the new council office at the Annex. He congratulated Alma Dennis, a constituent and mother of District 5 Planning Commission member Austin Dennis, on her 101 birthday. Chairman Ketchens informed the Council that he will place a condolence resolution on the next agenda for Amy Laurent, the District 5 representative on the Area Agency on Aging board for the last 18 years. Chairman Ketchens received an update from President Roussel on the installation of a phone line in the VA office in Lutcher.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre seconded by Councilman Amato and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Angele R. Rodrigue, Secretary