

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 2014**

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, June 4, 2014, 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; Eric Deroche, Director of Emergency Preparedness; Bedar Warren, Assistant Director of Human Resources; Chantal T. Waguespack, Director of Finance; Jody Chenier, Director of Operations; and Legal Advisor Bruce Mohon.

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 Amato and seconded by Councilman Patin, the minutes of the May 21, 2014 council meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

HEAD START FINANCIAL & ATTENDANCE REPORTS

The Head Start Financial and Attendance Reports for May 2014 were approved on a motion offered by Councilman McCreary and seconded by Councilman Brazan.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Roussel began his report by providing the Council with an update on the rain event of May 28. As of today, 125 homes in St. James Parish reported flooding; 104 on the East Bank and 33 on the West Bank, as well as 9 businesses. President Roussel and Mr. Deroche explained in great detail the threshold of \$6.7 million in damages that the State must meet for a federal declaration of assistance. President Roussel explained that the parish is seeking assistance from the state; DHR has limited funding to assist elderly and disabled residents affected by flood waters; encouraged parish residents to report flooding information to flood@stjamesla.com, to call the EOC or his office. Assistant Director of Emergency Preparedness Francis Hymel explained that GOHSEP is in the parish surveying damage and gathering statistics. Questions from councilmen were answered by President Roussel, Mr. Chenier, Mr. Deroche and Mr. Hymel. Continuing with his report, President Roussel provided the Council with information and/or updates on the following: audit exit conference on June 12 and annual audit report at July 2 council meeting; rescheduled ethics training for August 26; rescheduled the DHR Senior Picnic for June 12 at Lutchter Park; LDEQ Public Hearing on June 12 regarding Zen-Noh Grain permit; information from Mr. Mohon that Justice of the Peace and Constable districts follow the Parish Council districts; maintenance crews will begin working from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the summer; River Region Caucus meeting hosted by St. James Parish on June 12 at Spuddy's; hurricane preparation meeting tomorrow for parish staff in the EOC; annual parish wide hurricane meeting June 5 at St. James Reception Hall; LIHEAP crisis statistics; and summer reading program at the Library.

Mr. Chenier informed the Council that the culvert on Highway 643 was changed today, the David Street culvert project will begin next week, the contractor is assessing tree removal in Ferrero Canal, the old building in District 7 Park was removed today and new building should be delivered in two weeks, and the roof at the Utility Office is being replaced.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Representative Cedric Richmond was unable to attend tonight due to a family commitment and he will reschedule.

In the absence of Glen Millet, Chairman of the Planning Commission, Ryan Louque, District 3 Planning Commission Representative, presented the Planning Commission Annual Report. Mr. Louque stated the duties and mission of the Planning Commission, members of the Commission and items approved over the past year, June 1, 2014 through May 31, 2014.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED - None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

RESOLUTION 14-90, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING R. J. ST. PIERRE AS A DISTRICT 2 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre. The resolution was then adopted.

Councilman Patin offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 14-91, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING BETTY WILLIAMS AS A DISTRICT 4 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD**. The resolution was seconded by Councilman McCreary and unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 14-92, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING CHARLENE WILLIAMS AS A DISTRICT 6 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Brass and seconded by Councilman Brazan. The resolution was then adopted.

Councilman Brazan offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 14-93, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING DOLORES T. WISE AS A DISTRICT 5 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD**. The resolution was seconded by Councilman Brass and unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 14-94, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING DOLORES FLORENT AS A PARISH PRESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Brazan and seconded by Councilman Brass. The resolution was then adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilman Amato offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 14-95, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF CROWN ARCHITECTURAL METAL CO., LLC FOR RENOVATIONS TO THE LUTCHER TOWN HALL**. Councilman St. Pierre offered a second, and the resolution was adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

A discussion took place on the 2014 millage rates. President Roussel explained to the Council that the millage for Parish Drainage will be rolled forward from 2.98 mills to 3 mills for an increase of 0.02 mills, General Obligation Bonds will decrease by 0.20 mills from 1.20 mills to 1 mill, and the Youth Center will decrease by 0.40 mills from 1 mill to 0.60 mills. This will decrease the total parish millage for 2014 from 33.13 mills to 32.55 mills for a 0.58 mill decrease. President Roussel, Mr. Chenier and Mrs. Waguespack answered questions from councilmen.

Councilman Patin offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 14-96, A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE NEWS EXAMINER AS OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015**. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was adopted.

Councilman McCreary led a discussion of a computerized work order system. He said when he was elected he made a commitment to improve and better represent his district and he feels the current work order process is not efficient. Councilman McCreary previously sent his fellow councilmen, as well as President Roussel and Mr. Deroche, information regarding software that will enable councilmen to submit and track work orders to completion and he asked the Council for their support for this system. President Roussel agreed that our current system is antiquated and obsolete, the parish is currently developing a work order system and Mr. Deroche explained in detail the status of this system. Councilman McCreary is only looking for a vehicle to submit work orders. President Roussel asked Councilman McCreary to schedule a meeting with representatives from the software company.

RESOLUTION 14-97, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF LOUISIANA OFFICE OF FACILITY PLANNING AND CONTROL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman St. Pierre. The resolution was then adopted.

After an explanation by President Roussel and questions from councilmen being answered by President Roussel and Mr. Chenier, Councilman St. Pierre offered a motion to table the **PROPOSED ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 42, ELECTIONS, SECTION 42-2, "PRECINCTS DESIGNATED"**, OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES, for two weeks with Councilman Amato offering a second. A unanimous roll call vote showed all were in favor of tabling this proposed ordinance until June 18. The Council requested that a representative from the School Board attend the June 18 meeting to provide an explanation and answer questions from the Council.

COUNCILMEN'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre recognized Gramercy Mayor Terry Borne and he thanked Mayor Borne and town workers, President Roussel and parish workers for assisting with flooding in Gramercy, where 29 homes had water. He commented on the large drainage project in Gramercy Park and the approval needed from the Corps to clear Beaver Canal that will help with drainage. Councilman St. Pierre asked Mr. Chenier to request that the gas company build a bridge to cross Central Canal to access the monitoring station behind Sycamore Inn. He suggested contacting the railroad company to conduct a survey in Gramercy on the culverts from railroad track to railroad track in order to keep them clear at all times. Councilman St. Pierre asked President Roussel and Mr. Chenier to send a letter from the parish to the landowner seeking permission to dig the east to west canal to Hot Water Ditch. He thanked Mr. Chenier for the update on David Road and Ferraro Canal projects and thanked the parish for obtaining assistance for residents who had flood waters in their homes.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato asked Secretary Rodrigue to schedule a meeting next week with himself, Councilmen Brazan and Ketchens, Sheriff Martin and Mr. Mohon to discuss the Justice of the Peace and Constable request for a salary increase. He extended his condolences to the Bayou Laiche family and his appreciation to the parish for their help in Lutchter with the flooding. Councilman Amato expressed his disappointment with BKI for not coming to St. James Parish during this flooding event to gather information for the East Bank Drainage Study.

COUNCILMAN MCCREARY – Councilman McCreary thanked everyone for their condolences and expressions of sympathy on the recent passing of his Mother.

COUNCILMAN PATIN – Councilman Patin had no comment.

COUNCILMAN BRASS – Councilman Brass commended and thanked the Parish President and staff, Mayor Borne and staff, and Sheriff Martin and staff for their response to the water event. He informed his fellow councilmen of a meeting on Friday morning with Rep. Richmond, the Public Service commissioner, South Vacherie and North Vacherie residents to discuss drainage issues. Upon questioning, President Roussel told Councilman Brass the transition of the park rentals should be completed by next week. Councilman Brass asked Mr. Deroche to schedule a meeting after the season to discuss issues with the girls' softball program.

COUNCILMAN BRAZAN – Councilman Brazan received an update from Mr. Deroche on the walking track in District 7. He asked President Roussel, Mr. Chenier, Mr. Gravois and Mr. Landry to meet before the next council meeting to discuss the pumps. Councilman Brazan would like Mr. Chenier or Mr. Gravois to ride along with him in District 7 to view reoccurring issues. Councilman Brazan commented on the council meeting where Petroplex appealed the ruling from the Planning Commission and he feels the Council deviated from its normal course of action, the Council should be consistent, and he asked Mr. Mohon to meet to explain this to him.

PRESIDENT ROUSSEL – President Roussel informed the Council and the Public that as of 5 p.m. today Blind River is now open since it had been shut down due to the flooding.

CHAIRMAN KETCHENS – Chairman Ketchens extended an opportunity for Directors comment and Mr. Chenier informed and explained to the Council the violation at the East Bank Water Treatment Plant and assured residents that the water is safe to drink. Chairman Ketchens asked Mr. Chenier what could be done on Kingview, Barras and North Bank streets where water from sugar cane fields creates problems no matter how heavy the rain and Mr. Chenier will schedule a meeting with the farmers and property owners to discuss and hopefully resolve this issue. Upon questioning about the ditch on left side of Burton Street, Mr. Chenier told Chairman Ketchens he would contact Shell for permission to clean the ditch all the way to the back. Chairman Ketchens visited flooded homes on the West Bank and his heart goes out to those residents.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman St. Pierre seconded by Councilman McCreary and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.


Angele R. Rodrigue, Secretary