

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014**

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 Wednesday, August 20, 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; Michelle Nailor-Octave, Chief Administrative Officer; Eric Deroche, Director of Emergency Preparedness; Bedar W. 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 August 6, 2014 meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

DISBURSEMENT REPORT

The Disbursement Report for July 2014, totaling \$2,483,230.79, was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Brass and seconded by Councilman McCreary.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Roussel began his report by welcoming new West Bank resident Steven Hemelt, L'Observateur reporter. He thanked the Operations crews for the work they are doing with drainage throughout the Parish and the Parish is receiving compliments from the Public for this effort. President Roussel then provided the Council with information and/or updates on the following: exploring avenues for our funds in the LAMP program; District 3 Splash Park will open this Friday and a ribbon cutting will be held once the pavilion is completed; Head Start program; construction of EOC warehouse; book signing on August 25 at Lutchter Library; Electronic Recycling Day on November 1 sponsored by Keep St. James Beautiful Board; ethics training on August 26 at St. James Reception Hall; parish Labor Day Holiday on September 1; unveiling of official Freetown historical marker on September 4 at noon with a social at Welcome Senior Center; Communities of Distinction video with Terry Bradshaw spotlighting St. James Parish; River Region Chamber of Commerce Washington DC Fly-In on September 17 and 18 attended by President Roussel and Mrs. Octave; Corps meeting on September 16 regarding West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane Protection system. Upon questioning, President Roussel provided Councilman McCreary with the date for the Electronics Recycling Day.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Sharon Bethea and Jeremy Theriot with Cox Communication provided the Council with information on discount programs offered by Cox to its customers. Ms. Bethea explained the importance of the internet, especially with the beginning of the school year, and provided information on a home internet service program for families with at least one child in the free lunch program at school. She also provided information on a Lifeline Low Income Assistance program for senior citizens. Councilman Brazan asked the Press to note that Cox is not available in District 7, so therefore these programs are not available to residents of District 7. Ms. Bethea then answered questions posed by council members.

Dennis Hymel, with T. Baker Smith, provided the Council with an update on the drainage survey for the Vacherie area and upper St. James drainage basin. Mr. Hymel began by introducing the T. Baker Smith employees who accompanied him; Jimmy Ledet Vice-President of Engineering, Matt Ledet Land Surveyor, Scott Bourgeois Survey Intern, Michelle Poche Guidry Drafting and Design. Mr. Hymel explained in great depth and much detail the Upper St. James Drainage Basin study, which entails obtaining an emergency permit from the Corps of Engineers to clean Bayou Verret, and the Vacherie Drainage Study, which is currently 60% complete and would provide short term solutions for conveyances. Chairman Ketchens requested that the study area extend to King View Street. Mr. Hymel and Mr. Chenier then answered questions posed by councilmen. Mr. Hymel then provided Councilman St. Pierre with an update on the permit for Beaver Canal.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED – None.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilman Brazan offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 14-120, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING KENNETH GUIDRY AND GAYLE ROUSSEL TO THE CAPITAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.** The resolution was seconded by Councilman Brass and unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilman McCreary offered a motion to table ORDINANCE 14-11, AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A CROSS-CONNECTION CONTROL PROGRAM FOR ALL ST. JAMES PARISH UTILITY CUSTOMERS AS MANDATED BY THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS AND THE U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RULES AND REGULATIONS. Councilman Brass offered a second. Receiving no comment from the Public and after a roll call vote with all voting in favor, the ordinance was tabled until the September 3, 2014 council meeting.

The discussion of a Parishwide Flood Control Committee continued from the last council meeting led by Councilman Amato. Councilman Amato provided a draft of the committee charter to his fellow councilmen for their review prior to this meeting and asked for comments. Councilman Brass commended Councilman Amato on this draft and suggested the membership of the West Bank Task Force increase to three residents, one from each district, and a dedicated slot for a West Bank farmer. Councilmen Brass and Brazan would like the West Bank Task Force to include sewerage in their discussions. Councilman McCreary commended Councilman Amato and suggested the title be changed to St. James Parish Drainage & Flood Protection Committee since drainage would provide the most immediate impact and flood protection and backwater protection could be long range goals. Councilman St. Pierre suggested including BKI in meetings of the East Bank Task Force and President Roussel agreed and suggested including T. Baker Smith in West Bank Task Force meetings, as well, since both are currently performing drainage surveys of the parish. President Roussel provided the Council with information regarding Flooding and Stormwater Management for review and consideration in establishing this committee. After much discussion on the formation, responsibilities and objectives of this committee, Councilman Amato will revise the draft to include comments from this discussion and forward to councilmen and staff for further review.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 14-121, A RESOLUTION REQUESTING FUNDING UNDER THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAM FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF LOCAL FUNDS IN RESPONSE TO HURRICANE ISAAC, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman McCreary. The resolution was then unanimously adopted.

Councilman Brass offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 14-122, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO APPLY FOR STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS**. The resolution was seconded by Councilman Brazan and unanimously adopted.

President Roussel led a discussion on bids for the Youth Center by informing the Council that with the recent advertisement for the sale of the Youth Center at 65% of appraised value, 5 bid packets were requested and none were returned. Mr. Deroche explained that two firms, one from the Point Coupee area and one from the Lafayette are, are extremely interested in the facility, but the price is too high for the investment necessary at the facility. Mr. Deroche told these firms that he would bring this before the Council tonight since the decision is up to the Council and he would call each of them in the morning with any decision made by the Council. Discussions then took place on renting verses lowering the price; contacting a commercial realtor to list and sell the property; just hold on to it for a few months; difference between 65% of value and 50% of value; demolition of buildings by parish crews and then sell land; appraised value of land only; and consider affordable housing at this location. The Council took no action on the sale of the Youth Center.

COUNCILMEN'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN BRAZAN – Upon questioning, Mr. Chenier told Councilman Brazan that he would contact Shane Landry and provide Councilman Brazan with an update on the ditches and culverts. In closing Councilman Brazan thanked President Roussel for hiring local talent.

COUNCILMAN BRASS – Councilman Brass publically thanked the members of the South Vacherie Volunteer Fire Department, who were in attendance, for their efforts in obtaining a PIAL rating of 4 that will reduce homeowners insurance for South Vacherie residents. Councilman Brass asked Mr. Chenier to have the ditch dug by the new St. James football stadium as per the request he received from James Mitchell, Supervisor of School Board Construction. Councilman Brass received an update from Mr. Chenier on the lights at the District 6 Park.

COUNCILMAN PATIN – Councilman Patin had no comment.

COUNCILMAN MCCREARY – Councilman McCreary agrees with Councilman Brazan that we should not lower the price for the Youth Center, but recommends we obtain a commercial realtor to list the property and hopefully sell it.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato expressed his appreciation to President Roussel, Mr. Chenier and parish crews for the drainage work done in the town of Lutchet.

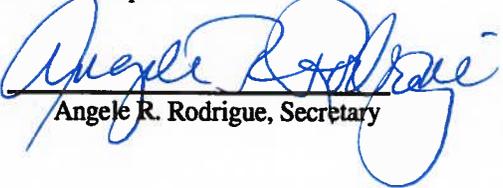
COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre recognized Mayor Borne of Gramercy and thanked him for his service to the citizens of Gramercy and wished him well in his future endeavors since he is not seeking re-election. Councilman St. Pierre read a thank you card from Anna Lee Oubre, who was recognized at the August 6 council meeting for her 43 years as Secretary of the Gramercy Recreation Board. He thanked the Parish for the work in District 1 as well as throughout the Parish. Councilman St. Pierre asked Mr. Chenier to contact Mr. Tureau with DOTD and request an illumination study at the intersection of LA 44 and the Veterans Memorial Bridge.

CHAIRMAN KETCHENS – Chairman Ketchens extended an opportunity for Directors comment. Mr. Chenier explained that both the East Bank and West Bank Water Treatment Systems are in violation of the maximum contaminant level as set forth by the State Sanitary Code and Federal Primary Drinking Water Regulations and

notification letters will be sent to all customers of both water systems. Chairman Ketchens questioned President Roussel on the digging of the King View ditch, west side, and President Roussel told him Mr. Woods has given the permission for his property. Chairman Ketchens wants the ditch dug all the way to the back.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Brazan, seconded by Councilman Brass and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.


Angele R. Rodrigue, Secretary