

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2013**

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, December 18, 2013, at 6:30 p.m.

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

Those also in attendance were: Angele Rodrigue, Council Secretary; Timothy P. Roussel, Parish President; Francis Hymel, Assistant Director of Emergency Preparedness; Michelle Octave, Director of Human Resources; Ashley Poche, Assistant Director of Finance; and Jody Chenier, Director of Operations.

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

The Honorable James Brazan, 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 December 4, 2013 meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

DISBURSEMENT REPORT

The Disbursement Report for November 2013, totaling \$1,343,999.41, was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Ketchens and seconded by Councilman Brass.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Roussel began his report by updating the Council on the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane Protection Study and a meeting with Monica Salins, Executive Director of the Pontchartrain Levee District, and the Corps of Engineers. He then answered questions from Councilman McCreary regarding this issue. Continuing with his report, President Roussel informed the Council that Mr. Chenier has been debating an insurance settlement for Hurricane Isaac damages for over eight months that has resulted in an increase in the settlement amount and he commended Mr. Chenier for his efforts. President Roussel provided the Council with information and/or updates on the following: Risk Management Insurance meeting; NFIP update; DHR free income tax preparation through VITA program beginning January 27; DHR Toy and Coat Drive distribution on December 19 at 3 p.m. at the Lutch Senior Center; St. James Parish Transit received DOTD Award of Achievement; Housing Preservation Program; LIHEAP applications will be accepted January 13; DHR GED program status. President Roussel provided the Council with an update of a meeting he had with Rache'l Oatis, President of the Lutch High School Student Council, regarding the creation of a St. James Parish Youth Council. He informed the Council that he is considering hiring an independent environmental consulting firm to assist St. James Parish when industrial prospects consider locating facilities in the parish. In closing, President Roussel wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Chairman Brazan shared his comments on the need for an independent environmental consulting firm to assist the Council, Planning Commission and parish staff when prospects approach St. James Parish to locate a facility here.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

President Roussel recognized parish employees with 10 or more years of service to St. James Parish. Employees with 10 years of service are Clarence Maddie, Jr., Don Melancon, Tevis Smith, Wilson Mitchell, Jr., Dusty Reulet, Keri Walker, and Jermaine Williams. Wendy Bolding has 15 years of service. Audrey Temple, Bernard Johnson, and Overton Celestin have 20 years of service. Employees with 25 years of service are Sherone Smith, Keith Duperclay, Kenneth Waguespack, Antonio Charles, Sr., and Albert "Mickey" Snyder. Antoinette Simmons has 30 years of service. Awards were presented to those employees who were in attendance; Wendy Bolding, Audrey Temple and Sherone Smith.

Councilman Alvin St. Pierre recognized Jim Riviere, who was appointed to the Ascension/St. James Airport and Transportation Authority Board of Commissions. Mr. Riviere, an avid pilot, introduced himself and provided the Council with some of his background. He provided the Council with information on the Ascension/St. James Airport.

Jude Gravois, Vice-Chairman of the Keep St. James Beautiful Board, presented the annual report. Mr. Gravois highlighted some of the 2013 activities in the areas of anti-littering, recycling and beautification and shared some of the planned activities for 2014. Mr. Gravois asked the Council to encourage those individuals they have appointed to attend and participate in the Keep St. James Beautiful meetings and events.

Blaise Gravois, Assistant Director of Operations, provided the Comprehensive Master Plan. Mr. Gravois presented a power point presentation of the Master Plan that highlighted the six goals of the Plan; preserving community assets, human services, housing, economic development, infrastructure and land use. The land use maps will be located at the Convent Courthouse and Vacherie Courthouse Annex for the public to view. After discussion on informing the public on the Master Plan and providing public access to the Plan, Chairman Brazan asked Mr. Gravois to schedule several informational meeting in January 2014 on both the East Bank and West Bank, at various times of the day and evenings, to provide the public access to the Master Plan with an opportunity for the public to have their questions concerning the Plan answered. The dates, times and location of these informational meeting will be published in the newspapers and posted on social media. Mr. Gravois then answered questions posed by council members.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED - None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilman Ketchens offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 13-183, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING VERONICA GRANIER TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD**. Councilman Patin offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 13-184, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF QUALITY SITEWORK MATERIALS, INC. FOR THE PURCHASE OF CULVERTS FOR A DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman St. Pierre and seconded by Councilman Amato. The resolution was then unanimously adopted.

Councilman Patin offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 13-185, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF CIMSCO, INC. FOR THE PURCHASE OF CULVERTS FOR A DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**. The resolution was seconded by Councilman Brass and unanimously adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 13-186, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADVERTISEMENT OF BIDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS IN FACILITATION OF THE FY2013 ST. JAMES PARISH LCDBG PROGRAM, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Ketchens. Councilman Brass provided a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Councilman McCreary offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 13-187, A RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THE OFF-SYSTEM BRIDGE PROGRAM.** The resolution was seconded by Councilman Patin and unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 13-188, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A LONG-TERM LEASE WITH THE ST. JAMES BOAT CLUB FOR THE OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF A PUBLIC BOAT LAUNCH IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman McCreary. Councilman Amato provided a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE 13-19, AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING UNMUFFLED COMPRESSION BRAKES ALONG LA HIGHWAY 44, FROM THE SUNSHINE BRIDGE TO THE UNION-CONVENT FIRE DEPARTMENT, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Patin and seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, 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., Wednesday, January 8, 2014, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent.

COUNCILMEN'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN BRASS – Upon questioning, Mr. Chenier explained to Councilman Brass the process for submitting projects for the Fire Association budget. Councilman Brass received an update from Mr. Chenier on the Magnolia Heights drainage project. He asked Secretary Rodrigue to send a letter to the School Board regarding availability of jobs with the contractor in charge of the construction of the new football stadium. Councilman Brass asked Mr. Chenier when the road program contractor would complete the shoulder work on Forrestal Street and Judge Becnel Lane.

COUNCILMAN KETCHENS – Councilman Ketchens congratulated the parish employees for their years of service. In closing, Councilman Ketchens wished the constituents of District 5, as well as all parish residents, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

COUNCILMAN PATIN – Councilman Patin informed his fellow councilmen that Paul Morton, President of St. James Stevedoring, has spearheaded a campaign to raise funds from local businesses and industries for the demolition of blighted property in District 4, with demolition assistance from Mr. Chenier, Mr. Donadieu and crews. Contributing industries are Occidental, Zen-Noh Grain, Nucor, CGB, ArrMaz Chemicals and Yara North America and Councilman Patin thanked Mr. Morton, Mr. Chenier and Mr. Donadieu for their efforts. Councilman Patin closed by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

COUNCILMAN MCCREARY – Councilman McCreary received an update from Mr. Chenier on the culvert project on Hwy 642 North. Regarding the time clock, Councilman McCreary would like for councilmen, if they so choose, to meet and view how the system will work. Mr. Hymel will present this request to Mr. Deroche upon his return on January 6. Councilman McCreary thanked LSR for assisting Gramercy Elementary with their recycling program. He shared his comments on the Bonfire Festival and the East Bank Senior Christmas Dinner held earlier today. In closing, Councilman McCreary wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato extended his appreciation to the Parish for their assistance with the Festival of the Bonfires and commented on the success of the festival. He announced that 125 bonfire permits have been issued for Christmas Eve. Councilman Amato closed by extending his wishes for a Merry Christmas to everyone.

COUNCILMAN ST. PIERRE – Councilman St. Pierre informed his fellow councilmen that Mayor Borne of Gramercy sent a letter to Sen. Vitter regarding CN Railroad and the rail congestion in the Gramercy area and Councilman St. Pierre asked Mayor Borne to mention the rail congestion in the Paulina area, as well, should he make contact with the railroad administration. He told Mr. Chenier that Gramercy Recreation Board will purchase gravel for the bus turnaround in the Golden Grove area, part of Park B, and asked Mr. Chenier if the parish would spread the gravel. Councilman St. Pierre asked if the intergovernmental agreement with Gramercy Recreation Board would be completed before spring sports began. He agrees with President Roussel on the need for an environmental consultant and the benefit to the parish. Councilman St. Pierre received an update from Mr. Chenier on the lights on Bayou Chevreil, the fire hydrant issue, and the DOTD meeting regarding Highways 643 and 644. He commented on the East Bank Senior Christmas Party held today at the Boat Club. In closing, Councilman St. Pierre wished everyone a Merry Christmas, asked everyone to remember the real reason for the season, and wished a happy and prosperous New Year to all.

PRESIDENT ROUSSEL – President Roussel told the Council that construction on the East Bank multi-purpose trail has begun and bridges will be built for the public to access the levee for the Christmas Eve bonfires.

CHAIRMAN BRAZAN – Chairman Brazan told Councilman Ketchens and Mr. Chenier that the light on LA 3127/3219 is out and asked Mr. Chenier to have it replaced. He asked that he and Councilman Brass meet with Mr. Deroche in January to discuss issues regarding recreation. Chairman Brazan thanked the employees for their years of committed service to St. James Parish. In closing, Chairman Brazan wished everyone a Merry Christmas, asked that we remember our military during this season, and extended Happy New Year wishes to everyone.

ADJOURNMENT

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

s/ Angele R. Rodrigue, Secretary