

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 7, 2026**

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, January 7, 2026, at 6:05 p.m., following the public hearing.

On roll call, the following were recorded present: Council Members Todd Poche, Courtney Long, Anthony Jasmin, Vondra Etienne-Steib, Donald Nash and Chairman Ryan Louque. Councilman Neal Poche was absent.

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

The Honorable Ryan Loque, 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 Jasmin offered the invocation and Councilman T. Poche led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

The first agenda item was the election of a new Council Chair. Chairman Louque opened the floor for nominations. Councilman T. Poche placed the name of Councilwoman Etienne-Steib in nomination and was seconded by Councilman Jasmin. After determining that there were no other nominations, Chairman Louque called for a roll call vote. After a roll call vote showing six council members voting in favor, and N. Poche absent, the motion carried. At this time Chairwoman Etienne-Steib assumed the seat of the Chair.

The next item was the election of a Vice-Chair. Chairwoman Etienne-Steib opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chair. Councilman Louque nominated Councilman Long for Vice-Chair. After no other nominations were forthcoming, Councilman Jasmin offered a second. After a roll call vote showing Council Members T. Poche, Long, Louque, Jasmin, and Etienne-Steib voting in favor, Nash against, and N. Poche absent, the motion carried. Chairwoman Etienne-Steib congratulated Vice-Chairman Long.

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque, the minutes of the December 17, 2025 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman Jasmin and seconded by Councilman Long, the minutes of the December 17, 2025 regular meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

At this time President Dufresne congratulated Chairwoman Etienne-Steib and Vice-Chairman Louque, adding that they will represent the council well.

President Dufresne presented this report to the Council:

- Good evening council, good evening, everyone,
- I hope everyone enjoyed a festive and safe holiday season. I didn't hear of any issues with the Bonfires, and it was yet another great year.
- I'd like to start off by offering my condolences to the family of our Sheriff, Claude Louis Jr., on the loss of his father, Claude Louis Sr. I know I am not alone in saying our thoughts and prayers are with the Louis family during this difficult time.
- The bid opening for the road preservation program was rescheduled to January 22, 2026. This delay gave our staff time to respond to item questions posed by contractors.
- The bid opening for the Buddy Whitney Canal project will be on February 3rd. This includes re-profiling of the canal banks and concrete lining from 3125 to up the canal all the way to where we finished the last culvert project on the Buddy Whitney canal.
- The 2025 road rehab program design is approximately 90% complete. In February, a meeting will be conducted to review the finalized plan and coordinate funding between facility planning and control, bonds, and the road and bridge fund. Advertising and bidding will follow soon after.
- The contractor for Humble Phase 4 is on site, and is establishing a lay down yard for materials on St. James Street. Triumph Construction will be replacing the main drainage trunk line from South Angelle Street to Riley Street. If any residents have questions, please call the call center at 225-562-2500.
- A meeting has been scheduled with the architects and engineers for the 5th district building to review the complete design. The project will go out to bid in February. Construction should be completed by the end of the year.
- Our solid waste and utilities crews have encountered issues with residents flushing baby wipes and other non-flushable wipes, which can destroy our sewer system pumps. Please, do not flush any materials, that's not deemed flushable, down our sewer system because it's been causing break-downs in our system.
- The solid waste division and the litter abatement division are currently cleaning up an illegal tire dump site south of the Baytree subdivision. Over 200 tires are being removed, at the request of the Sheriff's Office. Additionally, for the 6th time, the solid waste division is doing a full clean of Collin's Street. Please, report if you see someone dumping, which is illegal throughout the parish. Encourage your friends and neighbors to properly dispose of trash and litter and help keep our community clean.
- The bond commission in Baton Rouge is meeting on January 15th to approve the revenue bonds to fund the multi-purpose building. The council previously approved a resolution authorizing the application to the bond

commission. After bond commission approval, the council will be required to adopt an ordinance authorizing the issuing of debt.

- Today, we paid off the disaster loan made after Hurricane Ida. This loan made it possible to clean and reopen the parish immediately after the storm subsided, without having to wait on FEMA grants and insurance reimbursements. Also, a FEMA grant paid for the bond issuance and interest costs. To our knowledge, this is the first time FEMA has reimbursed a government for bond issuance and interest costs. We are considering getting preliminary approval from the council and bond commission for a future disaster loan to have in place in the event we should need it this upcoming year.
- The Department of Human Resources, Community Action Agency, hosted its annual Toy and Coat Drive on Thursday, December 18th. As always, DHR and our many generous donors made this event a huge success, and I'd like to thank them for making Christmas special for so many children in our community.
- I am pleased to share that this summer, for the first time ever, we will offer a girls' volleyball program. We are working with a contractor to make modifications to the floor at the Gramercy Recreation Center, and registration will open this spring.
- Next Friday, January 16th, is Louisiana's Arbor Day. Keep St. James Parish Beautiful will be hosting a tree planning here at the Convent Courthouse with a tree dedicated to each of St. James Parish's Presidents, and an additional ten trees will be planted by students at the 7th District Park. The tree planting at the Convent Courthouse will be at 10:00am on the 16th, followed by the 7th District Park planting at 11:15am.
- God bless each of you and your families, and God bless St. James Parish.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

PRESENTATIONS - None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

RESOLUTION 26-01, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING JAMOINE PICOU TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH PLANNING COMMISSION AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque. Councilman T. Poche offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

Update of drainage study from Forrestal Street to Pool Lane – No additional update.

Update of Multipurpose Building. Final plans should be ready in February and still on track for bidding in the first quarter.

ORDINANCE 25-28, AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BY THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES FROM CONSTRUCTION MAINTENANCE, INC., after undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman T. Poche and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a roll call vote showing six council members voting in favor, and N. Poche absent, the ordinance was adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 26-02, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL NUMBERS 1, 2, AND 3 FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2026, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman T. Poche. After a unanimous roll call vote showing six council members voting in favor, N. Poche absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 26-03, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Jasmin. After a roll call vote showing six council members voting in favor, and N. Poche absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 26-04, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ADVERTISE AND TAKE BIDS FOR VEHICLES FOR ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Jasmin. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 26-05, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO A DRIVEWAY ACCESS SERVITUDE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT AND THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1889 WEST MAIN STREET, LUTCHER, LOUISIANA, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Long and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a roll call vote showing six council members voting in favor, and N. Poche absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 26-06, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT PETER DUFRESNE TO SIGN A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman T. Poche. After a roll call vote showing six council members voting in favor, and N. Poche absent, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 26-07, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #4 FROM B.E.T. CONSTRUCTION, INC. FOR THE VACHERIE SENIOR CENTER PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Jasmin offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – None

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN TODD POCHE – Councilman T. Poche. He wished everyone Happy New Year. He commended Louque for his great job as chairman, and he congratulated Chairwoman Etienne-Steib and Vice Chairman Long.

COUNCILMAN COURTNEY LONG – Councilman Long requested to reopen conversations regarding increased stipends for board and commissions members.

COUNCILMAN NEAL POCHE – Councilman N. Poche was absent.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque thanked the Council for letting him serve for the last two years. He stated that he was trying to work on the stipends and an ordinance needs to be drafted. He said was tagged in a Facebook post regarding Humble St. Phase III. He said he responded to the resident. He said people had made false assumptions on Facebook regarding garbage and said that the Parish PIO responded.

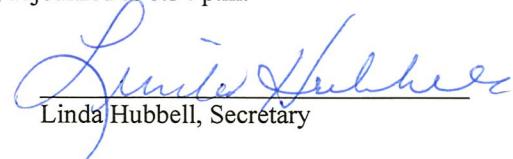
COUNCILMAN JASMIN – Councilman Jasmin congratulated Chairwoman Etienne-Steib and Vice Chairman Courtney Long. He thanked Councilman Louque for his leadership.

COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Chairwoman Etienne-Steib thanked Councilman Louque for his service and she congratulated Councilman Long on becoming Vice-Chairman. She thanked everyone for their support and trust as Chairwoman. She extended condolences to Sheriff Claude Louis on the loss of his father.

COUNCILMAN DONALD NASH – Councilman Nash had no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Nash and carried, the meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.



Linda Hubbell, Secretary