

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA  
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 3, 2021**

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, February 3, 2021, at 6:18 p.m., following the public hearing.

On roll call, the following were recorded present: Council Members Jason Amato, Ryan Louque, Mason Bland, Clyde Cooper, Vondra Etienne-Steib, Donald Nash, and Chairman Alvin St. Pierre.

Those also in attendance were: Linda Hubbell, Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Richard Webre, Operations Director; Ingrid Leblanc, Human Resources Director; Eric Deroche, Emergency Preparedness Director; and Adam Koenig, Legal Advisor. Mr. Vic Franckiewicz and Mr. Marty Maley were also in attendance.

Councilman Amato offered the invocation and Councilwoman Etienne-Steib led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Honorable Alvin St. Pierre, 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**

One a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib, the minutes of the January 20, 2020 regular meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

Good afternoon

- Yesterday marked the beginning of Black History Month. Please join me in celebrating the contributions of African Americans in our state and our community. Together, we can build a stronger community as we recognize our differences are what make us unique and make our community special. Our elderly program will continue history by distributing "Did you Know" flyers throughout the month of February. This takes the place of our annual black history program.
- If you are interested in receiving the COVID vaccine, please visit our hospital's website to fill out an interest form. You will be contacted to schedule the vaccine as they become available. Our elderly meals drivers distributed the St. James Parish Hospital Vaccination flyer to all homebound clients and their families. You may also call Gem Drugs in Gramercy or South Star Urgent Care in Gramercy to schedule a vaccination. Please visit the LDH's website for all updates regarding these vaccines.
- Our West Bank Reception Hall is still offering free COVID testing every Wednesday from 9am to 4pm.
- Please take the time to fill out our online Capital Improvement Plan public survey. The survey will ask what projects you'd like to see over the next three years and which service areas are most important to you. All data collected will be used in our plan development to ensure our projects are aligning with everyone's needs! Please visit our Facebook page for the link. It will be open until February 5, 2021.
- Entergy substation on Hwy 61 across from Noranda.... The permanent levee around the substation has been completed so there are no more Hesco baskets.
- "A Young at Hearts Carnival Social" Drive Thru for congregate seniors will be held on Thursday, February 11, 2021. The event is sponsored by Peoples Health and will be held at the Convent Senior Center from 9:30am to 11:00am, and at the Vacherie Senior Center from 12:30pm to 2:00pm. DHR will also prepare a carnival care package for the homebound seniors to be delivered on February 10<sup>th</sup>. These activities will take the place of our annual carnival social and is allowing our seniors to still enjoy the carnival holiday during this pandemic.
- Our LiHEAP call in for heating and cooling allocations is scheduled for Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am. The call-in number is 225-562-2201. The heating allocation is \$35,777. The cooling allocation is \$53,665. With these funds, the agency anticipates serving up to 250 eligible residents starting from February 2021 and going through the next several months until all funds are expended. Eligible residents must call in to be placed on the active waiting list. Appointments will be scheduled in the order the calls are received. For more information, please contact DHR.
- The ARC will remain closed to the clients until February 14<sup>th</sup> as advised by the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCCD) due to the COVID pandemic. OCCD will continue to communicate with local agencies any updates and further guidance.
- Our offices will be closed on February 15<sup>th</sup> in observance of President's Day, and also on February 16<sup>th</sup> in observance of Mardi Gras.
- The East Bank Natural Gas Infrastructure Project is moving along as scheduled and the Humble St. drainage project is also progressing. I want to thank our operations crews for their diligent effort and hard work.
- Our crews are also nearing completion on the Canatella St. project, behind the courthouse, and moving across to Trudeau St.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - No public comments were received on agenda items that required a vote.

**PRESENTATIONS** – Buddy Boe, Executive Director, presented the River Parishes Tourist Commission's Annual Report and the Strategic Plan.

**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS** – None

**OLD BUSINESS**

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – Councilman Cooper requested a letter be sent to Mr. Brass and Mr. Price to request a meeting.

- Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update – Defer until after the February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib invited Councilmen Cooper and Nash to join the meeting.

**ORDINANCE 21-01, AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN VERON HOLDINGS, LLC AND ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE EXISTING ST. JAMES PARISH FITNESS CENTER AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN, EXECUTE, AND ADMINISTER SAID LEASE AGREEMENT AND ANY AND ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**, having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted.

**ORDINANCE 21-02, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ST. JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES TO IMPLEMENT INTERIM REVISIONS TO CHAPTER 102 GOVERNING SUBDIVISIONS**, having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted.

Councilman Bland offered a motion to take **RESOLUTION 21-18, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH MEYER ENGINEERING, LTD TO PROVIDE ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE ST. JAMES MISSISSIPPI EAST BANK MULTI-USE TRAIL – PHASE 1 STATE PROJECT NO. H.009724, A/E PROJECT NO. 20-2058** from the table. Councilman Nash offered a second, and after a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried. After a lengthy discussion regarding funding, Councilman Bland offered and moved for adoption the aforesaid resolution and was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a roll call vote showing Amato and Bland in favor, and Louque, Cooper, Etienne-Steib, Nash, and St. Pierre against, the motion failed. Chairman St. Pierre requested to place a discussion item on the agenda for the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in July.

**NEW BUSINESS**

At this time a discussion took place regarding the deadline for the council meeting agenda. Mr. Koenig will draft a resolution for review.

**RESOLUTION 21-19, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE FEBRUARY 5, 2021 PAYROLL**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-20, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

Councilman Bland offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 21-21, A RESOLUTION COMMENDING MR. PHILIP CREEL FOR HIS 33 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PARISH AS A MEMBER OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH DISTRICT 4 RECREATION BOARD**. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-22, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SYSTEM SURVEY AND COMPLIANCE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT OF ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque. Councilman Amato offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION 21-23, A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ALL HAZARD PLAN FOR ST. JAMES PARISH**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

An **EXECUTIVE SESSION** convened at 7:30 p.m., on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried. Members of the Council, President Dufresne, along with Mr. Marty Maley withdrew to an adjoining chamber to receive a status report concerning 2:20-cv-03154-GGG-MBN Roussel v. Berkley Insurance Company and 2:20-cv-0291-GGG-DMD Gravois v. Berkley Insurance Company, and related matters. All returned at 7:48 p.m., and the regular session was reconvened. Chairman St. Pierre informed the public that no decisions were made.

**COUNCIL MEMBER’S REPORT**

**COUNCILMAN AMATO** – Councilman Amato stated that he took his second vaccine this morning and it was a very efficient operation. He thanked the Parish and Hospital for the good work. He requested letter be sent to Mrs. Linda Prudhomme, on behalf of the Council, thanking her for everything she has done for the Port. He said there are 4 hydrants that are out of service in Lutchet. He added that the town will do the maintenance and asked for the Parish to provide the hydrants.

**COUNCILMAN LOUQUE** – Councilman Louque had no comments.

**COUNCILMAN BLAND** – Councilman Bland stated that he had condolence letter sent to the families of Mr. Gary Lousteau from Convent, a devoted member of the Union Convent Volunteer Fire Department for 38 years and served as secretary and treasurer for 30 years. Also, to Carolyn Millet of Paulina, Bernice Bourgeois of Paulina, Catherine Montelius Roussel of Paulina, and Varie Mae Stewart of Convent. He said they finally got designs and quotes back for our District 4 Playground Equipment and is glad to get this going and hopefully ready for a spring attraction for the kids of District 4. He thanked Mrs. Audrey and Mrs. Holly for getting with the Keep St. James Parish Beautiful board members to kick start that board back off, adding that he believes with the help of that board we can start making a difference in the parish with the trash problem and said he doesn’t think this board can do it alone and is eager to

see what kind of ideas/comments come out of their first meeting. He asked if they received the results from the traffic study on Legion Lane and Burnside St. Mr. Webre said he will get it back on the schedule.

**COUNCILMAN COOPER** – Councilman Cooper thanked Mr. Boughton and Mr. Webre for assisting with the variance for the mobile home situation. He asked how do we get information to Susan Bailey about employment with the Solar system Company. Mr. Webre said he would get the information to Councilman Cooper and President Dufresne said a flyer was put on the website and Facebook page. Councilman Cooper stated that the solar light is out at the corner of Hwy 3219 and Hwy 3127 and recommended to have Entergy install a street light instead of the solar light. He also suggested to possibly place a flashing stop sign in the dark areas. He inquired about the deadline with the renovations at the park. Mr. Webre said it should be a 90-day job but would confirm the exact date.

**COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB** – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib requested that Mr. Webre contact the owner of the property on Collins Street regarding her request to deter the dumping. Mr. Webre suggested putting a fence across the right of way if the property owner agrees. She requested a quote to get industrialized equipment at the 6<sup>th</sup> District park. Mr. Webre indicated that Mr. Carlton Jones is working on that project. Councilwoman then inquired about blighted property. Mr. Webre said to notify I'ana Joseph or to put in a work order to start the process. He said I'ana has been going very well.

**COUNCILMAN NASH** – Councilman Nash thanked Mr. Webre and the administration for the great projects they are doing in District 7.

Chairman St. Pierre defer his comments until after the Director's report.

### **DIRECTOR REPORT**

**RICK WEBRE** – Mr. Webre indicated that the low bidder came in for the Phase 2 of the Bourbon subdivision about \$75,000 lower than anticipated. He said the Molaison project is on track and should be completed on time. Councilman Nash inquired about the Bayou Chevreuil bridge replacement. Mr. Webre said it is a long-term project. Councilman Bland inquired about grass cutting and spraying in the ditches. Mr. Webre said the herbicide crew will begin ahead of the vegetation crew this year and should begin in March.

**FELIX BOUGHTON** – Mr. Boughton said that hopefully by the time they know that status of the walking path grants we'll have exactly what our new assessed valuation is, and that will drive all of our decisions over the next year.

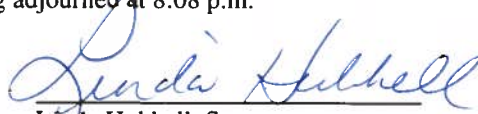
**ERIC DEROCHE** – Mr. Deroche informed the Council that the Louisiana Iris Conservation Society reached out to Mrs. Audrey and they will be doing some beautification at the Welcome Center.

**CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE** – Chairman St. Pierre thanked Mr. Webre on the Capital Outlay meeting. He said they discussed the project on Millet Street and indicated they may be able to save some money on that project. He expressed his sorrow regarding the loss of Mr. Gary Lousteau. He said he saw parish employees picking up trash on Hwy 3125 and gave kudos to them. He informed the Council that he will meet with the School Board about going into contract for cost sharing of redistricting and discuss tax recovery.

At this time President Dufresne informed the council that he drafted a letter from the Administration, on behalf of the Beautification Board, and sent to the office of Dollar General. He said it included store numbers and the complaints his office has received about stock in the aisle ways and overgrown grass.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Louque and carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

  
Linda Hubbell, Secretary