

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MARCH 4, 2020**

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, March 4, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

On roll call, the following were recorded present: Council Members Jason Amato, Ryan Louque, Mason Bland, Vondra Etienne-Steib, Donald Nash, and Chairman Alvin St. Pierre. Councilman Cooper was not in attendance for roll call.

Those also in attendance were: Hollie Zeringue, Deputy Secretary; Peter Dufresne, Parish President; Felix Boughton, Finance Director; Richard Webre, Operations Director; Ingrid Leblanc, Human Resources Director; Eric Deroche, Emergency Preparedness Director; and Cody Martin, Legal Advisor.

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

Councilman Cooper arrived and assumed his seat on the council.

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

On a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Bland, the minutes of the February 19, 2020 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib and seconded by Councilman Bland, the minutes of the February 19, 2020 regular meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT'S MONTHLY REPORT

The Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for January 2020 was approved on a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

- Met with DOTD in Baton Rouge to express needs for our priority projects.
- Met with PLD, BKI, Corp of Engineers, and CPRA to discuss our current status with the West Shore Alignment Project and the Airline Project.
- Visited Lutchter Park to check on the progress. Everyone is working diligently for the start of baseball season.
- Met with Mr. Shrewsbury, from DOTD, regarding the Starlone crossing, also discussed the need to enhance the Hester crossing.
- Met with the neighboring Parish Presidents, Jaclyn Hotard and Matt Jewell, together we met with Senator Cassidy to discuss ways to possibly form a coalition with the River Parishes to take a Regional approach for infrastructure needs, grants, etc. to improve, not just St. James Parish, but the entire River Region.
- Bidy Basketball is playing in Regionals this weekend. Wished them the Best of Luck.
- Youth Baseball registration ends on March 9th.
- The Human Resource Department is still offering free tax preparation service through April 15th.
- In an effort to increase book circulation, visit one of our Parish libraries. Check out 5 books in March for an invitation to attend the Easter Party.
- Upcoming Parish Events:
 - Keep St. James Parish Beautiful Board meeting is on March 9th at 6:00 p.m. at the Welcome Center
 - Lions Club Cochon de Lait is March 15th.
 - St. Peter Chanel's Spring Festival is March 21st and 22nd.
 - Business and Industry Meeting will be March 25th at 5:30 p.m. in the Public Relations Building. Membership renewals will be mailed this week.
 - The Planning Commission and Coastal Zone meetings are March 30th.

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

PRESENTATIONS

- Mr. Michael Wright, with the National Kidney Foundation, spoke about kidney disease statistics. After Deputy Secretary Zeringue read aloud the Proclamation, a plaque was presented to Mr. Wright.
- Mrs. Diane Wilson, 600 Ramona Street in Texas, spoke about Formosa Texas pollutants and showed pictures to the Council. It is noted that Councilman Bland approved this presentation. The posted agenda incorrectly stated Councilman Cooper.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED - None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilman Louque offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 20-51, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING BRANDON GRAVOIS TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY BOARD**. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-52, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING DARLENE RILEY TO THE KEEP ST. JAMES PARISH BEAUTIFUL BOARD, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-53, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING PAM POCHE TO THE KEEP ST. JAMES PARISH BEAUTIFUL BOARD, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

The following updates were provided:

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – no update
- North Vacherie Railroad Culvert Upgrade Project Status – Hoping to reactivate the permits so the timeframe won't be as long.
- Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update – The introduction of ordinance is on the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 20-54, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE MARCH 6, 2020 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Bland. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-55, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO PAY PENDING CURRENT INVOICES AND PAYABLES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-56, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF MARCH 2020 AS NATIONAL KIDNEY MONTH IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-57, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE A LEGAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH BUTLER SNOW, LLP IN CONNECTION WITH THE ST. JAMES PARISH LAND USE PLAN, THE DISTRICT 5 MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING, REDISTRICTING AND ELECTIONS, AND RELATED MATTERS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-58, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH JAMES PURPERA GOVERNMENTAL CONSULTING TO PROVIDE STATE CAPITAL OUTLAY BUDGET CONSULTING SERVICES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-59, A RESOLUTION INDICATING THE INTENTION OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA, TO BECOME A PARTICIPATING POLITICAL SUBDIVISION IN THE LOUISIANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (THE "AUTHORITY"); APPROVING THE APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR TO REPRESENT THE PARISH ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AUTHORITY; AND OTHERWISE PROVIDING WITH RESPECT THERETO AS PROVIDED BY CHAPTER 10-D OF TITLE 33 OF THE LOUISIANA REVISED STATUTES OF 1950, AS AMENDED, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

Councilman Amato offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 20-60. A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING MARCH 9, 2020 AS REALTOR® APPRECIATION DAY IN ST. JAMES PARISH**. Councilman Bland offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-61, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE CONTRACT WITH MEYERS ENGINEERING IN REGARD TO THE SOUTH VACHERIE SEWER ASSIMILATION PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE 20-04, AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AN AMENDMENT TO THE ANNUAL BUDGET OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JANUARY 1, 2020 TO DECEMBER 31, 2020, PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, 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, March 18, 2020, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE 20-05, AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY BY THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, 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, March 18, 2020, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato thanked the Parish and the Town of Lutchter for their help with the water issue on Dey Say Street yesterday, due to DOTD drainage work along Hwy 3125, the boil order had been lifted. He verified the Cochon de lait was March 15th. He requested to keep Rev. Gaines' family and First Antioch Baptist Church in your prayers, adding he was a good man and said services will be on Saturday. He requested an update on the contract for Miss Bliss for the environmental study. Mr. Martin said he will have an update for the next meeting.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque said good work continues on the 3125 Hwy project. He asked if there was a time frame for the work on the northern canals. Mr. Webre indicated the crews are doing an excellent job clearing the channels up to the laterals and coordinated with DOTD for authorization to clean the culverts under 3125. Councilman Louque requested Mr. Webre include the status of M2 Canal on the operations report.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland requested an update on the meeting with DOTD and Mr. Roussel on February 20th regarding the CN railroad crossings near the Sunshine Bridge and Hwy 3214. Mr. Webre indicated they submitted several railroad issues to DOTD and are working through them and will get the details to Councilman Bland. Councilman Bland requested an update of any side work/road work. Mr. Webre said he and Ryan Donadiou coordinated with DOTD and they are willing to dress the shoulders of the river road, they are just in the planning process. Councilman Bland said the District 4 Recreation will meet with the School Board tomorrow to discuss the District 4 Recreation plans. He said he met with Shell Convent last week, adding he plans to meet with each of the industry leaders to make relationships to grow together.

A brief discussion took place regarding railroad issues. Chairman St. Pierre requested to meet with Ty Bromell. Mr. Webre said they are taking it from two approaches, talking with CN and DOTD. Councilman Bland said it's not just the crossings, it's drainage under crushed culverts, to evaluate the issues underneath the railroad. President Dufresne indicated he has a meeting scheduled with Mr. John Dining, with CN, next week, adding that we are taking a vigorous approach to our railroad issues.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper requested a condolence letter be sent to the family of Wilfred Cooper. He said that some of the streetlights on Burton Street are out and requested they be addressed. He thanked Ms. Diane Wilson for the update. He requested specifics on who we are buying the land from, be available at the public hearing.

COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib expressed condolence to the Gaines' family. She said she likes the Facebook posts, adding that it is important the people know what were doing, and what we are trying to do. She thanked the Council for moving forward with the purchase of the land and said they need at least two basketball courts. She said its also important that everyone has input and say with the building.

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash said that currently there is only one solar light working on Hwy 20 and requested to possibly have permanent power. Mr. Deroche said parts are no longer available. Permanent powered lights would have to be explored. Mr. Martin indicated that the bids for the road widening will be going out in the next couple of years and suggested to inquire with DOTD, if the Parish could contribute additional funds to have it done as part of the project. Councilman Nash requested to get with Entergy to get the trees cleaned. Councilman Nash inquired about how many contracts we currently have. Mr. Martin will provide. Councilman Nash asked Mr. Boughton to send him a Parish organizational chart. Councilman Nash said we need to consider increasing the gas line (volume and pressure) going to the South Vacherie area. Councilman Nash also suggested to consider hiring a grant writer for the Parish. President Dufresne said they are currently discussing the possibility, adding that there are so many different grants for so many different departments, that it's pretty much departmentalized. President Dufresne indicated this is one of the things with the new contract, more monitoring on the State level, and added that they are in the processing of improving our ability to acquire grants. Mr. Martin indicated that we are currently under contract with third party vendors who provide grant services to us and said if there is a particular grant that needs to be looked at, they can send it to the vendor.

CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE – Chairman St. Pierre expressed condolence to the Gaines family and requested a condolence letter be sent to the family. He expressed his disappointment with the Molaison project, adding that we can lose a lot of money. Chairman St. Pierre thanked Mr. Webre for the report at Monday's meeting. He said gas lines are being put down at Hwy 3274 North of 3125, expect traffic congestion. He said they are working on increasing lighting behind Sandwich World.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

FELIX BOUGHTON – said they are looking at a different way of handling investments and need to amend the policy to align with State law and is looking to possibly changing the Management firm that handles the investments.

INGRID LEBLANC – thanked Councilman Nash for agreeing to serve on the CSBG/COA board. She asked Councilman Bland to begin opening the door, when speaking to industry, about apprenticeships and job readiness opportunities. Councilman Bland stated that he has asked industries to email him about job opportunities, apprenticeship, internships, etc.

ERIC DEROCHE – Vendor went to Council Chambers on West Bank to do an assessment on the audio system today and will return next week to perform testing on acoustics to try to fix the problem. The State has been communicating about the coronavirus and will hold a conference call with all OEPS on Friday morning. An email, with basic information, was sent to all employees with the information that was received from the State.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Cooper and seconded by Councilman Louque and carried, the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.


Hollie Zeringue, Deputy Secretary