

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON APRIL 14, 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, April 14, 2021, at 6:40 p.m., immediately 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, Jr.

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.

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

The Honorable Alvin St. Pierre, Jr., 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 Nash, the minutes of the March 31, 2021 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib, the minutes of the March 31, 2021 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 2021 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:

- I would like to start my report tonight by recognizing the hard work of our Parish operations crews who have been working diligently throughout the severe weather we have and are still experiencing this week.
- Yesterday, we received over three and a half inches of rain in under an hour's time. This rare rain event caused widespread flash flooding across the Parish. Our crews worked tirelessly before, during and after the rainstorms to clear drainage channels, identify downed trees or power lines, and clear debris from roadways and canals.
- While the events yesterday and today have brought a significant amount of water to our area, I am confident that the drainage improvements we have begun making since early last year are working and proud to say some areas of habitual flooding where homes have received water in the past, did not flood yesterday. I know many of our residents and council members have spotted some problem areas of poor drainage as a result of yesterday's inundation. Our operations drainage teams are working to survey and assess these areas and mitigate and future problems. It is important to note, that during a typical rain event, unlike the tremendous amount of rain experienced yesterday, many of our drainage channels would have properly handled water flow, however, we are aware of some areas that need attention and plan to evaluate these areas for drainage mitigation efforts. Yesterday's events were of a more extreme category which resulted in flash flooding in many of our drainage systems.
- We have received a multitude of work orders related to yesterday's rain event. Please know, our crews are working to canvass the entire parish and coordinating with both Entergy and the state to remove trees from powerlines or right of ways and will be working to close out work orders as quickly as possible.

DHR:

- The ARC has reopened to four days per week operations and open for client attendance Monday through Thursday. Friday's will remain a covid deep cleaning day.

EOC:

- Our parish work order app is now live in both google and apple app stores. We will be pushing out a social media campaign and press release about the app launch on Monday, April 19th.
- I encourage you to download this app which will allow you to easily place work orders from your phone. Our work order system has proven to be very successful in tracking residents' requests and I am confident this App will further enhance our ability to service residents and provide continued transparency.
- Moving on, I would like to recognize the hardworking men and women who operate our Parish 911 dispatch center as part of National Public Safety Telecommuters week. When an emergency occurs, the prompt response of emergency fire, medical or police services depend on the quality and accuracy of information obtained from citizens who speak directly to dispatchers in our 9-1-1 center. These individuals are the first and most critical contact our residents have with emergency services and serve as a vital link between our public safety professionals and the public. I ask you to join me in recognizing the contributions made by our 9-1-1 dispatchers and thank them for their dedication to our community.

Recreation:

- Our Parish youth baseball league has begun and will host a tournament on April 24th at Lucher Park. I would like to take a moment to wish all of our teams good luck this year and to enjoy your season. We are happy to see our youth recreation back after the impacts covid-19 had on our programs last year.
- The Gramercy walking track will be shut down temporarily April 22nd and 23rd to resurface the track, weather permitting.

Personnel:

- The deadline to apply for our college student summer employment program is this Friday, April 16th. Interested students can apply on the homepage of our parish website. The program will begin on Monday, June 7, 2021, and continue for up to 10 weeks.

Operations

For operations updates, I would again like to thank our crews for working diligently during severe weather to continue moving our projects along.

- The Bourbon Country Subdivision Gas Infrastructure project is nearly complete and expected to have all homes hooked up to the new lines within the next two weeks, weather permitting.
- The Molaison Sewer Treatment Facility is complete with fencing completed, only minor dressing up remains including painting and seeding.
- Phase two of the Humble Street drainage project which includes the South Angelle trunk line and culverts will improve the drainage between Industrial St. and Highway 3125 to South Angelle Street by replacing the trunk line and culverts with geosynthetic concrete composite mats. Bid advertising has begun and a pre-bid walk through will take place on April 20th.
- The District 5 comprehensive drainage study has begun to determine the risk areas including Baytree, Pecan St. and Kingview. We plan to use the West Bank Watershed Initiative Federal Grant and will be receiving a scope of work on this initiative in the coming weeks. This study will complete the full west bank drainage assessment.

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

PRESENTATIONS

Rene Castro, Regional 4H Coordinator introduce Carly Boudreaux, 4-H Leader explained that the Junior Leader Programs has been working on a service project for the entire community of St. James Parish. At this time, Sydney Louque, Vice-President, and Alex Foret, President presented their Blessing Box Program.

Gild Spellman was not attendance to make her presentation.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

OLD BUSINESS

- District 5 Alternate Access Route – no new update. Chairman St. Pierre said a location needs to be chosen before Capital Outlay is due and asked the administration to set up a meeting with the company.
- Acquisition of Land for Multipurpose Building Update – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib asked when the company would provide feedback. President Dufresne indicated that they are actively communicating with both the Hospital and DDG and are trying to get the square footage to DDG so they can see what kind of building they have to work with.

ORDINANCE 21-04, AN ORDINANCE SETTING AND DESIGNATING THE ADOPTED PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE FOR THE YEAR 2021 LEVIED ON ALL TAXABLE PROPERTY WITHIN THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA, having undergone the hearing process, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 21-64, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE APRIL 16, 2021 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-65, 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 Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-66, A RESOLUTION COMMENDING MR. CHAD WEIDERT FOR HIS 19 YEARS OF SERVICE TO ST. JAMES PARISH AS A MEMBER OF THE GRAMERCY RECREATION BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

After President Dufresne explained the resolution, Councilman Bland suggested to amend the resolution to include that task orders would be approved by the council, after a brief discussion, he then made a motion to amend the resolution to include that task orders need to be approved by the Council, under said Master Service contract, after another discussion, Councilman Nash offered a second. After a roll call vote showing Amato, Louque, Bland, and Nash in favor of the amendment and Cooper, Etienne-Steib, and St. Pierre against, the motion carried.

RESOLUTION 21-67, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH DUPLANTIS DESIGN GROUP FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and was seconded by Councilman Nash. After a roll call vote showing Amato, Louque, Bland, and Nash in favor, and Cooper, Etienne-Steib, and St. Pierre against, the resolution was adopted, as amended.

After President Dufresne explained the resolution, Councilman Bland made a motion to amend this resolution with Councilman Nash offering a second to add the same verbiage as the previous resolution. After a roll call vote showing Amato, Louque, Bland, and Nash in favor of the amendment and Cooper, Etienne-Steib, and St. Pierre against, the motion carried. **RESOLUTION 21-68, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH MEYER ENGINEERS, LTD FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by

Councilman Nash. After a roll call vote showing Amato, Louque, Bland, and Nash in favor and Cooper, Etienne-Steib, and St. Pierre against, the resolution was adopted, as amended.

RESOLUTION 21-69, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH BARBER BROTHERS CONTRACTING COMPANY, LLC FOR ASPHALT PATCHING THROUGHOUT THE PARISH AND RECONSTRUCTION OF STREETS IN LONGVIEW SUBDIVISION, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-70, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH VETERANS CONSTRUCTION, LLC FOR THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE RENOVATIONS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Louque. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-71, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF BUNKER GEAR SPECIALIST, LLC FOR BUNKER GEAR, 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 21-72, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF FERRARA FIRE APPARATUS, INC. FOR SELF CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS, 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 21-73, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF BUNKER GEAR SPECIALIST FOR THERMAL IMAGERS, 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 21-74, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH CYPRESS SURVEYING AND CONSULTANTS, LLC FOR SURVEY CONTROL NETWORK UPDATE, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-75, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS WITH WESTCHESTER, LLOYDS, CRUM, TRAVELERS, ALLIANCE GLOBAL, ATLANTIC, AND LOCA FOR PROPERTY AND CASUALTY INSURANCE AND TPA, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato and was seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-76, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS FROM XP SYNERGY COMPANIES TO PROVIDE COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC AWARENESS, AND MARKETING RESOURCES FOR ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES. CAA, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib and was seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-77, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH C&M SPECIALTY SERVICE, LLC FOR GRASS CUTTING, 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.

RESOLUTION 21-78, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CHANGE ORDER #3 FROM NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS, LLC (NMC) FOR THE MOLAISON SEWER PROJECT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Nash and was seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-79, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO ADVERTISE AND TAKE BIDS FOR MULTIPLE MODEL PICKUP TRUCKS FOR THE ST. JAMES PARISH GOVERNMENT, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Cooper. Councilman Nash offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-80, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR DRONE DETECTION AND RELATED ACCESSORIES, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Amato. Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 21-81, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION OF PARKVIEW LAND COMPANY, LLC (ITEM 21-04) UNDER THE ST. JAMES PARISH LAND USE ORDINANCE, WITH CONDITIONS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and was seconded by Councilman Amato. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE 21-05, AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE CHANGING OF THE NAME OF CENTRAL PROJECT STREET TO CENTRAL CROSSING STREET IN DISTRICT 4, AND PROJECT DRIVE TO MAGNOLIA GARDENS IN DISTRICT 6, ST. JAMES PARISH, LOUISIANA was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and was 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 Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex in Vacherie.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

FELIX BOUGHTON – informed everyone that without rolling forward the millages, and accepting the insurance savings, this administration, since taking office, has an efficiency savings of \$4,050,000.00.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato thanked the 9-1-1- emergency dispatchers and said they do a great job for us. He inquired about the Environmental Consultant search. President Dufresne said he is waiting to hear back from one firm. Councilman Amato asked if they saw the news coming out of Sorrento about the Westshore Project and said they didn't speak about it on the last teleconference. President Dufresne said they are calling it Westshore Enhancement, but it has nothing to do with the Westshore Alignment, adding that he is working with the Ascension Parish President to find sustainable surge protection to protect both parishes.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque said, with the gas improvement project, we are in better shape and the project is not completed. He said he was in communications with Rick and Ryan during the bad weather, while at work and he thanked them for riding around and being proactive.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland said they have had 5 power outages since Thursday and said Entergy is doing a full audit of reliability. He said the recent flooding has taken a toll on the District and he thanked the employee in the call center for her assistance with work order system issues and thanked all the employees working in the call center. He said the District 4 playground is nearing completion and will work on a date for the ribbon cutting. He inquired about the outstanding items with the park, Ryan indicated that Brent is currently working on scheduling. Councilman Bland asked not to take his comments of due diligence and checks and balances as something negative to the council.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper express appreciation to the administration for the work being done in the District 5 park. He said he is hoping they can get to place where they trust the administration and trust each other. He also said he appreciates the council members putting forth their concerns, and then he thanked the administration for all the work being done, not just in some Districts, but in all Districts. President Dufresne thanked Councilman Cooper for his vote of confidence and said he and his administration will work diligently to provide fair and honest service throughout the Parish, adding that his administration has saved the taxpayers over \$4 million since they took office.

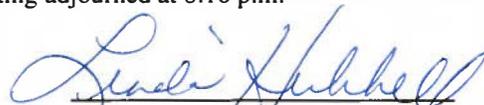
COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib said, she appreciates Councilman Bland's attentiveness to the agenda items. She said what it does is commands and demands all of us to pay attention to what we are voting on, but on the other hand, a council divided cannot stand. She said this is a great council to work with and will give the same respect as given to the past Parish President and Operations Manager. President Dufresne thanked her for her vote of confidence. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib expressed condolence to Levar Gauthier and his family for the loss of his daughter.

COUNCILMAN NASH - Councilman Nash inquired about the culvert change out on Hwy 643. Mr. Webre indicated they have been awarded \$250,000 for statewide flood control and will move it to that project and will contract that job. Councilman Nash also inquired if the bypass for the Coteau and Vacherie canals will be done prior to storm season. Mr. Webre indicated it is on the schedule. Councilman Nash commended the administration for the job they have done, adding there were no major flooding issue in his District.

CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE – Chairman St. Pierre requested a condolence letter be sent to the family of Judy Heltz. He said they are looking at things in recreation and possibly the fire departments to pay the parish for work being done. He asked Mr. Webre to let him know the cost of concrete mats. Chairman St. Pierre said he is hoping to have an update of the Westshore route at the next meeting. President Dufresne said they are working to secure the non-federal portion of funding that is needed to increase enhancement in St. James Parish. He said streets flooded in Gramercy, but not in any houses. He thanked the administration for always speaking with him and for the help, adding that he has been doing this a long time and suggested, to do your homework prior to the meeting, to make the necessary calls or visit the administration.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Cooper and seconded by Councilman Bland and carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary