

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES, STATE OF LOUISIANA
TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MAY 27, 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, May 27, 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 Clyde Cooper was not in attendance during roll call.

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. Attorneys John Young, Rick Stanley, and Marty Maley were also in attendance. Legal Counsel Cody Martin attended via telephone.

Councilman Amato offered the invocation and Councilman Nash 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

On a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilman Amato, the minutes of the May 13, 2020 public hearing were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minutes dispensed with.

On a motion offered by Councilman Nash and seconded by Councilman Louque, the minutes of the May 13, 2020 regular meeting were approved as distributed, and the reading of these minute dispensed with.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Dufresne presented this report to the council:

- The Gramercy testing site is now closed and the mobile testing site in the 5th District has been moved to the West Bank Reception Hall and will remain open until further notice.
- Our Parish offices are still closed to the public. We are waiting for the Governor's announcement on June 5th to decide how we will proceed to reopen.
- DHR is still taking applications virtually and by telephone.
- Our Finance Department has started applying for the CARE Act. These funds would reimburse the Parish for our State of Emergency costs.
- The Recreation Department has started a Cornhole League that will be every Monday, June 8th through July 27th at Lutch Park, beginning at 6:30. Contact the Recreation Department or our Facebook page for more information.
- The scheduled baseball practices have been going very well.
- Upon the Governor's approval on June 5th, cabbage ball is projected to begin mid-July.
- Demolition of the old ball fields at Welcome Park is almost complete. We will soon be in the process of refurbishing and remodeling at the Park.
- The libraries have put together a way to keep the kids involved with summer activities, by doing them virtually. All of the information can be found on our website or on Facebook.
- Entergy partnered with our Human Resources Department and gave a \$5,000 donation to help feed the health care workers and essential workers. Also, State Representatives provided meals to the residents of Districts 4 and 5. We want to thank Entergy, Mr. Ken Brass, and our other representatives for sponsoring the meals.
- Our transit busses are being set up with plexiglass to ensure the safety of our residents. We will start scheduling clients soon.
- The Presidential Preference Primary election is set for July 11th. Early voting begins on June 20th and takes place at the Convent Courthouse and the Vacherie Annex. You can view exact times and dates on our Facebook page.
- I received word, this afternoon, that the Hwy 3125 and 642 section turn lane improvements will be issued the Notice to Proceed to the contractor on May 31st.

Councilman Cooper arrived and assumed his seat on the Council.

- The Hwy 20/Bayou Chevreuil Bridge Project - DOTD expects to issue the Notice to Proceed in the next few weeks, and work is expected to begin in July.
- Two Thursdays ago, we had some flash flooding events in the Parish. Two homes took on water, and I was able to witness, first-hand, the problems that South Vacherie has been facing, as far as drainage is concerned. We have identified the problem and are working diligently to resolve.
- As many of you know, Hurricane Season begins on June 1st, it is not too early to start preparing. We have had two names storm already this season.

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

PRESENTATIONS - None

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED - None

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilman Amato offered and moved for adoption **RESOLUTION 20-108, A RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING R. J. ST. PIERRE AS A DISTRICT 2 REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ST. JAMES PARISH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD.** Councilman Louque offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 20-109, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE DISBURSEMENT OF PAYROLL FOR THE MAY 29, 2020 PAYROLL, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-110, 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 Councilman Nash. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-111, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING JUNE 2, 2020 AS PAUL KELLER DAY IN ST. JAMES PARISH, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Bland. Councilman Cooper offered a second, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTION 20-112, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN A RENEWAL LEASE AGREEMENT WITH EASTLEASE, A DIVISION OF AUTO-CHLOR, LLC, FOR A WASHER IN THE PARISH JAIL, 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 20-113, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH B.B. CONSTRUCTION, LLC FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PUBLIC WORK, 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.

RESOLUTION 20-114, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. JAMES PARISH TO ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT WITH ST. JAMES ARC AND AUTHORIZING THE ST. JAMES PARISH PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE SAID COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT, 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 20-115, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE CHANGE ORDER FROM COMMAND CONSTRUCTION FOR RIP RAP, AND MOBILIZATION, AND AUTHORIZING THE PARISH PRESIDENT AND/OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO SIGN, EXECUTE, AND ADMINISTER ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS, was offered and moved for adoption by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the resolution was adopted.

At this time Councilman Amato offered a motion to amend the agenda to introduce an ordinance, Councilman Louque offered a second. After no public comments were received and after a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE 20-06, AN ORDINANCE CHANGING THE LOCATION OF THE POLLING PLACE FOR PRECINCT 4, PRECINCT 5 AND PRECINCT 6 was introduced on a motion offered by Councilman Louque and seconded by Councilman Amato. After no public comments were received and 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, June 10, 2020, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse in Convent.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

An EXECUTIVE SESSION convened at 7:00 p.m., on a motion offered by Councilman Amato and seconded by Councilman Cooper. After a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried. Members of the Council, President Dufresne, John Young, Marty Maley, and Rick Stanley withdrew to an adjoining chamber to receive a status report from special counsel concerning potential litigation involving St. James Parish and Berkley Insurance Company and related matters. All returned at 8:00 p.m., and the regular session reconvened. Chairman St. Pierre informed everyone that no action was taken.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

COUNCILMAN AMATO – Councilman Amato thanked the administration and employees for the hard work the last six weeks, adding that it is good to be back with everyone. He said he would like to meet to discuss an Independent Environmental Study. He also inquired if the flags could fly half-staff on Paul Keller Day. He asked to have the commendation resolution for C.J. Brock on the next agenda.

COUNCILMAN LOUQUE – Councilman Louque thanked the Operations Director, Rick, and Assistant Director, Ryan, for assisting with some fees occurred for not making a One Call and said that we may have the opportunity to look at some of the fees involved. He said he had communications on some work happening in Grand Point, and asked if there was something that could be put in place to enforce, for the dust coming from the trucks.

COUNCILMAN BLAND – Councilman Bland informed everyone that DOTD is committed to side road scraping and digging ditches along River Road and restriping River Road on the East Bank. Work will begin as soon as the

River water goes down. Councilman Bland said he is not excited about using in-house labor to finish the roads. President Dufrene said we have an employee who is an expert on road repaving and are looking into getting equipment. Councilman Bland said he was contacted about having a kayak launch at the boat launch and will follow-up with an email. Councilman Bland said he had previously requested a copy of the approved plans for the drainage of Bellevue Lakes, that they are having drainage problems, and asked how can he get a copy of the plans. Councilman Bland said if anyone is interested in serving on the Economic Development Board to please contact him. He said he spoke with Amber about the census, that St. James is the lowest in response for the River Parishes. Mrs. Leblanc indicated that Mr. Duhe, the Representative, will come to give guidance on what we can do. Councilman Bland said we need to move the rocks and play equipment from the Romeville Park.

COUNCILMAN COOPER – Councilman Cooper thanked Mr. Webre for assisting with the horse that died. He said he received a call that the culver at Hwy 3125 and Landry-Geason St. is not draining. He inquired about the policy for speed bumps. Councilman Cooper requested a letter of condolence for Kyrianna Harris' family, she is the granddaughter of Pastor Herbert and Clara Harris.

COUNCILWOMAN ETIENNE-STEIB – Councilwoman Etienne-Steib requested condolence letters to Kelvin Jasmin and Kyrianna Harris's families. She inquired if the surveillance trailer for Collins Street had arrived, and about the speed signs on Magnolia Heights. Councilwoman Etienne-Steib thanked Kemlyn for the information on some of the projects. She asked if there is a projected start date for the canopy for the basketball courts in Lucher and Magnolia.

COUNCILMAN NASH – Councilman Nash expressed appreciation to Mr. Webre and President Dufresne for coming out during the drainage. He inquired about a culvert between Desire St. and Falgoust St. President Dufresne indicated that T. Baker Smith has already completed a comprehensive study and will get them to expand the study to include that area, to get the best solution to get the water across Hwy 643. Councilman Nash expressed appreciation to the Recreation Department for the demo of the old building in District 7.

CHAIRMAN ST. PIERRE – Chairman St. Pierre thanked Mr. Webre for the report. He said they did have a little water in Gramercy, south of the track. He requested a meeting with Mr. Webre to discuss a few items, and with Mr. Deroche regarding the money from the fire association to move the water line. Chairman St. Pierre expressed thanks for the information regarding COVID-19.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

INGRID LEBLANC – reminded everyone about the census and said they will send out updates. She said they are accepting online applications for client services, we want our residents to come in and let us know what they need, that there is funding and resources available.

ERIC DEROCHE – had a meeting today with the State on Hurricane Preparedness. We will have to do things differently this season due to COVID-19. We will be sending messages to encourage people to make a plan for themselves, to go to a family member, relative, or friend for shelter, rather than relying on a parish shelter.

FELIX BOUGHTON – emailed the council some information this afternoon. The most important is, this June or July we will ask the council to call an election for December, to renew 2 millages that will expire in December 2021. He said we can take advantage of the State's election cycle and get it done, adding that if we do it, we will also have a millage expiring in December 2024 so we can take care it at this same election, rather than calling another election in two years, making it cost effective to do it now. Councilman Bland inquired about funding for the bike path. Mr. Boughton indicated that someone will be working with him to apply for the grant.

RICK WEBRE – provided a preview of the public facing portal of the new work order system. Mr. Webre then answered the council member's questions.

ADJOURNMENT

After determining there was no additional business to come before the council, on a motion offered by Councilman Bland and seconded by Councilwoman Etienne-Steib and carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.


Linda Hubbell, Secretary