

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
SPECIAL MEETING
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH, 2017
CHAIR LARRY SNYDER
VICE CHAIR JACLYN HOTARD

The Council of the Parish of St. John the Baptist, State of Louisiana, met in Special Session in the Joel McTopy Chambers, LaPlace, Louisiana on Tuesday, February 14th, 2017, at 6:30 PM.

CALL TO ORDER:

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Larry Sorapuru, Jr., Councilman-at-Large, Div. A, Kurt Becnel, Councilman District I, Julia Remondet, Councilwoman District II, Lennix Madere, Councilman District III, Marvin Perrilloux, Councilman District IV, Michael Wright, Councilman District V, Larry Snyder, Councilman District VI, Raj Pannu, Councilman District VI

ABSENT: Jaclyn Hotard

Councilman Sorapuru led the Prayer. Councilman Perrilloux led the Pledge.

Legal Counsel Geoffrey Michel was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT - AGENDA ITEMS ONLY (2 minutes per citizen)

Warren Treme, 209 E. Airline Hwy., stated, "I am a developer and I have a development that was blocked in recent years by the parish. Mr. Snyder at the last council meeting you said that you checked the check books and you didn't have 50 million for the levee, well I do. You don't have to pass this tax. With an agreement with me, with all of the council people, you can get this tax for a fraction of the cost if not zero. I have Corp approved materials that you can use in kind for your match 100%; the Corp of Engineers and the State Levee Board have accepted this idea. So a tax would be an injustice for the taxpayers here in St. John Parish. If you have any questions I will be free to answer those questions."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Not at this time but what I would suggest that you can do is to talk with the administration. They take care of our day to day business for us and if you can find a way that we can get 50 million dollars that would be great. I am sure every ear here would be open to hear what you have to say."

Warren Treme stated, "Anyone of the Council people here can contact me. It is 100% guaranteed that you would pay a fraction of the cost this tax doesn't need to be passed at all what so ever."

Councilman Snyder stated, "If you could get your information to our secretary here for her to distribute to the council."

Warren Treme stated, "I will get her my numbers tomorrow and give everyone my email and if you have any questions feel free to ask but I will say once again that this tax has zero chance of happening if you make the deal with me and you won't have to tax the citizens. Zero dollars."

Councilman Snyder stated, "It almost sounds too good to be true."

Warren Treme stated, "It is true. Some of the people in this room have been in meetings with the Corp of Engineers, as well as the state and this has been accepted. So there are no taxes needed. Thank you very much."

PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES:

17-03 (Public Hearing Held) (Tabled 02-07-17) An ordinance amending the text of Chapter 109 - Natural Resource and Environmental Preservation and Protection, Article II. - Coastal Zone Management with the intent of the adoption of the St. John the Baptist Parish Coastal Management Plan (CMP) and the establishment of a local coastal management program in accordance with The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA) and The Louisiana State and Local Coastal Resources Management Act of 1978 (SLCRMA) as amended and in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statutes 49:214.21-214.42 and the Louisiana Administrative Code, Title 43, Natural Resources, Part 1, Office of the Secretary, Subpart 1, Chapter 7, Coastal Management (Parishwide) (N. Robottom)

Council Chairman Snyder stated, "This item will remain tabled until the next council meeting."

NEW BUSINESS:

Natalie Robottom - Resolution - R17-06 - A Resolution ordering and calling a special election to be held in the Parish of St. John the Baptist, State of Louisiana, to authorize the levy of a special tax therein; making application to the State Bond Commission in connection therewith; and providing for other matters in connection therewith

Natalie Robottom stated, "This election will address taxation in the Parish for a period of thirty (30) years for the purpose of paying any costs associated with construction, acquiring, maintaining, operating, extending and/or improving levees, facilities and structures associated with outer flood protection systems within the Parish. The project is approximately 18 miles of earthen levees and pumps with an estimated cost of \$718,090,000. The Federal share is 65% and the non-federal share is 35%. St. John is responsible for 20% of the non-federal share or \$50 million. Once constructed, an estimated \$5,070,000 will be needed annually for operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation. Based on current assessment and assessment numbers from the assessor's office residents can see an increase in their taxes bills from \$17.50 to approximately \$300.00 annually depending on the value of their homes ranging from \$100,000.00 to \$500,000.00 that would be about \$1.50 extra a month to \$25.00 a month extra for a 50 million dollar contribution to levee protection. With completion of the proposed levee project residents and businesses will be the protection that they need, economic development will be encouraged and flood insurance rates will be maintained or reduced. I think earlier we forwarded a document from the assessor's office that calculated those numbers. You will also receive tonight a document that not only looks at homeowners but businesses and what that tax might mean to them so we will get you that after the meeting but basically we have discussed this for some time. We are very fortunate that the WIN Act was passed that includes our levee this is our opportunity to start preparing for the parishes cost share and at this time I would like Mr. Hugh to address you all with how they came up with these numbers and recommendations based on a review of all of our financial and what options we had available to us and why this is the one that is being recommended."

Hugh Martin, Bond Attorney, stated, "Before we actually begin I want to point out that there was a distribution of a resolution that went out that had a typographical error that has been corrected and I just want to be sure that you are looking at the correct one that does provide for a 30 year tax."

Councilman Snyder asked, "What was the correction?"

Hugh Martin stated, "The number of years. There was a typographical error in the draft. The one that you have before you is correct. That was the only change. It had 10 but it is 30 years. The resolution before you is rather routine in the nature of calling elections. It basically calls an election as you know for ad valorem the tax would be for 7 mills to run for 30 years. This tax was decided to be the best source of being able to provide money for levee protection. It will provide money over a long period of time which is what it will take to actually construct, it will be done in phases and done in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers so it will require matching funds along the way. The tax will run over this period and we this it will provide enough funds to meet the obligations of the parish. Other possible taxes were looked at but it was felt that sales taxes are pretty heavy in the parish already and that it would be more economical since you can borrow money cheaper from an ad valorem tax produced bond issue than a sales tax not a big difference but a little difference over the years. The resolution authorizes that the election be called and held on April 29th and it provides for a publication of the notice of election in the local paper advising the voters of the election and this notice is published four times and provides that after the election we will meet and canvas the returns and declare the results of the election on Tuesday May 23rd at 6:30 PM. It also authorizes the publication of the notice of election which will be published four times and shows all of the polling places to your normal places established by the council for elections and the normal commissioners are the same ones that are authorized for general elections in the parish. An application is also authorizing the bond commission the authority to hold the election and notification is made to the secretary of state, the bond commission, the registrar of voters and other people who are charged with making the election machinery actually work so that they can do their job and that basically is what the election is. It is very similar as I said to resolutions that have been adopted before when we have called elections in the past. If there are any particular questions we will be happy to try to answer them."

Councilman Wright stated, "Mr. Hugh I would like to thank you and Jason for coming just a quick question are we voting to amend it first to reflect the updated 30 years?"

Hugh Martin stated, "No because it had not actually been proposed anywhere before. It was merely a typographical error that was never approved by you all or anybody else for that matter."

Councilman Wright asked, "So we just can just vote on it as is?"

Hugh Martin stated, "Yes. I just needed to be sure that you had the right document in front of you if you all had a question."

Councilman Perrilloux asked, "I thought we had to suspend the rules to put that correction in before we adopted it."

Councilman Snyder stated, "The resolution was presented and is being presented to us right now and it has probably changed many times before we received it and I didn't see a need to do that as far as parliamentary procedures are concerned to amend it because it isn't ours now if we want to change something else in it we might want to amend it after it is passed in the discussion."

Councilman Perrilloux stated, "We should suspend it and let the voters see it for 30 years and not 10 and put the resolution like it is supposed to be. Let's correct it in the record."

Natalie Robottom stated, "Just for clarification the only advertisement we put was the heading and description. We never advertised the entire resolution so nobody actually saw it so there is no need to amend something that we didn't advertise and put out to the public prior to coming here the resolution was changed throughout the day and that is what we are presenting to you but there hadn't been an official presentation of the one with the typographical error so there is not a need to amend it."

Councilman Snyder stated, "And it has been changed to the correct form."

Carl Monica stated, "Back in 1999 there was actually a 5 million dollar study done, I've got the paperwork to show you that and the news articles. At the Garyville Canal there was a Maurepas project for drainage in fact it has been over 20 years now and every time I go to a meeting about this it seems to be shoved under the rug, but the 5 million dollars was spent on the study and then plus 17 million was recently spent on the study I think including other projects and it ties into this thing because I asked at one of the meetings about the levee I said why are you going to build the levee on the Diversion Canal or the Hope Canal if you are going to build a levee why can't you marry that with part of the levee that you are going to build around the parish? To me it makes sense but maybe to them it doesn't and their answer was that they don't like to mix federal projects but if it is going to have a barren on the amount of money that the parish will spend or maybe it makes it less I think it is worth studying and I want to give you a comment that was made and this is not my comment this is the study done in 1999 and it is important to our area it says the increased channel capacity of Hope Canal should provide an enhancement in the ability to remove storm water from the existing Garyville drainage system hydraulic modeling indicates that the proposed Diversion Canal improvements can contain flows of 1,500 to 2,000 cubic feet per second and so this is without question the potential drainage capacity of the improved Hope Canal would be much larger to an order of magnitude that is now available. Hope Canal was picked to be number one and there were several projects proposed at the time and I can't figure out why it keeps getting shoved under the table now you have a tank farm very close by and I asked them about it because they were supposed to be going through their property and they said the land was there and I asked the state about it not long ago I called the guy with EPA and his answer was we are still looking at it. I think the parish needs to take a look at this. I know there have been some talks about whether you are going to go into St. James Parish or not because we are right next to St. James but to me if you do that part of that levee on the levee that you are going to build I am not saying savings but you are going to have two projects together. Again I think it is worth exploration."

Natalie Robottom stated, "That is a good proposition. We actually had a meeting with all of the entities which is the organization that is doing the

Diversion Canal, which is CPRA, as well as the Army Corp of Engineers as well as the property owners of Pin oak to look at that project. That project has taken a very long time it is my understanding that it is about 95% complete with design however they are at the table together to make sure that any attempts to utilize or partner the levee with the Diversion Canal not on the same property they are not in the same footprint which was a concern however based on information from the Corp because their project is a federally authorized project it takes precedence over the Diversion but they are at the table together CPRA, DNR and Army Corp of Engineers because these projects are very close to each other however it is my understanding that they are both moving forward so they are going to be looking at how close the footprint is and if there is any way to utilize the spoils from the Diversion and clearly that option will be explored but that is something they are working on."

Carl Monica stated, "That is good to hear I hope they follow up on it because they have been giving lip service to this thing for many years and actually after this last flood that we had on the north shore some people have said that if that had been built that possibly some of that flooding wouldn't have been so bad because that is all leading to the Maurepas swamp."

Natalie Robottom stated, "It is in the states Coastal masterplan that Diversion is one of their priorities as well as the West Shore project so the team is working on it."

Carl Monica stated, "The thing that scares me is that if it has been 20 years and nothing has been done what is going to happen to your levee unfortunately Louisiana does things in 20 year increments. I hope it isn't that long because everyone is waiting for that levee."

MOTION: Councilman Wright moved and Councilman Madere seconded the motion to approve Resolution R17-06 - A Resolution ordering and calling a special election to be held in the Parish of St. John the Baptist, State of Louisiana, to authorize the levy of a special tax therein; making application to the State Bond Commission in connection therewith; and providing for other matters in connection therewith. The motion passed with Councilwoman Hotard absent.

There was no executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Parish Buildings - Security

Lennix Madere - St. John the Baptist Parish vs. Myrtle F. Victor, Roba Inc. and Adair Asset Management, LLC, 40th JDC, #63827

John Barrett vs. St. John the Baptist Parish, Docket# 68043(Graffiti issue)

Sky Nicole Jones, et al v. Troy Miles, et al, 40th JDC

Any and all pending legal matters

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

There are no ordinances to be introduced.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 6:52 PM, Councilman Madere moved and Councilwoman Pannu seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed with Councilwoman Hotard absent.

/s/Larry Snyder
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

/s/Jackie Landeche
COUNCIL SECRETARY