

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2009
CHAIR RONNIE SMITH
VICE CHAIR CHERYL MILLET

The Council of the Parish of St. John the Baptist, State of Louisiana, met in Regular Session in the Joel McTopy Chambers, LaPlace, Louisiana on Thursday, February 26, 2009, at 6:30 PM.

CALL TO ORDER:

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Ronnie Smith, Councilman District VI, Danny Millet, Councilman District II, Haston Lewis, Councilman District I, Charles Julien, Councilman District III, Cheryl Millet, Councilwoman District VII, Steve Lee, Councilman-at-Large, Div. B, Darnel C. Usry, Councilwoman District V, Jaclyn Hotard, Councilwoman District IV

ABSENT: Dale Wolfe, Councilman-at-Large, Div. A

Councilman Julien led the Prayer. Councilwoman Hotard led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bill Hubbard, Parish President, was present.

Legal Counsel Barry Landry was present.

Councilman Wolfe arrived at the meeting at 6:33 PM

Judge Mary Becnel - Candidate for Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal

Judge Becnel thanked the council for the opportunity to speak about her candidacy for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal. She stated, "*First let me say that I am a proud product of the River Parishes, born, raised, educated, worked and raised my family here. I have spent forty years of my life in the court room going from court reporter to lawyer to judge. For the past fifteen years you have given me the honor of serving as your judge, which I deeply appreciate. Some people are asking me about the difference between a Court of Appeal Judge and a trial Judge and this is what I tell them. An Appellit Judge is a paper judge. A trial Judge is a people Judge, a real judge. An Appellant Judge reviews the decisions of the lower courts of the local trial judges that you elect. That court can change the decisions of those trial judges, that is what is so important about it. They can change it based on the written record alone, no live testimony. A trial judge is on the front lines and in the trenches. A trial judge is one that makes decisions not based on legal knowledge alone but from the heart, the gut, based on life experiences and common sense and with the benefit of listening and observing face to face, eye to eye. An Appellant judge decides cases based on the written word alone unless that judge has had the benefit of trial judge experience and then can put a face and feeling to those words on paper. Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope that you understand that this is a very bitter sweet situation for me. To think of leaving the courthouse where I have worked for forty years, however the vacancy created by Tom Daley's election as DA presented an opportunity that I*

just couldn't pass up to continue to serve my parish but in a slightly different capacity. I realize that I have very big shoes to fill following Tom Daley, however I am hoping that a pair of high heels just might do the job." She proceeded to give some brief information including her history with the court system and with her public service work. She commented that being a public servant extends beyond the walls of the court room. She mentioned her involvement with the local arts in the River Parishes and working with our local at risk youths. She started the River Region Arts and Humanities Council and has awarded over a hundred thousand dollars in grants over the past ten years to primarily school students in our area because the schools can't afford to give them everything. She extended her compliments to her colleague Judge Jasmine for starting Drug Court for rehabilitation instead of incarceration. She saw the need for and established truancy court and for early intervention with first time juvenile offenders. Every child that comes to my attention gets monitored for six months so we can find out what is going on and nip the problem in the bud. She saw the need to help girls coming into court who were getting into trouble just because they didn't know how to behave. So she established Charm School where she and two other ladies teach them basic manners, behavior modification, as well as how to be a lady. She made a deal with our past and current DA to give her these girls, let them come to her charm school and please don't prosecute them, which is a win/win situation. She also saw the need for fathers in our children's lives. What she did recently is called Devoted Dads. When a father comes into her court for not paying child support through the DA's office he is faced with contempt of court and incarceration. What she does is give him the option of committing to visit with his children. She calls it visitation instead of incarceration. These programs are not in her job description. Her philosophy is by the time these children get to her if she doesn't do something to help them who will. There are two good candidates in this race but only one of us has judicial experience. Ask yourself knowing that your appellant judge has the power to overturn your local trial judge's decisions, don't you want a judge who has been there, done that and made those heart and gut calls on a daily basis. She asked for your help on April 4th and would be honored to serve this parish and would like to continue to be your judge on the Court of Appeal instead. She thanked everyone for their support in the past and asked for their support again.

Jude Gravois - Candidate for Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal

Jude Gravois thanked the council for the opportunity to address them tonight. He commented that he, like so many of us grew up along the Mississippi River and shares the values, work ethic and appreciation of the people and customs. He will put his thirty years of legal experience and reputation for doing what's right and fair to work for you. Through 30 years as a full-time practicing attorney, he has earned a solid reputation for doing what's right. He will work on the 5th Circuit and make the River Parishes proud. He is a graduate of our local public school system and LSU Law. He is a former District Attorney and Criminal Prosecutor. He has been involved in just about everything the law has to offer. He has been a legal advisor to the Parish Council, the School Board and the Lafourche Basin levee district. He knows, appreciates and understands the challenges and issues both legally and other wise that you face in handling the business of governing this parish. He will put this to good use on the

Court of Appeal. During his career he has been elected as President of the local bar association for two terms and also served as secretary for one term and vice-president for many terms. He has been heavily involved in the local toy drive for the past fourteen years. He taught and coordinated classes in our local high school for Mock Trial Competition. In 2005 he was selected as the winner of the annual Louisiana State Bar Associations Crystal Gavel Award for outstanding service to the community and the legal profession. He was chosen from attorneys nominated throughout the state of Louisiana. He has represented people from all walks of life. He will bring all the experience he has both in the law and in dealing with people to be a fair, impartial, effective and hard working member of the Court of Appeals. He possesses the legal qualifications for this office many times over based on his experience as a full time attorney for the past thirty years; he is uniquely qualified for this office. He humbly asks for your support. If you wish to find out more information or have any questions, please visit his website at www.judegravois.com.

President's Remarks

Bill Hubbard, Parish President, stated, "I just wanted to give a little update on some things that we have been working on. One of the things over the last two to three weeks, we have been having town meetings for our Historical Districts. It started off in Edgard, then Garyville and Reserve and tonight was Laplace. The consultant that is working on that, Greg Cantrell and Associates, is putting together all the data and input from all the residents. We appreciate everybody that did come out and helped us with those projects. We are looking forward to meeting with the council within the next sixty days and coming up with some preliminary ideas. The animal shelter is moving along pretty good in case anybody has had a chance to swing by there. If I had to guess it is around sixty-five percent. It looks like they are getting ready to pour the slab for the parking lot in the next week or so. I am very pleased with the progress out there. Our local contractor is doing a good job. To the people in Garyville, while I was out there at the town meetings, there is a lot of concern about the Hope Canal. Just to give everybody an update on our major drainage canals, every since Katrina in 2005, the parish has been waiting on funds to dredge and remove the debris from Hurricane Katrina back in 2005 from all of these canals. We are still waiting on those funds. Hopefully this weekend I am going to go and take a ride down Hope Canal. I understand that canal is in very bad shape. Hopefully we can do what we have to do since we have Hurricane season coming up. I know Paul is scheduled to go out with the Department of Natural Resources to give an assessment of our canals north of I-10."

Consent Agenda

Items: Approval of Minutes February 10, 2009, Regular Meeting; Permit Approval - FCA Run for the Son 5k race and one mile fun run/walk - Saturday, March 28, 2009; Permit Approval - 6th Annual Tour de San Francisco cycling fun in St. John/St. James Parishes - Saturday, 3-7-09, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM; Permit Approval - 6th Annual Frisco Fest Run - 5k run & 1 mile Sunday, 3-8-09, 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM

MOTION: Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilman Millet seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda consisting of Approval of Minutes

February 10, 2009, Regular Meeting; Permit Approval - FCA Run for the Son 5k race and one mile fun run/walk - Saturday, March 28, 2009; Permit Approval - 6th Annual Tour de San Francisco cycling fun in St. John/St. James Parishes - Saturday, 3-7-09, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM; Permit Approval - 6th Annual Frisco Fest Run - 5k run & 1 mile Sunday, 3-8-09, 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES:

09-03 (Public Hearing Held) An ordinance to request a re-subdivision of Lot 3, Square 4, LaPlace Terrace Subdivision into Lots 3A and 3B (Linda Stein PZ08-029) B. Hubbard

MOTION: Councilwoman Usry moved and Councilman Lee seconded the motion to accept Ordinance 09-03. The motion passed unanimously.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

09-04 An ordinance to request a Re-zone of Lots A-1 & A-2 of River Glen Subdivision from R-1 to C-3 for a proposed strip shopping Center. (River Glenn Investments PZR-09-003) (B. Hubbard)

09-05 An ordinance requesting a Re-subdivision of a portion of Reine Subdivision into a lot herein designated as Lot SJ-1. (Wayne Kimball PZS-09-001) (B. Hubbard)

09-06 An ordinance to request a re-zone of Lot SJ-1 from R-1 to I-1 And re-zone Lots 26, 27 & 28 from C-3 to I-1 of Reine Subdivision (Wayne Kimball PZS-09-001) (B. Hubbard)

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Councilman Lee stated, "*I would ask at this time for a motion from the council. At 6:00 we had our finance meeting and I ask for a motion to approve the meeting.*"

MOTION: Councilman Lewis moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to accept the recommendation of the finance committee. The committee approved to award the bid to purchase a 20 foot knuckle boom loader to Pac-Mac at a cost of \$41,519.00 plus \$750.00 for orange safety paint, removed the item Pat McTopy - Authorization to execute an engineering services contract with Buchart Horn Inc. for design work at US 61 and Belle Terre Blvd and US 61 & 51 to relieve traffic congestion from the agenda, granted change order #2 in the amount of \$13,055.35 for the new animal shelter, granted change order #3 in the amount of \$29,998.00 for the two story addition of the Garyville Fire Station, granted a Certificate of Substantial Completion for the two story addition of the Garyville Fire Station, granted administration approval to go out for proposals for the Parish's Property, General Liability and Casualty Insurance, granted administration authorization to execute an agreement with the DOTD relative to the Mississippi River Multi-Use Trail, Phase I, granted administration authorization to purchase vehicles for the Public Works Department and granted to allow the administration to go out for RFP's for an air curtain incineration system. The motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT/ENGINEER REPORTS:

Julie Remondet, Director of EDC, stated, "On Thursday, March 5th at the St. John Community Center at 6:30 PM we have a presentation by Dr. Loren Scott on the state of the economy. He will address the national, state and river region economy for any businesses or people in the community. This event starts at 6:30 on that Thursday with a dinner. The dinner is ten dollars. You have to register in advance. The form is available in the local newspaper, as well as the Times Picayune. These tickets are available in my office. Dr. Scott is president of the Loren Scott and Associates Economic Consulting firm. He has represented people such as Bellsouth, Capital One, Exxon Mobile and has been quoted in the Los Angeles Times among many other publications. Dr. Scott has a lot of information that is very pertinent to us. I think it is a great opportunity to see the direction he feels the state as well as the river region is turning into. This event is sponsored by the three parishes St. Charles, St. John, St. James and the Port of South Louisiana. We encourage everyone to attend this. We think you will get a lot out of this."

Dale Wolfe - Personnel Matters

There were no personnel matters.

Ronnie Smith - Emergency Housing

Councilman Smith stated, "I just wanted to put the public on notice and administration also. I have run across several issues, items or situations where I found that emergency housing for constituents in our parish is needed and we have nothing in place at this time. So at this time I am setting up a meeting with the Housing Authority Director, a couple of members from their board, along with Mrs. Elois Joseph. We may bring a couple of other people in just to put our heads together to see what can be done or what relief can be brought to the parish to aid some of our constituents."

Councilman Wolfe asked, "Would you include me in that meeting? We have a situation on the West Bank that we need to discuss."

Councilman Lewis stated, "I will make sure I am there too."

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business.

CORRESPONDENCE/COUNCIL BRIEFS

Councilman Wolfe stated, "I know we have a lot of traffic on the River Road and the Airline Hwy due to the expansion at Marathon. I have received hundreds of calls in terms of employment and we had some vendors trying to get into Marathon to no avail. I would hope that maybe in the near future we can have Parish President Bill Hubbard contact Marathon Oil and get a committee of Council members to meet with them. It doesn't make sense for us to float bonds for Marathon or

any other industry in this Parish and save them millions of dollars and the people we represent aren't getting the benefit. So I would ask that Mr. Hubbard set up a meeting ASAP and I would surely love to serve on that committee."

Councilman Smith stated, "Mr. Wolfe, I heard that you would like to, Mr. Julien, myself, Mr. Millet and Mrs. Usry. Mr. McTopy could you please note that or get with our secretary and set that meeting up as soon as possible? Thank you."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I just hope everyone had a very safe and happy Mardi Gras season. I want to thank the Lions Club for the DuMonde Parade that they put together in St. John. It was my second experience at the Reserve parade and it was a lot of fun. So we do know how to have a good time in St. John and I hope everyone had a good time."

Councilman Smith stated, "I would like to take this time out to congratulate Coach Jasmine and the East St. John high school boy's basketball team for winning the district championship the other night. The reason I am doing this is because it is the first ever outright district basketball title that the school has earned. Mr. Julien's son is actually a starting player on that team. So congratulations to you and him Mr. Julien."

There was no executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Cheryl Millet - Council matters

Dale Wolfe - Personnel Matters

Property/Casualty Insurance Agent - 1) Claims, any/all property, casualty, and Workman comp claims 2) Claims, procedures and disposition 3) Coverage's, any/all material changes

Cable Franchise Negotiations

Jaclyn Hotard/Ronnie Smith/Montgomery Watson/GE - Report on the NANO filtration project

Any and all pending legal matters.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:03 PM, Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

/s/Ronnie Smith
COUNCIL CHAIR

/s/Jackie Landeche
Council Secretary