

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**  
**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2012**  
**CHAIR LUCIEN GAUFF**  
**VICE CHAIR JACLYN HOTARD**

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 Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012, at 6:30 PM.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**PRESENT AT ROLL CALL:** Lucien Gauff, III, Councilman-at-Large, Div. A, Jaclyn Hotard, Councilwoman-at-Large, Div. B, Art Smith, Councilman District I, Ranney Wilson, Councilman District II, Lennix Madere, Councilman District III, Marvin Perrilloux, Councilman District IV, Michael Wright, Councilman District V, Larry Snyder, Councilman District VI, Cheryl Millet, Councilwoman District VII

**ABSENT:** None

Councilman Wright led the Prayer. Councilwoman Hotard led the Pledge.

Legal Counsel Billy O'Regan & Tom Daley were present.

**Larry Snyder - Acknowledgement - Mr. Ezekiel Jackson - Pioneer in the fight for Civil Rights**

Councilman Snyder commented on Mr. Ezekiel Jackson owning the first movie house in Garyville many years ago, being the first person to bring baseball and other activities to the people of Garyville and just being a wonderful pioneer in the fight for Civil Rights in the Parish and in the state. He acknowledged him for all of his still present contributions to the parish.

**Lennix Madere/Marvin Perrilloux - Acknowledgement - Ernest Dents, Marshall "Pop" Lawrence, Sandy "Smoke City" Miles, and Edward Hall for their contributions to the Parish in the fight for Civil Rights**

Councilman Madere and Councilman Perrilloux commented on the members of the Reserve/Garyville area that made wonderful strides in the fight for Civil Rights for the people of St. John the Baptist Parish. Mr. Ernest Dents, Mr. Marshall "Pop" Lawrence, Mr. Sandy "Smoke City" Miles and Mr. Edward Hall were all instrumental in moving the parish forward as a community for the equality of all people in the parish.

**Consent Agenda**

**Items:** Approval of Minutes February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Regular Meeting; Councilwoman Millet - Re-appointment of Jake Lyford to the Animal Control Board; Councilwoman Millet - Re-appointment of Don Loisel to the Planning & Zoning Board; Councilwoman Millet - Re-appointment of Stephan Fraker to the Economic Development Committee; Councilwoman Millet - Re-appointment of Melanie Basile to the Recreation Board; Councilman Snyder - Appointment of Danny Rome to the Recreation Board;

Councilman Wilson - Re-appointment of Barbara Falgoust to the Animal Control Board; Councilman Wright - Re-appointment of Kenneth Simoneaux to the Animal Control Board; Councilman Gauff - Appointment of Justin Lopez to the Planning & Zoning Board

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilman Snyder seconded the motion to approve the amended consent agenda items consisting of Approval of Minutes February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Regular Meeting; Councilwoman Millet - Re-appointment of Jake Lyford to the Animal Control Board; Councilwoman Millet - Re-appointment of Don Loisel to the Planning & Zoning Board; Councilwoman Millet - Re-appointment of Stephan Fraker to the Economic Development Committee; Councilwoman Millet - Re-appointment of Melanie Basile to the Recreation Board; Councilman Snyder - Appointment of Danny Rome to the Recreation Board; Councilman Wilson - Re-appointment of Barbara Falgoust to the Animal Control Board; Councilman Wright - Re-appointment of Kenneth Simoneaux to the Animal Control Board; Councilman Gauff - Appointment of Justin Lopez to the Planning & Zoning Board. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES:**

There were no ordinances at this time.

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:**

**12-04** An ordinance granting approval to further extend the valid period of time of Conditional Subdivision Approval for an additional twelve (12) months for **Carriage Plantation Subdivision**, Lots 1 through 16, located on Main Street, in Section 27, T-11-S, R-7-E, LaPlace, St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana. (A. Sutherland)

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Councilwoman Hotard stated, *"At this time I would ask that the council accept the recommendation of the finance committee."*

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilman Snyder seconded the motion to accept the recommendations of the finance committee. The motion passed with 8 yeas and 1 abstaining (Hotard).

**DEPARTMENT/ENGINEER REPORTS:**

**Cheryl Millet - Permitting Process**

Councilwoman Millet stated, *"I put on here permitting process but I was actually referring to the Occupational Licensing process. I just feel that it is something that we need to put a committee together to work on. I think it is something that is very frustrating to a new business to come into town and have to go in nine different directions to go ahead and get an Occupational License, Sales Tax License, the Health Department and I would like to see if there is some kind of way that as St. John being small business friendly that we can make the process easier for a new business."*

Natalie Robottom stated, *"We agree with you 100% and actually our staff has already had a meeting with all the entities involved based on some*

of the concerns expressed to our office and individually from attending new openings and discussing it with business owners as well as through our PAC committee. We met with Mr. Nathan Stein who is the tax collector and is one of the first places they stop to get a tax ID number. Our new economic director, Mrs. Buckles, Ms. Angelic Sutherland who handles some of that process through Planning and Zoning, representatives from the Sheriff's Office, Mr. Jeff Clement all met because each one has a portion or a part in this process. As of today we realized we left out another component which is our Utilities Director who actually handles non-domestic and permitting and that is another step. Our goal is to streamline the process. We would also like to have it start with our economic development office. There are some other things that come into play with regard to office space and timing and staffing but we think it is critical that new businesses start in our office and that we are aware of it prior to the opening of their doors. So if there is any support, suggestions or guidance that we can provide we provide that on the front end. We attended and many of the council members were there with me this weekend where the secretary of state is launching a website [www.geauxbiz.com](http://www.geauxbiz.com) where the state is moving to a system of when you apply for a license or to enter into a corporation the information that you submit is populated into the other documents that you are going to need to apply for. So you are not having to fill all of that out each time that is something that we need to take advantage of and do as well. That is to have a central location and also not having our business people have to travel to all of these locations and also having a clear understanding of all of the requirements when they get started. We started that process. It is not over. We will obviously have participation by the council. We just had that initial meeting trying to bring the people together who had a piece. We are evaluating how other parishes are handling this but our goal is to streamline that process and make it easier on all of our businesses to get what they need to have done but also to have that entry point into the parish begin in Economic Development."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I just have a suggestion or comment and maybe when you all are working on this it might be something you might consider. Having someone assigned to this business so that when they have a question they can call this person and say hey what does this mean and what do I have to do because it is so confusing? If you go to one place they tell you to do this, then you go to the next place and they tell you to do this and then you have to go back over here and then they say no you don't have to come over here you have to go back over there. So you need one person that they can call if it is somebody in EDC that would be great just so that we can advise them and welcome small business."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We also talked about having one set of forms and instructions depending on where you start is what you get but if we all generate the same form or we are all utilizing the same form then you are not going to get conflicting information. We agree with you. We agree and understand and sympathize with individuals who have gone through that process. I can tell you that some people have done better than others but they may have more experience in doing that but we have had some concerns and our goal is to improve that process, streamline it and do what is possible to help our businesses get started and then be successful once they are started."

Councilman Snyder asked, "Didn't you all have a package together that you could give to anyone who wanted to start a new business that had a flow chart and just went right on through? I saw something not a flow chart but a package somewhere."

Natalie Robottom stated, "There is a packet on the website starting a new business but again that is something that we have created but many times they will come to us first, then we send them to the tax collector to get their tax ID number. So immediately they may start with us but we send them somewhere else then they have to come back to us. We do have a system on our website. It is starting a business and what is required but if they don't start with us and they start somewhere else we can't help. So we need to one develop a process to where we are all using the same form and the same instructions. We have also discussed a marketing approach to making sure that anybody who is interested in starting knows exactly where to get started but clearly we have a staffing issue, we have a location issue but we are going to work through that. I think the structure is critical. There are ways to do things now where we can forward documents to another department without you having to hand carry them and we need to take advantage of all the technology that is available to us."

Councilman Perrilloux asked, "Does the package start with Mrs. Eugene? Is that the starting point?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "No Mrs. Eugene actually has a contract with the parish to assist several sets of business owners. One if you are starting a business they will help with developing a business plan, discussing a financial package, putting together some marketing ideas and of course understanding our process with regards to starting a business but she is also in business to help some of our existing businesses that may need some help, that may be struggling pointing them toward some resources helping them with a plan. Many times our small businesses start without a business plan and that is not a good idea. You have to have a plan of where you want to go. You have to have capital. You have to be able to manage and understand that when you are starting your business you may need a lot of cash flow up front and you have to plan for those tough times initially as you become established. Part of that process may be encouraging them to wait a little bit longer until their plan is fully developed and they have enough capital to extend them pass those difficult time because what we have found historically is that we have had businesses open but about 50% of them close within six months. That is not a good thing. It is demoralizing to them. They have lost their savings and then they are still looking for a job. Our goal is to have them be successful. So in addition to helping our new businesses get started. We would like to help some of the existing ones and then we have some businesses that are doing really well that we may want to encourage and help them expand and maybe hire a couple of additional individuals. So Mrs. Eugene is working in partnership with our office. We are also working on a small business resource center with the technical college. Again it is about a relationship and a partnership. It is not duplicative which is why all of these entities are meeting to make sure that the services that are being provided are not duplicative and that we are all on the same page but that is a different component. Generally they will start with Ms. Sutherland's office, which is Planning & Zoning because they will go there for a permit and then of course there are some instructions

*but of course the first step on that list is now go to the tax office and get a tax ID. So that is the kind of thing that our residents become upset with. It was sort of funny but not really if you are not from here. He said they sent me to somebody's house and I said oh I wouldn't think our office sent you to anybody's house. He said oh yes it was a house. It was a house off of Belle Terre. Well that was Nathan's office that was a house but it is a business. So I am trying to explain that there is no way that someone from our office sent you to a house to do business but that was their perception. I left the government complex and you sent me to somebody's house to get a tax ID number and we have to change that perception."*

**Larry Snyder - Council's Appointment to the Tourist Commission**

*Councilman Snyder stated, "It was brought to my attention that we need to appoint someone to the Tourist Commission. That is some business that we need to take care of right now if we can."*

*Councilman Perrilloux stated, "I would like to make a motion to nominate Rodney Nicholas to the Tourist Commission."*

**MOTION:** *Councilman Perrilloux moved and Councilwoman Hotard seconded the motion to appoint Mr. Rodney Nicholas to the River Parish Tourist Commission. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Larry Snyder - Process to select members to the Board of Adjusters**

*Councilman Snyder stated, "Yes we need to come up with a process to select a new board of adjusters. We have talked to our legal department and they have instructed us that we need to have five members and we may have two alternates. So our question to them is why can't we have seven or nine? Mr. Daley is going to get in contact with the Attorney General and talk with him about why we can't have nine and if we can't have nine what do we need to do to get nine. So I think we need to put this on the back burner for a second and maybe at the next meeting we will have some more information to make these decisions."*

*Tom Daley, Legal Counsel, stated, "As you know one of the first actions of this council was to amend the number of the Zoning Board of Adjusters to five and two alternatives. That was because of previous litigation that challenged the nine member board. That challenge was based on Louisiana State Law 33:4727 which says that any municipality or parish that has a comprehensive zoning plan needs to have a zoning board of adjustments to review certain issues with regards to appeals. Based on the state law we are currently restricted to five with two alternates. That state law however has been amended several times by other municipalities specifically Slidell and New Orleans to have full bodies of seven and not five with two alternates. St. Charles Parish is currently operating with seven also but I haven't found the amendment authorizing that. It is my recommendation that if this council wants to go with more than five members that you request that your legislative delegation in Baton Rouge simply introduce an amendment to the state law to increase the number. That is the way other parishes have done it. I have drafted a quick resolution for your consideration. Be it hereby resolved by the St. John Parish Council that they request that their Baton Rouge Legislative delegation amend LA R.S. 33:4727 to permit St. John the Baptist Parish Board of Adjustments to consist of a*

nine member board all of whom shall reside and be electors of the parish of St. John the Baptist. That is what I think is the easiest way to expand the board if you can't live with the state law that says five and two alternates. Mr. Snyder request that it be nine members and that we ask the legislative body to introduce an amendment to be considered it would be a local bill, it wouldn't involve anybody else other than St. John to expand it to nine. No other parish that I am aware of has nine but other parishes have seven. The state law contemplates five with two alternates."

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilman Madere seconded the motion to accept Resolution R12-10. A Resolution to increase the numbers on the Zoning Board of Adjustments to nine members.

**WHEREAS,** St. John the Baptist Parish desires to provide equal representation from all areas of the parishes seven districts and two at large divisions, and; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** that the St. John the Baptist Council does request that our Baton Rouge Legislative Delegation, amend LA R.S. 33:4727 to permit St. John the Baptist Board of Zoning Adjustments to consist of nine members all of whom shall be residents and electors of the parish. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Larry Snyder - Status Lasseigne Canal clean out**

Councilman Snyder stated, "That canal I think is on the bond issue. After talking to Mrs. Robottom she said it has been permitted and they have bids going out and it will be cleaned soon."

#### **Art Smith - Form committee for DBE**

Councilman Smith stated, "Yes at our last meeting I brought to our attention that I wanted to form a DBE for St. John Parish and we had said that we were going to do it at the next meeting if possible. So now I think we need to form a committee so that we can investigate that and Mrs. Robottom already had some information and I talked to Mr. Perrilloux and he had some information so I think it is time for us to move forward with this and let's get this behind us, form a committee and get a policy in place. So I guess right now I am asking you Mr. Chairman to get us a committee."

Councilman Perrilloux stated, "I don't have all of the information necessary and I wanted to investigate it more. I was going to make a motion, if the council had no objective, to remove it from the agenda at this time until we discuss it more. I don't even know if we have businesses that qualify for DBE. What is DBE and if it benefits St. John Parish. I wanted to do more research on it and get all of us involved before we go forward with a committee."

Councilman Smith stated, "I think forming a committee will give us that opportunity to research and to do this. It is a matter of moving forward. I know this was something that was done in the last council and I don't think every business in St. John Parish is going to qualify but this assures that the disadvantaged business is not a racially or gender motivated issue but it is just for disadvantaged businesses to have a piece of the pie and those that don't qualify can make themselves qualify. So the issue is not really anything other than let's form a committee, do the investigation, the same thing that you want to do Mr. Perrilloux, let's get this done and move forward and put

some action into place so that we can either disapprove it, throw it out or whatever but if we keep putting off forming a committee, we can have the committee to the study for us."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I just wanted to add a couple of comments like what Mr. Perrilloux said, I know a while back we had looked at this and I do agree with what Butch is saying. I know that I have been gathering some data on this information and I think it will be helpful before we actually form a committee so we will know who needs to be members of the committee from the business community, the private sector, public sector, council, community exactly who we need to have on the committee and how their membership can benefit the committee the best and until we actually have all of the information on even what a DBE is. Some people don't know. So why we are still in the fact finding stages, I do agree with that, we need to get a little bit more information before we can actually put a committee together because we don't know who will best serve the committee until we have all of the information in front of us. So I would like to make that same request as well before we put a committee together that we know exactly everything about the program, how we want to implement it and look at some areas that actually have a program like this and what has worked and hasn't worked before we actually form a committee because we really don't know who will be best to have on the committee if we don't have all of the information and we may just be duplicating things that are already out there. So I would like to hold off on establishing a formal committee. We don't actually need a committee to gather data, to ask the questions, to have people involved in it but once we have all of the information then we can make an informed decision and then say okay who needs to be part of this committee and how do we move forward and what truly is our goal in implementing this type of program so we don't leave anybody out or duplicate any efforts."

Councilman Snyder stated, "I think that Mr. Perrilloux and Ms. Hotard just gave us enough reasons to have a committee. All of the things that were mentioned a committee can dig that up for us and they can do the fact finding. Mrs. Robottom is this part of Mrs. Eugene's contract using her as a consultant dealing with something like this? I hate to throw this on you."

Councilman Gauff stated, "I did speak with her. She wants to be a part of the committee. I can't answer to say if this is what she does but I can say that she wants to be a part of the committee."

Natalie Robottom stated, "Part of the contract with Mrs. Eugene actually does specify that she does work with disadvantaged businesses and all small businesses and of course this is one of those. However based on the information that was provided previously to the council by the Davalier Law Group and basically from that presentation what he explained is this is a process. This is not a matter of introducing an ordinance and saying this is what we are going to do. It requires policies, procedures, staffing and there is an enforcement piece to it but all of that comes with evaluating your current system, your current businesses who are potential candidates for DBE's and it is something that he and his firm are familiar with in New Orleans but that is them. St. John is very different. At that point the council elected not to move forward with that as a process but to establish a committee to look at how we are going to move forward. That didn't take place

understanding both sides. I do think there probably needs to be some information gathering, some education and just information to all of us about what that stands for and what that would entail. As both Mr. Perrilloux and Ms. Hotard have indicated if you put together a committee of people who aren't familiar with this as a process then that is not really going to get you anywhere. There probably does need to be some meetings to decide one what we are attempting to do, gather some data if that is working through Mrs. Eugene who probably has some associations with some of the folks that have more experience with drafting ordinance language and developing a DBE then we can obviously work through her and have her involved in this process. We also have an Economic Director who is now familiar with this as a process. So I think we have some options here. Looking at the agenda item I thought you guys had kind of done this or had gotten together and were ready to name people but that doesn't appear to be what has happened. I would caution you that it is important that you have the right mix of people and the right knowledge base involved in a committee that would work on something of importance. What I will offer up to you is our economic development director to meet with the individual who made the presentation to us to work with our existing consultant, Mrs. Eugene, to maybe put together something to present to the council with a path forward on establishing a process for looking at DBE's."

Councilman Smith stated, "I guess what I am looking for right now is listening to everybody, it is a committee of the council people that we can start gathering facts and information and then come back and get a committee that involves everybody. We appreciate the offer of your EDC person so that if we are going to get information let's do a committee among ourselves. If everybody wants to be on the committee it is fine with me. Let's start gathering facts among ourselves so that we can make a decision."

Councilman Snyder stated, "It seems like to me we have a committee together already. We have Mrs. Eugene, Mr. Smith and we have our EDC director. We have a committee right there of people who are involved. You are a member of one of these DBE's Mr. Smith and Mrs. Eugene is our consultant dealing with new businesses and we know all of the experience our EDC director has. So it seems like we have a committee right there to get started. If you want someone on the board or if someone wants to volunteer fine. I would be like a sheep in the desert if you put me on that committee because I don't know anything about it."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "Maybe what you need to do is to set up a workshop where you all can get together and make these decisions and find out who you want on the committees and then you can come and present it and say this is the committee that was formed. That way you are going around all of the people that are involved because when you speak with Mrs. Eugene she might say hey this person needs to be on the committee or this person needs to be on it. If you put a workshop together and then we can form a committee of all the interested parties and then come back and say the committee has been formed. That would be my suggestion."

Councilman Perrilloux stated, "I agree with Mrs. Millet and Jaclyn. We are jumping into something we don't know anything about. Sure we can form a workshop and get together and then form a committee after. Let's

see what this is all about because right now I know I am at a lost. My fellow council members, I am not speaking for them, but I am sure they are at a lost. So we just can't say well let's just form a committee and don't know what we are forming it for. Let's resource these people, use them, have a workshop, sit down and talk with them and then we can go from there and bring this back to the council and then we can form a formal committee then but not just form it to say we are going to have a committee to do DBE which we don't know anything about what we are doing. I don't."

Councilman Smith stated, "I have no problem with that at all. My main goal is not to let it drop and to push it forward. I have no problem and Mrs. Millet I appreciate the suggestion of the workshop. That will work fine for me and if everybody agrees we can just have Mrs. Robottom have her staff set up a workshop for us if that is acceptable to everyone here."

Natalie Robottom stated, "Just give us a little time, as I mentioned obviously Mrs. Eugene is working already with Mrs. Buckles. We actually do have some information from the group that provided us information before who has been through this process, established a DBE, let us have an internal meeting and get some information that we think would allow us to put together a workshop so that all of us will have all of the information in terms of what are the components, what are the requirements. I do think it is important that we look at our demographics in St. John Parish. I think looking at that and what we have in terms of the businesses and business owners and the number of certified DBE's in St. John because I don't think our goal is to hurt our local businesses. This is an attempt to help them but if they are not certified and can't become certified then we maybe opening up to something to people who are certified DBE's. They are just not our residents. Again not to discriminate but if your goal is to help locally disadvantaged companies then we need to have a base line on what we are dealing with and who would benefit from this. It takes a little bit more than just having a discussion without gathering data. I think through the work that Mrs. Eugene has been conducting since her contract was initiated and the information that Mrs. Buckles can generate as well as what has taken place in neighboring parishes we will be able to pull something together for a workshop."

Councilman Gauff stated, "I think through the discussions that we have had and even discussing it in Houma, there are some resources out there that have more experience then we have and I think, we heard it tonight, still there are a lot of people unsure of the DBE's and maybe we need to just wait, get our group together, have a workshop and have a good discussion so that we can get a good group together and proceed with this and move it forward."

Councilman Smith asked, "So are we going to ask Mrs. Robottom to set up a workshop for us?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "I agreed to that already."

#### **Art Smith - Discussion relative to tax revenue in the Parish**

Councilman Smith stated, "I put this item on because I know we are looking for money and money is so tight. I had a couple of

conversations today with Mr. Stein and my idea behind this thing was and still is that a lot of businesses are under reporting and when they under report on their taxes we lose money. We are scrounging for money. We want money for recreation. We want money for drainage. We want money for all of these other projects and yet we want to bring in businesses and we still have businesses in the parish that are not paying their fair share. It isn't an administrative matter for our tax collectors here in the council. It is just a general parish thing. For example take businesses that deal with cash, they may tell the sheriff hey I only did \$50,000.00 worth of business and you look around and you say you know what this business does more than \$50,000.00. Even when some of these businesses sell goods if they are dealing cash they are not reporting that so we are losing 7.9% for taxes on the license so it is just a measure of checks and balances and I still understand, even after speaking with Mr. Stein, I understand his portion of it, he is sales tax and he can't audit every business but there are a lot of checks and balances that we don't have in place and how do we know if we are getting our fair share. We are looking for money to do all of these projects and I don't feel like we are getting our fair share from the businesses that are dealing cash. I know we have a lot of small businesses. Just in district I there are a lot of businesses and not to beat up on Mr. Stein but I bet you he has not audited some of these businesses since he has been doing business with the parish."

Councilman Gauff stated, "Okay I would ask what do you want to come out of this? Who are you directing this to?"

Councilman Smith stated, "Well we have a budget and we get our money from the school board. I am asking somebody or anybody what are the checks and balances that we have in place to be sure that we are getting our fair share?"

Councilman Perrilloux asked, "Is this an item that the school board has to address?"

Councilman Smith stated, "Well the school board has to address it but how do we know we are getting our fair share. We get 1/3 of that money. When the school board collects taxes, which are contracted out through Nathan Stein, are we leaving money on the table. Is Nathan Stein leaving money on the table? It affects us also. So when it affects us is it a problem for us or just a problem for the school board or should we be asking the school board hey are we getting our fair share?"

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I do want to make one comment. I am in business for myself and I have been audited by the school board. So I do know they do occasional audits randomly. They will send you a letter and come and audit you to make sure that you are reporting everything that you have to report. My concern is not so much with the ones that are under reporting, it is the ones that are not even licensed to operate that's even worse. You have no way of telling what they are earning because they have no licenses. That is something we can as a parish address. As far as collecting sales tax, we as a council have no control over that. That is not our job. It is the school boards job to collect the taxes not ours but we can make enforcements for those who have not gotten occupational licenses."

Natalie Robottom stated, "The school board did contract with Mr. Stein

and I know Mr. Smith spoke with him earlier and historically since that contract was initiated there has been an increase in the amount of sales taxes collected through that firm. I understand what you are saying Mr. Smith. However Mr. Stein is paid based on a percentage of what he collects. So it is to his benefit to collect as much as he can. So I think that is why there has been an increase. However I do think it is important. We can pull the contract that was signed and agreed to by the school board and make sure that all of you are aware of what's in it and how that actually works. The occupational license piece is a problem. Again this is something that we are looking at with regard to making sure that those who should have one actually do. We have been in conversations with Mr. Stein about that. He has found people operating without them and has gotten back taxes from them. Once the occupational license has been sought, so he tends to progressively pursue them to the point where they are not that happy. So as I said his fee is based on how much he collects. It is to his advantage to collect as possible. I will have the contract pulled, we can take a look at it and see who is doing what and what those requirements are. We could probably also have him pull together a history of what has been collected over the last several years so we can see if there has been an increase or a decrease or what that comparison is. You are right we do get a third that isn't going to change. It impacts us all the same way because we divide whatever is collected but if there are some specific concerns after we review the contract and review the history then possibly there may be some action that is requested."

Councilman Smith stated, "I do have some specific concerns but I don't want to name names publicly. There are certain situations that happen that people actually under pay. I am not going to get into naming names."

Natalie Robottom stated, "That is not our issue for enforcement."

Councilman Smith stated, "It may not be our issue for enforcement but it does affect us."

Natalie Robottom stated, "It does and I think those concerns should be directed to the appropriate source. At this point you are correct every business is not audited every year. It is a random system of auditing however as Mrs. Millet has said if you know it is random and you may possibly be audited it tends to prevent you from attempting but regardless I think that is something that needs to be discussed with the individuals who are responsible for enforcement and conducting the audits."

#### **Marvin Perrilloux - Update on Gardenia Canal cleaning**

Councilman Perrilloux stated, "I put this on the agenda after the town hall meeting we had on February 16<sup>th</sup> just to give the residents of LaPlace Park an update. I know work started right after the meeting. I didn't know it was going to take affect that quick but Mr. Kendrick or Mrs. Robottom for informational purposes what are we doing in LaPlace Park and what are we going to continue to do, just a little information."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We actually discussed this this morning at our staff meeting and because you know the Haydel canal is actually one

of the permitted canals but based on the meeting I know Mr. Kendrick went out the day after with the resident who wanted to give him a tour of the site. It really is not a large canal. It just goes to the back of LaPlace Park and work has started there. There were a couple of issues one involving some culverts that they thought were blocked and I think Mr. Kendrick's staff is looking at blowing out some of those however they did start digging the little canal area that was blocked. They removed some of the debris that had moved towards the back of LaPlace Park and at this point it is my understanding that they are about 90% complete with the work that borders or parallels Gardenia Street. He did meet with the resident that had some concerns."

Councilman Perrilloux asked, "You did say that canal is Haydel canal?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "Yes it is."

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Theresa Rodgers - Resolution R12-08 - A Resolution authorizing St. John the Baptist Parish to submit a grant application for the "Safe Routes to Schools Program"**

Theresa Rodgers stated, "Administration requests authorization to submit this grant application to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development for the Safe Routes to School Program. The grant is in the amount of \$250,000 to improve pedestrian safety by adding sidewalks, lighting, and cross markings allowing children to safely walk to and from East St. John Elementary School. This is the second grant submission for East St. John Elementary as it narrowly missed funding in the previous grant cycle when LaPlace Elementary was selected."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I just wanted Mrs. Rodgers I know we had some email correspondence about the program and looking at John L. Ory, Emily C. Watkins and St. Joan of Arc. If you could just elaborate a little bit on some of the emails that we had so that the public knows what other schools we did apply for grants for, the ones we did receive, didn't receive and why and what we are going to look forward to going after in the future."

Theresa Rodgers stated, "Well we were not apprised as to why but we have previously submitted the same grant application for other schools and you named them and they were not approved. I do know that with John L. Ory one of the factors is that the data doesn't exist to satisfy the grant requirement in terms of the number of walkers and bike riders to the school. As we have discussed certainly we would like for every school in St. John the Baptist Parish that meets in any way, shape or form these grant requirements to be part of this program. We are going to continue to seek this for other schools. As it stands this year East St. John missed the last grant funding cycle ranking 14<sup>th</sup> when only ten schools were accepted in the state for the program and LaPlace Elementary was one of the ten. We certainly are going to continue to pursue this for other schools that meet the criteria."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Thank you. I just wanted to let the public know that we did look at receiving grants for all the other schools and there are a couple of components like you said just the number of kids that are walking to school. I know that there is a requirement on the school's portion to actually receive the grant. I just wanted to let the public know that we are looking at all of the schools and are going to pursue as many as we can and hopefully we can receive as many as we can."

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Hotard moved and Councilman Wright seconded the motion to approve Resolution R12-08 - A Resolution authorizing St. John the Baptist Parish to submit a grant application for the "Safe Routes to Schools Program" **WHEREAS**, St. John the Baptist Parish desires to provide pedestrian safety improvements that will encourage children to walk to school; and **WHEREAS**, sidewalks, lighting and crossing marks would improve access to East St. John Elementary School; and **WHEREAS**, the Parish intends to apply to the Louisiana Department of Transportation for a Louisiana Safe Routes to School Program grant to accomplish this goal; and **WHEREAS**, there is no local match required for this grant program; and **WHEREAS**, the Parish does agree to accept liability for any improvements made through this project; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the St. John the Baptist Council does hereby authorize the Parish President to sign and submit a request for funding through the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Louisiana Safe Routes to School Program in an amount up to \$250,000.00 for eligible expenses to improve pedestrian safety and to create a Safe Route to East St. John Elementary School; and **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Parish does authorize South Central Planning and Development Commission to put together such a proposal on its behalf and for C. J. Savoie, Parish Engineer, to provide cost estimates for the said proposal. The motion passed unanimously.

**Jobe' Boucvalt - LNO - Authorization to execute a Letter of No Objection for Shell Pipeline Company's Construction of a pipeline segment and block valve connection to existing Garyville Compressor Station**

Theresa Rodgers, stated, "Administration recommends approval of the Letter of No Objection for the proposed pipeline on Marathon Refinery's property in Garyville. The new 12 inch pipeline will connect an existing pipeline south of Airline Highway to an existing compressor station north of Airline Highway. While the entire construction area is on Marathon's property, boring will take place under Airline Highway. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development will be notified by Shell Pipeline regarding the Project."

**MOTION:** Councilman Wilson moved and Councilman Madere seconded the motion to authorize a Letter of No Objection for Shell Pipeline Company's Construction of a pipeline segment and block valve connection to existing Garyville Compressor Station. The motion passed unanimously.

**Art Smith - Resolution R12-09 - A Resolution to maintain services of the St. John the Baptist Parish Reserve/Edgard Ferry crossing**

Councilman Smith stated, "Need I say anything else. I put this on there

because the ferry operations are very essential to West Bank people and East Bank people but more essential to West Bank people. That ferry means a lot, I don't know if people realize what it means to have that ferry crossing on a daily basis for residents that have no transportation. We have very little grocery shopping we can do so they can catch the ferry and go right across the river. A lot of the plant workers use that ferry for their jobs. This is a situation that we have to cross another parish to come to LaPlace. We have to go either to St. Charles or St. James. The ferry eliminates that. It saves time. It saves gas money and during these economic times the West Bank has a very large population that is actually considered below poverty level. So to do that to the West Bank at this time is really bad. It is a bad move and I am just asking this council to let our Baton Rouge constituents know that we want to maintain that ferry operational, if not at the present level then to increase it."

Natalie Robottom stated, "Yes we support you 100%. Even before the government's budget was introduced right after the elections because of the history of the ferry and having it and not having it or having the small one waiting for the large one I had made contact with all of our new delegation that was elected on how important that ferry and the ferry services are to our residents and to everyone in St. John Parish. As a result of the proposed budget I made contact with them again individually by phone expressing that concern and making sure they were aware that those cuts are being proposed. We are fortunate that two of our Senators are actually on the transportation committee. I am going to encourage all of you as well as all of our residents to make contact with our legislative delegation Senator Troy Brown, Senator Gary Smith, Representative Greg Miller, Representative Randall Gaines and Representative Clay Schexnayder. All of their information is on our website. We encourage you to call, write or email them letting them know how important it is that they work really hard to keep this ferry. Understanding the budget process, it was introduced, session hasn't started, they have the whole session to go through and negotiate and manage and work through committees and work with the governor in terms of things that he is interested as well as the things that are important to us. It was an introduction but I am confident that our delegation is going to work really hard to maintain that service but I take nothing for granted. I am going to continue to speak with them as well as counterparts in other areas and colleagues at the state level but I encourage all of you as council members to do the same as well as our residents to contact their representatives and express the importance of that ferry."

Councilwoman Millet asked, "Is it possible that we could put together a letter on our website so that the residents can just go directly there and shoot it wherever it needs to go?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "Yes they were just discussing putting together a form letter to have available. All of their contact information will be on our website but it is important. I am speaking specifically to our delegation but it doesn't hurt to call the governor's office and leave messages. He has staff that responds to those calls and gets the emails. I think it would mean a lot if we started to respond and express our concern about that cut."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I just didn't know if we had a link to

*their website for their email addresses then we could just shoot it automatically because it is so much easier and people would be more readily available to do this if it is just a quick press of a button and shooting it out then if they have to sit there and individually do each one."*

Natalie Robottom stated, "We will work on that but I do think it is important that you talk to them too. Make the calls if you see them in public remind them how important that is."

**MOTION:** Councilman Smith moved and Councilwoman Millet seconded the motion to approve Resolution R12-09- A Resolution to maintain services of the St. John the Baptist Parish Reserve/Edgard Ferry crossing. **WHEREAS**, St. John the Baptist Parish desires to provide ferry services to the people of the St. John the Baptist Parish, and; **WHEREAS**, the Ferry service is a major use of transportation for the people of St. John the Baptist Parish on both the West Bank and the East Bank, and; **WHEREAS**, the Ferry is used to transport children going to and from schools on both the West Bank and East Bank of St. John the Baptist Parish, and; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the St. John the Baptist Council does wish to maintain the services of the St. John the Baptist Parish Reserve/Edgard Ferry crossing and that this resolution be submitted to DOTD urging them to not shut down the use of the ferry. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **CORRESPONDANCE/COUNCIL BRIEFS**

Councilman Smith stated, "First I would like to congratulate the West St. John High School girls for making it to the state finals. We talk about history and pioneering but this is history for West St. John. They are in the state finals. I wish them good luck and I hope they can win it all. This past weekend we had a lot of rain and I saw a lot of problems with drainage. I received calls from several different places with people having drainage problems and I know we don't have any money so I was just wondering if anybody could think outside of the box to get us some money to help solve some of these drainage problems. I am happy to announce that at this moment Pleasure Bend residents are being trained in the volunteer fire department to help open that Pleasure Bend fire station back there hopefully soon. We even have somebody that is going to be certified to teach CPR back there. The things are going very well back there. We even had the sheriff back there arresting some people. So these people are getting some attention. I noticed that the fence is going up around the farmer's market. Also work is moving along in the park at the Airnasium. I would also like to announce that the Wallace Indians would like to adopt the fire station at the bridge and also the park at the bridge that will get one thing off of our backs and we won't have to maintain those parks and hopefully they can do a good job. Also there will be a town hall meeting at 125 Ash Street in LaPlace tomorrow February 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM and that is for the revitalization of Milesville. I know you can't make it Mr. Gauff but I am inviting everyone else."

Councilman Wilson stated, "We had a little rain Saturday. I did find a couple of areas that are going to need some attention but for the most part Mr. Kendrick has been doing a pretty good job in keeping up with the things as we go. They are not major problems but we still need a good rain to see. This wasn't quite enough we need a little more to see

what is going to happen with the project."

Councilman Madere stated, "I was pleased tonight with the opening of the bids for the inflow and infiltration repairs in the parish. District III I think is going to benefit from that effort and like the residents I can't wait until we actually get everything underway and they get started. I am also looking forward to the completion date. I also road through the parish over the weekend when we had this rain and it was a welcome that the rain did come and it also gave me the opportunity to go through Homewood and see how the water was flowing out of Homewood and it was going pretty good even though I know the project isn't completed. It should be at the end of the month they told me but everything looks pretty good. It is very promising even though that rain was coming down pretty hard. In some areas, like Mr. Wilson said, we do have some problems but once again we are going to appeal to the people in our district to get together and try to help and clean up some of the trash in the ditches that is causing some of the problems but I think as a whole everything is moving forward. Once again to the people in District III, everyday I will be out there looking for something to repair or fix something, whatever you need give me a call and we will get it worked on."

Councilman Perrilloux stated, "I would like to thank administration on a quick follow up for LaPlace Park. Now I know the Haydel Canal is not the New Era Canal. Also I will have my next town hall meeting which will be New Era and The Grove. It is going to be the second week in March. I haven't announced the date yet but I will post it and put signs out in the neighborhood. I would like to say congratulations and welcome to the new business "Let's top It Yogurt" that just opened on Belle Terre. It was really good. I enjoyed it."

Councilman Wright stated, "I know we did have a lot of rain. I did go driving around in District V yesterday in particular. I was very disappointed at the amount of trash and debris in the ditches and the drains. I know we brought this up at the last meeting but please take pride in your community, please pick up the trash and don't litter. It isn't hard. I am working with capital projects and public works. We are assessing a lot of the canals but we need you to do your job first and pick up the trash so that we can do ours."

Councilman Snyder stated, "I am not quite sure who contacted the apartment buildings in Cambridge but I saw the garbage cans were picked up today. I sure appreciate that. They were in the streets yesterday but they were picked up today and placed a little closer to the homes. I did try to get a call into Mr. Levenstein I think he has some of those buildings and Mr. Fauchaux and I left a message with them. So I appreciate those guys making an effort to try and help us clean up our neighborhood a little bit. Also we have a meeting Saturday in Cambridge at 10:00 at the Courthouse on Cambridge Drive. Lastly there was a sweet young lady who had a birthday last week and I would like to wish her a Happy Birthday and her name is Rita Dents, she is the wife of Ernest Dents and she sings in our choir at our church. She is a redhead and she is 84 years young, so Rita Happy Birthday dear."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I really don't have any comments other than to wave. I have some customers of mine at the store that say Mrs. Cheryl you never wave to us. So I am waving."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Mr. Snyder I did get a message on the Cambridge meeting that they postponed the meeting. We will have to double check to make sure. There was also another sweet young lady whose birthday was last week as well and that is our parish president Robottom. Happy Birthday I hope it was a good one."

Councilman Gauff stated, "I would like to say congratulations to the West St. John girls also for making it to the championship and the playoffs. Good luck to Riverside tonight hopefully they win and my brother can win then they can meet each other. I would also like to wish my dad a speedy recovery and I send my prayers out for him. So hey dad hopefully you come back to 100%."

#### **PRESIDENT' S REMARKS**

Natalie Robottom stated, "Good Evening, I hope everyone had a safe and Happy Mardi Gras! Due to weather conditions the Tohwahapash Parade was cancelled; however, we received many positive comments from the DuMonde Parade. A hogwash meeting has already taken place to discuss issues or concerns for both parades and plans for improvement have already been discussed. The crowd was one of the best for this year and I thank everyone for participating and keeping it a family event. Thank you Councilman Perrilloux for holding a town hall meeting for residents in LaPlace Park last Thursday, February 16, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. at the St. John Parish Central Library in LaPlace. It was a great meeting with lots of conversation and I appreciate everyone attending. I look forward to meeting with more neighborhoods and residents in the future. Congratulations to the 9 and 10 bidy basketball teams who participated in the Bidy Basketball Tournament this past weekend at Regala Gymnasium. We had a great turnout and the tournament ran smoothly in our new gymnasium. The St. John Parish 9 & 10 year old team received third place over all with Donaldsonville received second and Opelousas in first. Thank you to all who participated and attended. The 12 year old Bidy Basketball Tournament will be held this weekend, Friday, March 1 through Sunday, March 3 at Regala Gymnasium located on Regala Park Road in Reserve. Games will begin at 5:30 on Friday evening and 10:00 am on Saturday and Sunday. All are welcome to attend. Congratulations to two new businesses in St. John the Baptist Parish who recently held grand openings: 1<sup>st</sup> Franklin Financial and Let's Top It Yogurt Shop. 1<sup>st</sup> Franklin Financial is located at 119 Belle Terre Blvd offering starter loans, personal loans, and consolidation loans. 1<sup>st</sup> Franklin Financial is open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday - 8:30 A.M. - 5:30 P.M., Wednesday - 8:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M. and closed on weekends. Let's Top It Yogurt Shop offers ten different flavors of yogurt with over forty toppings. They are located at 150 Belle Terre Blvd. and are open on Sunday from 12:00PM to 9:00 PM, Monday through Thursday from 11:30 AM to 9:00 PM and Friday and Saturday from 11:30AM to 10:00 PM. We wish both businesses the best of luck and ask the community to support all local businesses. A reminder that sections of Louisiana Highway 18 in Edgard and Wallace will be closed between

Highway 640 and the Veterans Memorial Bridge for filming at Evergreen and Whitney Plantations through Friday, March 9, 2012. During this time, traffic will be diverted to Hwy 3127; however, residents will have access to neighborhoods and businesses. Please stay tuned, as dates and times are subject to change based on weather conditions. Emergency responders, including fire fighters, Mets with Acadian Ambulance Services and Sheriff's Deputies are aware of the road closure and the detour plan. During some of the filming, traffic will be permitted to flow on the highway with only temporary stopping of cars by St. John Parish Sheriff's Deputies. Motorists are asked to read the electronic boards and detour signs which will be placed in various locations on the West Bank to alert drivers of road closures. The ferry and the courthouse will be accessible during this time. The Mississippi River level has lowered to 8 feet at the Carrollton Gage and restrictions on the levee have been lifted. Thank you for your patience and cooperation with the Corps restrictions. The St. John Westside Volunteer Fire Department will be holding a CPR Certification Class this Saturday, March 3, 2012 at 8:00 a.m. Space for the class is still available, please call 985-4973441. The class will be \$10 per person. The St. John Theatre presents The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee on Saturday, March 10 at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, March 11 at 2:30 p.m., Friday, March 16 at 7:30 p.m., and Saturday, March 17 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for students, and \$10 for children and can be purchased in advance at Allied Express in LaPlace or at the door approximately one hour before the show begins. Police Jury Association Convention last week was a great opportunity to make contacts and get with our delegation to help to move the parish forward."

There was no executive session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

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 Agreement

Any and all pending legal matters

**ADJOURNMENT:**

At 7:49 PM, Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilwoman Hotard seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

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COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

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Council Secretary

