

**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**  
**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2012**  
**CHAIR LUCIEN GAUFF, III**  
**VICE CHAIR JACLYN HOTARD**

The Council of the Parish of St. John the Baptist, State of Louisiana, met in a Special Meeting in the Joel McTopy Chambers, LaPlace, Louisiana on Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 6:00 PM

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**ABSENT:** Ranney Wilson and Cheryl Millet

Councilman Snyder led the Prayer. Councilman Wright led the Pledge.

Legal Counsel Billy O'Regan was present.

**Natalie Robottom - Appointment to the South Louisiana Port Commission**

*Natalie Robottom, Parish President, stated, "I would like to thank you for coming on such short notice. Thank you Mr. Gauff for calling the meeting however all the paperwork required for this appointment was not in hand until this week. Actually there was an additional letter forwarded today. What I have attached for you is a copy of the statute that dictates how the appointment is made. What I have to date are three letters based on the nominating organizations two are for the same individual and there is a time line associated with the appointment that transfers to the governor's office after March 9<sup>th</sup>, so I am going to respectfully ask that you concur with my recommendation for Mr. Joseph M. Scontrino, III and that has been with careful consideration and review and consultation with the governor's office as well as our state senators and other individuals within the governor's office with regards to this appointment. So again my nominee and recommendation is Mr. Joseph Scontrino, III."*

*Councilman Snyder stated, "This seems like a very important appointment. If it warrants us to come out here on a special occasion to do this it seems like it is something special. I hate doing things on a rush. I realize that the problem with the timing of all of this is not necessarily Mrs. Robottom's. It sounds like it came from higher up. I don't like making big decisions without really thinking about it and getting opinions from people I respect. I don't feel good about this at all. I just wanted to express that but I know we need to do something. Is Mr. Scontrino here tonight?"*

*Natalie Robottom stated, "Actually I tried to reach Mr. Scontrino, I spoke with him on the phone after the meeting was scheduled but he had a*

prior engagement. As I explained to Mr. Smith, he is very open to meeting with you all to discuss your concerns as he has met with me and my wishes and visions for an appointment to the Port is very different from what has been in the past as I think this councils and he is very open to having that discussion. I do want to clarify this is an important position. It is not new. I have spoken with several of you. Mr. Smith was one of those early on in the process and I explained to him what I was looking for and what was required that it was not up to me it is statutorily governed which is what you have. There is a specific list of organizations that can submit nominees. I was in contact with one at least six weeks ago who assured me they would be submitting a nominee. I received it Tuesday morning. So again I feel the same way that you do. I don't like to be pushed to the end of the limit however I do think what we have before us are two nominees in accordance with the guidelines and I have made a recommendation for one of those. As the council I am asking that you concur with that recommendation so that we can forward the name on to the governor and of course if you read through the rest of the statutes there are other steps. There is an appointment and then at the end of the session a confirmation."

Councilman Snyder asked, "If we don't do this tonight what will happen to this appointment? What will happen period?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "The governor will assume that responsibility and make an appointment."

Councilman Snyder asked, "He gets the appointment from the people you recommend?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "He will confer with me."

Councilman Snyder asked, "He will concur with you? Okay."

Natalie Robottom stated, "He will contact me for my recommendation, which is the same one I am submitting to you."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Well good. I can't support it. I am sorry I just can't support it let you and the governor handle this so if this thing doesn't work out. I don't know the guy. I don't know him. I have heard about him. I just don't know him and I would like to at least meet a person once or twice before I do anything like this. Now if you and the governor want to handle this that is fine with me."

Councilman Perrilloux stated, "A lot of people don't know Mr. Scontrino. I know him. I would have liked for him to have been here tonight so I could ask him some questions like what are his goals for this position and I too felt like I was not forced but it came up all of a sudden. I know it was something that we probably had to do as we got elected to the office but it was something that came up at the last minute. I didn't feel comfortable with it. I wanted to know if we had other qualified people that could do this position. I don't know. I didn't know how to process work. I am learning how to process work. I just thought Mr. Scontrino should have made himself available tonight to at least show his face, say who he is and what are his goals for this position."

Councilman Madere stated, "I concur with Mr. Snyder and Mr. Perrilloux. This is an important position and I wouldn't know this individual if he

walked in the room with two other guys. You know when we are put in these positions to represent a decision should be based on knowledge most of the time or especially a position like this. I am not questioning Mrs. Robottom's selection because I know she makes good decisions and everything but representing the people in my district and to vote for them to represent me. I have to think what it is that they would do as far as me sitting here casting this vote basically for someone who I know nothing about. The only thing is a little lack of information. I am pretty sure if I had the information about this individual and had the chance to meet this individual I would not have any problem doing this but there is still a question in my mind as of right now which way I am going to go because like I said when I took this position it was to represent the will of the people and whatever vote I make tonight I don't think I am really representing the will of the people in my district because I didn't have a chance to really digest who this individual is, how he looks. If someone was to ask me in my district tomorrow morning to describe him, I have voted for someone I can't describe that is the only thing that I have a problem with not as far as his qualifications but exactly who is he."

Councilman Wright stated, "To my understanding this isn't just a nomination process there are steps and legal processes involved. Could you explain that to us please?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "Basically the requirement is as the statute indicates for the organizations that are listed A through H to submit a nominee to the president. It is the president's appointment that must be concurred with by the council. Again I did receive a copy of Mr. Scontrino's resume and history and information attached to one of the letters I received today. I will be happy to pass that around. Of course I am familiar with Mr. Scontrino. I did interview him as well as other candidates but specific to what I was looking for in an appointment and that was someone who would represent the wishes of St. John the Baptist Parish, this office and economic development for the parish and the region. In observation and my experience in the parish that has not always been the case with our appointments and I made it very clear that this council as well as myself and the other parish presidents who I have been in contact with were looking for communication, understanding and knowledge about what was going on at the Port that I don't think we have had before. Again it wasn't specific to Mr. Scontrino it was specific to both individuals at the time who requested an interest and provided a letter of recommendation which is the number one criteria. There was a third individual who actually provided me a letter requesting that I consider her. It was not a letter of recommendation as I received from these. So I will be happy to pass around a copy of his resume but again my decision is based on my knowledge and information and what my expectations were from an appointment of the parish president. I think I did my due diligence. I spent time with them. I have spent time with other appointees and in terms of what we are looking for in a person in this position I think Mr. Scontrino will serve us well."

Councilman Smith stated, "I would like to make a motion that we take a ten minute recess so we can make copies and give everyone a copy and allow everyone to look this over."

**MOTION:** Councilman Smith moved and Councilwoman Hotard seconded the motion to take a ten minute recess. The motion passed with Councilman

Wilson and Councilwoman Millet absent.

**MOTION:** Councilman Wright moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to go back into regular session. The motion passed with Councilman Wilson and Councilwoman Millet absent.

Councilman Smith stated, "During the early campaign Mrs. Robottom and I had a couple of conversations concerning the Port Commission because I had gotten a call way back when. One of my major concerns was that we have some diversity on that commission. I guess you guys know that I am one that speaks up a little bit and my main thing was that I had a particular candidate that I was supporting named Louis Joseph and I wanted to be sure that he was retained as the present commissioner. I received information today that he will be retained and everything has worked out. So that was one of the conversations I had with Mrs. Robottom and we talked about that. We agreed that it was very important that we retain some diversity on that commission and I fought very hard to make sure that happened and it has happened. So now the main thing is to move on to the next step as to whatever we have to do to get this done and I understand that if we don't do it tonight that the governor is going to do it and it still has to be confirmed by the senate. Basically my understanding is that no matter whom we recommend it still has to go before the senate and if the senate doesn't agree then something else happens."

Natalie Robottom stated, "I actually did a lot of homework and spoke with all of them prior to calling all of you and they are aware of the nominee as well."

Councilman Smith stated, "I just wanted to enlighten them as to what my conversation was and why I was doing this. We were both in agreement and now I guess we will just move on. I just wanted to put that point out there to the board and she agreed and we made that agreement that diversity has to happen."

Councilman Gauff stated, "I think we, Mrs. Robottom and myself, we also had that conversation about diversity and having someone that would represent us and she assured me, as guess as she had you, that this was going to happen. As far as Mr. Scontrino and the other nominee or candidate, I know both of them. I didn't see a problem with either one of them. I think Mr. Scontrino does, as a business person, give us an opportunity to bring and add a lot of value to St. John Parish. I didn't see a problem with not supporting this recommendation. I do think this process came about us pretty quickly. I think it came about to all of us pretty quickly and that did make us all throw up a flag to say that we wanted more time, we thought we needed more information for the people that didn't know him. I think we have given the president a lot of leeway in her recommendations. We have found that so far we have done pretty well. I guess I always say let's try to support her, give her what she wants or give her what she needs and I would ask again that we consider it but I also say stick to your guns. If you feel like you want more information then let's try to get more information let's make a good valued decision. So that is my take on it."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So we are saying that if we don't do this tonight, the full Louisiana state senate is going to be the one to make this decision?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "The governor has to make a recommendation. As the statute says, the sixty days from inauguration on the 9<sup>th</sup>, ends tomorrow. At that point, if this council and parish do not submit a name the governor will name someone. In June or the end of June when session ends, the senate confirms all nominees for boards and commissions not just this one anybody who was appointed through that process. They all come up for confirmation during that time at the end of session. Whoever it is can serve through that time. In the event they are not confirmed they are removed. What I have said to you is I have spoken with the governor's office to ensure that the appointment was one that they could accept. I have spoken with all of our senators to assure that it is an appointment that they could accept. So that should not occur. I actually spoke with all of you too but it is a process that involves several layers it started with the letter, it came to me and my recommendation to you, from you it goes to the governor and from the governor the senate confirms. That is the process. It is in state law. We followed it. I waited on a recommendation letter from the Chamber as they assured me they would be sending one. I received it Tuesday. As Mr. Smith said, we did talk about Mr. Joseph and how he actually does communicate with me about what is happening at the Port. I thought it was a priority that he remain and I wanted to wait to make sure that he was going to be appointed because as I told him if he wasn't I was appointing him. So I received that confirmation and insurance that everyone was on board with Mr. Joseph. So I pursued the other nominees."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So the governor will appoint someone that you recommend, the three or four people that you recommend or can he appoint anyone he wants to?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "He cannot. It has to come from like there is a list of nominees, they have to have that letter recommending them from the list of A through H. Whoever the nominee is must have that letter. So it would have to be someone who has that and in the past and that is not uncommon, the governor is going to confer back with the parish president."

Councilman Snyder asked, "All of these eight here recommended someone?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "They did not."

Councilman Snyder asked, "Just two groups recommended?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "It was three groups that recommended. Three to me, I know Mr. Joseph received the AFL-CIO recommendation. It is my understanding that maybe some of the others may have received something as well but his went to his senator and that is where his appointment is coming from or recommendation coming from."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So the senator is appointing Mr. Louis?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "Recommending him."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So he is recommending Louis not the governor?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "Well the governor has to make the appointment."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Okay well I understand that then."

Natalie Robottom stated, "It is the same process. The senators make recommendations. The governor has four appointments. Each parish president has one appointment. This is our recommendation."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Well we have to do this but my only objection is timing. I hate doing things hastily because a moment of miss-thought could mean a lifetime of problems and I just hate to have my name on something that doesn't work and I did it hastily that is my only contention but we have to do what we have to do."

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Hotard moved and Councilman Wright seconded the motion to take the recommendation of Parish President, Natalie Robottom, and appoint Joseph M. Scontrino, III to the South Louisiana Port Commission. The motion passed with 7 yeas and 2 absent (Wilson & Millet).

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:**

There were no ordinances to be introduced at today's meeting.

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 6:38 PM, Councilwoman Hotard moved and Councilman Wright seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed with Councilwoman Millet and Councilman Wilson absent.

/s/Lucien Gauff, III  
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

/s/Jackie Landeche  
Council Secretary