

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**  
**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011**  
**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 Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, at 6:30 PM.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**ABSENT:** Cheryl Millet

Councilman Millet led the Prayer and Councilwoman Usry led the Pledge.

Legal Counsels Judge Tom Daley, William O'Reagan and Kerry Brown were present.

**Natalie Robottom/Rene' Schmit – Presentation – LSU Ag Center**

Mr. Rene' Schmit, Parish Administrator for Agriculture & Natural Resources, commented on the LSU AgCenter. The LSU AgCenter plays an integral role in supporting agriculture industries, enhancing the environment and improving the quality of life for the citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish. Educational outreach offered through the Parish LSU AgCenter Extension office includes online and in-person classes, seminars, workshops, field days, publications, and news releases. Parish Extension agents provide one-on-one service and disseminate educational information through various methods including internet and social media communications. The programs consist of Family and Consumer Sciences, Health and Nutrition, 4-H Youth Development, Louisiana Master Gardener, Horticulture/Agriculture. His staff briefly introduced themselves and explained their role in the community.

**Natalie Robottom – Proclamation – February 6, 2011 as Quinn Johnson Day in St. John the Baptist Parish**

Natalie Robottom, Parish President, stated, *"Whereas, it is an honor and privilege to give special recognition to Quinn Johnson for his outstanding accomplishments as full back for the Green Bay Packers, NFL 2011 Super Bowl Champions; and, Whereas, Quinn, a 2004 graduate of West St. John High School played both full back and line backer, reflecting the highest ideals of hard work, training and sportsmanship; and, Whereas, Quinn further pursued his dreams and attended Louisiana State University, where he played in 40 games for the Tigers, winning a National Championship in 2007; and, Whereas, Quinn's NFL career happily began in 2009 when he was drafted by the Green Bay Packers in the 5<sup>th</sup>*

*round as the third-best full back player in the country; and, Whereas, we appreciate his athletic prowess and we are very proud of his accomplishments and outstanding spirit of dedication and enthusiasm; and, Whereas, the citizens of this wonderful parish are happy to honor Quinn Johnson and extend to him our sincere best wishes for many years of happiness and continued success; Now, therefore, I, Natalie Robottom, Parish President in conjunction with St. John the Baptist Parish Council Members do hereby proclaim February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 as Quinn Johnson Day in St. John the Baptist Parish."*

*Quinn Johnson stated, "I would like to thank everyone for their love, support and prayers. All of it helped me to get to where I am today, thank you so much."*

### **Consent Agenda**

**Items:** Approval of Minutes February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Regular Meeting; Permit Approval – Relay for Life Fireworks – Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10:00 PM until 10:30 PM; added Parade Permit Approval – WSJ Quinn Johnson Parade – 2-26-11 – Edgard

**MOTION:** Councilman Lewis moved and Councilman Lee seconded the motion to approve the amended consent agenda items consisting of Approval of Minutes February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Regular Meeting; Permit Approval – Relay for Life Fireworks – Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10:00 PM until 10:30 PM; added Parade Permit Approval – WSJ Quinn Johnson Parade – 2-26-11 – Edgard. The motion passed with Councilwoman Cheryl Millet absent.

### **PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES:**

**11-06** (Public Hearing Held) An ordinance amending Section 105-25 of the St. John the Baptist Parish Code of Ordinances, as follows: Residential swimming pools shall be enclosed by a fence with a minimum height of six feet. (C. Millet)

**MOTION:** Councilman Lee moved and Councilman Morris seconded the motion to table Ordinance 11-06. The motion passed with Councilwoman Cheryl Millet absent.

**11-07** (Public Hearing Held) An ordinance authorizing a lease between St. John the Baptist Parish as lessee and Roxann W. Gort as lessor for lease of temporary office space for the Department of Health and Human Services. The proposed lease is attached hereto as "Exhibit A". (N. Robottom)

Marie Brown-Mercadel stated, *"Administration request authorization to execute the previously referenced lease with Roxann Gort to temporarily house the Health and Human Services (HHS) Department at 975 Cambridge Drive, LaPlace. The renovations to the current building are scheduled to begin March 7, 2011 and are expected to be completed in 120 days. The lease begins March 1 and ends June30, 2011 with an option to extend for an additional 60 days if the building isn't finishes. The lease rate is \$2,400.00 per month and will be paid through the 2011 Building Maintenance Fund."*

**MOTION:** Councilman Morris moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 11-07. The motion passed with Councilwoman

Cheryl Millet absent.

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:**

**11-08** An ordinance granting approval to further extend the valid period of time of Conditional Subdivision Approval for an additional twelve (12) months for Monica Estates, Lots 1 through 51, located on Red Barn Road, situated in Sections 10 and 11, T-11-S, R-6-E, Garyville, St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana (M. Henderson)

**11-09** An ordinance granting approval to further extend the valid period of time of Conditional Subdivision Approval for an additional twelve (12) months for Perle DeMillet Subdivision, Lots 1 through 40, located on South Church Street, in Section 15, T-11-S, R-7-E, Garyville, St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana (M. Henderson)

**11-10** 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 (M. Henderson)

**11-11** An ordinance granting approval to further extend the valid period of time of Conditional Subdivision Approval for an additional twelve (12) months for Sugar Lane Estates Subdivision, Phase VII, Lots G1 through G36, located on Dufresne Drive, Section 27 & 53, T-12-S, R-18-E, Wallace, St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana (M. Henderson)

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Councilman Lee stated, *"Council as you well realize we met for forty-five minutes this evening to conduct any and all council finance business. We had quite a few items to approve and some constructive discussions. At this time I would ask that one of my fellow council members make a motion to ratify actions taken as such meeting."*

**MOTION:** Councilman Millet moved and Councilman Morris seconded the motion to accept the recommendation of the finance committee. The committee approved to award the low bid for the 2011 Removal & Replacement of concrete, sidewalks, driveways & street to DMC of Metairie, to award the drainage excavations of Parish ditches – 2011 Annual Contract – to the lowest responsive bidder Compass Ventures of LaPlace, to accept administration's recommendation and grant them Authorization to execute a contract with South Central Planning & Development to conduct the Re-apportionment process for \$30,000.00, to grant change order #1 from Principal Engineering for Country Club Bridge replacement to alter the scope of the project to include the boring of a waterline under the Country Club Bridge. No additional cost will be incurred by this change order, to grant Task Order 2009-1, Meyers Eng., Ltd. for additional fees incurred during the design phase of the Mississippi River Multi-Use Trail – Phase 1 at a cost of \$14,560.00, to grant change order #1 from Professional Engineering Consultants Corporation in the amount of \$2,506.50 for the Balsam St. drainage improvements, to grant a Certificate of Substantial Completion for Professional Engineering Consultants Corporation for the Balsam Street drainage improvements project, and to grant a certificate of

Substantial Completion from Central Electric of Monroe for generator installation at Ruddock Well No. 2 and Station No. 3. The motion passed with Councilwoman Cheryl Millet absent.

**DEPARTMENT/ENGINEER REPORTS:**

**Raydel Morris – Update on Capt. G. Bourgeois**

Tom Daley, District Attorney, stated, "The property at 425 Capt. G. Bourgeois Street is zoned R-1 Residential. The residents in the area have complained vigorously about the fact that metals have been cut up on the premises and the property is out of zoning compliance. Based on citizen complaints, the Parish Council passed a resolution requesting enforcement action, which was conditioned upon review by legal counsel. My office has researched the historical uses of the property, met with the Zoning Director, residents from the neighborhood and the current owner and his attorney. My office has analyzed the historical uses of the property in an attempt to document what non-restricted uses on the property have been grand fathered and offer the following observations. The property in question is a four (4) acre tract with several large storage buildings. The current owner is LaPlace Industrial Properties, L.L.C., who acquired the property on August 31, 2010 from Barauch Ents., L.L.C. St. John the Baptist Parish government sold the property to Barauch Ents., L.L.C. in 2007. The State of Louisiana, Department of Transportation sold the property to the Parish in 2002. This property, since the 1960's, has historically been used as the State Highway Department maintenance and equipment yard and for a storage yard by the Parish. During the time that Barauch Ents., L.L.C. owned the property, the Parish leased, portions of the property for the storage of Parish equipment, etc. Correspondence between the property owner and the Parish indicated that in addition, the Parish used the property for storage of sand and sand bags and for a sand bag filling operation for hurricane prevention usage. The Parish's Director of Public Works confirmed in writing that during the administration of Parish President Nickie Monica, the facility was used to store white goods, tires, sand bags, culverts and old equipment, but that the parish did not perform any salvage operation at the facility during its ownership. A resident living in the neighborhood has asserted that the grand fathered non-conforming use was abandoned by non-use due to the fact that the property was unused for more than six (6) months during the Parish's ownership. In response to this assertion of the Parish's Public Works Director, has advised, in writing, that the property was used "at all times for public works...to store old equipment, large equipment, and sandbags for emergency preparation". On July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Mike Henderson, as Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, issued a letter to Mr. Carter, the owner or chief operating officer of Barauch Ents., L.L.C., advising that "This property currently operates a salvage, storage and recycle company at 425 Capt. G. Bourgeois St., LaPlace, St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana. The property is zoned light industrial and meets zoning criteria to continue in operation". Mr. Henderson's letter misstates the property's zoning classification. The property has never been zoned light industrial. Mr. Carter's use of the property, if it included that of a salvage yard, would not automatically prohibit regulating salvage activity unless that use existed for more than five (5) years, the statute of limitation period for zoning enforcement. A report by Mr. Henderson advises that the current owner has leased the premises for the following uses: A portion

of the property is leased to Cypress Landscaping who utilizes it to store equipment and/or organic soils. Michael Sanders, Sanders Services, has also leased a portion of the premises and according to their occupational license application uses it for storage and recycling of non-ferrous metals. Mr. Ernest Kimble, a masonry contractor, leases a portion of the land for equipment storage. Mr. Henderson evaluated the above uses and found them to be allowable non-conforming uses and he has so indicated in a memo to his file. I am of the opinion that certain non-conforming uses have been grand fathered based on historical use. Those uses include: the storage of equipment, culverts, sand and sand bags, tires and white goods. The use of the property for recycling of non-ferrous metals in my opinion appears to be an expansion of the State and Parish's pre-existing non-conforming uses, which existed for more than five (5) years. The cutting of scrap metal on the premises, as a continuous use, would be an expansion of the non-conforming use and hence, prohibited. Mr. Henderson had the premises inspected Monday, February 21, 2011 and the inspector observed the cutting of aluminum scrap metal. Based on these findings and the council resolution, my office has forwarded to the property owner and it's lessee a Notice that the use of the property to recycle metal, despite any contrary representation by the Zoning Department, is not a grand fathered use and any such use violates the Parish's Zoning Ordinance. The property owner and/or his tenant may institute legal action against the Parish if enforcement action is pursued due to the prior representations of the Zoning Department, however we are proceeding and putting them on notice to cease and assist any scrap cutting activity. That is my report Mr. Chairman."

Councilman Smith stated, "Thank you Mr. Daley. I know I have some constituents here that were interested in what was going on. Do you understand everything that Mr. Daley just said? He said that they are going to contact the owners of the property and issue a cease and desist at this time that they can no longer cut metal at that location. So your concerns about them cutting metal with any explosions from that happening is being enforced and they will not be allowed to do that. At this time I can only give you the update on the report and the investigation that the District Attorney's office has implemented and let you know exactly what we are doing. What we are doing again is the DA's office is advising the owners of that property that they are not allowed to cut metals of any type at that location. I know you had a big concern of possible explosions or anything like that so I want you to be assured that it will stop."

Audrey Mason, 124 Mason Lane, asked, "Well what can they do over there?"

Tom Daley stated, "My report based on the grand fathered use is that they can store equipment, sand, culverts and other related activities but they cannot expand the use that the state had since 1960 and the parish continued which was to use it as a storage yard."

Councilman Julien asked, "What about chemicals? There are certain chemicals that fall under that restriction right?"

Tom Daley stated, "I am unaware of any chemical storage at the facility."

Audrey Mason stated, "I am behind the fence of 425 Capt. G. Bourgeois. I have taken numerous pictures of big yellow containers on the back of trucks that is in the yard. I have seen the owner in the blue tahoe come there with a trailer with the same yellow tank on the back of his truck getting out of the shed going back to Airline Highway. So they are doing something over there. We spoke with DEQ about the tires. He said you cannot have more than 100 tires at one time. He said that is against all laws. I said well I know they have more than 100 tires because it is sticking out of the fence on the property over there. So they are going to be checking into that for us too. So I am not understanding how you can say it is legal for them to have a storage. These pictures show you what kind of storage they are doing over there. It still looks like a junk pile. I don't understand where he is coming from with the historical this and the historical that. If it is wrong for one thing why can't it be wrong for something else? The sand bags that they say the parish used or leased or however Michael Carter took all the sand bags and put them in the ditch and closed the ditch up. So there is no sand bag for hurricane use. There are no culverts. None of that is there, only this junk that is there now that the present owners are doing. I get woken up at 7:00 in the morning. I can't sleep with all the roaring in back of me with all the machinery going back and forth. I don't like that not one bit. I need to rest too and that is on a Saturday. I am just not understanding what you all are doing."

Mike Carter, LaPlace, stated, "At one time I did own the property and my company name was Barauch Ents. Historically that property when sold to the state by Gulf State Land before any houses were there. I am born and raised in the area. There were no houses in the area when the state started operating there. When Mr. Ory, Mr. Arceneaux and one other gentleman were involved with the zoning that property had commercial operations there during the process of zoning the parish. Now if that was an oversight on those three individuals that property should have never been zoned residential from the place where there is a commercial or light industrial operation going on during the initial zoning of the parish. So how can they legally arbitrarily because they did not follow the procedures of the law from the state, they didn't go through everybody and inquire as to how that property should have been zoned especially in areas where there was potential to be commercial property. They just arbitrarily zoned everything south of the railroad track in the black community residential. There was no opportunity what so ever in the black community to expand to commercial or light industrial and to me that is discrimination. Why should a property that is in existence be arbitrarily zoned one way when its initial operation is commercial or light industrial."

Councilman Smith stated, "Mr. Carter at this time what I think needs to happen it sounds to me like you have some concerns or some questions. I'm going to refer you to meet with our District Attorney on that because it sounds like the questions you are asking are legal."

Mike Carter stated, "I'm making a statement. I am not asking a question."

Councilman Smith stated, "Okay I thought you wanted a question answered. I am sorry."

Mike Carter stated, "It is not a question it is a statement of fact."

*The reason I put sand bags in that ditch is because it was on private property, my property at the time, because erosion was causing my fence line to expose the concrete and my fence was going to cave in so I stopped the ditch up which was within my legal rights."*

*Audrey Mason stated, "First of all our property was bought in 1941, it was a community then. The state bought it in 1961 so you are looking at 20 something years later. We always had a community there. So I don't know why the state was allowed to come in and do what they did when they did it and there were houses there. This is in my backyard."*

*Councilman Smith stated, "Mrs. Mason I agree with what you are saying and we could probably go back and forth all night with rebuttals my thing is the District Attorney has done an investigation, the complaint that he received he was asked to do an investigation and to issue a cease and assist order to stop the cutting of metals at that location. Again that issue that we just spoke about has been addressed. It is in fact being enforced and that part of the issue that you asked about should be taken care of. I see you have additional concerns. Could you do us a favor if you really have additional concerns, any and all other concerns put those in writing and present those to us and if there is some way that we can help you we will try to do that but remember we are going to have to do everything by the letter of the law."*

*Councilman Morris stated, "This is in my district. It was my item. Me and the residents sat and met with Mr. Daley and what we did because right now we are at a stand still. What I instructed the residents to do was that we need to get documentation. When they see the tanks on the backs of the trucks they need to give us pictures because right now when we go to court we need to show exactly what they are doing and when you hear them doing something other than storage there you have to document it. This board passed a motion for a cease and desist based on the District Attorney. We can go back and ask him to enforce it but we need the evidence to show what they are doing wrong. So I am asking you again, please when you see something wrong or you hear something wrong go out, keep a note, document it, date it and sign it. So if we are being sued we will have some documentation instead of word of mouth."*

*Councilman Julien stated, "As this is a residential area you said that we had to follow the letter of the law. I want to encourage the community not to give up, to keep up the fight. We have to fight for the people who can't fight for themselves sometimes. So we need to if we made a mistake then we need to rectify the mistake so that the noise can be stopped and I don't think they are going to have a lot of problems with storage of sand bags especially on a Saturday when attorney Mason wants to sleep in."*

#### **Raydel Morris/Haston Lewis – Update on water line crossing the River**

*Councilman Lewis stated, "I hate to keep beating on this but the information I have been getting I am not getting the correct information that I need because according to that little book it says that they did 'x' number of work on the project so that tells me that nothing is going on. Secondly, I have a book again with a study saying that it is very important that we take care of this clarifier because it isn't going to last that long and the last information I got it was going to last about 2 years and I don't think 2 years is going to take*

us where we need to be. If this clarifier goes out we are going to have trouble. Let me tell you something, I have had a lot of experience on getting that line out of the river. It almost lasted four years and to build this clarifier, I want to see that happen because if that clarifier goes out we are going to be out of water. I am going to stay on this project. I am going to tell you all something every meeting. I am going to stay on this until I see something happening over there. I don't see enough happening. I would like to speak with the engineer on it because in this book he is writing in detail a lot of things that need to be done over there because if we don't do it we are going to have trouble over there."

Natalie Robottom stated, "Yes Mr. Lewis, that was the document that we received that caused our alarm. There isn't a cost in the booklet because it has been handled in house. There were two phases designed to take care of and actually extend the life of the existing clarifier because we were afraid. The book doesn't reference a cost because what we have done with the clarifier has been done through the utilities department. We were extremely concerned about the condition of that clarifier and whether or not it would last in time for us to design, get permits and do a water line under the river. So we developed a plan that consisted of two phases to make repairs to the existing clarifier that would allow us the time necessary to have our meetings with the Corps., to secure right-of-ways to extend the water line under the river, to get the additional funds that are needed and also to complete the full design. So what we feel we have done is reduce the immediate necessity, although phase two has not been completed, phase one was very successful and we are looking at completing it in the next month. As we said that should keep it running for two years, not that we want it to last two years but our existing funding is one million dollars for a clarifier. We have decided that a better remedy would be to put the line under the river and it is going to require some additional funds. My office has already decided that in next year's budget we will put some money aside out of the utilities fund to add to that. We want to see what is left from the rest of these bonds issues. In the meantime our engineer has not secured all the necessary permits. We do not have all the land acquisitions right-of-ways that would be needed to put the pipe under the river. So we are working on all of those things now. It is our understanding based on our meeting with the Corps and the Pontchartrain Levee District and the LaFourche Basin Levee District that we are going to exceed what our original estimate was so we don't want to get started with a project and not have the money but we were very concerned about the clarifier situation on the West Bank and we have taken steps in house, that money isn't coming from the bond project, it is being taken care of in the utilities fund and we are making repairs to that existing clarifier to protect the residents on the West Bank."

Councilman Lewis stated, "I have the information about what you just said that needs to be done. I am just making sure it happens. If I don't watch it, it isn't going to happen."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We understand. We are working on it. Our report is in our administrative report. Mr. Morris requested it and we couldn't get clarification. We thought he wanted a work shop. I think he wanted a special meeting on utilities. Whenever the council decides what they would like we are prepared to have a meeting to discuss both

water and sewer as well as a number of other projects that we feel it is important that you are aware of. So as soon as we get that clarification as to if it is a workshop or a special meeting, we will be happy to address both water and sewer."

Councilman Morris asked, "Do you have an estimated time on when the construction of this line will happen?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "We are working on it now. The longest thing is the permitting. We have met with and received copies of our neighbors permit plans. So we can reduce the back and forth that goes on with permitting. So we are trying to expedite the process by getting it right the first time and we are hoping just under normal circumstances it takes a while to get those permits and we couldn't take the chance of leaving the clarifier in the existing state but we have made those repairs and this is an ongoing process and we anticipate and feel very strongly, like you do Mr. Lewis, that this is the best resolution and we are going to keep working until we get there."

Councilman Morris asked, "So you feel comfortable that the repairs you made to the clarifier will last two years?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "Yes."

#### **Raydel Morris – Update on adjudicated properties**

Councilman Morris stated, "I would just like the administration to let me know where we are with this project."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We received a proposed ordinance and procedures from the Broussard-Baloney Law Firm. We shared that proposal with the Assessor's Office, the Sheriff's Office and with our legal counsel and there were only minor revisions sent back to the Broussard-Baloney Law Firm. In a meeting with them we discussed the need to prioritize the properties that we would begin with for their value and clear title and they are working on that as well as the minor revisions. Once we receive those we will bring both parties together and have a workshop with the council to present to them what the overall plan and ordinance will require. Once everyone is comfortable with it we will bring it before the body for approval of an ordinance."

Councilman Morris stated, "Me and Mrs. Mercadel had some discussions on why I would like this project to keep moving on."

Natalie Robottom stated, "I think it is pretty close. I met with Mrs. Baloney about a week or so ago. Do you know when the revisions will be made? (asking Mrs. Mercadel) So we are expecting their revisions in the next couple of days and then we will get everyone together to take a look at those."

Councilman Morris asked, "Just one curious question? I know that we had two companies. Is there any activity from the second company that was awarded the contract to do this?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "I am going to use some of our internal terms and that was bn – before Natalie. Actually there was some work done by

*the first company and it was an internal administrative decision to divide the project into two portions. The first company did their work and now it is Broussard-Baloney's time to do their work and everything will come back together and the council can make a decision as to how they want to move forward. That was done internally and both firms have done their portions."*

Councilman Julien asked, "Do you have an estimated time when we will have the workshop for the council members?"

Natalie Robottom stated, "We are expecting the revisions in two to three days. We will then get the two firms together to discuss the overall product and then we should get together fairly soon."

### **Raydel Morris – Local participation in projects**

Councilman Morris stated, "As we are all aware we have a 29 million dollar bond project. As I look at the contractors, engineers and inspectors, I see very little participation from our constituents. I would like to know what can we do to improve their participation. I am concerned about that because it sends a signal out that our local constituents can finance projects but we have very little participation. So if this council needs to pass something so that we can get that increased I think we need to do so because it sends a signal out and lets everybody know. We are in a depression. There are very few jobs. People are losing jobs. Houses are foreclosing. I think what we need to do is everything and anything possible so that we can increase this participation. I had a conversation with Mrs. Mercadel about it. She said maybe we need to have a meeting of all the local contractors because from her experience she finds that a lot of time they want to but they don't have the necessary insurance or paper work. So if we have to go out and educate them. I think whatever it takes this council and this administration we need to do whatever it takes to get this done to increase the participation."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We agree with you on that. I understand that there was a challenge to a previously passed ordinance by this council with it being unconstitutional to try to dictate participation. Obviously when we are dealing with bid law there is no way to negotiate through that other than to have people fairly bid. It is our experience and we actually have a meeting scheduled, we will discuss it on a later item, with a firm that works with small businesses, to try and help train, develop and prepare our local businesses to be prepared for our work. Overall what we would like to have is an approved vendor list where they are on our list. We know you have what we need. We can have you come in and work because you are on that list but what we basically are unable to do is to give our locals an unfair advantage especially when we are dealing with bids. There are bid laws that prohibit that but we do think that we can do a better job of helping our small businesses navigate through our system and be better prepared when work is available."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I just wanted to kind of touch on that and maybe that is something that we can do through our economic development department is have some workshops just to educate people even who are just starting a business just A to Z what you need to do or a business 101 for our locals to try and help them on their path to become

eligible to do work here in St. John Parish."

Natalie Robottom stated, "I think our meeting is tomorrow at 3:00 and it will be a joint effort. We did attend a meeting with Senator Landrieu and Secretary Steven Moray, there is funding for that. They are encouraging us on a regional basis to partner with our educational institutes to provide those types of trainings and business incubators. Actually I think a lot of it is just not having or knowing and understanding what is involved. On our end in our procurement office we are trying to do a better job of making sure that it is consistent and it is out there so anybody who wants to do business with the parish knows what is expected. So we are refining those processes now. We do have a meeting scheduled this week. I will address it a little bit later in one of the other items but that is a need that we feel needs a little bit more work."

Councilman Morris stated, "This is one of the things that I am working on. I am doing a comparison of our insurance that the parish requires our contractors or bidders to have. At that time I am trying to do the surrounding River Parishes because what I am hearing from some of the contractors is that the insurance that we require for local contractors to come and bid on the in-house jobs are higher than the surrounding parishes but we can discuss that at a later date."

Natalie Robottom stated, "I can tell you that I already started that process. So if you would work with us that has been a concern of ours as well. We definitely want to protect the parish in terms of what those requirements are but we have been in contact with Mr. Rollo's office. We have pulled requirements from other parish's websites and we are going to be revisiting that to see how we can adjust and if we can to better serve people who have smaller businesses and can't come up with some of the larger insurance requirements."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "Actually Councilman Morris I had this conversation with Mrs. Robottom and Mr. Rollo sometime back looking into actually setting up tiers because of course a person who is doing some minor landscaping work doesn't necessarily need the same insurance requirements as someone who has a bulldozer on a piece of property. So we had discussed that and that maybe something that will help some of the small business owners if we can set up those tiers to say okay these larger businesses that are doing work that can put us at more of a liability that they do have a higher insurance requirement."

Natalie Robottom stated, "I know Mrs. Labat has been working with him and as I said we directed them to other parishes that have that tier system and of course it isn't automatic. We have to review and make sure that it complies with what we are doing here."

**Raydel Morris/Haston Lewis – Fire protection for Capt. G. Bourgeois and W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street in Edgard**

Councilman Morris stated, "One of the things that came out with the discussion of the property on Capt. G. Bourgeois we realized that there is no fire protection from Fir Street to Persimmon Street which is a couple of thousand feet. I would like the administration to maybe look into it and have the engineer to see if he can get a price to see if we can work it out. I know several years ago the parish passed a bond

issue to say that everybody should have fire protection. There is no fire hydrant and we are talking about a couple of thousand feet."

Natalie Robottom stated, "Mr. Morris I think I am reading your mind, based on the complaints that we heard last time, we sent the fire department out on an interim basis just to make sure that their fighters were trained to be able to handle a fire there. We do have a proposal to install two new fire hydrants on Capt. G. Bourgeois and that work should be completed by the end of March."

Councilman Lewis stated, "We have about five fire hydrants out on the West Bank and plus on Phoenix around Capt. G. Bourgeois that street doesn't have a hydrant at all plus on Oubre Court in Edgard doesn't have a fire hydrant on it either. So we need to look at those."

Natalie Robottom stated, "I don't think Mr. Rayneri is writing those down. So could you repeat those?"

Councilman Lewis stated, "Phoenix Lane and Oubre Court in Edgard."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We will have our fire departments go out to make sure that there is an interim in place and then we will have our utilities department go out and access the area."

Councilman Smith stated, "If we have that many locations in the parish that don't have the proper fire hydrants in place, would it be possible to get a request in to the fire departments to check the entire parish because we may have some other areas that we are missing."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We are being assessed now in Reserve for that. Making sure that protection is possible. We are evaluated on a regular basis. Obviously this is three streets out of the entire parish so there is a process but some things happen and we are not aware that they aren't functioning properly. We appreciate you sharing that with us but that will be the responsibility of the fire departments and our utilities department to stay on top of that."

Councilman Morris stated, "Just to update what you said, Capt. G. Bourgeois has no fire hydrants. The other incidents it was probably late at night and the hydrant was hit and wasn't replaced. The firemen do go around and give a yearly report of all missing fire hydrants and repairs that need to be done and the utility department gets it. So all they have to do is pick up that data and from there throughout the parish because every time they go around and check they actually give a report on each hydrant and I think each one is numbered."

Councilman Smith stated, "I understand that Mr. Morris. My concern is if there is no fire protection and there has never been any on Capt. G. Bourgeois they should have caught that a long time and reported it."

Natalie Robottom stated, "I think it was just an issue of making a decision to do it. I have made the decision and we are installing the fire hydrants."

**Raydel Morris/Haston Lewis – Update on walkway to river pumps Edgard water plant**

Councilman Lewis stated, "You all know I brought that up. We even voted to go ahead and do it but it isn't done. I even begged for the money that night because I wanted to make sure it happened. We got that passed and I still don't have a walkway. You know what's happening? Those guys are going out there at night, it is dark, when the pump trips out there they have all kind of problems to get out there and start the pump off again. What is going to happen is the river is going to rise again and they are going to have to get in a skiff again and go back out there. That shouldn't happen. That has been going on for at least thirty years and it is time to stop it."

Natalie Robottom stated, "Mr. Lewis we did secure the funding. The design is being completed. We are awaiting the permit from the Army Corps of Engineers. We will direct the engineer to follow up on that immediately but we are making some progress in that that much is done. Sometimes the Corps takes longer than we need them too. We will make every effort to get that permit so that we can complete that walkway."

Councilman Lewis stated, "Let me tell you what I did when I had trouble with that water line. I asked the council to let me invite the Corps to come to the meeting and believe me within less than a week I had the permits. We are just sitting down on that job that is why nothing is happening. We have got to move. If we are not up to date with getting those permits or working on that already than we are not going to be able to pump that water in the river. We just have to move faster than what we have been doing."

Natalie Robottom stated, "Well we will try that."

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Charles Julien – Adopt legislation for small businesses/disabled business enterprises**

Councilman Julien stated, "I have been speaking to administration. Mr. Brown had been working on some stuff for small businesses and some legislation that we could pass to make sure that we did get some minority participation. The administration has been working with us. I only want to say that I know you have a tough job Parish President so I will yield to you at this point and keep on working hard."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We will and as I said we have a meeting scheduled tomorrow with a firm that works with small businesses which includes disadvantaged and minority businesses. We think it is important that we do help all of our small businesses but there are some things that we think can be in place that are already in place in the state to help in that measure and we will get back with you all following our meeting."

Councilman Julien stated, "You said something earlier about a legal challenge and I am wondering if you could expand on that."

Natalie Robottom stated, "There was an ordinance passed many years ago

about a 25% set aside. That was ruled unconstitutional. So that is no longer in place."

**Mike Tregre – LNO – to Entergy of Louisiana for a substation located on the Eastern end of the Parish**

Marie Brown-Mercadel stated, "Administration requests authorization to issue a letter of no objection to Entergy of Louisiana for the addition of a substation on the border of St. John and St. Charles Parish. The project also involves installation of a transmission line, but there is no environmental impact to the parish."

**MOTION:** Councilman Julien moved and Councilman Lee seconded the motion to approve a LNO to Entergy of Louisiana for a substation located on the Eastern end of the Parish. The motion passed with Councilwoman Cheryl Millet absent.

**Mike Tregre – Authorization to renew and extend the terms and conditions of the contract with Pictometry International Corporation for a 2 year period at a cost of \$36,482.00 funded by the Department of Homeland Security**

Marie Brown-Mercadel stated, "Administration requests authorization to renew and extend the terms and conditions of the contract with Pictometry International Corporation for 2 years. The project is funded by the Department of Homeland Security and includes aerial mapping of the parish that is used to update geographical information systems at no cost to the parish."

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Usry moved and Councilman Millet seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to renew and extend the terms and conditions of the contract with Pictometry International Corporation for a 2 year period at a cost of \$36,482.00 funded by the Department of Homeland Security. The motion passed with Councilwoman Cheryl Millet absent.

**Mike Henderson – Authorization to execute an Intergovernmental Agency Agreement with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and St. John the Baptist Parish to conduct commercial building inspections to ensure compliance with the Louisiana State Uniform Construction Code**

Mike Henderson, Planning & Zoning, stated, "The administration is requesting authorization to execute an Intergovernmental Agreement with the U.S. Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the office of the state fire marshall to ensure continued compliance with the State uniform code for commercial construction. This contract is for a term of three years with no increase in cost."

**MOTION:** Councilman Millet moved and Councilman Morris seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to execute an Intergovernmental Agency Agreement with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and St. John the Baptist Parish to conduct commercial building inspections to ensure compliance with the Louisiana State Uniform Construction Code. The motion passed with Councilwoman Cheryl Millet absent.

**Mike Henderson – Authorization to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor**

**Agreement with South Central Planning and Development to provide administration oversight and building code enforcement activities pursuant to the requirements of Act 12, for a three year term**

Mike Henderson stated, "The administration requests authorization to execute a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with SCP to provide administrative oversight and building code enforcement for residential construction. The contract is for three years with no increase in cost."

Chris Rowe, Reserve, asked, "Can't I comment on this or make a statement?"

Councilman Smith stated, "Sir on new business there is no public comment. All the comments that we have goes under other items."

Chris Rowe asked, "How would I be recognized by this council to speak? I have been trying to get in touch with Mr. Millet and Mr. Morris and Mrs. Robottom they are trying to keep me off of the agenda."

Councilman Smith stated, "They are not trying to keep you off of the agenda. You have addressed the council on your issue before. There is an ongoing investigation with the item. When that report comes back to us we will be more than happy to get back with you and then if you need to come back and address the public or the council on that issue at that time once that report is complete, contact me and I will gladly put you on the agenda."

Chris Rowe stated, (not at microphone hard to understand) "I was able to speak once but none of my neighbors have spoken."

Councilman Smith stated, "Sir I am trying to speak to you because you are addressing me. I will get to Mr. Millet in a second. If someone is out in the audience outside of the chambers when we are on an item and they would like to speak, they have to come inside the chambers to be recognized. (Mr. Rowe was making a lot of comments not audible because he wasn't at the microphone) Sir he cannot put you on an agenda the night before the meeting. If you need to get on the agenda it has to be two weeks prior. (Mr. Rowe commented about going to file a law suit against the parish first thing in the morning) Have a nice night."

Councilman Millet stated, "He told me he wanted to come in front of the council and speak as their representative. He didn't say anything about any other people. I knew they were going to be here but I put him on the agenda so that he could speak as their representative of them. That is it."

Councilman Morris stated, "You see what we have to put up with. Friday me and Mike Tregre went out and did an inspection. We contacted DEQ. We went out and talked to some of the residents. Mr. Rowe doesn't understand. For the public's information Mr. Rowe wants us to pull the commercial license from the grain elevator which this parish doesn't have control over. It goes through DEQ and the state. He doesn't understand that. We put him on the agenda once. Mrs. Mercadel gave us an update. We have done everything we possibly could. He doesn't understand. I asked him what does he expect by coming to the meeting. He still hasn't told me but to cause confusion. He is constantly at our

office and at all the offices."

Natalie Robottom stated, "My office staff, both Mr. Tregre and Mrs. Mercadel and prior to that Mr. Oncale, we met with the plant manager and some of the employees at ADM grain elevator. We have had DEQ come out. We have met with them numerous times. I have spoken with Mr. Rowe over the phone. I explained to him that these individuals were handling it. It is not over. We are waiting for the investigative report. I have asked that a meeting be scheduled with Cargill in addition to ADM so that they are aware of what is happening. I am not sure if that has been scheduled yet but we have not dropped the ball on this. As Mr. Millet and Mr. Morris has said there are things that are not within our control. We are following up on a regular basis with DEQ. We respond to Mr. Rowe. His approach, as he told me, is a little bit different from mine but that doesn't mean that we are not still working on it. As soon as we get information regarding the investigation we will be happy to share it with you all."

Councilman Lee stated, "Just if I might to assist the council and the administration to get back on track here. This item up for discussion under administration is the authorization to enter into a cooperative endeavor agreement with SCP to provide administrative oversight and building code enforcement activities pursuant to the requirements of Act 12, for a three year term has nothing to do with grain elevators. I just want to make sure that the public understands we got off track here. So I would like to get us back on track because this item does require action by the council."

**MOTION:** Councilman Morris moved and Councilman Millet seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with South Central Planning and Development to provide administration oversight and building code enforcement activities pursuant to the requirements of Act 12, for a three year term. The motion passed with Councilwoman Cheryl Millet absent.

**Marie Brown-Mercadel – Resolution R11-04 – A resolution amending the current Citizen Participation Plan for the Louisiana Gustav/Ike CDBG Disaster Recovery Program and the Louisiana Community Development Block Grant**

Marie Brown-Mercadel stated, "The administration requests approval of a resolution authorizing the adoption of technical language changes to the current Citizen Participation Plan for the CDBG Disaster Recovery Program and the Louisiana community development block grant."

**MOTION:** Councilman Julien moved and Councilman Morris seconded the motion to approve Resolution R11-04 - A Resolution amending the current Citizen Participation Plan for the Louisiana Gustav/Ike CDBG Disaster Recovery Program and the Louisiana Community Development Block Grant. **WHEREAS**, the Parish of St. John the Baptist regularly applies for Louisiana Community Development Block Grant funding and an ongoing Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery program, and; **WHEREAS**, the Parish has previously enacted a Citizen Participation Plan with regard to both of these programs, and; **WHEREAS**, the Parish desires to update its Citizen Participation Plan to ensure it meets required Community Development Block Grant standards regarding citizen

participation; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the St. John the Baptist Parish Council does hereby amend it's Citizen Participation Plan for the Louisiana Gustav/Ike CDBG Disaster Recovery Program and Louisiana Community Development Block Grants. The motion passed with Councilwoman Cheryl Millet absent.

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

Councilman Lewis stated, "I want to put the public on notice that I plan to override planning and zoning for a denial for Lori Robertson, 447 Capt. G. Bourgeois in LaPlace."

Councilman Julien stated, "I just want to let the community know that the Reserve Library has opened back up. It has been re-done. Mr. DeSoto, Mr. Williams and Mrs. Houston did a great job of re-opening it up and re-dedicating it. It is great. We need people to go out and research and utilize our library to acquire more knowledge."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, "I have a request of the administration and I apologize it should have been under department and engineer reports but they have a lot of construction that is going on at LaPlace Elementary and I have made several calls to the contractor. They are using Carrollwood Drive as an outlet in and out. I have asked them not to because as you are aware Carrollwood is only an asphalt overlay whereas if they come in off of Belle Terre on Fairway that is a concrete road and they're several portions of Carrollwood Drive that have already caved in and they are sunken in and I have called that in to our Public Works Department and they are on top of that as well but as we are patching, holes are constantly forming because of the construction activity."

Councilwoman Usry stated, "I would like to thank Sheriff Jones and the trustee program for cleaning the sidewalks from Main Street to Hemlock. They did an excellent job. We have a hard surface to walk in and they might want to continue from Hemlock to Milesville. So thank you."

Councilman Lee stated, "On behalf of Mrs. Millet, not being here tonight, her husband is ill and she had to be at the hospital. I wish him God speed and best wishes. Hopefully he comes home well."

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

Natalie Robottom stated, "I attended a public hearing yesterday relative to the re-drawing of the election districts. It was in Houma in the Bayou region. Many of the districts do not meet the ideal populations, guidelines or legal requirements. So there is going to be some changes. The legislature is accepting input from the public and will meet March 20<sup>th</sup> through April 13<sup>th</sup>, to adopt new districts. We are continuing administratively to meet with our elected officials. We encourage all of you to do the same. The meeting we attended primarily was LaFourche and Terrebonne and they are adamant about keeping those two together. We have had discussions about keeping the River Parishes together because of our similarities, our economic similarities and the relationship that we have. We encourage you to continue to do that. There is going to be a change. If LaFourche and Terrebonne stay together we will not necessarily be in part of that area but we are going to continue to pursue that. There are a few plans on the website

that you can visit Louisiana Legislature at [www.legis.state.la.us](http://www.legis.state.la.us) and there is a redistricting plan there. Also two weeks ago Louisiana residents converged on Washington for one of the largest economic development opportunities in the country. We were showcased as a region with presentations by St. John, St. Charles, St. James and Ascension and the Port of South Louisiana. It was also an opportunity for us to meet with out state and congressional delegation at the same time and we have since received some directives as well as small businesses association meeting to give us some direction for training our small businesses. The economic development breakfast was attended by over 100 elected officials and business leaders. We were also addressed by US Department of Transportation maritime administrator regarding the Mississippi River and the outlook for the future in bringing in international trade. I know Mrs. Millet isn't here but she was also in attendance at the small business meeting. A special thanks to my staff who partnered with the staff of neighboring parishes. They did an outstanding job. Terri Abadie who is very skilled had St. John very well represented and I want to thank Mr. Perry Burrel who actually built a smoke house that functioned as such that was on display smoking Andouille in Washington. I want to thank them for making the trip the success that it was. I also attended the Police Jury Association meeting with Mr. Lewis in Shreveport. There were several things under discussion there redistricting, ethics, cooperative extension services, efforts to fight poverty and we are going to attempt to hold another ethics seminar after the April elections. We have had some new employees come on in the manager level that we would like to get the ethics training and obviously if there are newly elected officials we want to provide them with that opportunity. The water relocation on Country Club Drive went really well today. A fewer number of homes were disrupted than we thought. We were able to locate a valve that only had half of those residents involved but we do want to remind them that if services were removed at their homes they are going to be under a boil advisory until they get the all clear and the test results are in. I know Mrs. Usry touched on it. We do want to thank the Sheriff's Office for so quickly jumping on that project. They have cleaned from Main Street to DuPont but it isn't just the Sheriff's Office our Public Works crews are out there as well. They are removing the debris and working hand and hand with the office. It is my understanding that they finished a lot sooner than they expected so they will be moving to the West Bank I think tomorrow and we will have Public Works assess the entire River Road to see what is available there. We do understand that some of it was just covered but there are some areas that may need to be replaced but we will ask Cliff and Mr. Ricky Roussel to partner on that to see after it is cleaned what may need to be done by their office. I would also like to let our code enforcement individuals know that I expressed a safety concern with some of the vehicles and two replacement vehicles will be available for them this Friday. They can pick those up at division. It is Mardi Gras time. Our parades are coming along. We do have two. The Krewe of Towapshasha is Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 1:00 PM in Reserve. The Krewe of DuMonde is Sunday March 6<sup>th</sup>, beginning at Noon in LaPlace. Obviously this is a family event and we would like to caution all of our residents to look out for small children and of course to remain safe along the parade route. The parade can also be viewed on NOLA.com. Reminder our own Jordan Dorsey who was here at our last meeting, is in Hollywood performing. He needs your votes. Voting for American Idol begins Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, so please remember to vote for Jordan. He is

counting on us. Also you will still see that we have our red dresses, go red for woman. We want to encourage everyone to wear red the month of February. Relay for life is still soliciting teams and sponsors for their April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 event. It is at Riverside, please contact Angelle Boudreaux at St. John Relay for life at gmail.com or visit St. John Relay for life on Facebook. Keep St. John beautiful will host its annual clean sweep on April 16<sup>th</sup>; we are also looking for teams and participation from everyone throughout the parish. If you are interested please contact Dana Milioto at 985-652-9569. We would like to have the largest event possible. Please come out and help us to keep St. John beautiful. Just a reminder parish holidays, all of our offices will be closed March 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> for Mardi Gras and we want to wish everyone a Happy Mardi Gras."

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 8:08 PM, Councilman Lee moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed with Councilwoman Cheryl Millet absent.

/s/Ronnie Smith  
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

/s/Jackie Landeche  
Council Secretary